



Vol. 13, No. 1 (2022)

<http://www.eludamos.org>

I Am... Bothered About D&D

Kristian A. Bjørkelo

Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture. 2022; 13 (1), pp. 111–121

I Am... Bothered About D&D

KRISTIAN A. BJØRKELO

Abstract

Is *Dungeons & Dragons* receiving too much attention in game studies compared to other tabletop role playing games? And what, if any, are the issues with this?

In this commentary the author creates an overview of the overwhelming focus on *Dungeons & Dragons* in game studies journals and puts it in relation to the cultural and economic position of the popular role playing games. The author calls for a more diverse and critical approach to tabletop role playing games in game studies, and the need to take into account the different playstyles fostered by different mechanics and the communities that form around the games.

Keywords

TTRPG; D&D; WotC; game studies

Introduction

Imagine going to a game studies conference and every presentation was about the *Mario Bros* games. The history of *Mario Bros*, queer readings of *Mario Bros*, ethnographies of *Mario Bros* players, comparative analysis of mechanics in different *Mario Bros* games and so on. This is how attending tabletop tracks on conferences can feel like. It's all about this one single game: *Dungeons and Dragons* (D&D, or DnD) (Gygax and Arneson 1974).

When attending DiGRA 2022 in Krakow, I made a point out of attending as many tracks that as I could that included analogue, tabletop gaming, since this is a field that has been of growing importance to me. In the sessions I attended,¹ whenever there was talk of tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPG), it concerned *Dungeons & Dragons*.²

One particularly engaged presentation referred to the difficult calculations of D&D as a threshold that prevents inclusion and for this reason should be handled by software. I asked whether or not the solution could instead be picking another system or game. The response didn't thrill me. Apparently, the presenter claimed, no other TRPG had reached mainstream audiences, and they named *Pathfinder* (Bulmahn 2009) and *The World of Darkness* as examples; the former an immensely popular derivative of the 3.5 edition of D&D; the latter a multimedia phenomenon that changed roleplaying games in the 90s and spawned computer games, novels and even a short-lived drama series produced by Aaron Spelling (Conway et al. 1996).³ Hardly out of the mainstream, even if not the juggernaut that D&D is.

Two presentations stood out in the program as being not about D&D, one about *Mörk Borg* (Nilsson 2020), a game derivative from the classic D&D playstyle, and another on *Thieves' World* (Arneson et al. 1981), a multi-system publication. Also in these talks, however, classic D&D asserted itself, as the focus was on how the two titles discussed influenced D&D.

Dungeons and Dragons is a massive beast with few commercial rivals, and its owning corporation Wizards of the Coast (WotC) and their corporate owners Hasbro have financial interests in monopolizing the roleplaying hobby. Along with the extremely successful *Magic: The Gathering* (Garfield 1993), D&D makes WotC's portfolio one of the most influential in tabletop gaming. Like Games Workshop's attempt at establishing the *Warhammer* hobby as a synonym for the wargaming hobby in general, WotC has been successful in mainstreaming the idea that D&D is roleplaying and roleplaying equals D&D. Looking at mainstream journalism on the hobby would give the impression that the hobby and the game are one and the same. The plethora of roleplaying games out there that are compatible with the series' latest instalment *Dungeons & Dragons* 5th edition (more commonly known as 5e [Mearls and Crawford 2014b, 2014a]) seems to confirm this, giving the impression that 5e compatibility is a prerequisite of commercial and popular success.

A sizable number of large and small rivals do exist, however, drawing growing numbers of passionate players and consumers. Some of them are even written by game scholars. Why are these alternatives still underrepresented in game studies? And where is the critique of WotC's business practices and their strategy of cultural monopolization? As critical researchers, we owe tabletop roleplaying games, game culture, and game studies such (self-)critical approaches.

The Importance of D&D

It is hard to overstate the historical significance of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and how it established and cemented the concept of tabletop roleplaying games. This is a history that has received well-deserved academic scrutiny (Peterson 2012, 2021, 2022; Zagal and Deterding 2018). It is however important to keep in mind that, when Gary Alan Fine did his fieldwork for the seminal study *Shared Fantasy: Role-Playing as Social Worlds* (Fine 1983) in the late 70s and early 80s, alternatives to D&D were already preferred by his informants as they were players in a campaign of *Empire of the Petal Throne* (Barker 1974) ran by the game's author himself. The histories of these early games, some of which are still alive and well, have received little attention from game scholars.

