Scholars have long recognized the link between games and learning. Mary Flanagan, who researches games at Dartmouth, found that players of a gender bias board game were better at seeing things from someone else’s point of view. The catch, her study found, the game must use “embedded” design – sneaking a social purpose into a genuinely enjoyable format – rather than relying on overt messages.

Games also allow us to be someone else. In the book Serious Games (2009), Christoph Klimmt points out that players sometimes abandon the way they would typically behave and try out something new, simply because they’re occupying a fantasy world.

We grew up playing board games. Snow days, rainy days, and holidays were filled with rounds of Monopoly, Sorry, Clue, and Parcheesi. I never thought too much about what these games were teaching me. As an adult, I now wonder if it bothered my sister that she could not place two pink pegs in her car when she chose to get married in The Game of Life.

In this catalog we offer a wide variety of modern American board games that are unified by a common theme – they all carry some type of social commentary. Whether it was by accident or by design, these games are a reflection of cultural anxieties and changing social mores. Similar to small press book publishing, these games are popular enough to a segment of Americans to have been commercially viable, even if only on a limited basis.

I have to admit, many of them elicited a laugh or two. After all, these are board games. Not to be taken too seriously, right? Isn’t the lesson really how to play well with others? How to lose gracefully?

So, I chuckled when I discovered a copy of What Shall I Be? The Exciting Game of Career Girls and imagined myself being limited to these roles. But my reaction quickly turned to anger when I dug into the game and discovered the “personality cards.” “You are overweight” the red heart-shape card seemed to scream at me. “Bad for: airline hostess, ballet dancer and model.” What was that again about embedded design?

Whether we like the message or not, board games have long been an important part of our culture and are a reflection of society. Many of these board games were produced in limited numbers and are already scarce because of this and their fragile nature. They teach us about ourselves, how far we have come and, in some cases, how far we have yet to go.
A game for two to six players, the object of Cruising is “to move from mother’s home and land on the penthouse with at least $2,000 and a lover card.”

The game follows aspects similar to game maker Milton Bradley’s popular game The Game of Life, released in its modern iteration in 1963. Both games attempt to mirror life events along a linear track with some intersections dependent on the choices one makes as a player.

To begin, Cruising players receive $100 and a stereotypical gay profession card (interior designer, hair stylist, fashion photographer, floral arranger, ballet instructor, or clothing salesman). All game pieces start at Mother’s home, and players advance by rolling the die, collecting and paying money according to the game spaces and cards drawn. A player who lands, for example, on a Letter from Mother space draws a card, which is generally helpful, such as Money for Culture. The card can be forfeited to the ballet instructor player in lieu of payment should the player land on their profession space. The card labeled Penicillin Pills can be used to avoid paying fees when landing on the V.D. Clinic space.

Cruising also includes a set of cards drawn when a player lands on a Cruise space. A player may decide to stop on the Cruise space, even if they roll past it. This deck contains Tricks - “You left your glasses at home. It turns out to be a girl!” – and the coveted Lover cards needed to win the game. But be careful, if a second lover card is drawn, both must be forfeited.

Near the end of the board game is the crossroads, where all players must stop, according to the four-page rules book, which accompanies the game: “On his next turn, he must choose the PATH OF LOVE or the PATH OF MONEY. If he has a LOVER card, but needs more money, he might choose the PATH OF MONEY (it contains more paydays). If he has enough money, or almost enough, but no LOVER card, he might choose the PATH OF LOVE (it contains more CRUISE spaces). The ultimate decision is up to him.”

Little is known about the game, which has the look and feel of a DIY or small press production. The game board is printed on two pieces of pink 8 1/2 x 17 inch card stock. A small yellow slip of paper recommends that for player ease the game board be pasted on a firm piece of 17 x 17 inch cardboard. The game includes: 1 Game Board, 60 Cruise Cards (blue), 45 Letters from Mother Cards (yellow) 6 Professions Cards (light blue), a supply of money in $10, $100 and $1,000 denominations, and a set of rules. Six colored markers and a die were supplied. Housed in a nine-inch tall cardboard tube with a metal cap and paper label.

The game board pieces are curled from being housed in the tube with some light toning to one edge and small pin holes to each of the corners. Overall, very good. $750
FANTASY WEEKEND IN KEY WEST
Fort Lauderdale, Florida: Friends of Dorothy, n.d. (circa 1975)

Not only is this game recommended for adults, the creators of Fantasy Weekend in Key West recommend you choose to play with “people who don’t blush easily.”

A game for two to eight players, the board game is billed as the first gay board game “where your fantasies are fulfilled by beautiful and hot men.”

Created by Friends of Dorothy, Inc., a gay men’s organization, the board game has a distinct free love vibe pre-dating the AIDS crisis: “The object of the game is to hold on to your money for dear life, trick as many times as you are able, accumulate as many points as possible, and share as many outrageous fantasy experiences that are uniquely Key West.”

“The action” occurs as players roll the dice, move around the board and follow the directions on the spaces where they land, which may include drawing Encounter or Experience cards. As they move around the board, players visit such places as bars, tea dances, the glory hole, the clinic, etc. Here’s where the blushing comes in. An example Encounter: “A sailor has you jerk off onto his stomach and then wants you to lick it off…how’s that for naval action? 6 points.”

