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POKER PLAYING AS A DRAMATURGICAL EVENT: BULL POWER, THE
MEANING AND COMMITMENT FOR EFFICACIOUS GAMESMANSHIP

By

Susan H. Boyd

B.S., University of Minnesota, 1963

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

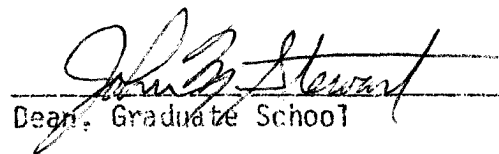
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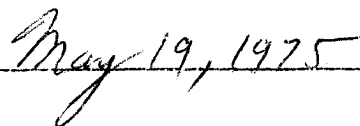


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Anthropology

Poker Playing as a Dramaturgical Event: Bull Power, the Meaning and Commitment for Efficacious Gamesmanship (122 pp.)

Director: Lee Drummond



The study focuses on symbolic interaction among poker players in three distinct gaming environments in Missoula, Montana. Interpretation of gaming encounters analyzes social behavior as symbolic behavior; whether the games have symbolic extensions or transformations drawn from values and goals of wider society. This ethnography identifies referents and contexts of play symbolism, key themes, meaning and commitment to the poker games as explicated by the participants. Linguistic, game, kinetic, social and cultural codes are described and analyzed as nested hierarchies of meaningful structures in the three game environments.

The semantic domain of Bull Power explicates operational philosophies of two major player types competing to win money. Action and status typologies of Bull Power develop patterns for social and gaming interaction with reference to the bovine metaphor of bulls, steers, heifers and calves.

Conclusions of the study are that two gaming environments share a common symbol system although actual play reflects differential social and educational experience; the third environment does not share the system or quality of play, which is distinct since less prestige is attached to competition and financial gain. A mediational class of game personae explicates an aesthetic, transcendent quality of pure play which contrasts with game play in the three environments.

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PREFACE

The main theoretical inspiration for this thesis is Clifford Geertz's analytical interpretation of the Balinese cockfight (Geertz 1973). Geertz stresses an interpretive approach to the analysis of culture which provides a "metasocial commentary" upon "reading" experience of the members and by the members of a particular culture; "a story they tell about themselves" (Geertz 1973: 448). Reading the experiences of the Balinese in the gaming encounter of the cockfight, Geertz analyzes behavior as "circling within bounded cultural forms in search of broader unities of the Balinese social experience" (Geertz 1973: 453).

As in Geertz's study, the object of analysis and interpretation in this thesis is a gaming environment. I chose to interpret poker games as they occur in three downtown Missoula bars. The poker game represents what Goffman has called "a focused gathering in which the participants are engrossed and interacting within a particular setting" (Goffman 1961: 9). Heuristically speaking, the poker game is a micro-environment within the bar and represents a situation designed by a structured etiquette, game meanings and game equipment. The poker game is a dramaturgical event with aesthetic and organizational properties which are motivated, socially and psychologically, by the probability of a fateful outcome. Geertz's discussion of "deep play" in the

Balinese cockfight is especially psychologically tantalizing in the dramatic context of a poker game. Deep play represents a contrast to utilitarian behaviors since being in over your head with more to lose than you can win affects a player in his statuses and roles involvement beyond material and utilitarian considerations (Geertz 1973: 432).

My interpretation of the poker game focuses on "explicating the explications" of poker players by unconventionally ascribing properties and conjunctions between actions and qualities normally clothed in other signifying contexts and references (Geertz 1973: 9, 447). Rather than describe functional mechanics of the game, I explore social semantics as webs of significance spun by the dramatis personae who also participate in the symbolic framework of wider society (Geertz 1973: 5; Goffman 1961: 7). My interest in the poker game as an aesthetic-dramatic event necessitates the discovery of stylized and expressive linguistic behavior within the gaming encounter, i.e., linguistic behavior communicating contents and forms of innovative action and expression. Bluffing, lying and cheating are enacted as dramatic expressions of "performing" beyond everyday life. Like the Balinese cockfight, the poker game has immediate dramatic shape, metaphorical content and a social context as an expressive form (Geertz 1973: 444).

My interpretation of gaming encounters represents an analysis of social behavior as symbolic behavior. I studied whether these games have symbolic extensions and/or transformations drawn from values and goals of wider society. From experience during the pilot

study, I deliberately selected three bars with definite social groups that represent differential generational, occupational, educational, and sexual attitudes and values of the players. The comparison of these three bars in relation to the context of values espoused by the American cultural complex formulated the following possibilities:

- 1) What goes on at these establishments bears no relation to the lives and thoughts of patrons in their everyday existence.
- 2) Poker games and "real life" are somehow related, but patrons of these three bars come from different social milieu and consequently think, act and play differently.
- 3) Despite the differences in the patrons' ages and social milieu, there is something that makes play activity distinctly alike. There is a common symbol system operating for the patrons of each of these establishments.

My task was to identify referents and contexts of play symbolism and to discover key themes, meanings, and commitments of the gaming experience. Meaning/form were analyzed by the interaction of various achieved statuses of participants; house owner-player, house player-skill, house status person-player, skill status person-player, and buffoon high-status friend. I contrast and compare social interaction with patrons who either have no immediate connection with the house or who are attempting to achieve status and recognition from the house. An interesting component of the interaction of players

is the linguistic behavior of the dramatis personae, i.e., how participants and kibbitzers manipulate speech for satisfying personal and social ends. Speech functions as a means of symbolically communicating status relationships and manipulating the game.

Therefore, an interpretive approach concentrates on examining the "piled-up structures of inference and implication through which an ethnographer is continually trying to pick his way" (Geertz 1973: 7). If I reported only that which the "rehearser (parodist, winker, twitcher . . .) is doing ('rapidly contracting his right eyelids'), my interpretation of the actor would constitute what Ryle calls "thin description" (Geertz 1973: 7). If I reported a nested "hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsal of parodies" which are enacted ('practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion'), my interpretation of the actor would constitute "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 7). Through the linguistic, game, social, cultural and kinetic codes of the play world, my interpretive approach to poker games constitutes thick description, since I explore hierarchies of meaningful structures of these codes in three distinct play environments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express her appreciation to the members of her Thesis Committee for their comments and considerations in preparation of this study and manuscript: Dr. Lee Drummond (Chairman), Dr. Frank Bessac, Dr. James M. Schaefer, and Dr. Duane Pettersen (Interpersonal Communication). The author would like to express thanks to Dr. Katherine Weist, whose suggestions concerning social network theory added perspective to the data, and to Patricia Simmons and Sue Rabold for manuscript preparation. Finally, although contributors from the various gaming environments preferred to remain anonymous, I would like to thank them for their invaluable assistance and cooperation.

CHAPTER I

MODELS AND DISCUSSIONS

As my research began on the philosophical context of play symbolism, I noted several models which, for heuristic purposes, served as theoretical threads in my analysis and interpretation of gaming encounters. These threads are inextricably interwoven throughout the fabric of field experience and are elaborated most fully in the following chapters.

I would like to concentrate on the study of games with rules (Piaget 1962), concepts about play (Huizinga 1955), and gaming encounters as dramaturgical events (Goffman 1961 and 1967). Most of my processual statements are elaborated from writings of folk drama by Peacock (1968 and 1969). Statements of drama which interpret socio-political interaction and its symbolism are based on works by Kenneth Burke (1957, 1958, 1962 and 1966) and acknowledgment of Manning's analysis of clubs in Bermuda (Manning 1973). Analyses of social interaction and cultural symbolism are discussed with reference to action fields of dominant symbols (Turner 1967). Finally, the sociolinguistic approaches are cogent for the analysis of linguistic-paralinguistic manipulation of game action as well as lexical clues for symbolism of the play world (Hymes 1962, 1964 and 1974; Gumperz 1964; Williams 1972; and Albert 1964).

Games With Rules

Early in my research, interest and curiosity were stimulated by Piaget's discussion about the decline of symbolic play as correlated with the extent to which a child attempts to adjust to reality rather than to assimilate it, i.e., how far imitation is incorporated into intelligent and effective social adaptation (Piaget 1962: 145).

Piaget states that the involution of symbolic play does not occur in games with rules which increase in number, both absolutely and relatively, with age (Piaget 1962: 145). Since psychological and social satisfactions are legitimized by rules and controlled by a collective discipline with a code of honour and fair play, he concludes that games with rules reconcile ludic assimilation with the demands of social reciprocity (Piaget 1962: 168).

While in agreement with the idea that rules are signposts of socialization, I do not regard games with rules devoid of/or substitutive for symbolic play. Symbolizing does not arbitrarily disappear with the advent of rules. Symbolism is part and parcel of the en-socialization to adult values and rule making. Goffman (1961) states that games have general organizational properties including socialization as a means of satisfying personal ends and as latent and manifest symbols of the society (Goffman 1961: 9). Although games with rules imply social reciprocity, they are not solely determined by functional relationships. Games with rules are influenced by a set of symbolic contexts and referents which channel expectations of means and goals in the adult world of play. Symbols are "forces" in the field of

social interaction (Turner 1967: 44). Culturally dominant symbols condense, polarize and unify disparities of social experience which become intelligible and explicable (Turner 1967: 44).

Foil of the Game and Social Interaction

Since McLuhan describes poker as an "expression of many complex attitudes and unspoken values of a competitive society," I researched the explication of competition and status by interviewing different social and generational groupings (McLuhan 1964: 240). By analyzing social interaction within an emerging symbolic framework, I hoped to discover screens erected for instrumenting personal satisfaction and channeling the "flow of socially significant matter in the encounter" (Goffman 1961: 73). The foil of the poker game is manifold; it is based on status relationships, generational and sexual membership, skill, and the manipulation of socially and personally satisfying means.

McLuhan (1964) also suggests that during periods of rapid social change, social practices of one generation tend to become codified in the games of the next (McLuhan 1964: 239). I researched the possibility of processual statements, i.e., whether individualism, competition and status had the same meaning for generational groupings within the games. I researched what most broadly was being "played" and how this was implemented. I noted the significance of competition and status within the games as relating to values and goals of wider society.

Poker Games: Adult Play and Drama

Goffman (1961) states that social scientists have "neglected to develop an analytical view of fun and an appreciation of the light that fun throws on interaction in general" (Goffman 1961: 17). The play environment is characterized as a spatial separation from everyday life--"a closed space, materially or ideally, and inside this space play proceeds" (Huizinga 1955: 19). The macroenvironment of the bars offers opportunities to study the atmosphere and setting of an adult play world. Special visual and aural contrivances create an atmosphere of social relations in play. I studied the aesthetic form and content of play within bars and games not as existential description limited to material effects but shape wedded to a social-semantic domain, a cognitive field.

In a dramaturgical sense, games with self-involvement with probable fateful outcome constitute the potential for both comedy and tragedy. The poker game has a distinct physical and spatial orientation, an etiquette which designs the raw structure for "plot," and linguistic behavior with special expressive style and contents. As social interaction develops, symbolic characterizations and means were enacted. The game-relevant meanings are useful disguises for "behind these meanings, the sentimental, material and esthetic values steal into interaction, infusing the game with tones of meaning that have nothing to do with the game but the encounter" (Goffman 1961: 74). Playing games within the poker game suggests that play is a re-creation of social forms and symbolic constructions. Huizinga

(1955) states that play is the "manipulation of images as conversions of reality" (Huizinga 1955: 4).

As a dramaturgical event, poker games are analyzed as an innovative, symbolic context for role formation, explication and manipulation of culturologically sanctioned and stigmatized statuses. I intended to discern whether the dramaturgical event of the poker game presented:

- 1) an infusion of seriousness at the "deep play" level of psychological experience and if "deep play" altered social interaction and the dramatic form of game playing;
- 2) a context for creation of new social postures, i.e., a context for viewing and enacting sanctioned or stigmatized statuses;
- 3) a dynamic manipulation of dramatic forms/contents of setting, action and climax by different social groupings within the symbolic action fields;
- 4) a traditional model for the emulation of younger participants;
- 5) a dynamic situation in which the traditional model might be transformed or replaced by a shift in social loyalties of the younger generation, i.e., a new moral base for legitimatizing values and actions (Peacock 1968: 196);
- 6) transitional and liminal personae "betwixt and between" statuses and values of the generations

(Turner 1967: 98);

- 7) a dissolution or amalgam of cognitively dissonant values focused on stratification and egalitarianism (Festinger 1957: 180, 182, 187, 189, 191).

Play as Drama

Play as drama not only "propels people toward a decision to act" but also offers an opportunity to tinker with symbolic form and content of social experience (Brecht in Peacock 1969: 172). Play can be instrumental for the creation of interpretive insights, heightened moods and action. Play is a voluntary and manipulative experience. Through social interaction of the gaming encounter, Homo ludens is merged with Homo significans in the assimilation and experience of socially relevant symbols. Social fictions and images are captured in dominant symbols and action fields that embrace different social groupings within a society. Dominant symbols condense and unify social experience, however contradictory (Turner 1967: 40 43 44 46). Both the bars and the poker games become dramatic foci that behave more like prisms than mirrors, i.e., in the refraction of social dialogues, monologues and choruses.

Function of Interpretive Anthropology

Like Burke's "literary species" interpretive anthropology defines the essential character of cultural forms by "placing definitions of form in a world of other forms to illuminate both" (Hymes in Peacock 1967: xv). Symbolic analysis of cultural forms strives

to "concretize" social theory and philosophy by discovering meaningful behavior as explicated by the people themselves. A common sense approach to "reading" experience of human behavior in cultural narratives by and of the people is transformed into an expressive interpretation of meaningful behavior for people.

Fieldwork

There are some problematic issues which confronted me from the inception of this thesis. I will briefly elaborate them in this section: choice of gaming environments, poker and the law, analysis of a heterogeneous and dynamic field situation, and participant-observer interviewing and testing of poker players.

The selection of "The Traditional Poker Game in Missoula" was not terribly difficult. The Oxford Bar and Cafe represents the most enduring set of game and social relationships in our community. Poker games at the Oxford survived both "open" and underground periods before gambling was legalized in the State of Montana. The Oxfordians are mainly retired construction workers, railroaders and ranchers, former and current civil service employees, and skilled laborers. Many of the participants and kibbitzers are long-time acquaintances and have played poker in the Oxford for fifteen to twenty years.

The second most important poker game in Missoula was officially organized during the summer of 1974 by an experienced owner and his dealers who were originally attached to the management and payroll of the Oxford. The patrons of the Stockman Bar and game are a mixture

of businessmen, university professors and professional men, young men with some college experience, and a few retired gentlemen who followed the owner from the Oxford.

The third significant game is at the Top Hat and was organized early in the fall of 1974. The game is managed by young people within a country music, bluegrass bar setting. The bar and game are patronized by the youngest crowd of the three establishments. The Top Hatters appear to have a variety of fragmented educational and occupational experience. Many emulate a "hippie" life style. Formerly the Top Hat was a stronghold of a costume jewelry crowd striving to emulate upper-middle class bar patrons of Missoula. Portions of this colorful crowd still patronize the Top Hat during the day and early evening. Around nine o'clock, especially when live country and bluegrass music is performed, the older crowd slowly drifts out and is replaced by "hippies," university students, and other interesting personae of the younger generation.

The overwhelming majority of players and kibbitzers at all three bars are male. I have observed one whiskey-voiced, middle-aged woman play poker at the Oxford. The Stockman employs a charming and gregarious young woman who will sit in the game after her waitressing duties are finished for the evening shift. Only a few girls, one in particular, play at the Top Hat. The comely lass at the Top Hat occasionally dealt cards for the house; she represented the most foxy and alluring woman of all the games. I later learned that she left Missoula to become a poker dealer in a northern Montana town.

Since the drafting of the first Constitution for the State of Montana, gambling had been illegal. Until the Second Constitutional Convention and public referendum of 1972, poker had apparently been tolerated by the local law enforcement agency which made sporadic "crack downs" and "spot checks" on the games. In 1968 the Attorney General for the State of Montana "read" the statutes literally and, with due conscience, promoted a wide-sweeping enforcement of the gambling laws. In 1968 the games went "underground" and were secreted from view in basements and backrooms of bars. My informants were quite reluctant to divulge much information about this underground period; however, during the months of fieldwork, I managed to discover the main underground games and some offshoot networks and diversifications of gambling activities.

At the time of my pilot study in June, 1974, the poker games were on the brink of being operationally legal according to State and City laws. I had an opportunity to witness the response of the community to professional gambling, the application and issuance of dealer permits, the formation of a lobby group for the expansion of legalized gambling, the new status of respectability of gambling, and how legalization had affected the traditional game at the Oxford.

Although this material is given as a background statement in addition to the context of play, an indepth treatment of legalization and its effects on gambling activity represents an area of research beyond the scope of this paper. Unlike Geertz, my field experience of gaming encounters presents a dynamic setting and a heterogeneous mixture not only of participants but also situations of the micro-

environments, commitment to the games by the house as a financial enterprise and social experience of the participants in community affairs. These features of the poker games are complicated by the fact that games reflect differential implementation and attractions for clientele because of the respective owners' personal styles and rule making for table etiquette.

In order to remain as sensitive as possible to the dynamic situation presented by both social groupings and legalization, I made no initial assumptions of logical consistency between the three environments with regards to either the symbolic system or its action fields. I made no a priori attempt to force individual, normative or ideational levels of analysis into isomorphic categories or contexts. I hoped to allow the greatest latitude for the people to speak and to explain themselves.

Out of respect for my various informants' privacy, I will keep their identities anonymous. I had originally wished to tape record the interviews, games and the elicitation of linguistic material. However, the reluctance and suspicion of a vast majority of players and owners--that the tape recordings represented a grave intrusion on the games and their private lives--scotched a valuable empirical tool for rechecking the field data. Since the material involves individual play strategems and analyses of friends and "enemies," status with The Law and, in some cases, ignorance on the part of relatives and associates of involvement in the games, I defer to their wishes.

I spent three months of intensive observation during nighttime sojourns to these three establishments in August, September, and early October. During late October and November, I spent more time in tracking down informants for interviews. I discovered that most players would rather be informally interviewed during rest periods, either during the day or between games at night. Most were very uneasy about being approached for a formal interviewing session so that most of the data were compiled by memory during informal relaxation periods and lengthy observation of the games. I took a notebook into the field for linguistic data during the months of December, January, and February to record lexical and grammatical constructions for symbolic and dramatic analyses.

I attempted to create a game simulation with sixteen different randomly dealt hands. I spent hours analyzing possible strategies and moves to cross-check whether or not players were maximizing potentials in their respective playing styles. I tried to present the simulation in formal interviews but was completely thwarted by a lack of cooperation. I attribute this to an unwillingness to "play" against rival personae and to disclose exact strategems enacted against specific personae. After one informant discussed his frustration with the simulated game, I realized that the pressures and manipulations of playing styles were so closely geared to seating arrangements and kinds of players that the simulation was worthless. When asked to place personae at the table in a specific arrangement of his choice, the informant balked again. Finally, in one session, the informant disclosed that

he selected his playing style to contrast with whomever faced him as an opponent. This could change at any moment with the influx of fresh players or the detection of his covert manipulations by his opponents. The opponents would most probably compensate by switching their style of play to corner the strategy.