Take *Empire of the Petal Throne* (Barker 1974) as an example. The game was self-published by professor M. A. R. Barker the same year that saw the first official release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Empire of the Petal Throne* was published by TSR the following year (Barker 1975). As mentioned earlier, according to Fine's study, many of his informants preferred this game to D&D, and its history is fascinating.⁴ Likewise games such as *RuneQuest* (Perrin 1978) and *Tunnels & Trolls* (St. Andre 1975) deserve mentions. The latter are also included in Shannon Appelcline's first volume of *Designers & Dragons* (Appelcline 2014b)—a four volume series that deals specifically with the publishing history of tabletop roleplaying games (Appelcline 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d).

It is equally hard to overlook the cultural significance of D&D. From its appearance in *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg 1982) to *Stranger Things* (Duffer and Duffer 2016), D&D has been visible in popular culture and media. There have been attempts at creating television and movie franchises from the game (Daley and Goldstein 2023; Gibbs et al. 1983; Solomon 2000),⁵ and the classic movie *Krull* (Yates 1983) also suggested connections to the franchise. The Tolkienesque fantasy of D&D has undoubtedly been an inspiration for how fantasy and roleplaying has been portrayed in music, films, and the media.

Dungeons & Dragons was also a focal point of the Satanic panic taking off in the US in the 1980s. Here, concerned conservative Christians such as Pat Pulling would accuse D&D of causing suicides and being a gateway to occultism, Satanism, and, drugs (Stackpole 1990; Martin and Fine 1991). One of the better known stories, is that of the aforementioned Pat Pulling who started a crusade against D&D after her son, according to her, shot himself just "hours after a D&D® curse was placed on him during a game conducted at his local high school" (Stackpole 1990). Pulling would go on to found the organization BADD—Bothered About D&D—and her crusade is well documented in the so-called *Pulling Report* by Michael Stackpole (1990).

With the popularity of the web series *Critical Role* (Mercer et al. 2015)⁶ and further mediatization of D&D (Švelch 2022), the game has seen a radical upsurge of interest and popularity, further entrenching the notion that roleplaying is D&D, and D&D is *the* roleplaying game. It should come as no surprise, then, that D&D is of primary interest to both journalists and game researchers, and to many the game is the first and only experience they have with tabletop roleplaying games.

Of course, this has to be seen in context with the financial interests of WotC and its parent company. This is their bread and butter. Monopolizing the field of tabletop roleplaying games guarantees them a steady trickle of profit, which is why they have been able to leverage the cultural weight that comes with owning two of the most popular tabletop games in the world in order to have other publishers start using their system, whether it was named D&D, D20 or 5e. The popular gameline *Pathfinder* (Bulmahn 2009) started out as such, and companies such as Kobold Press, Troll Lord Games and Frog God games base their business model on producing compatible material. Other publishers, such as Cubicle 7, release D&D-compatible versions of their games in order to tap into this market segment.

For this reason, critical games researchers should not just be able to study how consumers (or players) relate to the game and how WotC relate to its customers, but should also be aware of how our research focus on *Dungeons & Dragons* aids a multinational company in achieving its cultural and economic aims.

***Dungeons & Dragons* in Game Studies**

To investigate my suspicions that *Dungeons & Dragons* is disproportionately represented in game studies, I skimmed through the contents of the journal *Analog Game Studies* that were tagged to be about 'tabletop role-playing games'⁷ and the 237 papers in the *Sage Journals* database, including *Games & Culture* and *Games & Simulation*, that were tagged with 'role-playing'. A minority of the latter dealt with actual tabletop roleplaying games. Additionally, I skimmed through the currently 12 issues of the *International Journal of Role Playing*, four issues of the *Japanese Journal of Analog Role Playing Games Studies*, as well as the 257 papers in *Game Studies* that came up using a site search, though only very few of those papers were about *tabletop* roleplaying games.

	References to D&D
<i>Analog Game Studies</i>	25
<i>Games and Culture</i>	4
<i>Simulation and Gaming</i>	3
<i>Game Studies</i>	18
<i>International Journal of Role Playing</i>	30
<i>Japanese Journal of Role Play Studies</i>	7
Other Journals	3

Table 1: Number of references to D&D by journal.

