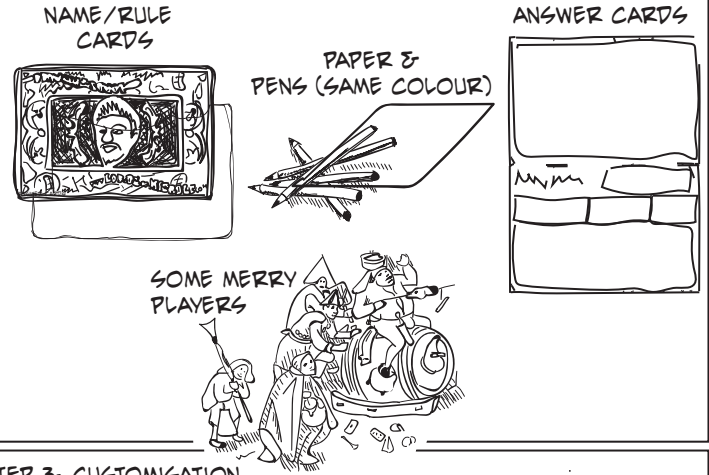


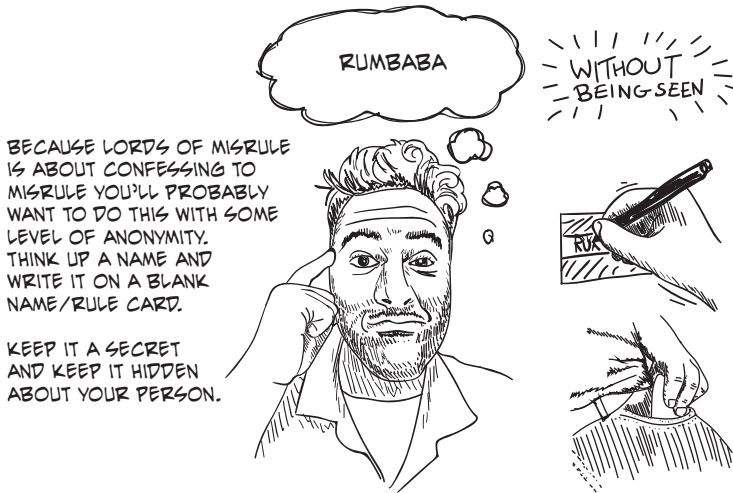


HELLO, MY NAME IS DR. ALAN MEADES, I'M A SENIOR LECTURER AT CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY, AND MY RESEARCH AREA IS PLAY AND MISRULE. LORDS OF MISRULE IS A GAME THAT I'VE DEVELOPED TO HELP ME LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE PLAY, AND THE SITUATIONS WHERE WE CHOOSE TO BREAK RULES WHEN WE DO PLAY. I HOPE THAT IT'S A GAME THAT YOU FIND ENJOYABLE, THAT YOU CUSTOMISE IT FOR THE WAYS THAT YOU PLAY, AND THAT YOU CONSIDER SHARING SOME OF YOUR IDEAS AND GAME RESPONSES WITH ME.

STEP 1: THINGS YOU'LL NEED TO PLAY LORDS OF MISRULE



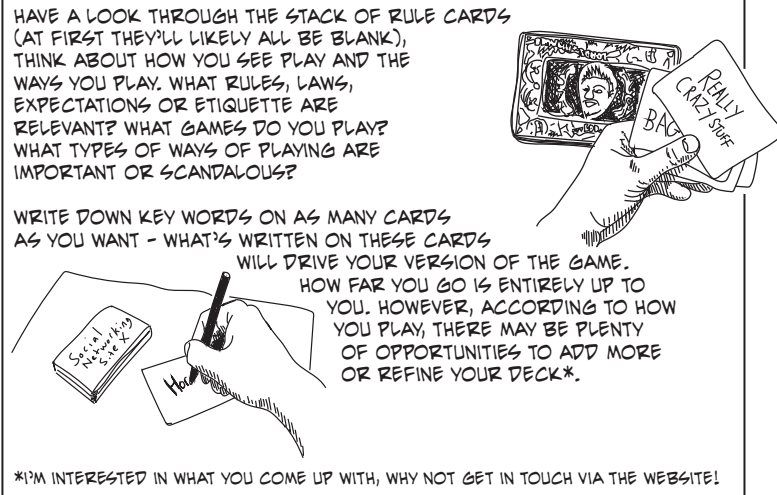
STEP 2: PICKING AN IDENTITY - BECOMING A LORD OF MISRULE



BECAUSE LORDS OF MISRULE IS ABOUT CONFESSING TO MISRULE YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT TO DO THIS WITH SOME LEVEL OF ANONYMITY. THINK UP A NAME AND WRITE IT ON A BLANK NAME/RULE CARD.

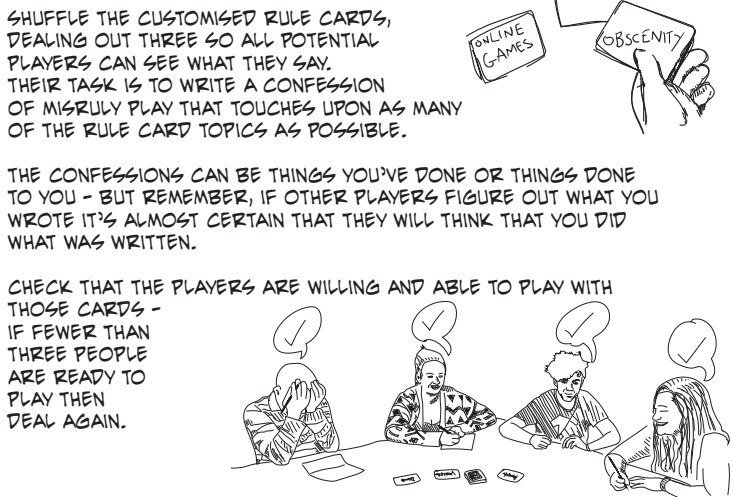
KEEP IT A SECRET AND KEEP IT HIDDEN ABOUT YOUR PERSON.

STEP 3: CUSTOMISATION



*I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU COME UP WITH, WHY NOT GET IN TOUCH VIA THE WEBSITE!

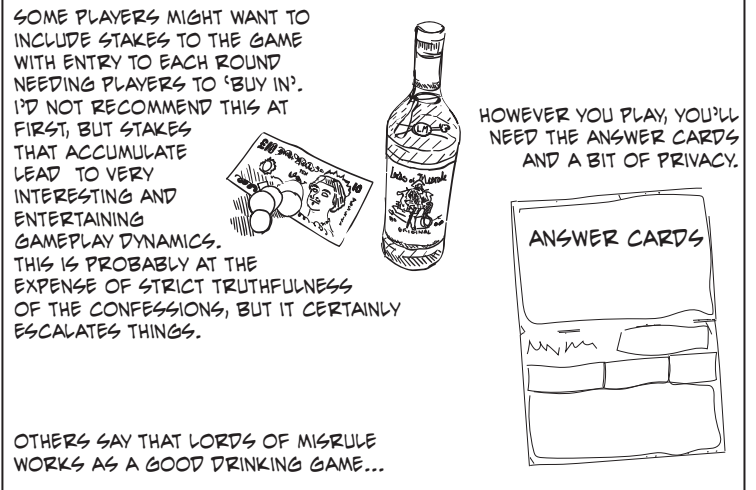
STEP 4: AGREEING TO PLAY



THE CONFESSIONS CAN BE THINGS YOU'VE DONE OR THINGS DONE TO YOU - BUT REMEMBER, IF OTHER PLAYERS FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WROTE IT'S ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THEY WILL THINK THAT YOU DID WHAT WAS WRITTEN.