I also made checks on their everyday activity as well as unusual experiences, like racetrack participation during the Western Montana State Fair, to discover how many poker players were playing the ponies, circulating at the racetrack, betting or merely watching.

Initially, I wondered whether being a woman would hinder field-work in an almost-exclusive male domain. Response to my presence ranged from undisguised baiting to cool, indifferent tolerance. I received some sarcastic asides, many questions about the thesis, and a few opinions expressed that "a woman didn't and couldn't know a goddamn thing about poker playing." Although I experienced a few tense and anxious moments, most "rites of passage" developed into humorous parodies and clichés. Respect was not earned by passively lurking in the corner, since I was immediately confronted with the necessity of becoming an active and vociferous kibbitzer. Participation in the games and my performance as a poker player were pivotal for any success in the field experience and commitment to their world. Being female did not seem to handicap my relationship with most of the gentlemen I met. In fact, on several occasions, being a woman was distinctly advantageous.

CHAPTER II

MEANING AND COMMITMENT FOR THE EFFICACY OF MANHOOD

Cultural acts, the construction, apprehension and utilization of symbolic forms, are social events like any other; they are as public as marriage and as observable as agriculture.

(Geertz 1972: 168)

In "Religion as a Cultural System" Geertz states that a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as images of the actual state of affairs peculiarly well arranged to accommodate such a way of life (Geertz 1972: 167). The poker games represent intellectually reasonable and emotionally convincing statements about the American entrepreneur; the house enterprise, structure and means to actuate entrepreneurship in money making and risk taking; and American manhood within this system.

There are moral and aesthetic preferences of the poker game, imposed conditions of life implicit in a world with a particular structure and shape of reality (Geertz 1972: 167). The poker game also supports beliefs by invoking deeply felt moral and aesthetic sentiments as experiential evidence for their truths (Geertz 1972: 167). A system of symbols in the poker game acts to establish pervasive, long-lasting moods and motivations which are clothed in

factuality that seems uniquely realistic for a general order of American life (Geertz 1972: 167). Symbols facilitate the replication of relevant experience and are effective expressions of ongoing processes of social action (Firth 1973: 169-261). The poker games and the symbolic systems of poker games are dynamic, interpretive forces for social interaction.

Constellations of Meaning--A Theoretical Overview

Symbols are especially effective in directing and instigating social and psychological action because they "strike deeper and deeper in the roots of the unconscious" (Sapir quoted by Turner 1967: 33). Symbols juxtapose grossly physical and structurally normative experiences of social living. The economical condensation and multi-referential nature of symbols produce action units, forms of substitutive behavior for direct expression and ready release of emotions (Turner, Sapir 1967: 29).

Durkheim and Fortes note the peculiar quality of moral imperatives linked with desirability (Turner 1967: 30 and Firth 1973: 168). Emotional stimuli are converted to rules saturated with emotion. Symbols merge the sensory-orectic and ideological-obligatory modes of experience so "the irksomeness of moral constraint is transformed into a love of virtue" (Turner 1967: 30). By unifying disparities dominant symbols effectively merge/convert gross physiological attributes with ideological dicta "as poles clustered with contradictory significata" of social experience (Turner 1967: 33). Despite contradictions of content which are concealed in the normative, performative and

ideological behaviors, dominant symbols emphasize harmony, i.e., clusterings and constellations of meanings providing a viable action field within a cultural context. Conflict and hostilities are masked in the ambiguities and harmonies of dominant symbols.

Ritualization of the Play Environments

In a broad interpretation of games as "rituals," poker games are social, cooperative activities which express a kind of creativity and relate men to one another. Games as "rituals" perpetuate "new and fresh perspectives as a means of innovation to relate nature of the self and others" (Bocock 1974: 178-179). Through symbolic mobilizations of life meanings which are selected from the cultural lexicon, "meanings are reintegrated at new symbolic levels as a social currency of communicative forms" (Munn 1971: 605). Meanings are given form and expression outside the subjective experience and apprehension of the actor as elements of social relationships (Munn 1971: 605). Ritual action creates images expressive of order and disorder for the regulation of personal and social experience (Munn 1971: 605).

Significant elements of a symbol's meanings relate to what it does, and what is done to it, by whom and for whom (Turner 1967: 46). The poker game as a total field of social relationships has a structure for the groups who perform, organizing principles of the groups, and dynamics of alliances and factions within/between groups.

With the legalization of poker, game rules are implemented according to two major organizing principles:

- 1) the tables will be limited to seven players and a house dealer,
- 2) there will be no pot larger than \$100 for any single hand.

Although five players can initiate a game, no more than seven people can play at one time. This was instituted to prevent Cincinnati games,¹ which decrease the number of cards per player in the draw and increase showdowns pre-draw. The pot limit of \$100 insures participation of a greater number of people of various financial backing. Formerly no-limit pots squeezed little men out of the game entirely. During the underground era, it was not unusual to find \$3000 to \$5000 on the table for a hand. There are rules preventing players from borrowing from each other during a hand in progress, and converting checks to chips at the poker table. These rules are designed to prevent an unfair advantage of obtaining money to push someone out of the hand, and payroll checks from being cashed and "wasted" on the games.

The house dealer manages all money coming from the players, the pot size, the house 6 percent rake-off² and change-making with chips. He controls the etiquette of the game according to the house rules and city-state laws. Since the house dealer rarely deals hands, unless requested by a player, everyone in the game deals hands and calls the

¹Cincinnati games position more than seven players, frequently as many as ten, around the poker table.

²Any underlined term is commonly used by players, managers and owners. The rake-off is determined with each change of the sum of the pot. Terms are found in the glossary, Appendix A.

game of his choice. The house dealer collects all discards, officiates over all cuts and recuts, and replaces worn decks. House dealer shifts continue for three hours on the average. During breaks from the table work, house dealers are employed to run drinks, smokes, and food to the players seated at the poker table.

All three establishments list the kinds of games, rules and amounts of buy-ins³ on large signs. The Oxford has two poker tables. Each table has a set of rules for the kinds of games run at the table. Table I at the Oxford runs Lowball and Stud. Oxford Table II runs Lowball, Razz (a six-card variation of Lowball), five-card and seven-card Stud. Oxford Table I has a rule that states, "You cannot pass and raise," while Table II has no such rule. The games and kinds of action dictate different mechanics of passing and raising a bet. You can check (pass) and raise at any time in games like Razz and seven-card Stud when flexibility on incoming cards and decision-making--bet, check, fold (drop out), and raise--shape the game with each incoming card. Table I has a higher percentage of older, experienced players. Table II usually has a mixture of patrons, the majority of which are younger men below sixty years old. In the Oxford high-status personae of the house prefer Table I unless there is heavy action (lots of money) in the game at Table II. High-status skill personae vary play between both tables but usually end up at Table I. There are sign-up boards for the waiting lists of Tables I and II.

³To enter a game, a player must have an initial stake to buy into an open seat.

Entry to a game is accomplished by taking an open seat from someone who has officially left the game or who allows a player to use his stack of chips. Players can retain a seat but will be dealt out on specific hands when the player chooses to eat, drink or leave for the john.

Dyed-in-the-wool poker players at both the Oxford and Stockman prefer five-card Stud--it is "The Poker Game." Stud represents the most strategic game, psychologically and numerically. The highest hand wins a Stud game. Lowball is best characterized as a position game in which skillful players pick seating arrangements to manipulate the playing styles of the other players. A Lowball winning hand is the lowest combination of five cards after the draw. The lowest possible combination from ace to five is called a wheel. Stud has one hole card (concealed face down on the table) and four open cards, face up on the table. All cards in Lowball are in the hole, concealed in the players' hands. Both Stud and Lowball have one wild card, the joker, which is called the bug. It functions as an ace, and fills in a straight or flush in Stud. In Lowball, the bug is used as any low card. High card/hand opens the betting in a Stud game, while the player to the left of the dealer in Lowball is required to open blind, i.e., he does not see his cards. The blind opener prevents hands from being thrown in and produces a house rake per hand.⁴ The gentleman in the dark puts up \$1.00 before the deal. Another rule allows any player

⁴Blind openers are also used in five-card High Draw, played only at the Stockman and Top Hat.

seated next to the player in the dark to straddle, which costs him \$2.00. This forestalls both players' commitment to bet since the action is passed around the entire table and returns to them for their respective decisions. This insures flexibility in position; you buy position and conceal your motives.

The Stockman runs three games at two tables. Table I is usually the only one in play. High Draw of five cards, Lowball, and five-card Stud are featured with similar rules on betting as the Oxford; straddling, checking, and raising are permitted. Both the Stockman and the Oxford have rules on betting a set amount per pat hand, hands that are cinches to win. Table I of each establishment does not allow slow betting--checking and later raising. If you should slow bet a pat hand, you lose the action bet. This is to prevent suckering in of other players and creating a hostile game environment. The house wants to assure patrons of a sporting chance, "a game to be played," in theory, anyway.

Slow betting, drunks and screwballs⁵ are not well tolerated by players or managers of these establishments. Formerly drunks were allowed to play at their own risk, but managers generally state that drunks are not now allowed to play in the poker games. There is a folk level morality operating that it is wrong to make money from drunken patrons or take advantage of their plight. This is most apparent with legalization and attempts to "clean up the games."

⁵Screwball refers to two kinds of players--one plays every hand which is dealt as a game strategy, and the other is disruptive and "nutty." The latter is not well liked and rarely is tolerated.

It appears to be a rationalization of respectability for the houses. Another rationalization is that drunks louse up the rhythm, flow and concentration of the hands. The Stockman is most rigid on barring ungentlemanly conduct and refuses entry to people who are well-known about town for dishonest or disruptive behavior.

The third set of poker games is played at the Top Hat. The Top Hat runs Lowball, High Draw and both Stud games. The rules are not as fully elaborated as those of the Stockman and Oxford. Top Hatters are generally most suspicious of anyone who does not belong to their generational grouping. They fear narcs⁶ who might bust (arrest) someone in the game or kibbitzing for using drugs.

The factions and alliances of the Oxford are based on longstanding involvement in the card games, horse racing, sports betting and other gambling diversifications. The Oxford house consists of the owners (bar, restaurant, and games), managers of poker, pan and keno,⁷ house skills, and high-status friends who use house buy-ins to play in poker games. During the underground era from 1968 to 1974, many of these people were engaged in small business networks, various duos and trios, which operated diverse forms of gambling--alongside of, in "cahoots" with, or in opposition to the big game owners. Dealers and managers for the house are well schooled in house financial philosophy as well

⁶Plainclothes detectives, usually from juvenile division, who investigate narcotics violations.

⁷Pan is a rummy-type of card game which is played in the afternoon by older men and for small stakes, usually ten-cent or twenty-five-cent chips. Keno is a bingo-type of game played by bar patrons and controlled by a manager.

as the operation of the games. The house dealers are mostly older men at the Oxford, one part-time young person deals at the Stockman, and all Top Hat dealers are below the age of thirty-three.

Big action games can occur any time with the influx of moneyed players (high rollers), fish (live ones who are not playing for the house), or a congenial mixture of friends and money.

A part of the Oxford group--the owner, his dealers, and two shells--forms the Stockman game. The Stockman Bar and Restaurant are owned by another party who rents space in the back to the poker game owner. There is active observation of the games by people circulating between the Oxford and Stockman houses. Dealers and managers participate within and between establishments in active gossip networks.

It is generally agreed that the best games in town are attached to a bar and restaurant. Food and drink keep players at the table for longer periods of time. Oxfordians have the highest overt interest in sports; racing forms and football "poo" sheets are readily visible. Discussions about betting strategy are lively; some players pool fractional amounts with house personae to create a larger sum of cash used for betting on horse races. A sports wire is located in the Oxford bar. It churns out ticker-taped results of the various contests for posting on a large scoreboard.

Each establishment has its own style and intensity of involvement in gambling. Style is shaped by the owner's and manager's preferences and experience for attracting clientele. Managers are key

wheels for promoting the games and have authority to wield on employment decisions. Each establishment knows the operation and basic financial philosophy of the other games; what kinds of players are attracted and the general tone of the games as moneymaking devices. Most players know an establishment's record and its treatment of customers, how much money is needed for effective participation, and what action the management will take for or against a player.

Each establishment has a definite rationalization for the kinds of games played in its arena as well as those games outside its jurisdiction. The ambition and interest of the house and staff is to make money. How moneymaking is rationalized by the house owners and managers varies:

"Well, we make a little profit."

"This is a big business, an extensive operation."

"We provide poker games which are recreational."

"We're not out to skin anybody."

"I've got enough money from other sources. I do
this for fun."

All establishments agree that the \$100 pot limit encourages more people to play--"It's a good thing,"--at least on the surface.

The games at the Oxford are played rapid-fire style to insure very fast hands and a good rake on the games. The pots are frequently pushed to \$100, even before the draw. The games at the Stockman are less rapid, quieter, with less money per hand, and fewer \$100 pots. The Top Hat has the lowest buy-in (\$10) in contrast to the Stockman

and Oxford (\$20). The Top Hatters usually have the lowest amount of money on the table, fewest number of players and very rare \$100 pots.

Thematic Constellations of the Poker Games

During my stint as participant-observer, my role as analyst was to interpret the play environment in terms of cultural themes and symbols expressed within the poker games. Cultural themes have been used by Benedict (1932, 1934, 1946), Bateson (1958), and Geertz (1973) as a literary device to interpret culture in terms of itself; to fix aspects of a distinctive etymology infused with meanings that are culture specific. Culture themes are analytical concepts derived from symbolic constructs of the cultural participants. My task as analyst was to discover a system of symbols that elaborated a world with a particular structure and shape of reality.

As my fieldwork progressed I discovered bundled constellations of meaning and action in the poker games which centered around a general presentation of American life; financial success as a key prestige factor for an individual's performance of status within the American community. The most frequently mentioned, enacted or alluded to thematic content of the games is: making or losing money, how to intimidate players and not be intimidated yourself, manipulation by deceit, and sexual identity, i.e., what constitutes successful manhood in American life. I also briefly researched the origin of poker as a uniquely American synthesis of several foreign imports of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note the linguistic deriva-

tives from which poker originated.

About 1837 the 52-card deck originated in a combination of as nas, which was brought to New Orleans by Persian sailors, and poque (bluff), a card game played by early French settlers of Louisiana (Steig 1972: 11). Poque had a 32-card deck, while as nas used twenty cards comprising four suits with equivalents of our Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks and Tens (Steig 1972: 11). Poque was refined and improved by Americans with ideas incorporated from English brag, German pochen (to beat), Italian primero (first),⁸ and French gilet (vest; fam. breadbasket; idiomatic, se remplir le gilet, to stuff oneself) (Steig 1972: 12). Northerners carried the game back up the Mississippi River where English speakers mispronounced it "poker" (Steig 1972: 12). About the time of the Civil War modern draw poker got its start, and during the 1870's Stud superseded its popularity (Steig 1972: 12). Descriptive linguistic contents underscore: bluffing, bragging, being first, and stuffing one's vest, which express current themes of winning, lying, and boasting while beating someone in poker.

Most players voice opinions that to be a good poker player one

⁸Upon reading Steig, I had a hunch that primero meant "first" but was misspelled. After checking an Italian dictionary, this suspicion was confirmed. Through conversations with a linguist, Tony Mattina, who has played the game, and Dr. Dominic Ortisi, professor of Italian (both gentlemen are from the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Montana), I discovered that the spelling was primiera. They agreed that this word means "first" or "foremost." Dr. Ortisi said that there is a sixteenth century literary genre, capitolo, in which the poet wastes his time writing at great length about an insignificant subject, frequently including obscenities. One of the most famous capitolo is dedicated to primiera.

must be capable of subterfuge and lying. Camouflaging the contents of the hand and deceptive strategies are accomplished by various means of lying, from "sins of omission" to outright misrepresentation. Lying requires a great deal of skill and patience to perform well within the poker game. I often hear, "All poker players are real good liars." Skillful manipulation of deception can pay off if a player has a good sense of timing and knowledge of how players will react to his ruse. Deception may also take the form of cheating, which is sometimes utilized, though at great risk: crimping (bending corners or rounding the backs of cards by cupping them in the hand), nailing (marking the sides of the cards with a fingernail gash), spotting (smearing a foreign substance like grease or water on the card's back), shaving (thinning the borders of the cards), and peeking (eyeballing someone's hand).⁹ Cheating is least tolerated at the Stockman. Clever house dealers at the Oxford will detect nailing and mark up the rest of the cards or crimp the rest of the deck to spoil a "system." Most dealers will simply replace a deck that is suspect. It is not unusual for a player to ask for a clean deck.

Intimidation is another key focus for thematic content of poker games. Many times I heard the following phrases:

⁹These terms were obtained from Mahigel and Stone (1971: 40-45) but are used by Montana players. As one might guess, these terms are rarely used during the games, but conversations initiated about a previous night's game might just touch on claims of cheating, spotting suspicious behavior, or response to a cheater. House dealers know telltale clues to detect cheaters. Each house has its method of applying pressure or removing a cheater from a game. Sometimes players will expose a cheater, but this is rare.

"You scared me!"

"I'm afraid of that hand."

"I was scared by your hand."

"That hand scares me."

"No help here." (referring to a Stud hand when poor cards have been dealt)

"I lost control."

"He runs scared."

These phrases demonstrate responses to threatening situations which call for risky decision-making, usually culminating in a player's fold or defeat. Sometimes players will deliberately take risks by outlandish betting and raising to force another player to fold prematurely--running scared. This phrase is directed not only at the player who ran but also the bettor who may not have had enough faith in the hand to risk a showdown. Intimidation can take the form of verbal taunts, disruptive chatter, a show of force and confidence, speeding or slowing the rhythm of the game to boost tension, or subtle kinetic movements. Shoulder blocking (turning one shoulder inward to block the view of another player), turning your back on someone (an ignoring posture), shuffling feet, leaning forward or backward in your chair, stretching, yawning, or other displays of boredom can rattle a player who is trying to decide what to do. Pretending that you are intimidated, and indecisive by sheepishly calling raises, although holding a good hand, works to your advantage. It can make another player underestimate your hand and become overconfident or careless. No one act of intimidation or

lying can be used repeatedly within a game, for someone will surely read your system and destroy the effectiveness of the ruse.