For every paper skimmed this way, I made note of which tabletop roleplaying games were mentioned, thus providing an overview of how frequently D&D was featured compared to other games in the hobby. Many of these mentions were parts of lists of available games and offered no analysis of them, but they were all included and noted in my spreadsheets. This approach showed clearly that D&D was by far the most mentioned game in the journals.

Counting other games mentioned in these journals, I found over 130 individual games, but most of these only got a single mention in one or two journals. The spreadsheet was a long list of ones. The only other games whose combined mentions entered the double digits were *Call of Cthulhu* (Petersen 1981) with 16 mentions, and *Vampire: The Masquerade* (Rein-Hagen 1991) with 13 mentions in all the journals listed in the table. That is compared to the total of 90 mentions of D&D across the board.

In the 34 papers in *Analog Game Studies*, there were 25 mentions of D&D, and it was more often than not the sole focal point or case in the paper. Sometimes other games would be mentioned. A very few papers dealt mainly or solely with other games. Games that stood out were *Fiasco* (Morningstar 2009) and *Apocalypse World* (Baker and Baker 2010) and some of its derivatives which seemed to be of particular interest to some of the contributors. *Fiasco* gets at least one mention, if only because Jason Morningstar, the designer, contributed a paper on it (Morningstar 2014). In total, 55 different tabletop roleplaying games receive mentions in *Analog Game Studies*, but the vast majority of these only receive one mention, thanks to especially two papers dealing with the history of tabletop role-playing games (Stenros and Sihvonen 2015; Zagal 2019).

Other TTRPGs in Game Studies

Although some may disagree, it is not that game studies is generally inattentive towards analogue games. Game studies seems very much focused on what we can learn from live action roleplaying games, but we also have a lot to learn from tabletop roleplaying games—both about player interaction and about rule systems that govern play. And there is a fair bit of work being done on tabletop roleplaying games, and while I argue that the majority focuses on D&D, this is not an exclusive focus.

If I were to call out some works, I would for instance mention Ashley M. L. Brown's chapter on the "fourteen-inch barbed penis" (Brown 2015) and how players used the roleplaying supplement *Freak Legion* (Brown 1995) for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (Rein-Hagen 1992; Rein-Hagen et al. 1995), to explore the boundaries of play in tabletop roleplaying games.

Another example would be Karl Bergström's (2012) paper, 'Creativity Rules. How Rules Impact Player Creativity in Three Tabletop Role-Playing Games' in the *International Journal of Role Playing*, which shows the importance of differentiating between different tabletop roleplaying games in our research.

I would also recommend the expertly and thoroughly edited volume *Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations* (Zagal and Deterding 2018), which not only covers the many forms roleplaying takes, but acknowledges many different

expressions and games of roleplaying and serves as a good starting point for research intent on looking beyond the invisible confines of D&D.

And, of course, Appelcline's work also deals with the history of several publishers and games alongside D&D (Appelcline, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d). These works stand as examples for why it is important to look at more games and communities in order to create a fuller impression of roleplaying games. They are still in danger of being overshadowed by D&D, a situation caused by the critical economic and cultural position of D&D.

Three Criticisms

I have three areas of criticism of D&D's position in game studies: (1) D&D as a cultural dominant, (2) WotC and Hasbro as corporate institution, and finally (3) the mechanics of roleplaying games. First of all, a continued hyper focus on D&D in academic literature adds to the weight of D&D overall, also outside of academia. And while its popularity and cultural significance make it an important object of study, we are also missing out on a large part of the roleplaying community that does not primarily play D&D, and who have developed norms, practices and terminology separate from those specific to this one game. Furthermore, there are game designers out there with an oeuvre of interesting games that deal with subject matters beyond the dungeon crawls and high fantasy of D&D that deserve to be included in game studies' understanding of role playing games.