CHECK THAT THE PLAYERS ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO PLAY WITH THOSE CARDS - IF FEWER THAN THREE PEOPLE ARE READY TO PLAY THEN DEAL AGAIN.

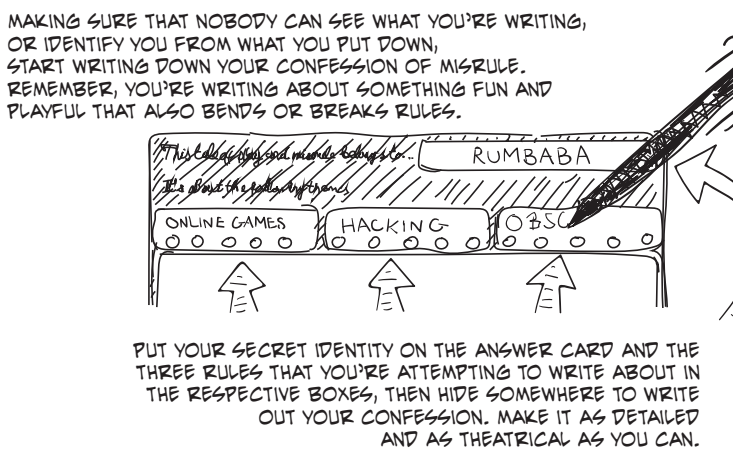
STEP 5: SETTING THE STAKES



HOWEVER YOU PLAY, YOU'LL NEED THE ANSWER CARDS AND A BIT OF PRIVACY.

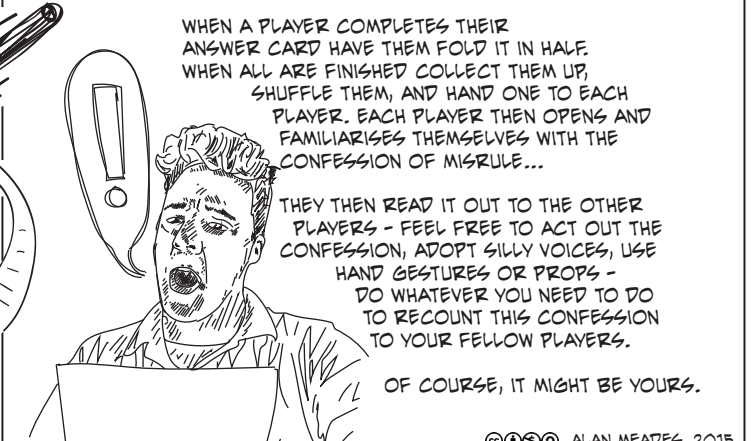
OTHERS SAY THAT LORDS OF MISRULE WORKS AS A GOOD DRINKING GAME...

STEP 6: WRITING YOUR CONFESSION



PUT YOUR SECRET IDENTITY ON THE ANSWER CARD AND THE THREE RULES THAT YOU'RE ATTEMPTING TO WRITE ABOUT IN THE RESPECTIVE BOXES, THEN HIDE SOMEWHERE TO WRITE OUT YOUR CONFESSION. MAKE IT AS DETAILED AND AS THEATRICAL AS YOU CAN.

STEP 7: PERFORMING THE CONFESSION



OF COURSE, IT MIGHT BE YOURS.

STEP 8: INTERROGATING THE PERFORMERS

AFTER THE PERFORMERS HAVE PRESENTED THEIR CONFESSION EACH PLAYER TAKES IT IN TURN TO ASK THEM A QUESTION OR QUERY A PART OF THEIR TALE OF MISRULE. PERHAPS SOMETHING DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, OR WOULD BE WORTH TALKING ABOUT... OR PERHAPS YOU WANT TO MAKE OTHER PLAYERS SQUIRM AND THINK YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHOSE CONFESSION IT IS BY THEIR RESPONSES AND BEHAVIOUR.

WHAT? HOW? BUT... WHO? IF? WHY?



SCORING... HERE

EACH ANSWER CARD HAS SPACE TO WRITE DOWN THE RULE CARDS THAT HAVE BEEN DEALT. EACH OF THESE HAVE FIVE DOTS PRINTED UNDERNEATH, USE THESE TO RECORD HOW WELL THE OTHER PLAYERS FEEL THE CONFESSION DEALS WITH OR RESPONDS TO THE SUBJECTS ON THE RULE CARDS.

STEP 9: SCORING AND RECORDING TOTALS



THEN RECORD THE TOTALS



SCORES ARE DECIDED BY ALL THE PLAYERS, INCLUDING THE ONE THAT PERFORMED AND THE ONE THAT WROTE IT (WHOEVER THAT MIGHT BE)...

BUT:

PAY ATTENTION TO WHO SAYS AND DOES WHAT, AND IF SOMETHING SEEMS OUTLANDISH OR MADE UP YOU NEED TO SAY THAT...

IF IT'S A LIE IT GETS ZERO
DO THIS FOR ALL THE PLAYERS AND CONFESSIONS.



STEP 10: DECIDING WHAT TO DO NEXT

ONCE ALL PLAYERS HAVE BEEN SCORED, AND YOU'VE RECORDED THE TOTALS YOU'VE GOT SOME CHOICES:

CROWN A WINNER... WELL, INVITE A WINNER TO STEP FORWARD...

OR PLAY ANOTHER ROUND WITHOUT RAISING THE STAKES - GO BACK TO STEP 4

OR PLAY ANOTHER ROUND AND RAISE THE STAKES: ADD NEW CARDS? ADD MORE TO THE BUY IN STAKE? WHY NOT TAKE OUT THE RANDOMNESS AND AGREE THE QUESTIONS BEFORE HAND? GO BACK TO STEP 5

OR DECIDE YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH AND LET THE OTHER LORDS PLAY ON... THE PROBLEM HERE IS THAT YOU'VE LOST YOUR STAKE, AND THE OTHER PLAYERS WILL KNOW WHAT YOUR CONFESSIONS ARE.



STEP 11: WINNING?!

WHEN WE PLAY IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT EACH PLAYER MAY BE TRYING TO WIN IN DIFFERENT WAYS. THE SAME IS TRUE IN LORDS OF MISRULE.

IF YOU'VE CHOSEN TO PLAY WITH STAKES OF ANY SORT THE ONLY WAY TO 'WIN' AND CLAIM YOUR PRIZE IS TO SHOW YOUR NAME CARD AND PROVE THAT YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WROTE THOSE CONFESSIONS. BUT... DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW?

START WITH THE PLAYER WITH THE HIGHEST SCORE. GIVE THEM 60 SECONDS TO CLAIM THE PRIZE BY SHOWING THEIR CARD. IF THEY DON'T DO THIS MOVE ON TO THE NEXT HIGHEST POINT SCORER UNTIL THE PRIZE IS CLAIMED OR NOT...