Moneymaking and risk taking permeate the game action and game chatter. Physical action of constantly manipulating chips during the game--stacking, fondling, or arranging "towers" of the different denominations of chips--is a frequent occurrence in all establishments. Many times the arrangement of chips is the highest value at the bottom of the stack, while twenty-five cent chips, which are used mostly in the ante, sit atop the stacks for flipping into the pot. There are different arrangements of chips, but "towers" are the most prevalent. Flipping money into the pot, rippling or fanning of chips by dealers and players for quick visual counts, scooping up the rake-off, and prodding the slow players to get with the action focus a great deal of arithmetical attention on the flow of the game. Arithmetic is not only studied per bet but also for balancing pot odds, i.e., possible victory of a particular hand against one's investment in the pot. If a player can afford to risk a hand, if a player has kicked in a certain percent of the pot, and if enough players have folded but the pot is big enough to guarantee a good return, he will see the hand to a show-down or even force the remaining players to fold. In Stud one has a better chance to analyze opponents' case cards by subtracting the suits and denominations left to complete a winning hand. In Stud the hole card functions as a "come on," and there are opportunities for bluffing and pulling more money into the pot. "Pay to see me," causes more card chasing in hopes that one might catch a winning hand on the draw. Many

times players say, "There are no second-best hands, only one winner." However, winning hands are not always the best hands dealt since lying and intimidation are used to push opponents out of the action. When questioned why people play poker, the most frequent and initial response was, "To make money."

Sexual themes are verbalized in myriad ways for definite purposes. Swearing, verbal and kinetic obscenities, "blue idioms" and double entendres increase tension in the games, distract players' concentration or needle someone's manhood. Personal sexual activity or identity are most often bantered about behind a player's back. "Needing the little woman," being attracted to or involved in the domestic scene, are most frequently heard as jibes at the Oxford. Manhood is a prime target for upsetting the apple cart during the games, especially if there is a female present. Oxfordians are the most wary of a woman's presence near the gaming tables. Therefore, during the first few weeks of fieldwork, my entrance was announced in a very loud voice by high-status, Oxford house personae. I was constantly questioned:

"Doesn't this language bother you?"

"Poker players swear a lot. Hey, whaddya think of that?"

"Shut up, there's a lady present."

"Hey, come sit over here, the language, you know. . . ."

Oftentimes these statements were followed by gales of ribald laughter. At the Stockman, the difference between men and boys is used more frequently to delineate the positive aspects of manhood and to ridicule

the inexperience of youth.¹⁰ The rawest language is heard at Table II of the Oxford where there is the most aggressive betting on high-risk games as well as the heaviest drinking of all tables in the games. At the Top Hat and with younger bar patrons, sexual identity and discussions are more exploratory. Definitions of sexual roles and sorting dissonant criteria like, what does it mean to be: a jock (an athlete), a liberated woman (no attachment to a single lover or a lesbian), a cute ass (a homosexual), uptight or hung-up (presumably like the older generation), or involved in a trial marriage or divorce proceedings. Often personal relationships of Top Hatters are discussed by exploring one's social roles and identities within the peer group as contrasted with adult roles.

The Oxfordians have the most definite content of "being manly," i.e., being aggressive, in command of oneself and others, having physical prowess (in the past or the present), making money, holding liquor well, and displaying shrewd, independent behavior. The Stockman players have the least overt discussions or actions concerning sex, except for one player who spirits some bantering since he is a manager of a film theater that shows X-rated films exclusively. At the Stockman, sexual topics are infrequent, if mentioned at all. They are low-keyed, subtle expressions which are seldom used for ridiculing a player, since skillful/nonskilled gamesmanship is more pertinent for judging the player's performance. In all three establishments prostitution and pimping, showing porno flicks or displaying "unusual" interest

¹⁰One older gentleman ribbed a young participant by saying, "Look at the kid on a chain. Pull his string and watch him move."

in the female or male body are generally stigmatic topics and tabooed social behavior. Those engaged in such activities provoke ridicule and moral indignation, often expressed behind the offender's back.

A "transactional" style of speech with sexual emphasis is mainly used for abstract rather than personally-directed epithets (Gumperz 1970: 303-305). Sexual words/ideas/behaviors most often express disgust and frustration for catching poor hands, botched strategy, or displaced anger after a loss.

"Fuck you very much." (reversal of thank you very much
was used after catching a poor
hand from the dealer)

"Son-of-a-bitch!" or "Mother Fucker!" (non-directed,
exclamatory)

"I've been suckin' hind ass all night." (non-directed,
exclamatory)

"That's a 96 or a 69." (Description of a Lowball hand)

"That's getting jacked off." (Description of a messed
hand or a pair of jacks
beaten by a higher hand)

Whenever a personally-directed insult flew, ("you son-of-a-bitch!"), it was usually met with laughter and a secret sense of satisfaction that the "son-of-a-bitch" got "someone's goat." The second person singular, you, is most frequently heard at the Oxford and much less at the Stockman. The second person plural, you, can be directed to a portion of active players or the entire table, but this is rare. I only heard this once during a temper tantrum by a poor loser at the Stockman and only two or three times in jest at the Oxford.

Response to my presence as a woman observer was varied: the

most sheltering by Oxford status personae; most avoidance or furtive eye contact, Oxfordians; most curiosity about a woman studying poker, Oxfordians and Stockmen; serious propositioning, Oxfordians; teasing and flirting, Oxfordians and Stockmen; earliest invitation to play, Stockmen and Top Hatters. The most territorial aligning, "Hey, Lady Luck, come over here and sit behind me," took place at the Oxford. The most genuine interest, friendliness and inclusion in the game rituals took place at the Stockman. The Top Hatters were most quietly amused or ignored my presence. They never directed any sex-linked topics at me and were the most suspicious of me as a social scientist. I attribute these varied reactions to my age, i.e., I am younger than most of the Oxfordians and Stockmen but older than all Top Hatters. The Top Hatters were most "hip" on my educational status and information about the field of anthropology.

Post-mortems on hands, analyzed by players during the game and most often the night after the game, are most revealing. The topics most often stressed in the gossip networks are: who was a big money winner, who bluffed someone, and who caught the best cards or made the most skillful moves to outwit opponents. Post-mortems also contain lively and colorful anecdotes of players' misfortunes, stupidity or behavior which upset the players. Post-mortems are hot items, especially between the managements of the Oxford and Stockman, and usually prompt a reminiscence of legendary defeats and victories.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the data from the three establishments suggest the following summaries of the thematic foci and social interaction. (See Table 1).

Money, Lying and Intimidation

The Oxford has the most overt, recognized, and rigid system of stratification for social and business relationships. Intimidation has its pecking order and certain personae are off-limits for serious taunting. There is the highest amount of verbal and physical threat-making, mock and real, as well as the most vociferous ruses and game chatter. The Oxford has the largest volume of moneymaking by the house and risk taking of players. The house employs the largest staff, has diversified operations, and includes a high rate of informal employment of skills. The Oxford has the most heavy drinkers, the most illegal activity rumored to exist and the most overt bragging by players of being "consistent winners."

The Stockman has some stratification of house staff but very little directed toward the players, except skill. Verbal bantering and card skill are subtly stressed with the most "in game" post-mortems and appraisals per hand. There is subtle bluffing and variation of one's system. There is sporadic moneymaking by players, a lower amount of dollar loss by players and no rumors of illegal activity. There are more players who seem to break even over a period of weeks or months, some win "a little."

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF THEMATIC CONSTELLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

House Environment	Table	Money, Lying and Intimidation in Social and Game Relationships
OXFORD	I	Overt, recognized and rigid system of stratification Long-term acquaintances and staffers form core game players Tighter players generally; less verbalizing, some loose talkers Very fast rhythm of play Stud and Lowball predominantly played Bulling the game is overt and covert Games entail Big Money, usually \$100 pots
Largest staff		
Diversifications of gambling are present		
Informal employment of skills		
Largest cash volume		
Noisiest game environment	II	Overt, recognized and rigid system of stratification Most drinking of any game environment Most risk-centered games with more cards in play Most verbal, mock and actual threatened physical contact Rhythm changes more often with action building, generally fast Looser players generally enter this game table 7-Stud, Lowball, Razz more frequently played Bulling the game is overt and frequent Games entail Big Money, sporadic \$100 pots
Entrepreneurism has high value		
Oldest generational segment		
High stratification in staff hierarchies		
Illegal activities rumored		
STOCKMAN	I	Stratification based on experience and skill Shifting clientele, no core other than house staff Tighter players with some loose talkers Rhythm of play steady Stud, Lowball and High Draw are played Individuals have game favorites but no table favorite predominates Little or rare drinking confined to certain individuals Little physical or mock threats of contact Action peaks by player rivalries Bulling the game is mostly covert Medium-sized pots; occasionally reaching \$100 pots Most in-game post-mortems on poker hands
Small staff		
Rarely mentioned diversification		
Low employment of skills		
Medium cash volume		
Quiet game environment		
Entrepreneurism valued second to a Gentleman's Game		
Middle generational segment		
Low stratification in staff		
No illegal activities rumored		

TABLE 1 - continued

House Environment	Table	Money, Lying and Intimidation in Social and Game Relationships
	II	Rarely in play; only in overload season with students returning in the fall
<p>TOP HAT</p> <p>Smallest staff No diversification Rare house money to finance skills Lowest cash volume Fluctuating game and bar noise Entrepreneurism is not valued Competition is not valued Youngest generational segment Rare stratification; social leveling is prominent and valued Illegal activity in drugs</p>	I	<p>No system of stratification; rivalry occasionally present between two players Shifting clientele; peer friendship networks predominate Exploration of playing poker; no apparent adherence to action typologies like Oxford or Stockman Rhythm is slow and there is sporadic concentration on game No one game preference No bullying the game to any extent Teasing, but not much serious threat-making No \$100 pots that I observed</p>

TABLE 1 - continued

House Environment	Table	Sexual Identity of Males and Females
OXFORD	I	Verbal action is high with loose talkers Some physical threat-making Woman's presence is least enjoyed Sexual topics are stigmatic Sports are valued and there is betting on sports events Most traditional view of physical prowess, sports and being in command of others as well as self
	II	Physical and verbal action is the highest of all games Sexual topics are very stigmatic Women are ridiculed and used for joking Most directed personal insults with sexual referents Sports valued Most swearing of any game environments
STOCKMAN	I	Polite and orderly socialization are valued male behaviors Women tolerated in and out of the game Woman's role as homemaker is valued Intellectual or gaming skill valued above physical threats Sexual topics are rarely used Swearing in response to poor individual performance and rarely directed toward another player Sports are valued but mostly in reference to former careers as students or in relation to children or younger relatives; some betting takes place through the Oxford
TOP HAT	I	Exploration of sexual identity of both males and females Sexual topics are used in jokes and punning--word play Rare discussion of sports Dislike of type-casting in traditional sexual roles Very few physical or mock threats Girls are welcome in the game Occasional courting and flirting behaviors between kibbitzers and girls or game players and girls

TABLE 1 - continued

House Environment	Inter-Game Relationships and Perceptions of the Other Two Houses
OXFORD	<p>The Stockman has a small money game, and there are younger players present.</p> <p>The Top Hat is a kid's game. There are drugs, dress and other peer group behaviors which are not valued by Oxfordians.</p> <p>The Top Hat is stigmatic because of drugs and youth culture.</p>
STOCKMAN	<p>Both the Top Hat and the Oxford are stigmatic because of generational extremes in membership.</p> <p>The Oxford has high rumors of cheating and fear of unsavory characters. The Top Hat has high rumors of drug use.</p> <p>The Oxford has too high stakes games and the Top Hat is too low in table pots.</p> <p>Nonetheless, there were some players who did engage in games at the Oxford, and some who might visit the Top Hat (but rarely entered youth sphere of activities).</p>
TOP HAT	<p>Not much was said in defense or against the Stockman games; some male and one female Top Hatter visited the Stockman games.</p> <p>There is fear of the Oxfordians' playing style and house operations; house and player stratifications of the Oxford hierarchies are recognized, disagreed with in principle and top personae of Oxford are feared.</p>

The Top Hat has the least formidable threat-making which often disintegrates in laughter. Bluffing and ruses are very transparent as the contrast between holding a good or a bad hand is easily read. There is the least amount of money exchanged, least interest in making money, least house rake-off and the least enforcement of rules. It was the only house which allowed a postponement for leaving the game "flat-broke" and offered players a "second chance." Illegal activity that is rumored to exist concerns drugs, not abusive house operations. The Top Hatters conspicuously emphasize egalitarian relationships, even while playing poker.

Sex

The Oxfordians have the most elaborately defined criteria for manhood. Displays of physical and verbal aggressiveness are highly touted. Oxfordians use the most sex-linked language and contents, frequently for taunting, and the language is stigmatic in a woman's presence. Sports and athletes are admired. The Oxford has the largest number of older, retired men--early fifties to eighty-two.

The Stockmen attach less importance to sex and physical prowess by emphasizing experience and skill for effective game playing. Sports and athletes are most often discussed in relation to children or younger friends. Respect for the woman's roles within the domestic sphere is expressed; however, women are tolerated as players and kibbitzers more than at the Oxford. Gentlemanly conduct, personal responsibility, and politeness are positive male behaviors. Swearing is in response to poor performance and rarely used to attack a fellow

or lady player. Sex-linked contents are more restrained and less frequent than at the Oxford. The personae of the Stockman range in age from late twenties to early sixties.

Top Hatters' sexual roles are least concretely realized in traditional expressions of adulthood. Sex-linked language and contents are peer-oriented and creative, which provokes much mirth. There are active discussions of divorce, marriage, family, and friends. Ridicule and fear of the older generation, especially the Oxfordians, are topics of conversation. Top Hatters rarely put down a player or friend with sexual epithets. Almost all the personae of the Top Hat were aged early twenties to mid-twenties.

All four foci are used in varying degrees by individual personae within the establishments, vary between establishments and are rationalized in varying degrees of importance for shaping game chatter, action and social behavior. People who circulate as players among the poker establishments usually vary behavior according to the styles of play most emphasized in a particular milieu. The elaboration of themes can depend upon the parameters of experience, skillful manipulation of expected performance, and the ability to adapt to different social milieu.

The generalized summaries suggest that the Oxford represents "The Money-Making Institution." It is a hub of activity that consumes a large amount of time and effort for both the house staff and players. Members of the Oxford business and social networks participate in diversified and ramified gambling and moneyed interests. The Oxford

is viewed by most outsiders to be an exploitive enterprise. The Stockman's game is characterized by most players as a "gentleman's game." The Top Hatters are socializing and having fun with less emphasis on competition and status than either the Oxfordians or Stockmen.

The variability in the degree of involvement and elaboration of the thematic constellations--money, sex, intimidation, and lying--suggest that differences are based on age, social class, involvement in current employment and, to a limited extent, a shift in perceiving the woman's roles in American society.

Most Oxfordians are "past prime" with regards to continuing sound health or strenuous physical activity in contrast with the Stockmen who are "in their prime" and the Top Hatters who will approach "the prime." Male sexuality is most strongly elaborated, defended and vicariously celebrated at the Oxford, most covertly at the Stockman. Many Oxfordians have limited amounts of formal education and have been wage-earners, whereas the Stockmen are most often self-employed, professional men and have experienced more college level training. Moneymaking and sports are vital activities for the Oxfordians, while the Stockmen do not overtly elaborate either topic. At the Oxford, sexual topics and language are rampant, yet stigmatic, which contrasts to both the Stockman and the Top Hat. The Top Hatters represent the most exploratory segment of the generational groupings since adult roles--occupational, financial or familial--have not yet solidified. Sexual topics are rarely stigmatic. Capitalistic enterprises of Oxfordians are denigrated, feared, and rationalized by youths as "what's wrong with

contemporary American society." The Oxford represents the most competitive and stratified establishment, while the Top Hatters praise equalization and leveling of statuses within the peer network. Although the Stockmen share some aspects and values with both the Oxford and Top Hat, Stockmen rationalize the presence of the other two houses as somewhat stigmatic and representative of generational extremes.

The thematic foci concerning image-making in the contexts of the American Dream and manhood circle within the bounded forms of success and getting ahead. Competitive means, including intimidation and manipulation, have a function in the marketplace. Virility, which is typified by strength, good health and youthful vigor, is reflected in behavior like roistering about with male companions over good games, food and drink. The poker games offer a structure and the means for enacting emotionally and intellectually convincing experiences which mutually reinforce American world view and ethos. The complex criteria for success and the American entrepreneur are most sought after by the Oxfordians, most nearly attained by the Stockmen and challenged by the Top Hatters.

Charles Dickens once remarked as an observer of the American scene that there is a love of smart dealing which gilds over many a swindle (Merton 1969: 212). Empire building of whatever size has been dear to the American Dream of the rugged individual carving out his pie in the sky via competition and enterprise. Ambrose Bierce reflected that there is a toleration of successful knaves regardless of contradictions in their public and private lives; that Americans

socially recognize rogues by a slow, inevitable stroke of the ignoring eye (Merton 1969: 213). With the Watergate affair culminating during the spring and summer of 1974, a commonly voiced opinion that "Most politicians are crooks anyway, Nixon was just dumber than most," tends to reinforce a folk-level explication of idealized goals and botched means--faulty preparation and expertise to carry off the roguery. To be hoodwinked cleverly takes the sting out of the game, but a shoddy farce merely pours salt into the wound and prompts outraged cries of moral indignation. When asked about Nixon's "forfeiture" of the Whitehouse Tapes and the aftermath on PBS Firing Line, William F. Buckley, Jr. remarked, "He was an ass." It would appear that even political corruption has an aesthetic.

CHAPTER III

SYMBOLS FOR MANHOOD: BULLING THE GAME

The role of such a special science as anthropology in the analysis of values is not to replace philosophical investigation, but to make it relevant.
(Geertz 1970: 338)

Symbols and action fields for intimidation and deception within the poker game are represented by the semantic domain of bull power and bulling the game. Action strategies and player typologies symbolizing bull power in these three play environments are most fully employed by the Oxfordians and Stockmen, while hardly recognized by the Top Hatters. There are four descriptive categories which are derivative of bull power and status relationships: bull shitting, the deception of players; bulls as high-status personae, like bull cook who is the head hash slinger; bullet, an ace; and to bull the game which means that a player will shove in a large raise to force opponents out of the action. The most frequently mentioned action strategy used to intimidate one's opponents is bulling the game. This strategy is used to increase the probability that a Tight Ass¹ player will fold when not holding the nuts and that a Loose Ass² player will be hard pressed to gamble in outdrawing

¹Tight Ass (Tightie) refers to a player who is a defensive strategist because he waits for the nuts (cinch hand), checks rather than raises, and does not rely on luck.

²Loose Ass (Loosey) refers to a player who is an offensive strategist because he attempts to build the nuts, bets and raises heavily, and relies on luck to get the nuts.