As someone with a vested interest in tabletop gaming, I think it's great that more and more people are discovering roleplaying games. At the same time, I fear that the almost exclusive attention on D&D makes people miss out on all the great games that are there to be played, and that this hurts the smaller publishers and game developers who are left in the shadow of WotC unless they start publishing 5e versions of their games. Publishers and developers who, in turn, might end up having to pay WotC for the privilege.⁸ This could not have been made clearer than in the early days of 2023, when attempts to changing the Open Gaming Licence not only caused an uproar in the community, but endangered the livelihood of publishers and content creators who have made themselves dependent on the feigned benevolence of a corporate machine that is motivated to maximize their profits (Evans-Thirlwell 2023).

This brings us to the second criticism: that of the financial position of D&D. As game studies scholars we have a moral obligation to be aware and critical of the position of D&D and its owners in the marketplace of roleplaying games. Hasbro and WotC profit from being considered the largest or only game in town and foster the image of being synonymous with the roleplaying hobby. It is in WotC's interest that as many games as possible use their system, and that D&D becomes *the tabletop roleplaying game*. Game studies should question and criticize this position, and the economic motivations behind it.

The cultural and financial dominance of D&D is for all practical purposes a monopoly. Game studies should engage critically and discuss what this monopolization of the tabletop roleplaying space does to the hobby. The more attention D&D gets from game

studies or from the media, the larger it gets, potentially overshadowing or even out-competing other, smaller games.

Furthermore, and thirdly, when focusing solely on D&D, we risk losing sight of the variety of playstyles and rule mechanics that exist within the greater hobby of role playing, including the valuable discourse that follows from this. The work done by White (2020) on *The Forge* is an indication of how discourses surrounding mechanics in role playing can be studied.

As a games researcher I believe that what games we play matters, and the mechanics of these games matter for how we play them, even *how we can* play them. There's an ideology at work in game mechanics that is being reproduced as we play them. To quote Nicholas J. Mizer for his reason of choosing the Old School Renaissance (OSR) communities and D&D for his ethnography:

While I sought variation in the regions I studied, I pursued a narrower focus in the type of games I studied. Different types of role-playing games represent different traditions of experience, different techniques of the imagination. (Mizer 2019, p. 11)

Dungeons & Dragons is designed for dungeon delving (Trammel 2014) and killing monsters in order to further the narrative and develop the characters; this is the core of the D&D experience, and is represented by its mechanics. Regardless of its reliance on essentialist notions of 'character class', race and gender. The roleplaying we often laud as part of the game, is often in spite of these mechanics, not because of them. This creates, as Mizer says, a particular experience, and as we focus our research on play experiences and communities, the mechanics and ideology that drive those experiences become of utmost importance as objects of critical analysis.

This is what Bergström is speaking of when discussing rules and creativity in different TTRPGs (Bergström 2012), finding, for instance, that D&D puts the rules before narrative, whereas other games in his sample privilege narrative and creative participation over rules. This should come as no surprise to anyone experienced with D&D as well as other systems.

Does it Matter?

As critical researchers we should be aware of the political, financial and cultural interests that are driving the visibility of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Of course, game studies should be aware of the huge cultural influence of D&D, but we should also be able to engage with it critically and discuss what this monopolization of the tabletop roleplaying space does to the hobby. The more attention D&D receives, from game studies or from the media, the larger the franchise gets, potentially overshadowing or even out-competing other, smaller games. Many are the game systems that have fallen to the wayside, not for the lack of quality, but for the lack of an audience. With our hyperfocus on one game and one part of gaming culture only, we are contributing to its dominance: culturally, politically and financially.

Given that there is a plethora of tabletop roleplaying games available, with vibrant communities and different approaches to mechanics and thus experiences and affordances for creative play, we are barring ourselves from understanding a sizable part of what roleplaying is and can be outside the realm of D&D. With greater scope for the essay, this is also where we could bring in the critical research done on The Forge community (Torner 2015; Trammel 2019; White 2020; White et al. 2012), and the games that sprung out of this, such as *Apocalypse World* (Baker and Baker 2010) and *My Life With Master* (Czege 2003). This work shows the potential to delve into not only commercial alternatives to D&D, but into the avant-garde of tabletop game design and para-academic activities of tabletop game designers, which parallel that of live action roleplaying game designers.

And this should matter to game studies.