SO, THAT'S KINDA HOW TO PLAY LORDS OF MISRULE, BUT IT'S A GAME ABOUT BENDING AND BREAKING RULES FOR FUN THOUGH. THIS MEANS THAT YOU SHOULD BREAK THESE RULES OR THINK OF...

STRATEGIES

DECIDE WHAT KIND OF PLAY YOU WANT TO DO. I, FOR EXAMPLE, PREFER TOYING WITH PLAYERS RATHER THAN 'WINNING'. SO THESE ARE THINGS I'D DO: PICK ANOTHER PLAYER'S NAME AS AN IDENTITY; TELL A STORY INVOLVING OTHER PLAYERS; CHANGE MY IDENTITY EACH ROUND; SCORE EVERYONE 5 STARS; PICK ONE PLAYER'S IDENTITY AND SCORE THEM HIGH ALL THE TIME; STEAL ANOTHER PLAYER'S IDENTITY; FORM AN ALLIANCE; ...WIND PEOPLE UP AND JUST MISRULE.



THAT'S NOT PLAY! ☹️

WE'LL COME TO THAT IN A BIT, BUT FIRST - COLLECT UP ALL THE ANSWER CARDS, STICK THEM IN AN ENVELOPE AND DESTROY THEM...

OR EVEN BETTER POST THEM OR PHOTOGRAPH AND UPLOAD THEM SO THAT DR ALAN MEADES CAN USE THEM WITH HIS RESEARCH. ALTERNATIVELY GO TO THE WEBSITE AND GET IN TOUCH.

ONLINE OR BY POST

WWW.LORDS-OF-MISRULE.COM
LORDS-OF-MISRULE.WETRANSFER.COM

DR ALAN MEADES
CANTERBURY CHRIST
CHURCH UNIVERSITY,
NORTHWOOD ROAD,
BROADSTAIRS,
KENT, U.K.
CT10 2WA

YEAH, FINE... BUT WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS?

ASIDE FROM LORDS OF MISRULE BEING AN ENTERTAINING GAME IT IS A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT PLAY AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HOW WE PLAY AND WHAT IS UNDERSTOOD AS 'GOOD' PLAY.

DUTCH HISTORIAN AND CULTURAL THEORIST, JOHAN HUIZINGA, CAME UP WITH THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER OF PLAY. IT'S BY NO MEANS THE ONLY ONE, BUT IT GIVES US A GOOD IDEA OF HOW WE REGARD 'GOOD PLAY' EVEN TODAY.

- Play is free, is in fact freedom.
- Play is not "ordinary" or "real" life.
- Play is distinct from "ordinary" life both as to locality and duration.
- Play creates order, is order. Play demands order absolute and supreme.
- Play is connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained from it.

JOHAN HUIZINGA 1872-1945
HOMO LUDENS (1938)



BUT OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS I'VE BEEN STUDYING THE WAYS THAT PEOPLE PLAY (VIDEOGAMES MOSTLY), AND I'VE FOUND LOADS OF EXAMPLES OF PLAY THAT INCLUDE:

RULE BREAKING, DISORDER, DECEPTION, PROFIT, RISK AND POWER

AND THESE DON'T FIT INTO THESE WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT PLAY... INSTEAD THE PLAYERS ARE SEEN AS BAD, JUVENILE, CRIMINAL OR MANY OTHER NAMES AND LABELS. THE POINT IS THAT THESE KINDS OF PLAY ARE SEEN AS:

ABNORMAL...

AND I'M NOT CONVINCED THAT'S THE CASE.



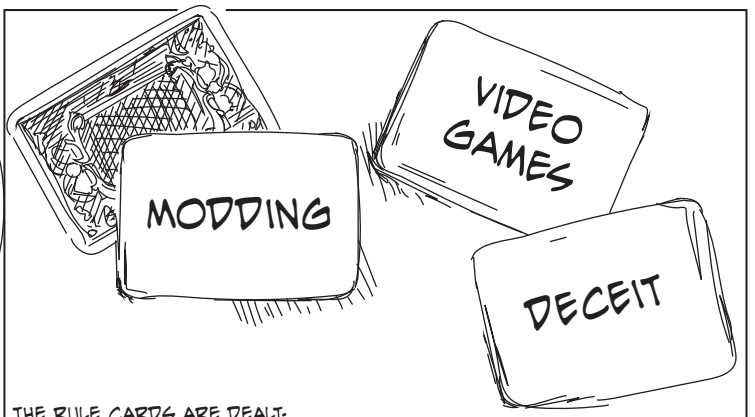
BEFORE I GET TOO DEEP INTO THINGS...

SECRET AGENT DISGUISE SET

PSSST! OVER HERE!

HAVING A HARD TIME IMAGINING WHAT A GAME OF LORDS OF MISRULE MIGHT ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE? HERE'S AN EXAMPLE BASED UPON CONFESSIONS OF MISRULE AND PLAY IN ALAN'S BOOK 'UNDERSTANDING COUNTERPLAY IN VIDEO GAMES'.

IDENTITY: ZAKHAEV



THE RULE CARDS ARE DEALT:
 MODDING - MODIFYING TECHNOLOGY, SOFTWARE OR HARDWARE;
 VIDEOGAMES - GAMES PLAYED ON COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY;
 DECEIT - DECEIVING SOMEONE BY CONCEALING OR MISREPRESENTING THE TRUTH.

ZAKHAEV'S ANSWER CARD...

Zakhaev

It's about the following themes



WHAT ACT OF MISRULE OCCURRED?

Me and a few friends set up a specially modified version of a Call of Duty game on the Xbox. We then tricked other players into playing it, and when they played it the game stripped them of all the stuff they'd unlocked through months of play - or had paid people to add to their games, ruining it for everyone else playing properly.

WHO DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE?

It was me and some of my mates from back home, probably five of us. All seventeen year old blokes at the time.

WHO OR WHAT WAS THE TARGET OF THIS ACT OF MISRULE?

We picked on d*cks - other players who obviously had hacked their games to make them look better than everyone else and giving them weapon unlocks they didn't deserve or know how to use properly. These idiots ruin the game for everyone.

WHEN DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE TAKE PLACE?

It was a fair few years back now when we were still at school - three and a half years ago, in the summer break.

HOW OFTEN DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE TAKE PLACE?

We probably did this five or six times, catching about forty of these players and robbing them of their ill gotten unlocks.

WHAT RULES WERE BROKEN?

ALL of the ones above, but when I think about it there were loads. The rules of the game, rules about how to use Xbox Live, and rules about hacking Xboxes too. I didn't do that bit, but I reckon it's probably against the law.

DID ANYONE GET IN TROUBLE?

NO! A few free accounts got banned (I think) but none of us got any grief about it.

FLIP OVER

HOW WAS IT DONE?