Both Tighties and Looseys are basic categories of poker players with distinctive features and action styles for poker playing. Both

and outwitting the player who is bulling the game. Two criteria are essential for bulling the game--a sizable amount of chips and the ability to convincingly initiate and perpetuate aggressive strategy, even while holding a mediocre or poor hand. When asked if women make good poker players, the general consensus was, "No, they aren't aggressive enough and are too tight with money." Bulling the game is also referred to as buying the pot. If one bumps opponents with a formidable raise and scares them, he buys the action. If you are a high roller, a player who manipulates a large amount of chips, you can psychologically and financially break opponents while holding a set of poor hands. It becomes a question of effective competition by sham and aggression to bull opponents off the action.

Therefore, the means for actualizing bull power are money and successful physical and/or mental prowess. Within the semantic domain of bull power there are action categories, strategies and performance modes, and player typologies. Strategies and performing tactics are the least articulated by players for at least two reasons: first, players are reluctant to discuss tactics fearing that their "system" might be discovered and second, that they will not be likely to admit knowing some opponent's strategy. In the schemata of Table 2, the first column represents an emic category of action that is recognizable argot to most

believe in the efficacy of their respective winning philosophies. However, this is not to say that a player does not use both styles of playing within one night's round of games. There are many situations in which the philosophies concerning winning will surface and be verbalized.

TABLE 2. SEMANTIC DOMAIN OF BULL POWER

BULL POWER			
M A N I P U L A T I O N			
BULL SHIT	BULL COOK	BULLET	BULL
LYING	SOCIAL STATUS	SKILL STATUS	INTIMIDATION MANHOOD
Talking Loose and Bulling the Game	Head person who slings hash and bosses other help	Ace	Physical and Mental Bulls
<u>Emic Category/Action</u>	<u>Etic Analysis/Strategy and Performance</u>		<u>Player Typology</u>
<u>Talking Loose</u>	DEFENSE: <u>performing</u> , creating screens, chatter, <u>sabotaging</u>		Tight Ass
<u>Reading the Game</u>	DEFENSE/OFFENSE: knowledge, <u>card sense</u> , <u>reading</u> , <u>pegging</u> , psyching		Tight and Loose Ass
<u>Bulling the Game</u>	OFFENSE: force by tapping, <u>plowing</u> , <u>bumping</u> , <u>shoving</u> in chips, building action		Loose Ass
<u>Playing the Nuts</u>	DEFENSE: playing a <u>lock</u> , <u>pat hand</u> , <u>cinch nailing a player</u> , <u>playing the odds</u>		Tight Ass
<u>Straddling</u>	DEFENSE: <u>playing position</u> , getting out from <u>under the gun</u> and <u>being in the dark</u> , buying strategy		Tight and Loose Ass
<u>Gambling (to hold the Nuts)</u>	DEFENSE/OFFENSE: highly dependent upon luck and risk-taking to obtain <u>the nuts</u>		Loose Ass Conservative + Luck
<u>Whipsawing</u>	DEFENSE/OFFENSE: two players pulling position in tandem on opponent to force out, <u>big squeeze</u>		Loose Ass
<u>Slow Betting</u>	DEFENSE: <u>Playing position</u> and <u>sandbagging</u> , <u>shy</u>		Tight Ass and sometimes Loose Ass
<u>Flashing</u>	DEFENSE: creating a <u>tell</u> on purpose or mistakenly showing cards		Loose Ass
<u>Chasing</u>	OFFENSE: trying to <u>out-draw</u> an opponent, dependent upon luck		Loose Ass

poker players of the Oxford and Stockman games. The second column represents both experienced players' analysis of synonymous terms for strategy and performance, and my grouping of terms and strategies. The third column represents a player typology recognized at the player level of analysis. Both action categories and player typologies are freely discussed and manipulated by most players at the Stockman and the Oxford. Each action category has a defensive and/or offensive strategy with descriptive words and phrases which tell how action is operationalized.

Examples: Bulling the game is an offensive ploy of force, to tap, plow and bump opponents by shoving or plowing in with a large raise. One may create more action by bulling the game. A Loose Ass is most inclined to use this ploy.

Talking loose (bull shitting) is a defensive ploy used to deceive players by performing, chattering and sabotaging. A Tight Ass is more prone to mislead his opponents and to disguise his nuts by talking loose.

Playing the nuts is a defensive ploy and usually involves a great deal of patience. A Tight Ass plays a waiting game to hold a lock, pat hand, cinch with which he nails another player's nuts.

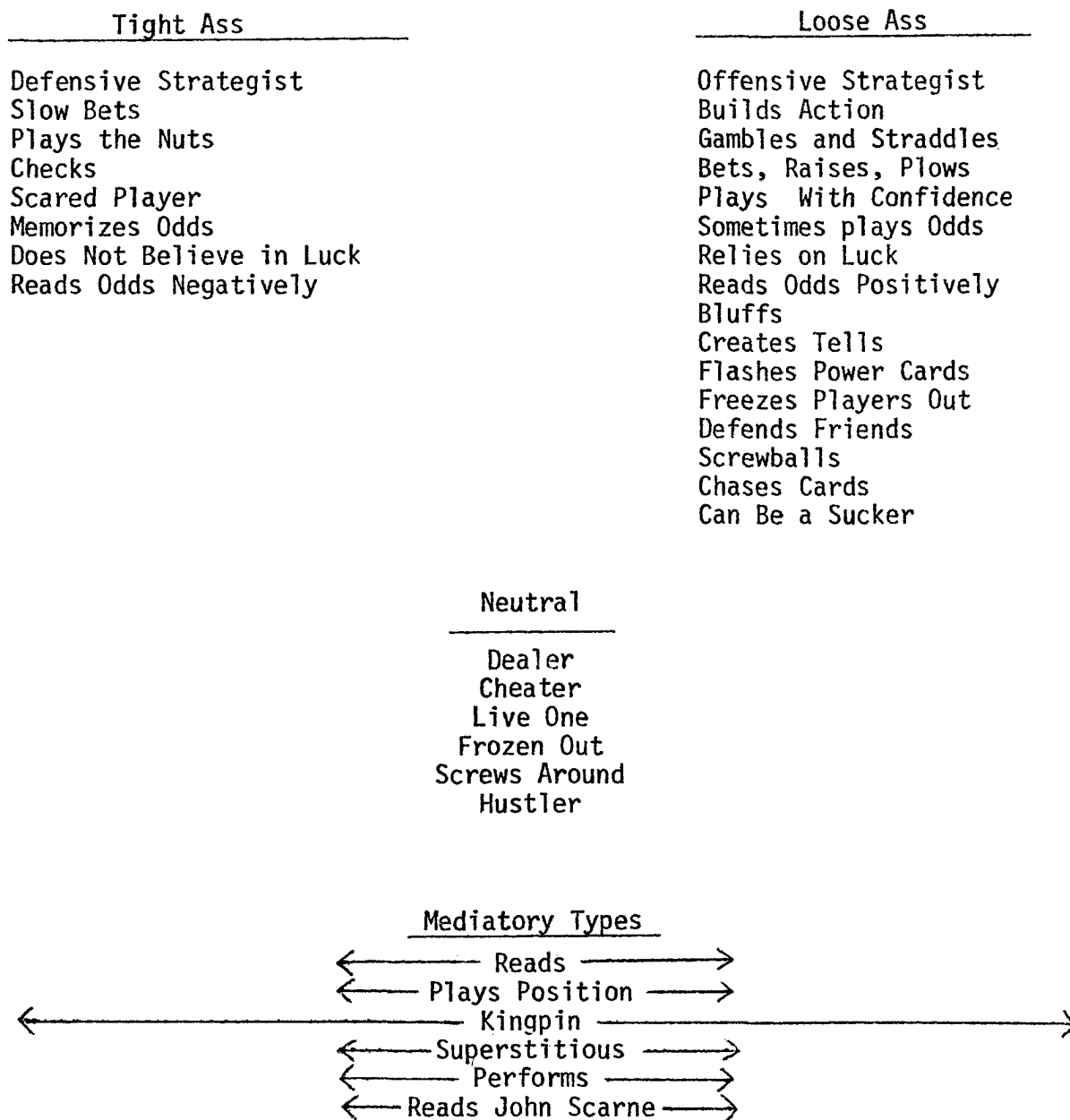
On the surface, bull power is overt, aggressive gamesmanship which dazzles and confuses players with less guts and money. However, competition in the poker game is complicated by covert means to bull the game pitted against player action and status typologies. (Table 3, Action, and Table 4, Status.)

On the surface, there is no necessary connection between playing tight or loose and being a winner and/or a loser. Both action typologies are believed to be equally effective as a winning philosophy. The boundaries of action and status are not rigidly defined. For example, a player who is virtually unsystematic in play is the enigmatic screwball, a Loosey who plays everything, or a conservative player who takes risks. High rollers who call a bull's raise are not necessarily tight or loose players. Bulling the game can mean that a tight player is running scared; therefore, he reverses the imputed threat by taking an offensive strategy, plowing in with a large raise and flashing a power card.

Action strategies of Tighties and Looseys are further complicated with the knowledge of an opponent's psychological and intellectual endurance against threat-making. Lying and performing conceal the fact that a player is really a Tightie with the nuts. Misrepresentation by slow betting, sabotaging, and performing are covert forms of bulling the game. These strategies may involve reading another player's psychological "vita" and pegging his system of play. Knowing that you have a lock on an opponent's nuts, in this case a hand believed to be a winner by your opponent, offers a prime opportunity to bull the game whether you are a Tightie or a Loosey. Both overt and covert forms of bulling the

TABLE 3

ACTION TYPOLOGY



game are designed and employed to destroy an opponent's confidence.

A Loosey who bulls the game aggressively views statistically probabilities as a positive factor during his performance, while a Tightie defensively appraises odds to determine who is statistically capable of beating his hand. The house owners, managers and high-status friends bull the game to build action, excitement and, most certainly, the rake-off. They have the financial means to play loose.

Tests of manhood involve decision-making, opportunism, and money-making. There is emotional and financial satisfaction to be gained by outwitting and destroying the opposition. Courage, skill and a good sense of timing all figure prominently in bull power. Some bulls rely on verbal and mental prowess, while others rely on heavy financial backing and sheer aggressive output.

Since both philosophies and strategies of Tighties and Looseys are equally efficacious in the respective minds of the players, I had to determine those features which constituted Winner versus Loser. During interviews, I asked players to arrange index cards with action strategies into player types or status categories. When this was impossible, I asked players what certain terms meant and whether a winner or loser would use a specific strategy. The generalizations of distinctive features, mediatory terms and neutral terms were discovered for action and status typologies (see Tables 3 and 4).

The dichotomy and distinctions depend upon one's philosophy of risk taking and/or statistical probabilities--in other words, how tight-fisted and conservative one plays with cards and money. A mediatory class of

players is represented by the conservative but flexible player who times risks, balances pot odds, plays position and reads his opponents. Conservative players who take risks not only mediate action strategies but also the category of winners and losers. Kingpins have the highest status in both typologies, crossroaders are usually tight players who perform, and hustlers are on the lowest rung of professional gambling. Winning and Losing status categories reassemble and combine features of action types to sort criteria for effective versus ineffective play.

The most interesting features of action and status typologies reveal that a player who takes well-timed risks will most consistently win money. The Tightie is most prone to break even, whereas the Loosey wins and loses the largest amount of money. The Loosey ritually consumes the sacred cow, the American dollar, and most thoroughly plays out manhood based on aggressive and virile play. In the Loser's category of Table 4, there are five distinctly Loosey characteristics, three either Tightie or Loosey, and three classified as Tightie. This shows that Looseys are more prone to being losers. In the Winner's category of Table 4, there are four behaviors characteristic of Tighties, five either/or and only one Loosey trait, reliance on luck. This shows that tight and flexible playing strategies probably produce more winners.

The conservative who takes risks successfully combines the more rigidly adhered to criteria of Tighties and Looseys; this player is defined as the "Big Winner." The Loosey's derring-do is prized by some for the overt displays of courage and aggressive behavior, while Tighties partake of common sense and patiently weigh the frequency of pat hands.

Looseys are physical bulls and are exegetically mythologized as the stereotyped gambler. Tighties are mental bulls who are operationally mythologized as the statistics men. The winningest bull is the conservative player who combines a bit of gumption with risk taking and brains. This player represents a mediation at the positional level of Turner's analysis (Turner 1967: 50, 51).

Probably the most graphic illustration of the difference between Tighties and Looseys was verbalized by a kibbitzer at the Oxford. It is also a prime example of the games kibbitzers play. During one evening, a gentleman had consistently won. When asked by the kibbitzer how he managed to do so, he replied, "Brains? Hell! Give me luck. It's just luck." I know this player's winning philosophy--he reads John Scarne and assesses strategy on the basis of statistical odds for winning and losing hands. The kibbitzer piped up with the following analysis of winning:

That's right. It's luck, you betcha. Ya don't need brains. Give me luck anytime. Brains are for shit. Brains is shit.

The kibbitzer is bullshitting, of course, and happens to be one of the "all time great Tighties" in Missoulia poker circles. However, by reaffirming the Loosey's philosophy of winning, the myth is retained and given credence. Tighties and conservatives continue to milk the players who rely heavily on luck, the "lay of the cards," and are emotionally jacked on the excitement of winning easy money.

Highly manipulative players who "code-switch" between Tighties and Looseys understand this philosophical rift. Kingpins, hustlers and

crossroaders use strategies and styles of play to maximize beliefs of Tighties and Looseys. The crossroader is in the most danger, however, since he is usually a stranger at the poker table. If he talks loose while playing tight and is discovered, he might be punched out by angry opponents who know that they have been taken. Highly manipulative players will choose game participation most wisely to act out certain roles and statuses for the "audiences" and the most efficacious posture for winning. Professionals most nearly epitomize the fellow who loves smart dealing, plays a ruthless game and is most adept at quick decision-making, i.e., when to deceive and when to pull in his horns. The most successful player, in terms of winning money without cancelling his victories, bulls the game mentally and/or physically to control the rhythm of play and to manipulate emotional expectations of his opponents.

The player who most thoroughly manipulates and synthesizes not only his behavior but that of participants in the gaming environment uses the contradictions of skill and luck. He operationalizes both action and status to suit the tenor of the game. He uses stratifications and alienations of Tighties and Looseys to cajole and soothe his opponents. The stigmatic status of being a fool who is easily duped is rationalized by Looseys as "brains is shit" versus a belief of Tighties that "luck is shit." This is most poignant in the bovine metaphor of "Oxen" and "Stockmen," who is the possessor and who is possessed. A stroke of luck, in a socio-political sense, is used to flatter and pamper the Loosey in hopes of personal gain.

The thematic foci--money, sex, intimidation, and lying--are

elaborated and defended by Tighties and Looseys from polar stances. Manhood is defined as mental skills versus emotionally charged and physical skills. These skills are tested in deceptive strategies, i.e., who is deceiving whom with ritual distinctions of those who believe in luck as opposed to those who do not. Financial manipulation, especially by house personae who are cognizant of the rituals, lends credence to both winning philosophies; the house "entertains" fish with their respective illusions in a play environment.

Within the status hierarchy of the house, there are different styles of play based on well-demarcated statuses of skills, friendship personae, and the managers and owners. Skills are usually thought of as losers and are required to play like Tighties. Skills are emasculated by external controls of the house. Since skills do not have money to make money, they represent steers in the bovine metaphor. Owners and managers, like bulls of the stock market, pump up the action and increase the volume of cash flow in the poker game,³ while skills hold a game together by representing a stable and less flashy style of play. High-status friends of the house and buffoon "entertainers" use house money to build action to win for themselves and the house. Dealers for the house must be "committed to the game" and mediate philosophical and social frictions. An expert dealer tunes the game to an attenuated pitch and flowing rhythm.

The constant patter of sexual imagery of the bovine metaphor

³One informant said that house personae can manipulate the cash flow around the table--"take from the rich and give to the poor"--by folding cinch hands to give losers a break.

counterbalances and explicates womanhood in categories of powerlessness; male dominance and bull power are reinforced by depicting women as keepers of the hearth. A player is constantly "reminded" of this potential bull power in the American marketplace. Rather than postulate purely Freudian ontologies and typologies of gambling personalities, sexual imagery in the poker game is a symbolic affirmation of powerful socio-political competition for statuses and roles. Bulls can have lots of cash. Bulls can be mentally alert and clever. Rationalizations of luck and skill create a greater credence for social cause and effects of bull power as well as respective contradictions of bulling ability in the marketplace.

The invocation and evocation of Lady Luck suggest a split between the traditional construction of reality presented to men as part of their culture--the passive woman of the hearth--and perceived social reality at the psychological level (Hammond-Tooke 1974: 131, 132). To create the all-powerful world of bulls and orders of social relationships which are potentially disruptive and harmonious to males, a man's attitude towards women is ambivalent and antagonistic. There is a significant contradiction between de jure and de facto perception of the woman's economic and socio-political roles (Hammond-Tooke 1974: 131). Woman is ritually pure as Lady Luck and ritually discriminated against by an "ex post facto rationalization" (Hammond-Tooke 1974: 131). Bull power reaffirms a man's identity with men in socio-political relationships and competitive statuses. Failure of socio-political effectiveness is translated in the imagery of being sexually deprived of the nuts. To put a lock on someone's nuts is a social and economic besting of male friends, neighbors and enemies.

By placing Lady Luck in a position of mystically causing fortune and misfortune, negative emotions and displaced hostilities are mythologically reinforced in the personae of women. Lady Luck oscillates between cultural ideals and perceived discrepancies in models of social life (Hammond-Tooke 1974: 131). She mediates thoughts and actions "occurring synchronically with the postulations" of bull power and her heifer status (Hammond-Tooke 1974: 131). The cognitive maps of bull power envelop discrepancies and the nature of social and gaming relationships as well as prescribe harmonious social postures between the sexes and loyalty to males within the "status blood bath" (Goffman 1961: 78). The ambiguity of the feminine luck symbol re-conceptualizes contradictions and pressures of social reality: "Women make lousey poker players because they're passive and too tight with money." Bulls as American males are rationalized not only in sexually convincing imagery but also explicated in a hierarchy of "moneymakers and smart dealers. Symbols of the semantic domain of bull power cluster the sensory and obligatory experiences for socialization and gamesmanship of the American man.

Sociolinguistics

The most recent statement about the goals and methods of sociolinguistics is presented by Hymes (1974) as the interaction between social role and features of language within the natural unit of the speech community (Hymes 1974: 35). Several sources have developed linguistic style in association with: creativity and status performance (Burling

1970; Albert 1964; Hymes 1962, 1964, 1974; Brown and Gilman 1960; and Gumperz 1964); the audience as a variable affecting speech (Geertz 1960); and social situation as related to speech variety of argots, values and attitudes (Rubin 1973; Fishman 1970; and Goffman 1964). There are critiques and discussions of the field and analytical endeavor, including the failure of researchers to specify circumstances of speech use, frequency, social intent, and expression, and the intersection of form with function in speech situations (Rubin 1973; Hymes 1974; Labov 1963 and 1972; and Williams 1972). Less has been written about the effects of emotive speech (Stankiewicz 1964). Socio-political symbolism in language is most extensively analyzed in the writings of poet and literary critic Kenneth Burke (Burke 1956, 1962, 1966, and 1967).