References

- Ahn, S. J., Chan, A., Heller, Young, von Medvey, S., and Pang, Y.-W. (2022, January 28) *The Legend of Vox Machina*. Amazon Studios.
- Appelcline, S. (2014a) *Designers & Dragons: The 00s: A History of the Roleplaying Game Industry*. Silver Spring: Evil Hat Productions.
- Appelcline, S. (2014b) *Designers & Dragons: The 70s: A History of the Roleplaying Game Industry*. Silver Spring: Evil Hat Productions.
- Appelcline, S. (2014c) *Designers & Dragons: The 80s: A History of the Roleplaying Game Industry*. Silver Spring: Evil Hat Productions.
- Appelcline, S. (2014d) *Designers & Dragons: The 90s: A History of the Roleplaying Game Industry*. Silver Spring: Evil Hat Productions.
- Arneson, D., Goldberg, E., Kraft, R., Ives, W., Marsh, S., Miller, M. W., Perrin, S., St. Andre, K. (1981) *Thieves World*. Chaosium.
- Baker, D. V., and Baker, M. (2010) *Apocalypse World*. Lumpley Games.
- Barker, M. A. R. (1974) *Empire of the Petal Throne (Original Manuscript)*. Self-published.
- Barker, M. A. R. (1975) *Tekumel: Empire of the Petal Throne (TSR)*. Lake Geneva, WI: TSR.
- Bergström, K. (2012) Creativity Rules: How Rules Impact Player Creativity in Three Tabletop Role-Playing Games. *International Journal of Role-Playing*, 3. Available from: <http://www.ijrp.subcultures.nl/wp-content/issue3/IJRPissue3bergstrom.pdf> [Accessed 20 February 2023].
- Brown, A. M. L. (2015) Three Defences for the Fourteen-Inch Barbed Penis: Darkly Playing with Morals, Ethics, and Sexual Violence. In: Mortensen, T. E., Linderoth, J. and Brown, A. M. L. (eds.) *The Dark side of Game Play:*

- Controversial issues in Playful Environments*. London: Routledge. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315738680-8>.
- Brown, S. (1995) *Freak Legion: A Player's Guide to Fomori* (E. Skemp, ed.). Stockholm: White Wolf Publishing.
- Bulmahn, J. (2009) *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Core Rulebook*. Redmond: Paizo.
- Conway, J. L., Hemecker, R., Medak, P., Fink, K., and Harrison, J. (1996, April 2) *Kindred: The Embraced*. Fox.
- Czege, P. (2003). *My Life With Master*. Half Meme Press.
- Daley, J. F., and Goldstein, J. (2023, March 3) *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves*. Paramount Pictures.
- Duffer, M., and Duffer, R. (2016, July 15) *Stranger Things*. Netflix.
- Evans-Thirlwell, E. (2023) The D&D Open Game License controversy, explained. *The Washington Post*. Available from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2023/01/19/dungeons-and-dragons-open-game-license-wizards-of-the-coast-explained/> [Accessed: 14 February 2023].
- Fine, G. A. (1983) *Shared Fantasy: Role Playing Games as Social Worlds*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Garfield, R. (1993) *Magic: The Gathering* (CCG). Wizards of the Coast.
- Gibbs, J., Nead, R., and Richardson, B. (1983, September 17) *Dungeons & Dragons*. CBS.
- Gygax, G., and Arneson, D. (1974) *Dungeons & Dragons* (1st ed.). TSR (1974–1997), Wizards of the Coast (1997–present).
- Martin, D., and Fine, G. A. (1991) Satanic Cults, Satanic Play: Is “Dungeons & Dragons” a Breeding Ground for the Devil? In: Richardson, J. T., Best, J. and Bromley, D. G. (eds.) *The Satanism Scare*. London: Routledge, pp. 107–124. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315134741-7>.
- Mearls, M., and Crawford, J. (2014a) *Dungeon master's guide*. Renton: Wizards of the Coast.
- Mearls, M., and Crawford, J. (2014b). *Dungeons & Dragons player's handbook*. Renton: Wizards of the Coast.
- Mercer, M., Fallows, S., and Eubank, Z. K. (2015, March 12) *Critical Role*. YouTube.
- Mizer, N. J. (2019) *Tabletop Role-Playing Games and the Experience of Imagined Worlds*. New York: Springer International Publishing. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29127-3>.
- Nilsson, P. (2020) *Mörk Borg*. Stockholm: Free League Publishing.