It was so funny, so just like a lot of people we'd been playing around with modded games on CoD because one of my friends had a hacked Xbox. So we found out that someone had made a game that took people's unlocks away. So, we got hold of the file and set up a match and then started playing a normal game looking for sh*t players with loads of good unlocks. Players who didn't deserve it and were ruining the game. Then, after we'd written down their names we invited them to play a 'special unlock game', but we used accounts that we'd made specially in case they got banned. Loads of them took the bait and played in the game, we even made messages appear on the screen saying 'adding all mega unlocks' and shit like that... then BOOM! at the end of the match the last second it goes MINUS INFINITY experience points and they lose EVERYTHING!

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS?

HAAAAHA! The messages were just so full on! ...people were just screaming, you couldn't make out what they were saying because they were so angry... We wouldn't say anything back most of the time, but sometimes we said we were Microsoft employees that had had enough, saying - "this is payback, you've brought this on yourself". While other times we'd just say "you didn't earn that stuff properly and you can just start again you d*cks". And then that's when all the funny messages start - and they're like "What are you doing, Leave me alone! ...they send you hate mail and rubbish. And I like that. It's very enjoyable.

WHY WAS IT DONE?

You spend a lot of time nurturing your account and then it's your pride... and then on the leader board you're just wiped out by someone who's hacked their game. This was payback for all those scumbags... and besides it was really, really, really funny.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT ALL?

It was the funniest thing I've ever done on a videogame, it was totally hilarious. I don't feel guilty or anything, these people deserved it, and beside at the end of the day it's just a videogame. So what, a few lost a couple of months worth of unlocks, guns and icons. So what? Get over it. I'd do it again at the drop of the hat.

NOW, THE RULE CARDS THAT ZAKHAEV WAS RESPONDING TO WERE ALL ABOUT VIDEOGAMES AND COUNTERPLAY (THAT WAS WHAT MY PHD AND FIRST BOOK WERE ABOUT), BUT LORDS OF MISRULE IS INTENDED TO BE FLEXIBLE AND WORK WITH THE GAMES AND WAYS THAT YOU PLAY. HERE ARE SOME GENERIC SUGGESTIONS FOR RULE CARD TO GET YOU STARTED, BUT YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECK PRETTY QUICKLY. FEEL FREE TO MAKE THEM AS SPECIFIC AS YOU NEED...

HOLIDAY	INJURY	LOSS	SECRET	DECEIT	DRINK
VEHICLE	PHONE	SPORT	VALUABLE	HIDDEN	OFFENSE
RISK	VIOLENCE	RIDICULE	WINNING	GANG	PRANK
OPPOSITE SEX	WEBSITE	VIDEO GAME	DISGUST	LAUGHTER	PROFIT

REMEMBER...

LORDS OF MISRULE IS ALL FULLY CUSTOMISABLE, FEEL FREE TO MAKE CHANGES TO ANY BIT OF IT. WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN IS EXAMPLES OF CONFESSIONS OF MISRULE THAT CROSS THE BOUNDARIES OF PLAY. I DON'T WANT THEM JUST TO BE ABOUT VIDEOGAMES, OR GAMES FOR THAT MATTER BUT ABOUT PLAY IN ITS MOST INCLUSIVE VIEW.

WHAT DO YOU DO THAT YOU FIND PLEASURABLE AND FUN? MANY PEOPLE MIGHT DISAGREE WITH ME, BUT I THINK THAT DEFINES WHAT IS AND ISN'T PLAY.

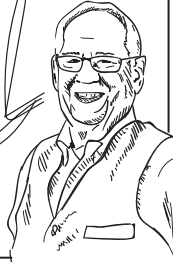
AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE TEMPLATE FILES THAT YOU CAN PRINT OUT TO MAKE A LORDS OF MISRULE GAME SET. I'D SUGGEST COPYING OUT THE GENERIC RULE CARDS TO TEST THE GAME OUT FIRST, AS SOME PLAYERS SPEND HOURS COMING UP WITH DECKS.

NOW I'LL GO INTO A BIT MORE DETAIL ABOUT THE REASONS THAT I'M INTERESTED IN PLAY AND MISRULE, AND THE WHOLE PURPOSE BEHIND DEVELOPING THIS GAME FOR YOU TO PLAY...

I FOUND THAT SO MANY PEOPLE PLAYED OCCASIONALLY IN MEAN, SNEAKY, AGGRESSIVE, PROFITABLE AND EVEN ILLEGAL WAYS, THAT THIS MADE ME THINK THAT MISRULE IN PLAY IS PRETTY NORMAL...

OTHER SCHOLARS HAVE MADE THE SAME OBSERVATIONS, SUCH AS PERFORMANCE STUDIES THEORIST RICHARD SCHECHNER WITH HIS IDEA OF 'DARK PLAY', THAT PEOPLE OFTEN ENGAGE IN...

dark play: "playing with fire," "breaking the rules," "getting away with murder." playing that emphasizes risk, deception, and sheer thrill.
 "playing in the dark" means that some of the players don't know they are playing - like in a con game
 Dark play involves fantasy, risk, fuck, daring, invention, and deception.



RICHARD SCHECHNER
PERFORMANCE STUDIES (2013)

IF THAT IS THE CASE, THEN PLAY AND MISRULE AREN'T DIFFERENT OR COMPETING THINGS, BUT ARE ELEMENTS OF THE SAME THING. THIS SUGGESTS THAT MISRULEY PLAY IS AS IMPORTANT TO US AS OBEDIENT PLAY. IF THIS WERE THE CASE WE'D PROBABLY BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY SITUATIONS WE CREATE TO ENABLE US TO OCCASIONALLY MISRULE...



*THIS IS SPECULATIVE AND SUBJECTIVE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WAYS THAT MISRULE WAS EXPRESSED AND ENABLED THROUGH PLAY. IT INTENTIONALLY MIXES THE CONCEPTS OF PLAY AND LEISURE, AND ADULT AND CHILDHOOD PLAY. IT'S ALSO APPROACHED FROM A EUROPEAN AND BRITISH PERSPECTIVE.

...BUT THAT THEY RECOGNISED THAT THERE WAS A NEED, FELT BY EVERYDAY CITIZENS, TO BREAK RULES. AND THAT THIS WAS FELT SO STRONGLY THAT FESTIVITIES WERE ARRANGED TO ENABLE THIS.

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGHOUT EUROPE DID AWAY WITH THE FESTIVITIES ASSOCIATED DIRECTLY WITH DIONYSUS, BUT NOT THE DESIRE OR NEED TO OCCASIONALLY BE MISRULEY. INSTEAD FESTIVITIES APPEARED THROUGHOUT THE CALENDAR THAT ALLOWED SIMILAR MISRULE TO TAKE PLACE, BUT THESE SAT AGAINST AND ALONGSIDE CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES. INCLUDING THE 'LENTEN CARNIVAL'.



THE LENTEN CARNIVAL TOOK PLACE JUST BEFORE EASTER, IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE. IT WAS A FESTIVAL RUN BY THE PEOPLE, AND CONSISTED OF FEASTING, DRINKING, HURLING ABUSE AT THOSE IN POWER AND BREAKING NORMALLY IMPORTANT RULES.

WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT RELYING TOO HEAVILY ON BAKHTIN'S WORK DUE TO ITS DISTANCE FROM THE ORIGINAL CARNIVAL EVENTS...

HOWEVER, IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE CARNIVAL WAS RESTRICTED BY THOSE IN POWER UNTIL IT LOST MUCH OF ITS DANGEROUS MISRULE, MUCH LIKE A MODERN CARNIVAL.