This section will briefly develop situational analysis of verbal styles and modes of speech associated with game chatter and player typologies. At the onset there are difficulties in restricting a direct 1:1 relationship between action and player type, i.e., relationships most naturally found in taxonomies with material referents (Berlin, Breedlove, Raven 1970). Action and motivational referents are linked to game strategies and verbal performance of Tighties and Looseys. The following linguistic data are tied to player action sets. Since creativity in designing game phraseology and terminology is dependent upon a good deal of "code-switching,"⁴ a player's performance is not a static

⁴Code-switching, in this sense, not only refers to a change from "transactional to personal" style but also in performance as a Tightie

relationship that holds for all times and all places.

According to overall frequency of speech modes discussed by Williams (1972), those modes used in the poker games of the Oxford and Stockman are generally context-centered--"impulsive, contactive, and conversative modes." These modes are complimented with nonverbal communication (Williams 1972: 128-129). The second order of frequency is "descriptive-directive," which is used for learning or recounting gaming situations at the Oxford and Stockman (Williams 1972: 129). The least frequent mode of speech at the Oxford and Stockman is "elaborative," the meaning of an experienced event, a concept or appeal to reason (Williams 1972: 129). Speech styles and topics of the Top Hatters do not reflect similar usage or expressions. The order of frequency at the Top Hat is "conversative, elaborative and impulsive modes" (Williams 1972: 128-129). The least frequent mode of Top Hatters is "contactive," which is restricted to initial greetings (Williams 1972: 128). The most nonverbal communicative behaviors are associated with the Oxfordians in contrast to Stockmen and Top Hatters.

The situations which are game-centered and typified by talking loose or playing loose are best characterized in the "impulsive and conversative modes" (Williams 1972: 128). Talking loose and playing loose most fully develop a verbal style of speech⁵ (Wells 1960: 216).

or Loosey--physical demeanor and frequency of modes (Gumperz 1964: 149). "Transactional" is tied to status as official and task-oriented; "personal," is connected with shared statuses on a friendship or peer basis.

⁵A verbal style, as contrasted with a nominal style, shortens the

CUT THE CARDS

Tight Player
 "Cut the cards."
 "Cut the deck,"
 "Will you cut the cards?"

Loose Player
 "Cut 'em!"
 "Cut 'em up!"
 "Whack 'em!"

The Tightie can tap the table with a couple fingers to indicate, "Cut the cards." A Loosey will usually indicate his pleasure with a wave of the hand toward the dealer, or by thumping his hand loudly on the table.

PUT A DOLLAR IN THE DARK

Tight Player
 "Put a Dollar in the Dark."
 "Put a dollar in."
 "Dollar in the dark."

Loose Player
 "Behind the gun,
 dollar in."
 "Darken it."

The Tightie might tap the deck against the table to signal the deal. The Loosey may point to the center spot on the table for dollar in the dark but would most probably thump the table with his hand, or smack the cards soundly against his hand or the table. Tighties, who are not talking loose, are less vocal and less physical in communicating directions and wishes. This behavior is consistent with the tighter, more controlled approach.

With the influx of new fish, players may code-switch not only from task oriented communication, transactional style, but also to personal styles. Players may switch to talking loose, clamming up, topic choices and greeting responses as "optional variants" in the codes of socialization and game behavior (Ervin-Tripp 1964: 90). The physical communica-

number of letters and syllables, uses less clauses and decreases the distinct sentence pattern. Verbal styles interject more of the speaker's personality, especially when the speaker uses the imperative form (Wells 1960: 215-217).

tive behaviors parallel the code-switching (Albert 1964: 42).

Examples:

Fish as Friends

There will be a personal style to those who share statuses, and speech modes will be contactive and conversative. Impulsive modes are extensive, especially in association with entrance to a heavy action game and a gaming encounter with heavy drinking. The general atmosphere is of "rough joshing."

Fish as High-Status Personae

There will be a parrying of a mocked personal style with contactive and impulsive modes. Certain personae who are not retributive or feared by players will permit taunting and rough joshing. The atmosphere is competitive, even tense.

Fish as Strangers

The dealer usually gives the rules for buy-ins. He will use a transactional speech style for developing an abbreviated catalogue of etiquette. Sometimes conversative modes will be used to elicit response from the strangers. Impulsive modes are not used until a settling period has transpired, since players will be sizing up the stranger during the settling-in period.

House dealers have styles which may correspond to the type of players seated at the table. Dealers can change the tempo of games by an emphasis on verbal stylization, pat phrases and clichés, or reduce their vocal activity to a bare minimum as the action flows. One colorful dealer for the Oxford house will speed up a slow game by calling:

"Look out! Down 'n dirty."	(Last card coming in a Stud game)
"Darken it!"	(Lowball opener)
"Hey, hey. Here we go!"	(Announcing a new deal)
"Look out, here they [cards] come."	(Open cards in Stud)
"Let yer judgment be yer guide."	(During a pause)

Hymes (1974) remarks that it is most interesting to note what "participants do for and to a language" (Hymes 1974: 21). The participants of the Oxford and Top Hat are most interesting in this respect. Some dealers who are experienced and well respected will probably verbalize the most changes in stock poker phrases. However, many dealers verbalize very little as they are concentrating on game matters and mediating frictions or rule deployments. A very noisy or smart-alecky dealer "steals" the verbal spotlight from players who are enacting their "drama" and verbal repertoire as game strategy. The best house dealers know when to initiate communication and when to be silent.

Status hierarchies of the Oxford house will use a transactional style and descriptive-directive mode when giving orders or making requests. In the case of high-status buffoon personae, players and staffers

will tolerate quips and gesticulations of the "entertainer-buffoons." These entertainers add color, chatter and tension, especially in strident, contactive, or impulsive modes of speech. Occasionally there are cliques of two or three staffers who briefly trade gossip or action tidbits. These personae whisper in a tête-à-tête manner with smirks, head nods and bobs as well as animated eye contact. The Stockman owner uses descriptive-directive mode in many of his staff discussions and requests. He is most conversative with players and friends as they enter or drop out of games.

First names and nicknames are used despite status differences in all three gaming environments. The situation is a paradox since players and staffers create solidary game relationships in an atmosphere of mutual respect despite the impending competition. An equalization in the use of first names represents a superficial attempt to erase social distance (Brown and Gilman 1960: 257-260). The remaining game and linguistic behaviors suggest that nicknames, especially the use of diminutives, designate affection or status affiliation. Nicknames are used for all statuses. Animal nicknames (or sounds an animal might make) denote friendship and buffoonery, sometimes disguising a ruthless player. Place names or names attached to ethnic origin are colorful and usually tag a high-status personae. The only derogatory ethnic remarks I heard were in connection with Native American scrapes and scuffles at the Oxford, and the ridiculing of a poor loser at the Stockman who was characterized as, "A hot-headed wop."

Kibbitzers at the Oxford use a great deal of impulsive and contactive modes of speech. Some kibbitzers are quiet, especially the real "down and outers" who have no game affiliation. Kibbitzers' frequency and amplitude of speech rise and fall with gaming action. Kibbitzers at the Stockman usually exchange contactive and conversative modes with player friends and the owner, while kibbitzers of the Top Hat can interrupt game action by conversing about friends, relatives, and events. The most unusual communicative behaviors of all players and kibbitzers took place at the Top Hat, i.e., musical behavior. Top Hatters may sing lyrics of popular songs, hum phrases, "licks or riffs."⁶ Top Hatters are the only poker players who mull over a hand and sing at the same time. Another distinctly Top Hat form is the use of "hip" talk--minimal words, syntactic fragments, and attitudes of "being cool." Speech is designed as "fill in the blank" within the peer group repertoire. All-knowing nods of affirmation or negation are displayed in response to clipped and terse phrases, and a full sentence style of discourse may not even be used for an "elaborative mode of speech" (Williams 1972: 129).

Although familiar with Bernstein's writings on social class differences and language learning, I was unable to determine any systematic class membership or educational training tied to the family life of Top Hatters (Bernstein 1961; Bernstein and Henderson 1969; and Pettersen 1971). Therefore, rather than connect homogeneity of Top Hatters with

⁶Licks and riffs are derived from jazz argots; licks are improvised solos and riffs are fragmentary and highly repetitive rhythmic or melodic sequences. I am analyzing Top Hatter's musical performance and did not hear licks or riffs used by the participants.

communication codes of their families or educational background, I based my interpretation of Top Hatters' linguistic behavior on Labov's peer group variable (Labov 1963: 279), Labov (1963) discusses an asymmetrical distribution of linguistic patterning over a wide variety of age levels (Labov 1963: 279). According to these three play environments, Top Hatters represent the most homogeneous but atypical speech patterns in contrast to patterns of the Oxfordians, Stockmen and community at large. Reinforcement of behaviors by the peer group includes musical tastes and dress as well as the noncompetitive nature of the game and social relationships. Therefore, I chose Labov's peer group variable as the most important factor for determining homogeneity of linguistic-paralinguistic behaviors of Top Hatters.

Paralinguistic behaviors are most prevalent in form and frequency at the Oxford. There is a frequent use of hand, fist, arms and upper torso. There is also frequent "signaling" which conflicts with overt content of a statement--winking, grimacing, pouting, smirking (Hymes 1974: 57-58). These signaling behaviors are used in gossip situations and as game strategies. Using facial tells as game strategy dispels certain myths about the "poker face."

A way of speaking can "constitute symbolic form and arousal of expectations" (Hymes 1974: 46, 106, 112). This is especially true of Looseys and loose talkers or the silence of a Tightie as these styles may actually define a game strategy. Socio-linguistic behaviors of the gaming environment assign matters of drama and action of a symbolic agency and purpose, i.e., players may use symbolic resources for their

own sake (Burke in Hymes 1974: 21 63). Players, kibbitzers, staffers and shills elaborate the bovine metaphor as dramatic and symbolic agents within the play environment.

Burke (1962) questions the intrinsic use of symbolic resources:

. . . might words be found to possess a 'spirit' peculiar to their nature as words; and might the things of experience then become in effect the materialization of such spirit, the manifestation of this spirit in visible tangible bodies? (1962: 5)

According to Burke, things of nature may be the manifest signs of their verbal entitlements as nature which "gleams secretly with a most fantastic shimmer words and social relationship" (Burke 1962: 21). Natural symbols become "a vast pagentry of social-verbal masques and costumes" (Burke 1962: 6 7). The enactment of Bull Power and aspects of the bovine metaphor--stockmen, oxen, steers, heifers--are socio-political entitlements within the game environment; extensions of idealized, performative, and obligatory roles that are found outside the games as well.

Conclusions and Comparisons

Games with rules may be analyzed as continuous social adjustment and adaptation, but they also have symbolic contexts and enactments for personae within a competitive society and gaming encounter. The semantic domain of Bull Power explicates the nature and structure of social life. In contrast to Oxfordians and Stockmen, Top Hatters are atypical in their commitment to the poker game. This may be attributed to a younger generation which is romantizing and reforming social order within a peer

community. Top Hatters are playing different kinds of games within the poker situation. There is less emphasis on making money or competing for financially-based statuses. Top Hatters are not involved to the same extent as Oxfordians in deep play. Top Hatters emphasize "being cool" and "moral." Top Hatters' social and political philosophies suggest a discontentment with the "American System" of moneymaking and financial prestige. The bovine metaphor is not linguistically expressed or enacted symbolically. Analytically speaking, Top Hatters represent nursing calves not yet weaned from childhood or assimilated in the mainstream of possessor and possessed. Oxfordians enact the American System, while Stockmen express confidence in the experience and extension of skills from the marketplace.

The foil of the poker game used by skilled players and professionals suggests that the foil is most closely tied to experienced gamesmanship and manipulation of opponents' expectations. Women and girls who play poker do not appear to be consistent or big winners. Men are most apt to employ strategies and tactics associated with symbolic enactments of competition. When women enter a game, male players seem to pull back, and the game cools off. The game takes on the guise of a confrontation of the sexes; males become more protective, less competitive, and reduce pressure and tension. This was evident in all three play environments. The foil of the game is most effectively used by house staffers and high-status friends who enjoy financial means to "play games." Experienced players use strategies and postures which are not easily read; skillful intimidation and lying are used to manipulate expectations, fears and

values of opponents.

Emotional stimuli and pleasures gained from gambling are rationalized by mental and physical bulls. The semantic domain of Bull Power harmonizes symbols of sensory and social experience, and defines order against a backdrop of chaotic and disruptive potentials during the scramble for status. Lying, intimidation and sex are thematic constellations manipulated for the positive values of financial gain and smart dealing. Games at the Oxford and Stockmen are more ritualized than those at the Top Hat. Top Hat games circle within a dynamic field of peer contact and young adult socialization. Life meanings of Top Hatters are in flux and more subjectively experienced within the closed network of a peer world.

Analyses by Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962), Barry and Roberts (1972), and Martinez and La Franchi (1969) offer a comparative framework for some disagreement and agreement with my research. Games of chance represent a response to passivity of players' normal life roles and an expression of incompatible responses toward gambling and the image of the diligent provider; this analysis by Roberts and Sutton-Smith is supported by a Loosey-Loser (Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962: 179). The correlation of games of chance and infantile dependency--when luck, not player skill, is responsible for outcome--may be supported by the values of a Loosey-Loser (Barry and Roberts 1972: 305). The Loosey might come closer to motivations based on an efficacious alter-ego within the gaming environment, but some players operationalize behavior as a game situation alters. Manipulative players code-switch as demands

and nuances of the game develop. For these players, poker represents a game of chance-strategy and skill. Professionals and skilled personae may be "addicted" to moneymaking as much as poker playing.

Although Top Hatters and Oxfordians are most prone to experience confusion or frustration about statuses and roles in relation to the community at large, the former experience a "liminal period" with shifting social loyalties, ethics and identities, while the latter represent a group "in a bind" from lack of formal training and approaching old age (Turner 1967: 98). Both Top Hatters and Oxfordians are not so easily swept into the idealized mainstream of cultural expectations and events. However, Top Hatters cannot be stylized as "addicted" gamblers, whereas some of the Oxfordians are closer to this interpretation (Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962: 184).

Statements about the control of "benevolent fate" are more true of a Loosey. In contrast to Barry and Roberts, the invocation of Lady Luck is a symbolic gesturing toward social, generic woman, not necessarily "mother" (Barry and Roberts 1972: 305). The feminine luck symbol is not "omnipotent" but fickle (Barry and Roberts 1972: 305). Statistics and probabilities offer aid and comfort to Tighties, who espouse a pragmatic and "scientific" approach to gamesmanship; statistics are less fickle and more omnipotent than Lady Luck. Personal assessment by conservative players occurs during logical analyses of the natural world rather than a supernatural world. A facile poker player realizes that there is an element of chance but disciplines his mind and emotions in defensive strategies. A rigid adherence to emotion-laden and highly

aggressive strategies tends to produce losers. A rigid adherence to the Tightie's approach produces a scared player who will not risk losing control to his imagination or intuition.

An article by Martinez and La Franchi (1969) explains commercial poker games in northern California by a four-fold classification of poker players and motivations (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 30-35, 52). These authors say the main skills in poker are patience and self-control to ride out a run of bad cards (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 30). My informants agree; they state necessary ratios of stakes to game styles, game mechanics and player types. My informants also agree that creating a double reverse strategy, signaling a tell, is difficult to carry off; tells are most transparently and frequently used by poor players (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 31).

If a player overtly shows his confidence, he suffers devastating effects when beaten. A loss of face by an overconfident player is an overture to defeat. Players try to erase defeats from memory as soon as possible--they count chips, eat, smoke, or take seventh inning stretches. Most often players who thought they held the nuts but were soundly burned will drop out of game for that evening.

In agreement with Martinez and La Franchi, Missoula gamblers sanction and reinforce certain game behaviors by singling out individuals who typify outer limits of permissible behavior. This sanctioning usually takes place after the offending player has dropped from the game (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 31).

In contrast to action at establishments studied by Martinez and La Franchi, action at Oxford Table II is loud and frenetic. Fast games typify both tables of the Oxford, while the Stockman game is more typical of the "quiet, relaxed game" described by the California researchers (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 31).

There are further variations in games throughout the state of Montana. In Billings participants can play Hold 'Em, a two-hole card Stud game with three open cards placed in the center of the table. Staffers in Billings use the center deal which restricts all card handling to the house dealer; this differs from Missoula's rotating deal. Hold 'Em and center deal are Las Vegas imports. There are Oxford-style games and clientele in Billings, Bozeman and Butte. City gambling ordinances and enforcement of Montana gambling laws receive differential implementation and enforcement around the state. Some out-of-town games restrict amounts of raising and betting, but do not have a \$100 pot limit. Names of face cards will vary, and a reverse wheel in Lowball, the Kalispell Wheel, is played in other games around Missoula. In Billings face cards and tens are paints, and if you hold a paint factory in a Lowball game, you have a very poor hand indeed.

Martinez and La Franchi state that the action player (Loosey-Loser) is "protected" by winning players who do not allude to the loser's sucker status; game personae will also insist that there is open, free competition (Martinez and La Franchi 1969: 33). There is ample evidence for protecting Loosey-Losers in Missoula games. Similar claims about competition are superficial "come-on's" to pamper Looseys. Like California

Losers, Missoula Losers rely heavily on luck. They save face by rationalizing failure to win because of bad luck. Winners will reduce tension by saying:

"Boy, you're really unlucky tonight."

"You sure are determined, I'll have to give you that."

"You really are unlucky."

"I won cuz of good luck, it's just good luck."

Informants' responses to questions vary with the amount of poker experience, perceptions of self in relation to other personae, and commitment to the game as a moneymaker. Emic analyses of game strategies and psychological manipulation stem from a conscious attempt to control play and opponents. There are almost no emic analyses or explanations of:

- 1) Society as a shaping "force."
- 2) Symbolism of the game.
- 3) Social structure of the game.

Only one informant generalized what he perceived to be "social and political" segments of Missoula in relation to class membership and political clout. Most emic analyses and explanations concern player typologies and motivations in action strategies; some were very perceptive and other analyses reflect position of a staffer or player in relation to the house. Some informants repeated rumors which permeated all three play environments: others repeated rumors generated in a closed network of a particular house or group of players.

Hypothetical questions raised about the games' relationship to everyday life can tentatively be answered.

1. Oxfordians' lives and thoughts are most closely tied to the gaming environment and experience. The "Oxford Way" is a life style for many players. Most of the Stockmen have viable lucrative interests outside the game and increased social and business contacts. In contrast, Top Hatters are playing fun games.

2. Poker games and real life are related to the competitive nature and structure of the American marketplace and philosophies of "how to get ahead." In the play environment, generational, occupational, educational, and class backgrounds show a significant clustering in these three establishments. The most important variables are age and education. Competitive play is most similar between Table I at the Oxford and Table I of the Stockman--both games are generally more tight than loose play at Table II of the Oxford. Table II of the Oxford represents the most emotion-laden and aggressive gamesmanship. Top Hatters are unique in social postures and gamesmanship which emphasize egalitarian statuses and motivations.

