

Respect and the HeroScape Community

It has been said that the heroScape hobbyists are not well-respected either within the larger gaming community or within society as a whole [1]. This essay makes the assumption that it is a goal of the heroScape community to gain respect, from other gaming communities and from society. In it, we examine the issues relating to the self-respect of heroScape hobbyists, heroScape's place among other games, and the position of gaming in general and heroScape in particular in society.

It is well-established among scholars of society and psychology that gaining the respect of others is often a function of achieving the respect of oneself. Part of the difficulty lies in the fragile nature of the heroScape hobbyist's own self-respect.

[Something about personal codes of honor, and the sense of the violation of the personal code.]

HeroScape occupies a place that is difficult to understand within the context of games in society: it is clearly, by the nature of its playing-pieces, the depth of the narrative associated with it, the open-ended nature of the complete official set of game pieces, and its tactical complexity, it clearly falls into the category of a miniatures skirmish game, the primary market for which is young adult males with few family responsibilities and a substantive disposable income, typically between eighteen and twenty-five years of age, typically college students and those beginning their post-scholastic careers.

On the other hand, unlike all other such games, it is sold primarily through mass-market retailers such as Target, Toys 'R' Us, and Wal-Mart, and not through specialized gaming or book stores, as are most miniatures skirmish games.

It is, at the same time, a very different game from socially respected brand-name games such as Monopoly and Scrabble, and non-brand-name games of antiquity such as Backgammon, Chess, or Parcheesi.

Hasbro has elected to advertise heroScape in a way that suggests that they believe the primary interest in the game should be among older children: the box label suggests that the game is intended for players eight years old and older, where the game's placement in the Hasbro catalog describes the game as intended for players between eight and twelve years of age.

This represents, to a certain extent, a threat: it is possible that Hasbro will elect to support the game through the period described by the duration of an entry-level player's interest, i.e., assuming that a child began playing the game at age eight, and continues playing the game until age twelve, or four years.

We can correct this phenomenon in a variety of ways: first and foremost is that we must shed the patina of "overgrown children" and permit ourselves to participate in the game as deeply as our means allow.