DESPITE THIS THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF OTHER SIMILAR, BUT SMALLER, EVENTS AND FESTIVITIES THAT ENABLED PEOPLE TO BREAK RULES. OFTEN SEEN IN ENGLISH RURAL COMMUNITIES THESE CAN BE SEEN AS CONNECTING WITH ELEMENTS OF THE BACCHANAL.

E.G. MUMMERS, LORDS OF MISRULE, GLADMAN'S RIDING, MASKING.



DARK PLAY IS THRILLING, LARGELY BECAUSE THE PLAYER UNDERSTANDS THE RISKS - IT IS MISRULEY, UNPREDICTABLE, AND TINGED WITH DANGER. IT IS PRONE TO UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES AND ESCALATION. IT IS ALMOST THE OPPOSITE OF THE 'GOOD' CHARACTER OF PLAY THAT HUIZINGA PRESENTED.



DAVID MYERS
PLAY REDUX (2010)

OTHERS, SUCH AS DAVID MYERS, HAVE GONE FURTHER TO EXPLORE PLAY'S 'ANTI-STRUCTURE'. THIS IS THE IDEA THAT PART OF WHAT PLAY DOES IS CHALLENGE, UNDERMINE AND BREAK RULES AND OTHER ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES.

THE MISRULEY PLEASURES AREN'T THEREFORE UNIQUE TO DARK PLAY, BUT PLEASURES OF PLAY MORE BROADLY. MISRULE AND PLAY ARE DEEPLY INTERLINKED.



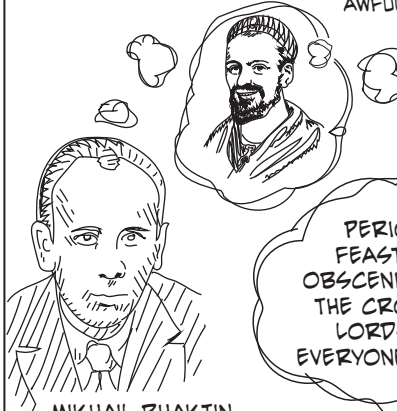
THE ANCIENT GREEKS, (AND ROMANS) WORSHIPPED DIONYSUS, A GOD OF CULTURE, PLAY, REVELRY AND DRUNKENNESS. WHILE DIONYSUS WAS CAPABLE OF CREATING WONDERFUL THINGS HE WAS ALSO PRONE TO RAGE, SAVAGERY AND VIOLENCE - LIKELY REPRESENTING THE RISKS OF DRINK AND EXCESS, BUT ALSO THE RISKS THAT WE SEE IN DARK PLAY.

DIONYSUS WAS WORSHIPPED WITH UNRULY DRUNKEN FEASTS, KNOWN AS BACCHANAL. THESE WERE POPULAR BUT WORRIED THOSE IN POWER, AS THEY ALLOWED PEOPLE TO BEHAVE IN MISRULEY AND UNACCEPTABLE WAYS. THE ROMAN SENATE PASSED LAWS TO CONTROL BACCHANAL IN 200BC. HOWEVER OTHER SIMILAR CELEBRATIONS TOOK OVER, INCLUDING THE SATURNALIA.



THE POINT IS NOT THAT OUR ANCESTORS BELIEVED IN UNRULY AND PLAYFUL GODS...

RUSSIAN LITERARY THEORIST, MIKHAIL BAKHTIN WROTE ABOUT THE LENTEN CARNIVAL AS DEPICTED IN THE WORK OF FRENCH AUTHOR FRANCOIS RABELAIS. BEHAVIOUR TAKING PLACE IN THE CARNIVAL, THE 'CARNIVALESQUE', INCLUDED AN AWFUL LOT OF MISRULE, AGAINST THE CHURCH, THE MONARCHY AND THE POWERS THAT RULED OVER PEOPLE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE...



MIKHAIL BAKHTIN
RABELAIS AND HIS WORLD (1965)

CARNIVALESQUE:
PERIODIC COMMUNAL MISRULE, FEASTING, DRINKING, RUDENESS, OBSCENITY, ANONYMITY AND DISGUISES THE CROWNING OF FOOL KINGS AND LORDS OF MISRULE, ATTACKING EVERYONE - THE POWERFUL AND WEAK.

PEOPLE TOGETHER, BEING MISCEVIOUS, BREAKING RULES, BEING MEAN TO EACHOTHER AND THE POWERS THAT BE.

THIS IS THE PLEASURE OF PLAY AND MISRULE, OCCASIONALLY GOING FAR BEYOND THE NORMAL RESTRICTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS. IT ALSO IS DANGEROUS - IT CAN GO TOO FAR AND BECOME RISKY TO EVERYONE INVOLVED.

THE POINT HERE IS NOT THAT THE CARNIVALESQUE IS PLAY, BUT THAT PLAY IS UNPREDICTABLE, ANTI-STRUCTURAL AND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISRULE LIKE THE CARNIVAL.

IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION BRITAIN COMMUNITIES CREATED THEIR OWN VARIED AND UNIQUE FESTIVITIES, RITUALS AND CELEBRATIONS THAT ALLOWED GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER IN PLAY, FRIVOLITY AND MISRULE.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN THE 18TH CENTURY HAD AN ENORMOUS IMPACT UPON OUR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF PLAY. PEOPLE LEFT SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES (WITH THEIR OWN FESTIVAL FORMS AND CALENDARS) FOR THE CITIES TO WORK IN DIRTY AND DANGEROUS FACTORIES.



Factories treated workers as a commodity, with the emphasis being on keeping factory output up - accidents were frequent and workers' rights and holidays were almost non-existent.

New forms of leisure and entertainment developed in order to serve the factory populations, supported by the spread of train travel. Seaside holiday resorts, such as Margate, took on the spirit of the carnival, all season long, and just a few hours from the factory.

This marks a shift in the popular understanding of play and misrule. Instead of occurring occasionally in a home town, for most people it was something done somewhere else, away from prying eyes, under the veil of anonymity of a visitor (as opposed to resident), and within a permissive holiday attitude.



Seaside holiday destinations, such as Margate, catered for this demand and entrepreneurs, often coming from travelling fair families who had brought carnival festivities to rural towns, developed permanent attractions such as amusement parks and coin operated machine arcades. Examples of these include Margate's Dreamland, Bridlington's Joyland, and Luna Park, Coney Island.

Gradually there was increasing employment reform, including the introduction of bank holidays, where all factory work ceased, and paid holiday leave.

This led to huge growth of seaside holiday resorts, and later foreign charter holidays. These holidays brought back some of the misrule dynamic seen within the saturnalia and carnival, but instead of taking place in the centre of a town or city, this festivity shifted to the edges: seasonal seaside resort's coastline edge, or the edge of a far-flung sun-kissed foreign destination. The edge-ness meant that these spaces offered partial anonymity and a sense of unreality - they became ideal spaces for play, leisure and misrule. Groups of people were able to mingle and to play.



While this changed play and leisure habits, there were other simultaneous changes that altered the ways children, childhood, and play were understood.