3. The Oxfordians and Stockmen share action strategies and verbalization of the bovine metaphor. Top Hatters have a limited, traditional game jargon which is highly infused with a fragmentary lexicon characteristic of a peer group. Top Hatters are less experienced gamblers and show more social experimentation and learning during the poker games. Top Hatters do not have a generalized or cohesive symbolic system operating in the play environment.

CHAPTER IV

POKER AND THE DRAMATURGICAL EVENT

The man who tells no lies cannot feed his children.
Barundi proverb. (Albert 1964: 46)

To discuss poker playing as a dramaturgical event with statements and analyses about dramatic maintenance, revaluation and reconciliation of Oxfordians, Stockmen and Top Hatters, I intend to concentrate on:

- 1) setting of the barroom and game place
- 2) masks and costumes of the personae
- 3) myths in process
- 4) liminal man in the play world

An important consideration for dramaturgical qualities of the gaming encounter is how the positive value of making money is used as a backdrop against which meanings and strategies of individual poker players are enacted.

Setting

One of the best indicators for ritualization and modification of the games is the physical layout of the play environments which either changed or remained the same during my six months of observation. The changes in the physical setting of the Oxford games represent new strategies of spatial and rule-oriented expressions to reflect new ideas and

behaviors--changes in the games' demeanor and attraction of clientele. The changes at the Top Hat strengthened peer group expression and interaction.

At the time of the pilot study, I was impressed by the austere, even Spartan, environs of the Oxford game room. The playroom had a large, barny atmosphere that was illuminated by diffuse florescent lighting. Both the size of the room and the lighting reflected a colorless interior without visual or spatial elaborations. When the games were not in play, poker tables were canvas-covered and protected by plastic, embossed tablecloths. The signs, which described an abbreviated version of game rules, were lettered by hand from a dime store stencil pattern. The signs were barely visible since the lettering in pencil blended with the grey cardboard background. Dead snacks, smokes, and paper trash were deposited in cardboard boxes which also functioned as spittoons.

Over the months there were several additions and replacements in the Oxford decor: an oil painting of a pack horse with decorative motifs of stags and does graced the space above the cage. A framed poker hand consisting of a four-heart flush with one hold card, all pasted onto a green felt background, was hung next to Table II. The hand signified four cards to a Royal Flush and was entitled, "Your Bet." After one week grease smears and fingerprints attested to the interest generated by that hole card. Commercially-lettered metal signs appeared with snappy phrases, wishes of good luck, rules and prohibitions, and the homemade signs disappeared. The latest innovation in the Oxford environs

occurred in late November when a railing was constructed to separate the kibbitzers from the gaming tables. A center aisle opened to the cage door, but only players could remain inside the railing which confined their movements to the area directly around Table I or Table II.

When asked about the changes in decor and decorum, several Oxfordians said:

"Hell, they're prettying up the place."

"I dunno why they're doing this, I liked it the old way."

"It's fancy, too fancy."

Comments from non-Oxfordians included:

"They're trying to turn the place into a goddamn Las Vegas casino."

The spatial divisions became most important after the construction of the railing, which I mused was a "corral." None of the Oxfordians called the railing a "corral," but there were several opinions that the railing functioned to separate the serious players. Players needed isolation for concentration since kibbitzers were bugging them and this situation was "getting out of control."

The Oxford never had live or canned music as part of either the barroom or the game room. Aural sensations were confined to game chatter and an occasional outburst from the barroom; announcements of sports, racing, and keno scores would interrupt the flow of game chatter.

The Stockman games were placed in a thoroughfare between the bar and the men's restroom and back door. Canned pop music was constantly and loudly emanating from a psychedelic Seeburg "juke box." The barroom

was usually filled with younger patrons who were beating the pinball and foosball machines, chatting, hollering, or picking up bar dates. The noises overwhelmed the players at times.

The Stockman game room was converted from a small pool and billard area. There are holes in the fiberboard ceiling from pool cues thrust into the soft ceiling. The room is intimate, neat and austere, and lighting is closely confined to the tables. Metal signs replaced commercially-lettered posterboard signs approximately the same week that Oxfordians hung their new signs. Unlike the grilled cage for financial exchanges at the Oxford, the manager-owner simply made change from his position at Table II. The linoleum flooring at the Stockman produced a harder surface than the wooden covering at the Oxford. One was definitely aware of foot noise and traffic at the Stockman. As at the Oxford, the Stockman tables were covered with a canvas material and protected when not in play.

During the pilot visit to the Top Hat, the game was located in a basement recreation room stylized very much on the same order as a family room. A small bar was tucked into a dark wall area opposite the tables. The atmosphere was very dark and intimate, since stereotyped green-glassed game lamps were hung directly over the tables. After licensing, the game moved upstairs to a room with a fire exit. The room was shaped like a long rectangle with high ceilings and painted wooden paneling. An old metal lamp on a chain hung directly over the game table. An old Shelvador refrigerator held soft drinks and beer, and the same overstuffed couch and chair from the basement game room sat along the wall to the left

of the poker table. An amateur oil painting entitled, "Too Many Aces," hung over the banker's box behind the game table. The painting represented the Old West "Shoot 'em Up" revenge motif; the scene was complete with terrified dance hall belles, the good guy with two guns blazing away at the unfortunate cheater, and a stereotyped saloon interior.

Music as a part of the barroom and game setting is best integrated with the Top Hat milieu; Top Hatters usually had music as part of the barroom environment since live performances were given most nights of the week. Live performances prompted critiques and bursts of musical participation, even by the poker players. Music at the Top Hat invariably was country western or bluegrass, and the music was well integrated with the expectations of the crowd. Jukebox music in the Stockman, however, was loudly in the background and geared to the younger members of the bar crowd. The music became irritating to poker players, especially when young, rascally barkeepers jacked up the volume on popular tunes. Music was not an environmental feature of the Oxford barroom or game setting.

In all three establishments, the bar crowds were subject to the two o'clock drinking curfew, so things generally quieted down with their departure. Poker games can last all night and generally disband around six or seven o'clock in the morning. The breakfast followed; sometimes breakfast was paid for by the house, often losers were treated by the winners. The gaming encounters fluctuated in starting time with the seasons, usually nine o'clock during the summer months at both the Stockman and Top Hat. During the winter months the games started around ten o'clock, mid-evening at the Stockman. The Top Hatters had a rough

time keeping the game going from night to night, and the Top Hat had a later starting time, around eleven o'clock. The Oxford games can start as early as four o'clock in the afternoon and invariably last all night until seven o'clock in the morning.

Two of these establishments underwent a shift in decor and atmosphere. The Oxford metamorphosed from an austere men's club to an emulation of what commercial poker establishments are "supposed" to look like. Instead of "abridging hierarchical relationships" in an egalitarian and mobile environment, the Oxford created physical barriers and limited interaction of kibbitzers and bystanders (Cavan 1966: 66). The "ongoing jokes and patter between barkeep and patrons," similarly reflected in the interaction controlled by house personae (Cavan 1966: 84). The Oxford had a shift in decorum of players and house personae, most evident in less spitting on the floor or in the cardboard trash boxes. The Top Hat shifted from a family room setting to a less middle class environment. The Stockman remained the same during my observation period with the exceptions of new metal signs and a sign-up board.

Like the California bar patrons of Cavan's study, participants "refrained from sharing recognition of each other" on the street and situations like the Western Montana Fair (Cavan 1966: 64). It is not surprising that the interviews were closely tied to either bars or the gaming environments. Only three informants talked "outside" bars or games.

In conclusion, the settings began to reflect the style of interaction expected within the three poker game environs. The Top Hatters

had no physical boundary mechanisms, and interaction was free and easy. The Stockman environment was informal and sociable with frequent chatting on entrance or departure from the games. The Stockman had the tightest spatial layout within intimate surroundings against a noisy and motion-filled backdrop of bar patrons, whereas the Top Hat and the Oxford had larger game rooms which were spatially separated from the main bar. The changes in the Oxford setting reinforced stratifications and underscored boundary maintenance of "respectable" behaviors.

Masks and Costumes

"Faces and lines" are most important for interaction in the gaming encounter since face, a positive social value a person claims for himself, and line, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts of expression, represent postures and means for interaction (Goffman 1967: 5). Masks and social face have usually been discussed in reference to "saving face," avoidance of destroying another's face, or sharing face with an interacting group (Goffman 1967: 42). In poker games there is an attempt to destroy face in competition, and, strangely enough, to support the Loosey's face. Poker games are status blood baths within a sphere of male companionship; games within games prompt deception and flattery to keep individual self-images viable and intact.

An interesting aspect of masks and costumes related to community faces and lines concerning legalization of gambling. Are gamblers suffering from "anomie?" Do innovative behaviors and performances before live audiences change with legalization?" (Clinard discusses Merton 1964: 16,17,25). With legalization of gambling, there is a legitimizing

of means to attain positive goals of moneymaking and smart dealing. Although moneymaking and smart dealing are recognized and valued in the marketplace, initiatives of gamblers are suspect by many community members. Legalization for the Oxford presents an adaptive socialization to acceptable postures and enactments of the American Dream (Merton 1969: 214). Adaptive socialization is most apparent in the Oxfordian's behavior and the physical setting of the games; the Oxfordians are attempting to clothe their activities in new garments of respectability. This is especially poignant since the Oxfordians' commitment to the game environment is a way of life. With legalization the commitment departs from the realm of fantasized enactment of The Social Order and enters the acceptable social world. Formerly Oxfordians perceived themselves to be pariahs, especially those who chalked up a record with The Law. Face is now rationalized in lines that stress respectable, law-abiding entrepreneurship.

Field experience confirms that pariah status and isolation from the community are found at either end of the age continuum, as demonstrated in the perceptions and behaviors of Top Hatters and Oxfordians. How the actors perceive stigmatic roles depends on a social labeling process and definition of pariahs (Becker 1963: 8,9). Different social strata provide differential access to institutionalized means, especially socialization, education and opportunities to discharge roles (Clinard discusses Merton 1964: 12). Merton (1969) suggests that class structure, lack of formal education and few economic resources might produce social and economic pressures to deviate (Merton 1969: 214 215). Deviation may

use innovative behaviors--new means to attain success goals (Merton 1969: 215). On the surface, it would appear that the Oxfordians might have been "pressured" to adopt new faces and lines; however, whether this was "forced" by society or "chosen" by the Oxfordians is not always clear. It would appear that Top Hatters are making a choice of face and line that stress a rejection of major values that maintain American economic and political order. Perhaps an equally viable way of analyzing deviant behavior is to view personae as actors, interactionists, who manipulate role expectations and "multivalue claims" in both achieved and ascribed faces and lines (Clinard 1964: 44). Rather than being a victim of "insufficiencies" social personae may change faces and lines with a shift in goals and means. From my understanding of the Oxford world, this quotation from Bernard Baruch is quite cogent:

You can't stop people from gambling. . . . why should you prohibit a man from backing his own judgment? It's another form of personal initiative. (In Bell 1968: 238)

In contrast to the Oxfordians, Top Hatters interact on the basis of their perceptions and strivings for transvaluation. Top Hatters recite new myths that portray alternatives to The Structure and vent frustrations of the deserving; Top Hatters are striving for new charters for action (Merton 1969: 220).

Within these three gaming environments, things and events are not merely matter in motion. Protagonists make decisions to act, enact and challenge the social dramas in symbolic mobilizations of meaning. Each play environment produces a social currency of communicative forms, and through ritual action images of order and disorder are expressed in

social relationships (Munn 1971: 605). Interaction of the participants' symbolic faces and lines are analytically summarized according to a stylized public image, a social classification of personae that ritualizes self-images in light of institutional structure and The American System.

Personae of the Oxford

The System, so long enacted as fantasy, is now becoming a social reality; a formerly stigmatized group is now presented with a respectability of means. Claims that legalization "let the little guy in" reinforced a newly attained moral order, not just for men with small bankrolls, but everyone associated with the Oxford. In fact, the stratified behaviors faces and lines continue stratifications of house and players as well as the mock and overt threat-making. No one is really barred from participation. The Oxford house still manipulates and controls many aspects of social and economic behavior.

Personae of the Top Hat

According to the Top Hatters' perceptions, The System stinks. Top Hatters use stigmatic statuses and roles with open disrespect and use of illegal drugs; claims that the game is not a moneymaker are reinforced by conspicuous egalitarianism. In fact the roles and expectations are blurred because Top Hatters experience a lack of cohesive goals, except for being "anti" and "cool."

Both the Top Hat and the Oxford personae can be grouped as in-house choruses, mini-communities, which stand in contrast to the macro-community

of Missoula. In a dramatist context, the Oxford and the Top Hat represent choruses entitled, "The Royal Flush," i.e., both perceive their social reality as The Winning Hand. Top Hatter's youthful idealism counters competition and financial prestige with social leveling and a buddy system, while Oxfordians' winning hand of pragmatism and competition reinforces culturally valued goals of "getting ahead." The Oxford attempts to shed stigmatized statuses and aura of gain respectability by the cleansing agent of legalization. The Top Hat rejects the macro-community and by enacting behaviors beyond permissible norms, i.e., enjoying a pariah status, especially through drug use and anti-capitalistic rhetoric.

The choruses of the Oxford and Top Hat are seeking a new moral order for legitimizing perceived cognitive dissonances; each chorus is engaged in the process of revaluation (Peacock 1968: 183, 192-196). Top Hatters rationalize their neo-populist face and lines in confrontation postures and mythologize confrontation by renouncing that which is presently achieved in macro-community statuses. In contrast, the "New Morality" of the Oxfordians seeks to merge with the mainstream of Middle America; Oxfordians seek reconciliation.

Incongruities of values in flux stimulate dialogue between public images of legislators, the macro-community leaders and gamblers. The Oxford chorus suggests that legislators are upholding the "good citizen image" without a pragmatic or intelligent understanding of the gambling world. Some Oxfordians have entered the public sphere as members of lobbying groups and as apologists for gambling. Legalization of all

forms of gambling prompts state-wide issues concerned with:

- 1) future take-over and control by organized crime groups
- 2) benefits to state coffers
- 3) means for state regulation versus local autonomy

Gambling issues and relevant contents are used in persuasive communication techniques to reduce dissonance of the public (Festinger 1957: 189). To obtain influence and social support one must use rhetoric and symbols as rallying points; gambling revenues, for example, should aid school funding and support for public services (Festinger 1957: 191). This conflict of interest was rationalized by one informant:

If churches and priests as well as the community approve of amateur bingo games, why is legalized and regulated professional gambling off limits for the citizens of Montana? Lawyers and priests have public images to protect. But you could use revenues to fund education and public services, like salaries for firemen, to offset the conniving image of professional gamblers. It's the people's fault for not educating politicians. There are good ways to prevent power monopolies in gambling.

One means for persuasion is to point out undeniable and incontrovertible information to impinge on public dissonance; like the churches and priests playing bingo, lawyers as image-makers, or ignorant legislators--all these examples contain a modicum of truth as perceived at the folk level (Festinger 1957: 194). In a lengthy article discussing the controversies and confusions of the local gambling commission, there are varying perspectives:

Commission members reflected a broad spectrum of opinion concerning gambling, ranging from the Rev. William Kliber's moral disapproval of gambling, to

the more permissive attitude of Harbeck.

"I would not like to see gambling expanded in Montana," Kliber said. He said he considers his role on the gambling commission as a "watchdog."

"We're trying to keep gambling clean and above-board," according to Kliber (Stromnes 1975: 6).

After approximately six months of legalized gambling there is pressure to move local control to a state regulating agency, the Department of Revenue. Reaction to state control is also varied:

Thomas C. Honzel, representing the county attorneys, said: "If there is expanded forms of gambling we need strong controls."

However, Robert A. Durkee, a lobbyist for the Montana Tavern Association, said his group supports a bill that would create a state gambling commission rather than place control with the Department of Revenue.

"We don't think we need a state police force," he said.

Rev. George Harper, a Helena minister representing the Montana Association of Churches, said his group is against any gambling laws.

"We feel that gambling is a parasite on any social institutions," he said. "I would make the same comment on any bill proposed along this line" (Langley 1975: 18).

The Top Hatters maintain internal harmony of the group consistent with their opinions, but have not yet formalized a way to communicate new social roles and relationships or to reduce dissonance between the community and a 1970's brand of socialism (Festinger 1957: 279). Top Hatters use rhetoric and myths which partake of an internal dialectic reserved for a private audience. The Top Hatters espouse a temporal integrity of "now terminology" signifying immediate dramatism for its own sake (Davis

1967: 15). Perceptions of immediacy and anticipatory socialization are clothed in the wisdom of child-moralist rejecting "plastic society" (Berger 1967: 19,22; Yablonsky 1968: 310-333).

At this point in time, we have two choruses avoiding a "social death" by integrating their perceptions of social reality with new roles, social faces and myths (Duncan 1968: 156). With old age looming on the Oxford horizon, symbolic interaction and community persuasion are quite pressing. The impossibility of killing the ambition to make money and love of smart dealing is an untenable civic position in the eyes of the Oxfordians. However, choruses of the Top Hat enact social dramas to create a social killing of the old economic and political order. In Missoula, the killing by Top Hatters becomes more like annoying gnat stings since the community is none too eager for this brand of social death. How effectively these two choruses can manipulate the dissonances of the larger community is still questionable. I would suggest that the Oxfordians have more political clout in the form of organized lobbying groups than the Top Hatters, whose political strivings are somewhat disorganized and lack an "authentic voice."

Personae of the Stockman

Poker games and social behaviors of Stockmen enact The System, which is played in a friendly and socially acceptable way. Claims of legalization, "letting the little guy in," are not as significant since stratification in Stockman games is based on skill and experience; the games do not require large stakes nor bankrolls demanded by Oxford

games. Within the Stockman poker games, there are covert experiential and intellectual parameters based on socialization in the larger community. In fact, the games attempt to promote honest and gentlemanly conduct by barring dishonest or unsavory characters who could spoil the polite competition among gentlemen.

On one analytical level, The Stockman personae represent the large community's interactionists in the business and social worlds; they are protagonists who enact several dramatic roles based on participation in wider social and economic networks within the Missoula area. Roles and statuses frequently sandwiched are business or professional man/father/skilled sport/ex-athlete/gentleman. Stockmen represent propriety coupled with polite rationalizations of self-confident and successful behavior in the games, social world and marketplace. Stockmen have many communication links through different social and economic channels; they do not resemble a more homogeneous group like that of the Top Hat or Oxford. There is no core group of Stockman players as there is at the Oxford, and no overwhelming sense of Stockman identity attached with a particular group, game or political voice.