- Perrin, S. (1978) *RuneQuest* (1st ed.). Ann Arbor: Chaosium.
- Peterson, J. (2012) *Playing at the World: A History of Simulating Wars, People and Fantastic Adventures, from Chess to Role-Playing Games* (2nd ed.). San Diego: Unreason Press.
- Peterson, J. (2021) *Game Wizards: The Epic Battle for Dungeons & Dragons*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/13472.001.0001>.
- Peterson, J. (2022) *The Elusive Shift: How Role-Playing Games Forged Their Identity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Rein-Hagen, M. (1991) *Vampire: The Masquerade* (1st ed.). Stockholm: White Wolf Publishing.
- Rein-Hagen, M. (1992) *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (1st ed.). Stockholm: White Wolf Publishing.
- Rein-Hagen, M., Hatch, R., and Bridges, B. (1995) *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (2nd ed.). Stockholm: White Wolf Publishing.
- Solomon, C. (2000, December 8) *Dungeons & Dragons*. New Line Cinema.
- Spielberg, S. (1982, June 11) *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. Universal Pictures.
- St. Andre, K. (1975) *Tunnels & Trolls*. Scottsdale: Flying Buffalo.
- Stackpole, M. (1990) The Pulling Report. Available from: http://www.rpgstudies.net/stackpole/pulling_report.html [Accessed: 20 February 2023].
- Švelch, J. (2022) Mediatization of Tabletop Role-Playing: The Intertwined Cases of *Critical Role* and *D&D Beyond*. *Convergence*, Vol. 28 (6), pp. 1662–1678. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221111680>.
- Torner, E. (2015) Uncertainty in Analog Role-Playing Games, Part 3. *Analog Game Studies*, Vol. 2 (2). Available from: <https://analoggamestudies.org/2015/02/uncertainty-in-analog-role-playing-games-part-3/> [Accessed: 20 February 2023].
- Trammel, A. (2014) From Where Do Dungeons Come? *Analog Game Studies*, Vol. 1 (1). Available from: <https://analoggamestudies.org/2014/08/from-where-do-dungeons-come/> [Accessed: 20 February 2023].
- Trammel, A. (2019) Analog Games and the Digital Economy. *Analog Game Studies*, Vol. 6 (1). Available from: <https://analoggamestudies.org/2019/03/analog-games-and-the-digital-economy/> [Accessed: 20 February 2023].
- White, W. J. (2020) *Tabletop RPG Design in Theory and Practice at the Forge, 2001–2012: Designs and Discussions*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52819-5>.

White, W. J., Boss, E. C., and Harviainen, T. (2012) Role-Playing Communities, Cultures of Play, and the Discourse of Immersion. In: White, W. J. and Torner, E. (eds.) *Immersive Gameplay: Essays on Participatory Media and Role-Playing*. Jefferson: McFarland, pp. 71–86.

Yates, P. (1983, July 29) *Krull*. Columbia Pictures.

Zagal, J. P., and Deterding, S. (eds.) (2018). *Role-Playing Game Studies: Transmedia Foundations*. London: Routledge. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315637532>.

Notes

- ¹ I have no interest in calling anyone out, as their research in and of themselves was mostly good and interesting, so I will not name the presenters abiding as close as I can to the Chatham House Rule.
- ² It is much the same situation for wargaming, miniature games and Games Workshop's *Warhammer*, which should be discussed elsewhere. It bears noting, however, that parallel to DiGRA 2022, the wargaming discourse on YouTube became very much aware of how algorithms skewed contents towards *Warhammer* and as 2023 comes around many people are looking for alternatives.
- ³ Admittedly a guilty pleasure of the author.
- ⁴ Barker was not only a muslim convert, but on the review board of the notorious Holocaust-denying *The Journal of Historical Review*. He also published an anti-semitic novel under the pseudonym Randolph D. Calverhall.
- ⁵ And in 2023 Paramount+ picked up a live action TV-series based on D&D.
- ⁶ Now also an animated series on Amazon Prime (Ahn et al. 2022).
- ⁷ Some relevant papers have not been tagged as such, and some papers do not show up when using the tags. Because of time restraints they have not been included in the statistics, but some have been read and cited in this paper.
- ⁸ While revising this paper there was an uproar against potential changes to the Open Gaming License that would have third party publishers pay to make compatible products.