Child workers were instrumental in keeping factories working, the frequent industrial accidents and the sense that children were losing an education and a childhood in exchange for work became popular concerns. People became preoccupied with the nature and impact of childhood, and in 1880 a law was passed making education mandatory until the age of 10 (subsequently extended), ending the widespread use of child workers in factories.

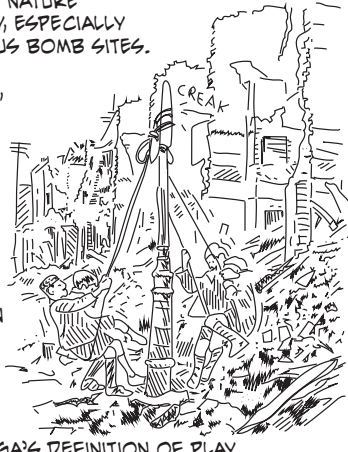


While the quality of teaching varied, the focus was on making sure that children developed necessary skills to become productive members of society, and children's behaviour - and play became subject to continual attention, scrutiny and control.

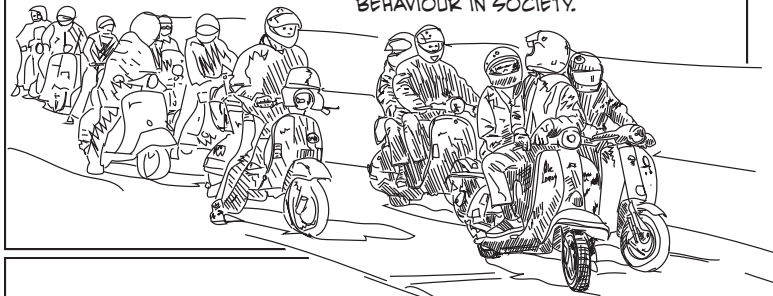
We can trace this scrutiny of play into bomb-sites and destruction that covered the UK after the second world war. People became concerned with the nature and environment of children's play, especially about children playing in dangerous bomb sites. This fit with a national initiative of modernisation and slum clearance, and playgrounds were designed into the fabric of post war town planning.

These new playgrounds offered safer spaces to play in, but also represent a definition and control of the correct ways of playing. While this was no bad thing it marks a modern obsession with the protection and control of play.

From this perspective play should be safe, useful, and only really for children. We're back at Huizinga's definition of play...



This inevitably places ways of playing and misrule at odds with the authorities and general population. This is perhaps best demonstrated with the development of the teenager or adolescent, who is neither child, nor adult, and often fails to fit in with the expected behaviour of either group. We find groups whose play is unacceptable: gangs, mods, rockers, punks etc. who when they stray out of the edge-spaces find themselves at odds with the law and society, and subject to the concern that people have about play and behaviour in society.

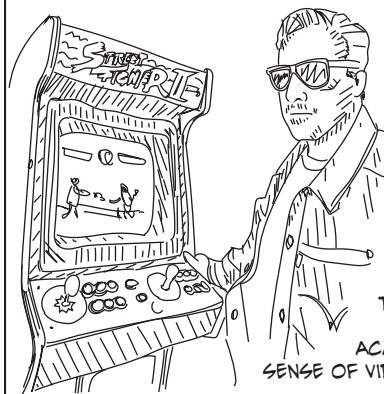


Despite this confrontationalism, play's anti-structure finds new locations and forms to enable its full expression. Play that is more misrule simply seeks edge-spaces that allow it to take place.

In England over the last 60 years there has been a process where geographic edge-spaces (the scrub land, bomb sites, abandoned factories etc.) have been used for play and misrule. In my own childhood and adolescence I played in the woods on the outskirts of town, an abandoned beach tunnel, the empty out-of-season beaches, and the dark and alluring videogame arcades.



For me the arcades were a source of play, danger and wonder. The games promised thrills, sounds and graphics better than any lame BBC or Spectrum home computer could offer, and new machines arrived with impressive frequency. At the same time the arcades themselves became an edge-space for a gang of adolescents, with all the hierarchies, tricks, pranks and petty violence that you'd expect.



This experience was so important to me that I've dedicated my academic career to trying to make sense of videogames and their communities.



I'VE EVEN SPENT TIME RESCUING, RESTORING AND DIGITALLY PRESERVING ARCADE MACHINES. INCLUDING LOCATING, RESTORING, AND THEN DUMPING ONTO MAME (MULTIPLE ARCADE MACHINE EMULATOR) THE ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE OF A STREET FIGHTER 2 WHACK-A-MOLE GAME CALLED KEN SEI MOGURA. IT'S NOW IN MARGATE'S DREAMLAND AND I HOPE THAT IT WILL BE ON PUBLIC DISPLAY WHEN THE PARK REOPENS.

AS I'VE DONE MORE AND MORE WORK LOOKING AT GAMES I'VE BEGUN TO QUESTION HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE TO MY RESEARCH, AND HOW MUCH OF WHAT I'M THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT IS ABOUT SOMETHING BIGGER - PLAY. AND THIS PARTIALLY EXPLAINS MY LOOSE USE OF THE CONCEPTS OF PLAY, LEISURE, ANTI-STRUCTURE AND MISRULE.

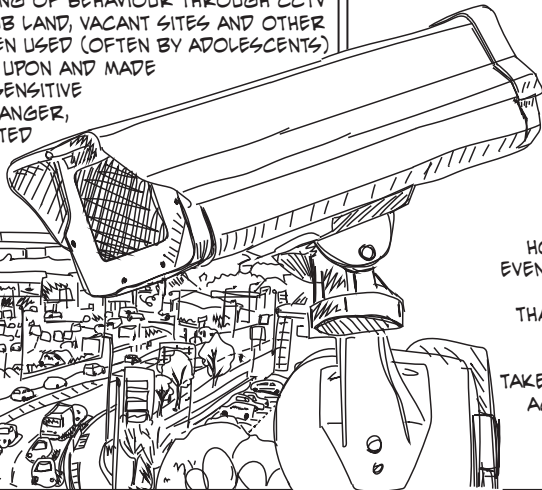
I'VE ALSO REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT ATTEMPTS TO RESTRICT PLAY, WHETHER IN THE SHAPE OF A GAME, OR A SET OF PLAYGROUND RULES, IS AT ODDS WITH THE CHARACTER OF PLAY. AS PLAY IS ANTI-STRUCTURAL ITS NATURAL STATE IS ONE OF CONSTANT CHANGE. THIS EXPLAINS WHY PEOPLE WILL CONTINUALLY CHALLENGE RULES, DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES OR MOVE ONTO NEW TYPES OF PLAY. THIS IS ALSO WHY ORGANISED GAMES, SUCH AS FOOTBALL LEAGUES, HAVE TO UPDATE AND CHANGE THEIR RULES PERIODICALLY - WITHOUT THIS THEIR GAMES WOULD FALL APART, OR REQUIRE HUGE INVESTMENTS OF TIME TO KEEP THEM AS INTENDED.



OF COURSE, THIS IS PRECISELY THE SAME PREDICAMENT THAT VIDEOGAME PUBLISHERS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAMS HAVE: THEY NEED TO KEEP PLAY WITHIN AN UNDERSTOOD FRAMEWORK (THE GAME), BUT IT IS A CONSTANT AND EXPENSIVE BATTLE. SOMETIMES A NEW VIDEOGAME RELEASE THAT ADAPTS AND RESPONDS TO THE EVOLUTION OF PLAY IS NEEDED.