House Personae

The drama of faces and lines enacted between house personae and live ones is most interesting. The Oxford house attempts to control patronage and cash flow with a "hands off" policy as far as limiting players. However, a player certainly needs a bankroll to cope with the tight, experienced player as well as the looser games generated by key personae or Table II. The management of the Top Hat rarely interferes

with the game participants and promotes a barroom environment which attracts the younger generation during the nine o'clock changeover. The Stockman house encourages friendly companionship in the competitive atmosphere of the games as well as social interaction upon entering or departing the game environment.

Within the house personae of the Oxford, especially during the first four months of legalized activity, linguistic virtuosity was prized by participants, including the kibbitzers. But as the game became ritualized, distinctions and the gap between "serious" players and the audience widened. The setting, action in game play and climax are controlled and restricted to game table participants. The Top Hat setting, action and climaxes do not attain the pitch of the Oxford, interaction is mellow. The setting, action and climax of Stockman games have an underlying tension for achievement without making a fool of yourself. The rhythm of the Stockman games is slower and more deliberate than that of the Oxford; the languor of the Top Hat games contrasts with the Oxford and Stockman.

Myths in Process

During post-mortems on games and hands, interaction within the gaming environment can sometimes reach epic proportions. Gluckman (1963) discusses the importance of gossip as part of the fabric of social life; that gossiping is a culturally controlled game with rules and interest to unify group membership and to limit accessible information (Gluckman 1963: 307, 309, 311-313). Gossip from poker games tends to reinforce the values of high-status personae in contrast to under-

lings. But gossip has another function--the generation, continuance and "debunking" of poker myths and mythological personae (Burke 1964: 142). During the course of gossip sessions, it is not unusual to realize the limits of permissible behavior. Listeners revel in the exposition of legendary defeats and victories of epic heroes. High-status personae are revered for power plays and special skills that will be idealized according to degrees of effectiveness; some players even achieve nicknames. Since the aim of gossip is to influence the listener, visiting Oxfordians canonize Oxfordian face and lines for the audience of the Stockman (Wilson 1974: 99). Many times current topics are connected with apocryphal anecdotes, "true incidents" and folk wisdom.

Phrases and lexical items are introduced in the gossip networks and stories as emotionally striking "literary" material, especially in the form of homilies (Stankiewicz 1964: 256). One of these stories concerned two Idaho hustlers who tried to take a sheepherder's summer wages. The hustlers cold-decked a game in which the sheepherder was to be hot suckered on triplet Queens, while the hustler held triplet Aces. The game proceeded with the hustlers confidently in control of an inevitable victory. However, they forgot to cold-deck the draw. The sheepherder drew two cards to his trip Queens, while the hustler stood pat. Needless to say, the hustlers went down in defeat as the sheepherder drew a Full House. There are many stories which develop into mini-morality dramas based on the concept that "justice prevails."

The emotional involvement with loss is most notable in the deep play of the Oxfordians to the extent that justice and the necessity of vengeance are a perceived "civic" order of moral negatives (Burke 1963: 221). The dramaturgical event is developed around the theme of possession-possessor and deep play. Myths and action within the gaming encounters play upon the concept that "justice will prevail." There have been incidents of ratting on offending personae, even to The Law. Personae who instituted floating games just prior to legalization were anonymously finked on to satisfy a staffer-house vendetta. Even in the games, moral proprieties are observed. Possessing not only money but also a social face and line created situations in which the player has more to lose than his dollars. Oxfordians not only have the highest stake in the games but continue to enact, even fantasize, power struggles for justice and their brand of "civic morality." Comic relief enacted by buffoon personae allow some joking about the Oxford social order, i.e., to say things which do not threaten the seriousness of deep play yet, ironically, express the incongruities of the social order (Duncan 1968: 60, 61).

Myth lines, which explicate whom one curses, tell of the strain on the hierarchy and perceptions of the micro-communities of the Oxford and Top Hat as contrasted with the larger community (Duncan 1968: 172). Top Hatters use ironic modes to tell us that certain moments in social courtship of the younger generation no longer make sense; wooing the Top Hatters with traditional means and contents of the American Entrepreneur (Duncan 1968: 172). A very important ingredient in social interaction and myth-building of Top Hatters and Oxfordians is the "Thou

shalt nots," avenues for expressing displeasure towards those who defy the socio-logic of their negatives (Burke 1953: 632; 1963: 221; and 1966: 10-13). Ritual cursing and irony underscore the moral negatives valued by the Top Hatters and Oxfordians, since cursing effectively rails against the indignities and contradictions of social life.

An interesting feature of myths, gossip and play concerns the use of "rhetoric," norms and techniques for persuasion by Tighties and Looseys, "logic," rules and uses of evidence and inference, and "poetics," esthetic criteria that govern discourse (Albert 1964: 36). In the process of myth-building and play, there is overlapping of rhetoric, logic and poetics, since situation and user influence speaking as an activity in its own right (Hymes 1964: 16). Most poker players know the rules and play the game of matching wits through verbal parry and thrust. To become an expert and persuasive liar one must alter or conceal truth by hatching plots. Poker myths often focus on the expert rhetoreician, the persuader, who locates and uses verbal and unconscious clues of his opponents. He knows how to manipulate ignorance and to distort the situation to his advantage. Poetics merge with persuasion in the sense that graphic sexual imagery and sounds in blue idioms and double entendres express a man's world of action, especially at the Oxford.

In Table 6, the most frequent items in the lexicon of poker players are the following:

- 1) the highest number of referents are motion words,
including the category of absence of motion;
- 2) the second highest number of referents are mechanical

TABLE 6
REFERENCES FOR POKER TERMINOLOGY

<u>Motion</u>	<u>Mechanical</u>	<u>Drama</u>
Crimp	Cinch	Tell
Catch	Lock	Talking
Chase	Door	Performing
Outdraw	Window	Speaking
Rotate	Wheel	Sabotaging
Put Down	Bullet	Sandbagging
Shaving	Hook	Scared
Pull In	Nail	Running
Raise	Paint	Show Down
Ran	Pan	Pay to See Me
Plow	Nuts	Chattering
Shove	Peg	Bull shitting
Jacked Off	Plow	Reading
Kicker	Sandbag	Pegging
Nailing	Rake	Peeking
Locking	Tap	
Cinching	Gun	
Squeezing	Whipsaw	
Whipsawing	Straddle the Fence	
Building	Pot	
Busting		
Flashing	<u>Natural World</u>	
Tapping	Bug	
Bumping	Bull	
Folding	Dark	
<u>Absence of Motion</u>	Blind	
Check	Fish	
Hung-up	Live One	
Straddling	Gut	
Balancing	Horns	
Centering (the deal)	Ass	
	Nuts	
	Balls	
<u>Supernatural</u>	<u>Socio-Political</u>	
Lady Luck	Big Cat	
Immortal Nuts	Whorehouse	
The Bug	Union Oil	
Card Sense	Jock	
<u>Temperature</u>	Liberated Woman	
Freeze	Nixoned	
Burn	John	
Heat	Kingpin	
Cold Seat	Crossroader	
Cold-deck	Hustler	
Hot Sucker	Cute Ass	
	High Roller	

and inorganic words; and

- 3) the third highest number of referents are dramatic-action words.

Persuasive metaphors, like "locking someone's nuts," not only have graphic images but also a painful physiological-psychological meaning as well. Temperature is most often used to indicate discomfort, while the natural world contains bugs, fish and anatomical referents associated with the bovine metaphor. The words denoting status have adjectives or compounds to indicate size, vertical or horizontal mobility. Many times rhetoric is used to induce confidence and to persuade opponents by self-effacement:

The last time I got a pat hand was when my mother
laid hers to my backside.

The poetic motive in play becomes an intrinsically satisfying use of symbols simply for the sake of sound and symbol (Burke 1958: 54). Not until one "owns" the symbols does one feel that one holds a key to immediate knowledge or understanding (Sapir 1967: 155). With intrinsic, psychological satisfaction, the imagery and affectations of the socio-political world are merged with mechanical devices, natural organisms and categories of motion-action. Burkean analyses of key terms is very similar to Turner's analysis of dominant symbols, i.e., one term may have a cluster of ideas implicit in it and disclosable by a methodological analysis of it (Burke 1958: 60). Dominant symbols are polysemic referents that are significant for social play in the gaming encounters. Some of the virtuoso players exploit their resources of "pun logic" for

sheer delight by putting "resonance into the utterance by using words that echo multiple meanings" (Burke in Reuckert 1963: 176). The sexual patter and imagery of bulls at play represent a cogent set of dominant symbols for the poker game, male competition and the dramaturgical event.

Liminal Man and the Play World

One of the most intriguing aspects of researching the participants of the play world are those players who adjust to diverse game and social behavior. These personae are the most exceptional at playing games, being someone else and role or code-switching as the situation demands. Transitional personae move from one game and house to the next, code-switch with facility, and perceive themselves as socializing agents with various social postures, faces and lines. Transitional personae are most adept when adjusting to appropriate emotions, philosophies, linguistic and paralinguistic behaviors of the gaming encounters. In this sense, transitional personae are similar to a liminal status described by Turner, i.e., personae who are neither fish nor fowl and liminality refers to a suspension or lack of commitment to a particular status or social self; a liminal personae is "betwixt and between," most notably during "rites of passage" (Turner 1967: 98).

One informant discussed his love of the different characters and settings as he imagined the possibilities of human action. From my observation, these personae were successful poker players, but there is no overriding social type with respect to education or occupation.

Transitional personae genuinely got a kick out of playing all the games. One businessman, aged mid-thirties, found no trouble in relating to Oxfordians or Top Hatters although he wore buckskin clothing, turquoise jewelry and long hair. During a lengthy informal interview, he discussed turquoise jewelry, backpacking in British Columbia, his business which freed him from a "nine-to-five" existence, his vices, and his love of "characters" who frequented the bars and games.

Another liminal man rarely was seen in any game environment other than the Oxford. He was constantly amused by the foibles and successes of his fellow players. He enjoyed the status of high-status friend to the Oxford house. During the Western Montana Fair, he watched with great amusement the momentary demise of a rodeo star-poker player who failed to rope a calf within the winning time limit; the rodeo star bit the dust not only in the arena but also at the poker tables. The transitional personae played off a huge stack of Oxford house chips one night; he ruthlessly organized his play as Tightie or Loosey with the alteration of opponents, his mood, or sense of timing in game rhythms. This same person was very quiet, friendly and would blush when praised within the macro-environment of bar and games. Outside of the Oxford environment, this person acted as though he never met anyone--a real loner. When I asked participants the attributes of an expert poker player, most answered that an expert poker player is a loner.

Another transitional personae of the Stockman admitted that poker and cards really bored him, but people were fun to meet; he preferred to play the stock market which involved more pleasure for his speculative interests.

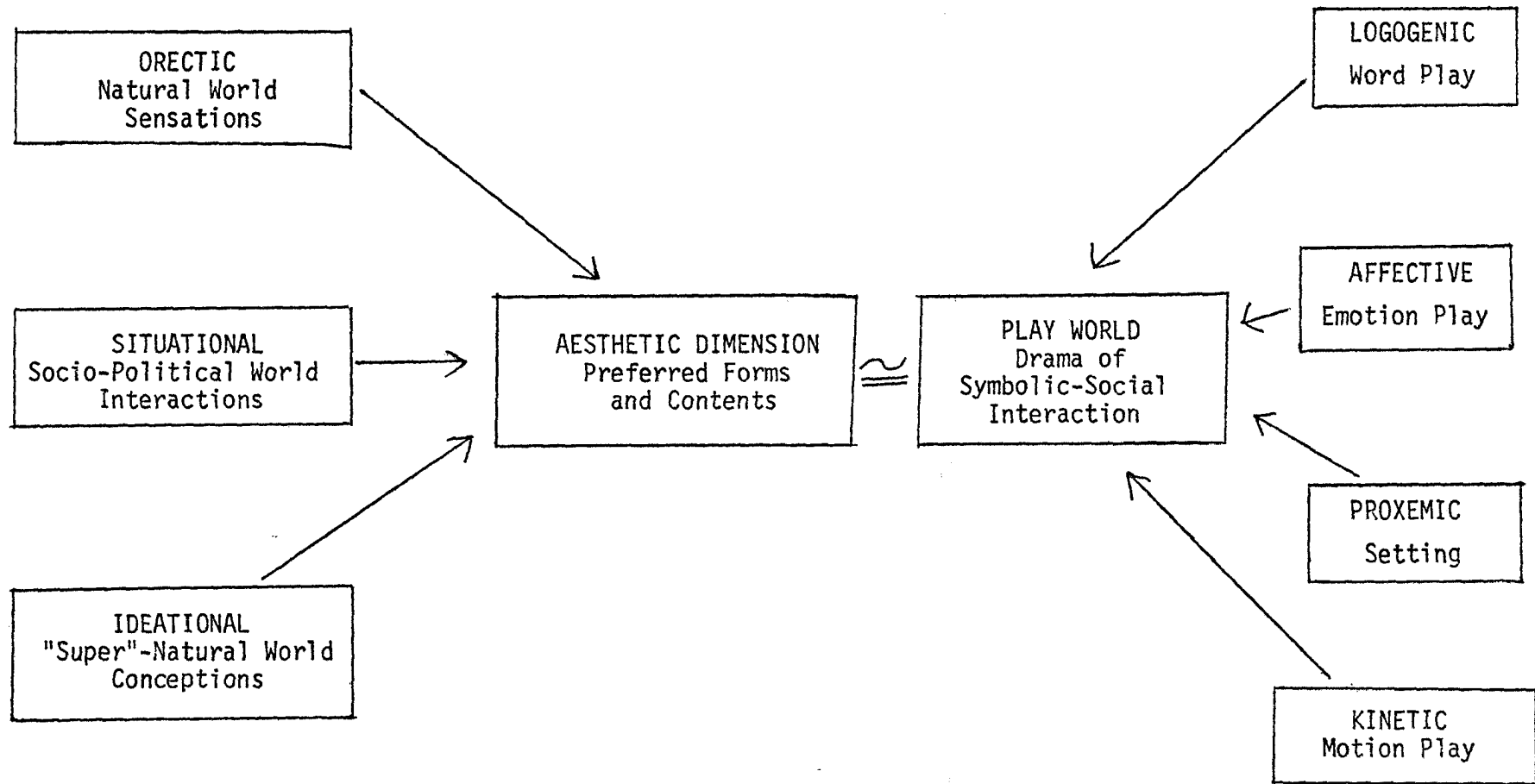
Transitional personae appear to enjoy a transcendent quality of play; liminal man toys with faces, lines, postures and guises for the pure pleasure of mental and social playwriting. Unlike a majority of Oxford personae, who are earnestly engaged in deep play, transitionals subsume moneymaking as part of the pleasurable experience of pure play. Top Hatters play seriously with faces and lines of social transvaluation, but less frequently code-switch from the security of peer group games.

Conclusions

This concluding section pertains to my thoughts and analyses of fieldwork material as these relate to the play world and model-building. The play world offers unique situations to analyze social and symbolic interaction, especially the meaning of optative strategies and the manipulation of images, linguistic virtuosity, symbolic entitlements and social relationships in play. The dramatic context of the play world offers a set of building blocks not unlike Burke's analysis of entitlements or Turner's development of dominant symbols (Table 7). The orrectic, situational and ideational realms of experience are components of an aesthetic dimension of preferred forms and contents, which are activated in the drama of symbolic-social interaction. Play includes word play, emotion play, play with setting and play with motion. Qualitative judgments, such as the constituents of deep play of the Oxfordians versus pure play of transitional personae or peer group play of the Top Hat, are expressed in symbolic and socially relevant meanings by the participants. Since there is a transcendence and emergence from the ordinary life of community members, transitional personae and expert

TABLE 7

EXPERIENTIAL MODEL OF THE PLAY WORLD



poker players are social artists who synthesize behaviors from all three realms of entitlements as well as realms of action to experience an aesthetic dimension of the play world. Munn's (1973) suggestion that we should study "logico-aesthetic" systems is most fruitful and intriguing in play situations (Munn 1973: 608).

The play world is a great "place" to observe man as symbolizer, actor, and acter. An interpretive approach to the ethnography of play may shed some light on meaningfulness that has different sensibilities and logics within orrectic, situational and ideational experience. "Hearing only one authentic voice" is simply not enough when faced with multifaceted behavior in play (Yolton 1967: 197). Placing definitions of form and content in another world of forms and contents suggests a variety of languages to deal with metasocial analysis, especially an aesthetic dimension of human experience in the play world. Like Jim Casey's remark in the Grapes of Wrath:

There ain't no sin and ain't no virtue--there's
just games people play. (Engels 1971: 141)

Interpretive anthropology is grounded in observation and explications offered by participants; it is somewhat like Burke's pun logic, since this mode of analysis seeks a pluralism of concepts and forms that resonate in multiple meanings. An aesthetic dimension of culturally-preferred forms and contents drawn from the orrectic, situational and ideational realms of symbolic entitlements represents a unique keystone to research operational philosophies of participants who are engaged in a dynamic setting of playful social interaction.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF MONTANA POKER TERMINOLOGY

GLOSSARY OF MONTANA POKER TERMINOLOGY

- action - 1) any round of play at the poker table; 2) a round of play which has a good pot on the table; 3) creating action means to drum up a better card game by performers and Looseys.
- action bet - 1) usually an opener by a hand that may be likely to win; 2) any bet or raise.
- ante - a set amount of money required to play a hand. Each player puts in the ante to get into the action.
- balancing pot odds - players will figure the ratio of their investment to the pot size and the strength of their hand.
- banker's box - a cabinet situated behind the house dealer which contains new and used cards, chips and game equipment.
- bet - to place money into action. The bettor may open the hand or continue to bet or raise.
- Big Squeeze: see Whipsawing
- blind opener - a player makes a blind bet before his cards are dealt. A forced blind opener means that the player to the left of the dealer must open blind.
- bug (the) - the joker. A wild card joker with different functions in different poker games.
- building action - to bet, to raise and to increase the pot size.
- bull cook - head hash-slinger of a luncheon counter.
- bullet (the) - an ace
- bulling the game - 1) shoving in a large raise or series of raises to force opponents to fold; 2) to control game action by overt aggression or covert skills.
- bulls - powerful personae
- bull shitting - a lot of talk designed to confuse or deceive players.
- bumping - shoving in a raise to nudge players for a decision to call, raise or fold.

burn - 1) to beat a player; 2) a one-card discard off the top of the drawing deck.

bust - 1) an arrest; 2) a bad hand or bad play in a game; 3) to bust a player means to bankrupt your opponent.

buying the pot: see bulling the game

buy-ins - each game establishment has a set amount to buy one's entrance into the game--a game entrance fee.

card sense - 1) intuition on what your opponent holds; 2) a "sixth sense" about card playing; 3) a player who is experienced and takes well-timed risks.

case card - 1) any fourth card received in the draw; 2) any card which fills out a straight, flush wheel or four of a kind.

catch - to receive a card from the draw.

center deal - house dealers control all card handling.

chase - trying to outdraw an opponent in the draw.

chatter - 1) game talk designed for color, entertainment; 2) creating tension; 3) creating deception

check - to pass the action to the next player without betting or raising.

cinch - a hand that is a sure winner.

