Don't let a game teach you anything other than how to play the game.

The early hex-based wargame *Afrika Corps* included the rule: "A hexagonal grid has been printed on the board to determine movement. Hereafter, these hexagons will be called 'squares.'" They printed that rule so you, the game player, wouldn't be confused.

James Ernest and I decided *Stonehenge* was better with 60 bluestones rather than the 56 that were there, because it made our game better. The original *Axis & Allies* suggested that there was a country called Borneo-Celebes. The *D&D* monster with the very French-looking name "bulette" is officially pronounced "boo-LAY." None of these are right.

Games can lead you to all sorts of knowledge. It's probably true that you first heard the word "initiative" playing *D&D*. But game designers aren't, Richard Garfield to the contrary, professors. We just make games. Don't let us raise your kids. Just get a real book.

Contributed by Mike Selinker

All games are designed systems—but this doesn't mean the same thing for tabletop and computer game design.

Tabletop designers create systems for players to understand—they must be understood to be played—while computer game designers mostly hide system operations.

This gives computer game designers the freedom to create more complex systems. But it also creates *the risk that the best part of the design is never experienced by the players.* A clever game AI that doesn't express itself in a way that reveals its design is little better—and may be worse—than one based on virtual coin tosses.

Contributed by Noah Wardrip-Fruin

WILL HINDMARCH
& JEFF TIDBALL

Introduction by Wil Wheaton
Foreword by Robin D. Laws

THINGS WE THINK ABOUT GAMES

with John August, Pat Harrigan, Fred Hicks, Kenneth Hite,
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Mike Selinker, and Noah Wardrip-Fruin