IN THE U.K. OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS THERE HAS BEEN A NATIONAL DYNAMIC OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, RESULTING IN THE RAPID SHRINKAGE OF EDGE-SPACES AND INCREASED POLICING OF BEHAVIOUR THROUGH CCTV AND PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES. SCRUB LAND, VACANT SITES AND OTHER SPACES THAT WOULD NORMALLY HAVE BEEN USED (OFTEN BY ADOLESCENTS) FOR PLAY AND MISRULE HAVE BEEN BUILT UPON AND MADE INACCESSIBLE. COMBINED WITH A HYPERSENSITIVE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC RISK (TRAFFIC DANGER, STRANGER DANGER ETC.), PLAY HAS SHIFTED INTO PRIVATE SPACES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MISRULE AND PLAY HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONSERVATIVE.

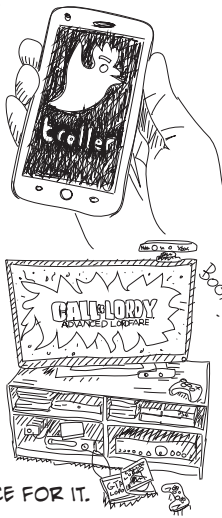
IN THE U.K. PLAY HAS BECOME LESS AND LESS A VISIBLE, FREE-FORM, AND COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY. INSTEAD IT IS OFTEN NOW DONE IN SPECIFIED PLACES, MANY SUCH AS SKATE PARKS OR AMUSEMENT PARKS REQUIRING AN ADMISSION FEE. INSIDE THESE SPACES PLAY IS SUBJECT TO REGULATION AND CONTROL - PLAY HAS BECOME A COMMODITY. WITHOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPRESS THE MISRULY ASPECTS OF PLAY THESE PLAY ENVIRONMENTS FAIL TO SUPPORT THE FULL SPECTRUM OF WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAY, AND THIS ELEMENT IS DIMINISHED AND GOES LEFT UNEXPRESSED.



HOWEVER, THE ANTI-STRUCTURAL NATURE OF PLAY MAKES EVEN THIS KIND OF WELL-MEANT RESTRICTION AND CONTROL ONLY A TEMPORARY BARRIER, AND IT IS MY HYPOTHESIS THAT PLAY HAS SHIFTED INTO DIGITAL SPACES IN ORDER TO ONCE AGAIN RECONNECT WITH MISRULE.

TAKEN FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, THE VARIOUS PROBLEMATIC ACTIVITIES THAT WE SEE ONLINE: TROLLING, ABUSE, GRIEF, SCAMMING, PRANKS, HARASSMENT, SUBVERSION... ETC. LOSE NONE OF THEIR OBJECTIONABLENESS BUT BECOME MUCH MORE NORMAL...

...THEY COULD BE SEEN AS PEOPLE RECONNECTING WITH A WELL ESTABLISHED VIEW OF PLAY THAT RECOGNISES THE PLEASURES OF OCCASIONAL MISRULE AND RULEBREAKING. DIGITAL SPACES ARE EDGE-SPACES IN THEIR INCREASING ABSENCE IN PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE. YES, THIS KIND OF PLAY STILL OCCURS IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD, BUT OFTEN AT SPECIFIC POINTS - A FOOTBALL MATCH, A STAG DO, A LAD'S HOLIDAY IN THE BALEARIC ISLANDS... BUT IN COMPARISON THE DIGITAL SPACES ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE AND OFFER FERTILE CONDITIONS FOR A BIT OF MISRULE.



ONLINE WE STILL HAVE A PARTIAL PERCEPTION OF ANONYMITY: THERE ARE CROWDS OF PEOPLE TO MIX WITH, TO COLLUDE WITH AND TO TARGET. AND THE PLEASURES, THE RISKY THRILL OF MISRULE, IS AS ALLURING AS EVER.

IT'S THEREFORE NO SUPRISE TO ME THAT WE SEE SO MANY EXAMPLES OF MISRULY PLAY ONLINE - I SEE IT AS A NATURAL SPACE FOR IT.

HOPEFULLY THIS GIVES YOU SOME IDEA OF THE BACKGROUND TO LORDS OF MISRULE. THE GAME IS REALLY A WAY TO GET ME TO START THINKING MORE ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAY AND MISRULE, AND HOPEFULLY ENCOURAGE A FEW PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO GET IN TOUCH AND HELP ME UNDERSTAND YOUR PERSPECTIVES.

MY PLAN IS TO USE WHAT I LEARN THROUGH LORDS OF MISRULE AS PART OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF A BOOK THAT DOES A COUPLE OF THINGS:

- 1) TRACES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAY AND MISRULE FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE;
- 2) OFFERS REAL LIFE EXAMPLES OF MISRULE IN PLAY IN A RANGE OF DIFFERENT CONTEXTS - I.E. NOT JUST IN VIDEOGAMES;
- 3) CHALLENGES THE IDEA THAT MISRULE IN PLAY IS SOMETHING DONE BY BAD / MEAN / ABNORMAL PEOPLE;
- 4) EXPLORES WHETHER DIGITAL SPACES DO ENABLE A RETURN TO CARNIVALESQUE PLAY - THE DIGITAL CARNIVAL.

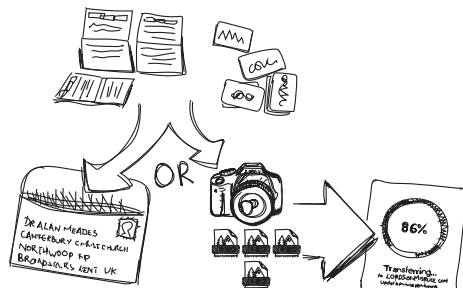


PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING YOUR, RULE DECKS AND ANSWER CARDS WITH ME ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED PLAYING LORDS OF MISRULE!

SO, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I SUBMIT MY LORDS OF MISRULE GAME CARDS TO YOU ONLINE OR VIA THE POST?

IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH ANYTHING THAT YOU SUBMIT AND THE STEPS TAKEN TO PROTECT YOU AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT.

LORDS-OF-MISRULE.COM OR LORDS-OF-MISRULE.WETRANSFER.COM



1) YOU SUBMIT YOUR GAME CARDS VIA POST OR AS IMAGE FILES UPLOADED AT LORDS-OF-MISRULE.WETRANSFER.COM

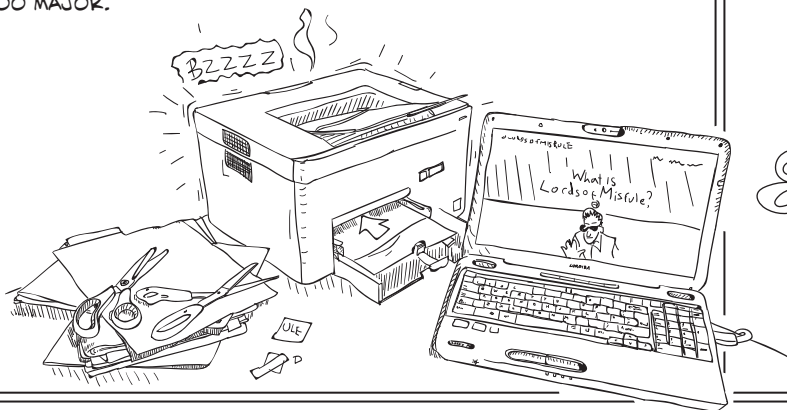
2) THE SUBMISSIONS DON'T GO STRAIGHT TO ME, INSTEAD THEY ARE PROCESSED BY A CCCU RESEARCH ASSISTANT. ONLY THE ASSISTANT CAN ACCESS THE UPLOAD FOLDER.