Cincinnati - poker games with more than seven players.

cold deck - to stack the deck, pre-deal.

cold seat - unlucky chair or position at the poker table.

crimping - 1) bending the cards to mark a place in the deck which is cut at that spot; 2) marking the cards by bending corners or entire back of the card like a turtle's back.

crossroader - a professional gambler who moves from town to town; plays tight but talks loose.

cute ass - homosexual.

dealt-out - a player leaves the game temporarily.

door card - a window card in the hand.

- fish - 1) a non-house player; 2) a non-house player who is a sucker.
- flashing - exposing cards accidentally or deliberately during the deal or when at play.
- fold - to drop out of the hand and lose the action.
- freeze out - (frozen out) 1) a player who forces an opponent out of the game; 2) a poker game with stakes limit in which a busted player may not re-enter.
- gut shot - to fill an inside straight.
- heat - 1) any unpleasant pressure; 2) police pressure on a house or a game.
- heavy action - a round of betting and raising which produces a large pot.
- high rollers - players with lots of money.
- Hold 'Em - a two-hole Stud game from Las Vegas.
- hole card - any card which is concealed from view.
- hook (the) - a jack.
- hung-up - 1) inhibited behavior; 2) behavior of a person who cannot or will not change his behavior, especially the older generation.
- hustler - anyone who tries to get a game going with hopes of taking someone's money. Hustlers are quite overt about organizing games and people know his intent.
- in the dark - 1) a player who is seated to the left of the dealer; 2) a player who shows off by betting blind.
- jacked off - 1) a fouled-up hand; 2) any higher hand beating pair of Jacks.
- jock - an athlete
- john (the) - restroom
- Kalispell Wheel - an ace-high straight.
- keno - a bingo-type game drawing action from bar patrons.
- kingpin - 1) a professional gambler-manager, an organizer; 2) any top-notch poker player who is adept and ruthless.

Liar's Poker - a dice game simulating poker hands.

Liberated woman -- 1) a woman who has more than one lover; 2) a lesbian.

live one - any player who plays with his own money, a non-house player.

lock - a winning hand which is a sure thing.

Loose Ass (Loosey) - an offensive strategist who believes in and relies on luck to outdraw or bull his opponents.

Loser - 1) anyone who does not play poker well; 2) a habitual or compulsive loser who cannot win - he wants to lose.

nailing - 1) the cards; means to mark the edges of cards with a fingernail gash; 2) a player, means to beat him soundly, especially when the player thinks he is the winner; 3) nailing the nuts, getting the best hand.

nuts (the) - refers to gonads - a hand that is a sure winner.

open blind: see blind opener

open card - any card not concealed from view.

outdraw - chasing cards and receiving a winning card on the last card drawn.

over-cards - any cards in Stud which are higher than the open cards of your opponents.

paints - face cards and tens.

paint factory (a) - a handful of face cards and tens.

Pan - a rummy-type of card game with small stakes.

pat hand - a winning hand that is a sure thing.

pay to see me - forcing an opponent to a showdown call of your bet or raise. He pays to see who wins.

peeking - to cheat by eyeballing an opponent's hand.

pegging - 1) knowing a player's probable moves; 2) cheating by punching tiny holes in the cards' backs for touch clues.

performing - 1) any behavior out of context; 2) loose talkers who chatter; 3) anyone who drank too much.

play position - 1) to pick an advantageous seating arrangement; 2) to play against an opponent's known strategy.

play the odds - 1) see balancing pot odds; 2) knowing the probabilities for filling out your hand; 3) or opportunities for your hand to be at an opponent's hand during the draw.

plowing - shoving in a very large raise to intimidate opponents.

pot odds: see balancing pot odds.

pull in one's horns - 1) to control your self-expression; 2) limit aggressive and deceptive behaviors.

put down - to criticize or ridicule another person.

raise - to increase the amount of the bet which is passed you.

rake-off - a percentage of the pot which goes to the house.

Ran: see running scared.

read - 1) the cards, means to peek into another's hand; 2) to read the cards means to size up opponent's potential; 3) read the game, means to know how to react to an opponent's strategies.

rotating deal - all players may deal the cards and call the game of their choice.

ruff 7 - 1) a lowball hand with 76 or 75 as highest two cards.

running scared - 1) a player who is afraid of his opponent's potential and folds; 2) a player who has no confidence in his hand or ability and tries to bull the game.

sabotage - to deliberately set a trap for your opponents.

Salt Lake Pair - an ace-king combination.

sandbag - 1) not betting your hand to its full potential; 2) not playing your hand to its full potential; 3) pretending to appear sleepy; 4) a method of sabotaging.

scared: see running scared.

screwball(s) - 1) a player who plays everything that is dealt to him; 2) a disruptive and nutty player.

screwed - beaten, "royally screwed" means that you have been soundly beaten.

- sharp - 1) a good player; for example, one who would pick up an opponent's accidental flash.
- shaving - thinning borders on the cards to mark certain cards or a place in the deck.
- shoving in: see plowing.
- showdown - usually two players who square off against each other in the final round of betting. (This can occur before the draw.)
- shy - 1) a scared player; 2) to come up financially short; 3) not to bet, only call; 4) to fall short of cards needed from the draw.
- slow betting - to check or bet very small amounts in suckering opponents to contribute to the pot. (A slow bettor usually has a very good hand.)
- speaks for itself - 1) the cards are turned up at a showdown and reveal the player's hand; 2) the dealer will call the highest combination of the winning hand to protect a player who might have overlooked his best combination.
- spotting - to mark cards with a foreign substance for visual clues in cheating across the table.
- straddle - a player next to the player in the dark buys the right to waive first round commitment.
- talking loose - deceiving players and creating tension by chattering.
- tapping - bleeding off money from a player, to tap him off.
- tell - 1) create a ruse, for example, a physical tell-tale quirk which players read as a clue to your strategy or hand; 2) some people read unconscious tells of their opponents; for example, rubbing your nose, squinting, biting one's lip may give clues to your hand and how one will play it.
- Tight Ass (Tightie) - a defensive strategist who believes in and relies in statistical probabilities for hand and strategy.
- under the gun - a player behind the dealer who must open the action.
- Union Oil - a 76 in Lowball.
- Wheel (a) - an ace low straight in Lowball which call includes the bug.

whipsawing - two players will squeeze out an opponent seated between them. The first player raises, and his partner will re-raise (usually double the amount of the first raise.) The player in between finds the action too rough and folds.

wired - matching hole card with first open card in Stud; example, one hole card Jack "wired" to the next open card Jack.

APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGY ON VOCABULARY

METHODOLOGY ON VOCABULARY

I initially asked for the definitions of words, synonyms, antonyms, and analogies of strategy. I wrote the words on three by five index cards with magic marker and bold type. I pronounced a word after a minute or so hesitation on the part of my informant. Many times pronouncing the word failed to get a response. I recorded all responses and watched for "blocked" items of stigmatic words. I listed all comments and made a list of tentative blocks and "I don't know." I checked attitudes that were linked with sex and drug argots. I wanted to check loan words that might be creeping in from the younger generation's argots.

I presented the contrastive sets of action and status by placing an initial dichotomy in separate columns. I asked the informants to put the remaining cards into the two categories or in the middle, if items did not fit or could be both. I also asked why an informant "centered" an item to discover whether it was a neutral or a both category. I constructed a master list of informant responses to action and status categories. Often informants would give me a new word or strategy, and I would have to re-check or cross-check this item.

My word list included argots from: poker, drug, hip, pool, prison, homosexual, prostitution, hobo, underworld, World War II and racing terms. I deliberately chose words like "reefer" that had at least two meanings for generational groupings. My testing methods were obtained from Berlin, Breedlove and Raven (1970). I used a triads test to note the choice of

analogues, and to determine whether informants made their choice on the basis of lexical or grammatical knowledge. I found that when informants did not know the lexical item, they tried to analyze the choice on the basis of grammar. Triads were the only set of tests that included some unknown terms. By using triads and dichotomies, I tried to discover those terms that were not interchangeable and those bounded by specific dimensions.

The following word list is marked for: kind of argot, place most frequently used, source other than participants in the gaming encounters, special note of local usage only, and finally, stigmatic attitudes associated with the words. Underlined words are most often used in the Stockman and Oxford. Asterisked items (*) are exclusively from the Top Hat. Items that are unmarked are apparently not known and not used in all three play environments.

Opportunity for formal interviewing was extremely limited by informants' unwillingness to be isolated from the game-bar environs. Formal interviews were conducted with a member of each generational grouping, and each member played in two of three possible environments; informant also had knowledge of the third environment. During observation I was able to cross-check and counter-reference many of the frequently used terms. I regret informants' reluctance to taping sessions. The youngest, college-aged student identified more stigmatic vocabulary; the two younger informants provided the most analogies or synonyms in formal interviewing sessions. In my judgment, the oldest informant blocks more stigmatic value or lexical items. This was later revealed in a cross-check in the

presence of his wife, i.e., she cued and registered disbelief when her husband feigned ignorance of the terms; he admitted that he knew the terms and she "kept him honest" during the remaining interviewing time.

<u>ARGOT</u>	<u>PLACE AND SOURCE</u>	<u>LOCAL ONLY</u>	<u>STIGMATIC</u>
Poker	<u>"A" HOLER</u>	X	X
Poker	BIG CAT (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	BLAZE (STEIG 1972)		
Homosex.	BLUE GOWN (FARRELL 1972)		
Poker	BOBTAIL STRAIGHT (STEIG 1972)		
Hip	<u>BREAD</u>		
Poker	<u>BULL</u>		
Prison WW II	<u>BULL COOK</u> (SPRADLEY 1970)	X (restaurant use only)	
Poker	<u>BULLET</u> (STEIG 1972)	Billings more than Missoula	
Poker	<u>BURN</u>		
Hip Homosex.	<u>BUMMER</u> (FARRELL 1972)	X (not sexual just denotes a bad thing)	
Hobo	CALIFORNIA BLANKET (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	<u>CASE CARD</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	<u>CINCINNATI</u>		
Poker	<u>CHASE</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	<u>CHECK</u>		
Hip Drugs	<u>COKE</u>	X (Locally is known but often blocked)	
Poker	<u>COLD DECKING</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)		
Poker	<u>COLD SEAT</u>		

Poker	<u>CRIMP</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE STONE 1971)		
Poker	<u>CROSSROADER</u>		X
Poker	<u>DEAD MAN'S HAND</u>	X legend is known	
Poker	<u>DOOR CARD</u>	X (not used in Billings)	
Poker	<u>DRIVER'S SEAT</u> (STEIG 1972)	X (different meaning from Steig)	
Poker	<u>EDGE</u> (STEIG 1972)	X (different meaning from Steig)	
Poker	<u>FISH</u>		
Poker	<u>FLASH</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Prostitution	<u>FLEABAG</u> (JAMES 1972)	X (not known but most thought it meant some- thing deroga- tory or lowdown)	X
Poker	<u>FREEZE OUT</u> (STEIG)		
Poker	<u>FULL BOAT</u>		
Racing	<u>GEE-GEE</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Racing	<u>GETAWAY DAY</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Prison	<u>GOULASH</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	<u>GUT SHOT</u>		
Poker	<u>HIGH ROLLER</u>		
Prostitution	<u>HO</u> (JAMES 1972)		

Prison	<u>HEAT</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	X (Oxford-Police pressure)	X
Racing	<u>HEDGE BETS</u>		
Poker & Prostitution	<u>HOOK</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972) (JAMES 1972)	X (a Jack)	
Pool & Poker	<u>HUSTLER</u>		
Prostitution & Drugs	HYPE (JAMES 1972)		
Poker	IMMORTAL (STEIG 1972)	X-Billings only "Immortal Nuts"	
Poker	<u>IN THE DARK</u>		
Poker & Hip	<u>JACKED OFF</u> 2 meanings		X
Prostitution Homosex.	<u>JOHN</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER, FARRELL AND JAMES 1972) 2 meanings	X (bathroom only)	
Poker	<u>KALISPELL WHEEL</u>	X (Missoula, Local only)	
Poker	<u>KICKER</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	<u>KINGPIN</u>		
Poker	<u>LADY LUCK</u>		
Pool	LEMONADING (POLSKY 1967)		
Poker	<u>LIARS POKER</u>		
Poker	<u>LIVE ONE</u>		
Poker	<u>LOCK</u> (STEIG 1972)		X (on nuts)
Poker	<u>LOOSE</u> (STEIG 1972)		X (Ass)
Poker	<u>LOOSEY</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	<u>LOSER</u>		

Poker	<u>LUCK</u>		
Prostitution	MACKMAN (JAMES 1972; WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	MONKEY FLUSH (STEIG 1972)		
Poker	<u>MUSCLE IN</u>	X(Betting strategy)	
Poker	<u>NAILING</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)	X (two meanings; both used)	X (the nuts)
Drugs Hip	NARC* (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972, Nark)		X
Poker	<u>NATURAL HAND</u> or <u>A NATURAL</u>		
Poker	<u>NUTS</u>		
Hip	PAD*		X
WW II	PEARL DIVER (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	<u>PEGGING</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)	("Reading" the cards; not punching holes)	
Poker	<u>PLOWING</u>		
Poker	<u>POT ODDS</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Racing	<u>QUINELLA</u>		
Prison	RABBIT TIME (SPRADLEY 1970 and FARRELL 1972)		
Poker	<u>RAISE</u>		
Poker	<u>RAKE</u>		
Poker	<u>RAZOO</u> or <u>RAZZ</u>		
Poker	<u>READ</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)		

Hobo Drug	<u>REEFER</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	X (refrigerator car; marijuana) (2 meanings)	X
Poker	<u>RUFF 7'S</u>		
Poker	<u>SALT LAKE PAIR</u>		
Poker	<u>SANDBAG</u> (STEIG 1972)		
Racing	<u>SCRATCH SHEET</u>		
Hip Poker	<u>SCREW</u> (STEIG 1972)		X
Poker	<u>SHARP</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	<u>SLOW BET</u>		
Poker	<u>SHY</u>		
Poker	SMOKE GLOW (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)		
Hip Drugs	SNUFF BOX*		X
Pool Drugs	SPEED (POLSKY 1967, WENT- WORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	X (drugs only)	X
Pool	STICK HALL (POLSKY 1967)		
Prison	STIR (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)		
Poker	<u>STRADDLE</u>		
Poker	<u>SUCKER</u>		
Poker	<u>TAP</u>		
Drug	<u>TEASTICK</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	X (marijuana)	X
Poker	<u>TELL</u> (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972 and MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)		

Poker	THE 7'S (STEIG 1972)	
Hip	THE FLICKS*	
Poker	<u>TIGHT</u> (STEIG 1972)	X (Ass)
Poker	<u>UNDER THE GUN</u> (STEIG 1972)	
Poker	<u>UNION OIL</u>	
Homosex.	WAZOO (FARRELL 1972)	
Poker	<u>WHOREHOUSE CUT</u> (MAHIGEL AND STONE 1971)	X
Poker	<u>WHIPSAW</u> (STEIG 1972)	
Poker	<u>WILD CARD</u>	
Poker	<u>WINNER</u>	
Poker	<u>WIRED</u> (STEIG 1972)	
Prison	YARD BIRD (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	
Underworld	ZUCH (WENTWORTH AND FLEXNER 1972)	

APPENDIX C

GAME SIMULATION

GAME SIMULATION

I dealt ten hands that were randomly cut and dealt to seven players. The cards were dealt on different days with different decks. I analyzed the hands for three games--High Draw, Lowball and Stud (thirty hands total). I numbered the cards throughout the deck including the draw cards. I eliminated the burn in any High Draw or Lowball game. I worked through all hands and noted potentials for possible winners before the draw. My basic reasoning was that: 1) players would be drawing with face cards, pairs or a possible open-ended straight in High Draw; 2) that players would restrict a hand's potential to no more than two cards in the Lowball draw; and 3) the hole card in five-card Stud had to be as high or higher than any opponent's open over-card for the player to remain in the game.

I picked seventeen hands that were most interesting and challenging; some had potentials for bluffing. I calculated the even or uneven distribution of pre-deal potential winners:

	Even	Uneven
Good Hand	6	6
Poor Hand	2	3

I checked which seat had the most chances to win. I found that Player VI had the most chances to win; Player III, the second most chances to win and all remaining players had even chances except Player II, who had most chances to lose.

I worked out a rotating deal sequence to see if a dealer would have an advantage over his opponents during his dealing time. I found that out of seventeen hands, the dealer had: two good chances to win, three even chances to win and ten with no significant advantage. The analysis restricted to the hands as dealt and did not apply "position strategies" to dealer's adversaries.

Example of notating a randomly dealt hand:

s = spades h = hearts d = diamonds c = clubs

PLAYER	Card #1	Card #2	Card #3	Card #4	Card #5
I	As	Kh	3h	Jh	8s
II	9h	9c	8d	3c	5s
III	Ks	Jc	8h	6h	2c
IV	Qh	10s	10h	2h	4s
V	Ah	Kc	Jd	9s	5d
VI	Ac	Qd	10d	7h	7c
VII	Bug	Qs	Qc	Js	6c

G A M E S:

PLAYER	High Draw		Lowball	Stud
I	A K J 8 3	A K	2 draw	A K
II	9 9 8 5 3	Pr 9	1 or 2 draw	Nines Wired
III	K J 8 6 2	--	2 draw	
IV	Q 10 10 4 2	Pr 10	Fold	
V	A K J 9 5	A K	Fold	A K
VI	A Q 10 7 7	Pr 7	Fold	
VII	Bug Q Q J 6	Bug, Pr Q	Gamble 3 to a wheel	

During the interviews, I asked players to seat opponents (and I asked for opponents' names) in table positions. I asked the informant to tell me the strategies for himself and opponents for a specific hand. As mentioned before, most informants were reluctant to do so. Only one cooperated to the extent that he placed all tight players in front of himself and one other loose player. I did have an opportunity to check player and informant styles of poker strategy. The game simulation was helpful in the sense that it clarified things I had observed or heard in the field. However, game simulation within a traditional game theorist's model of expectations and maximizing potentials would be very unfruitful, even unreliable. There are so many different factors which occur during interaction of gaming encounters, that informants could not keep track of all the factors influencing strategies: For example:

- 1) Tight versus Loose Players against code-switchers
and position players
- 2) Drinkers versus non-drinkers
- 3) Quality of players in the action
- 4) Knowledge of the game and your opponents
- 5) Amounts of money flowing from the house controllers

These variables can change with the entrance of one player to an established game. It would be most difficult to check maximization, especially when house people are controlling the flow of money and folding good hands to give a sucker "a break."

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