3) THE ASSISTANT REMOVES ANY INFORMATION THAT COULD IDENTIFY YOU OR OTHER PLAYERS. IF IT'S AN UPLOAD THEY EDIT THE IMAGES, RENAME FILES AND DELETE THE ORIGINAL UPLOADS (AND ANY EMAIL ADDRESS DATA). ORIGINAL FILES ARE SECURELY DELETED, POSTAL ORIGINALS SHREDDED.

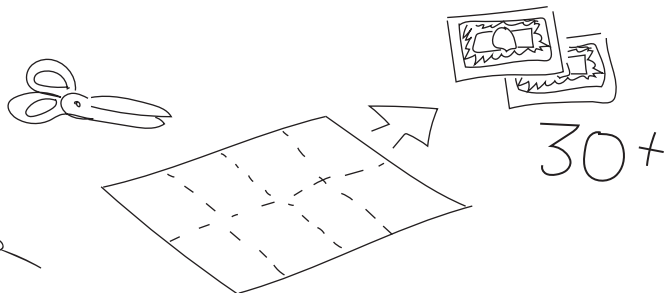
4) WHEN THE ASSISTANT IS CONFIDENT THAT EVERYTHING IS ANONYMOUS IT IS ONLY THEN PASSED TO ME. I THEN TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF THE DATA AND FEED IT INTO MY RESEARCH.

PRINTING AND MAKING LORDS OF MISRULE

THE QUICKEST WAY TO GET LAYING LORDS OF MISRULE IS TO DOWNLOAD THIS PDF FROM WWW.LORDS-OF-MISRULE.COM AND PRINT IT ONTO THICK PAPER OR CARD. IT'LL NEED A LITTLE BIT OF ASSEMBLY, BUT NOTHING TOO MAJOR.

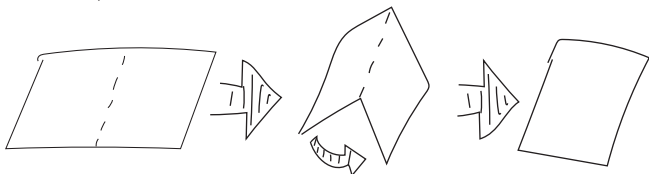


THE RULE CARDS AND IDENTITY CARDS (THE ONES WITH THE GRINNING FACE ON THE REVERSE) NEED TO BE CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINES. THIS GIVES YOU EIGHT CARDS PER PRINTED SHEET. YOU NEED A DECENT AMOUNT OF CARDS TO GET STARTED, I'D RECOMMEND A MINIMUM OF 30 RULE CARDS, SOME SPARES TO ALLOW YOU TO ADD MORE IN NEW ROUNDS, AND ENOUGH SPARE TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS SOMEWHERE TO WRITE THEIR LORDS OF MISRULE IDENTITY.



THE ANSWER/CONFESSION CARDS ARE LARGER AND MORE COMPLICATED. THEY SHOULD BE PRINTED DOUBLE SIDED (THE OFFICIALLY PRINTED PACKS USED FOR WORKSHOPS ARE - GET IN TOUCH IF YOU'RE INTERESTED). BECAUSE NOT EVERYONE HAS A DOUBLE SIDED PRINTER AVAILABLE THE SHEETS IN THIS PDF HAVE BOTH SIDES ON ONE PAGE. TO MAKE A SINGLE ANSWER/CONFESSION CARD SIMPLY PRINT THE PAGE AND FOLD ALONG THE DOTTED LINE, WITH THE PRINT ON THE OUTSIDE. THE BONUS HERE IS THAT IT'LL GIVE YOU EVEN MORE SPACE TO WRITE A REALLY DETAILED CONFESSION, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT!

**FAO: DR ALAN MEADES
LORDS OF MISRULE
CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY
BROADSTAIRS CAMPUS
NORTHWOOD ROAD
BROADSTAIRS
KENT, CT10 2WA.
UNITED KINGDOM**



AS EVERYONE PLAYS DIFFERENTLY, AND BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE WILL NEED MORE OF CERTAIN CARDS DEPENDING ON HOW AND HOW LONG THEY WANT TO PLAY, YOU CAN DOWNLOAD PDFS OF JUST THE RULE OR ANSWER/CONFESSION CARDS FROM WWW.LORDS-OF-MISRULE.COM TOO. LASTLY, HERE'S AN ADDRESS LABEL TO STICK ON AN ENVELOPE IF YOU DECIDE TO SEND ALAN YOUR FINISHED GAME CARDS.

SO, PLEASE DO GIVE THE GAME A TRY, THINK ABOUT SUBMITTING YOUR GAME RULES AND CONFESSIONS, LET ME KNOW OF SUGGESTED ADAPTATIONS AND CHANGES AND GET IN TOUCH IF THERE'S ANYTHING THAT YOU'D LIKE TO ADD, HELP WITH, OR IF YOU'D BE WILLING TO BE INTERVIEWED ABOUT PLAY. JUST GO TO THE WEBSITE AND MAKE CONTACT. WHAT YOU SUBMIT WILL BE USED TO CREATE NEW ACADEMIC ARTICLES, BOOK CHAPTERS AND (HOPEFULLY) BOOKS.

WWW.LORDS-OF-MISRULE.COM

IF YOU FIND THIS INTERESTING WHY NOT CHECK OUT SOME OF MY WRITING ABOUT VIDEOGAME GLITCHING, MODDING AND HACKING. I'VE A BOOK ON THAT SUBJECT PUBLISHED BY ROUTLEDGE: 'UNDERSTANDING COUNTERPLAY IN VIDEO GAMES' BY ALAN F MEADES (2015). MY JOURNAL ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS CAN BE FOUND BY LOOKING AT MY ACADEMIA.EDU PROFILE (IT'S LIKE LINKEDIN BUT FOR RESEARCHERS!).













THE LORDS OF MISRULE.COM

YOUR LORDS OF MISRULE IDENTITY:

RULE 1



RULE 2



RULE 3



WHAT ACT OF MISRULE OCCURRED?

WHO DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE?

WHO OR WHAT WAS THE TARGET OF THIS ACT OF MISRULE?

WHEN DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE TAKE PLACE?

HOW OFTEN DID THIS ACT OF MISRULE TAKE PLACE?

WHAT RULES WERE BROKEN?

DID ANYONE GET IN TROUBLE?

HOW WAS IT DONE?

WHAT WERE THE REACTIONS?

WHY WAS IT DONE?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT ALL?

RULE 1



RULE 2



RULE 3



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