The game is complete and includes a folding game board, eight player pieces, two dice, experience cards, encounter cards, player cash, score cards, game rules, and two reorder sheets for additional score cards. Housed in a two-part box, which has some light stains, a piece of tape, and a split to one corner. Overall, very good. $600
THE RAINBOW GAYME
Walnut Creek, California: People Like Us, Inc., 1992

You begin The Rainbow Gayme by coming out of the closet.

The goal of the game is to be the first player to reach the end of the path of rainbow-colored stepping stones. “The Rainbow Gayme is a fun way to learn more about the myth, magic and lore of our gay culture,” the rules state.

Each stepping stone color represents a different type of play. On the Orange spot you answer whether a famous quote was from a man or woman; Purple is a multiple choice question about gay culture; on Red you must draw a picture based on gay terms, articles and symbols; on Yellow you act out books, movies, songs, etc. unique to the gay community; and on Blue you answer how you would respond to a social or personal situation. For example, if you land on a Blue spot, you may be forced to answer the following: “You have not come out to your parents. You are now in a serious relationship. Do you tell your parents that the person you are living with is your lover?”

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, four pages of rules, four player pieces, six player pieces, an hourglass timer, pencils and pads of paper, suggested act out gestures, and one die. A catalog of merchandise offered by Wolfe Video: The Woman Identified Label was also included with the game.

Some minor sun fading to a side panel of the two-part box; else fine. $100
SAVE THE WORLD:
A Cooperative Environmental Game
Los Angeles, California: Bongers, 1981

No one wins this game, unless you believe everyone wins if you successfully move the doomsday clock back working together to Save the World.

Unlike most board games, there is no discussion in the rules about how to score more points or upset other players. Save the World is a cooperative board game, in which players team up to stop ecological disasters ranging from nuclear war to overpopulation.

The rule booklet for the game is 44 pages, folded and stapled, and really serves as a manifesto for the game’s creator Don Strachan (1942-2011), a self-described hippy environmentalist. A draft-resistance counselor during the Vietnam War, he gained his greatest fame for his invention Bongers, a percussive message tool.

“As many as 3/4 of Americans believe that they or their children will die in a nuclear war,” Strachan wrote. “Teen suicides and drug addiction are at all-time highs. Adults, paralyzed by the scope and magnitude of ecological problems block them out of consciousness and continue to over consume and live polluting lifestyles.”

Game play begins by dealing out all the Save the World cards, which represent various ways to combat global disaster. Each player also receives two eco-hero cards. Hot spot cards are then placed on the board, and the placement of the doomsday clock is dependent on the number of seconds each hot spot would consume if not corrected. During a player’s turn, whoever has the best move to combat the issue can play their card.

For example, the hot spot card moving the doomsday clock five seconds closer to midnight: “Nigeria - 94 million human beings are packed into this small African nation. Projected population of 618 million just can’t be reached – plague and famine will strike first.” Among your choices: gain just one second for a program that pays men $10 to get a vasectomy, but earn four seconds back for distributing Norplant, the reversible contraceptive, free to women in third world countries.

The game is complete and includes: a folding game board, rule book (printed on recycled paper), four player pieces, two tokens, two doomsday clock markers and three sets of cards: hot spot cards, save the world cards, and eco-hero cards. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box.

Light wear to the box, with a split along one edge. Overall, very good. $100

CAMEL THE GAME

Camel the Game is a game of bidding and bluffing. The object of the game is to outbid the other players and win letters to spell out the word CAMEL.

Housed in a box that looks like a larger version of the Camel cigarettes package, the game cards feature the controversial character Joe Camel, whose image was retired by R.J. Reynolds in 1997 amid mounting political pressure. In 1991, the Journal of the American Medical Association published a study showing that by age six nearly as many children could correctly respond that “Joe Camel” was associated with cigarettes as could respond that the Disney Channel logo was associated with Mickey Mouse, and alleged that the “Joe Camel” campaign was targeting children.

The game box does note that the game is “a smooth deal for 2-6 players (21 or older).” It is complete and includes 48 cards in shrink-wrap, one pencil, a score pad, and instructions. Housed in the original box. Fine. $75
Finally an answer to which came first the chicken or the egg!

(Spoiler Alert) When playing the Intelligent Design Vs. Evolution board game the answer is: “The chicken – and God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that has life, and the fowl that it may fly above the earth after its kind. [Genesis: 1:20].”

Created by actor Kirk Cameron and televangelist Ray Comfort, the board game pits intelligent design against evolutionary theory. Players are split into two teams and the team with the most “brain cards” – earned for properly answering brain teasers – at the end of the game – labeled the “end of time” – wins.

Cameron and Comfort, who are co-hosts of the half-hour television program The Way of the Master, said at a press conference announcing the game that they hope it will help fight against what they maintain is the brainwashing of an entire generation.

“We are very excited about this game because it presents both sides of the creation-evolution argument, and in doing so, shows that the contemporary theory of evolution is perhaps the greatest hoax of modern times,” said Cameron, the star of the ‘80s sitcom Growing Pains.

Included with the game is a DVD called “The Science of Evolution,” in which Comfort and Cameron take an orangutan to lunch and discuss the theory of evolution.

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, 75 brain cards, 250 brain teaser cards, two brain playing pieces, one die, instructions, and a DVD. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Light wear to the box; otherwise very good.

$150

Why should the lawyers be the only ones to get rich off the O.J. Simpson murder trial?

The Squeeze the Juice board game “where lawyers get rich and justice comes at a hefty price” is one of many enterprises that cashed in on the spectacle around the O.J. Simpson murder trial.

Players pose as one of O.J. Simpson’s six defense attorneys, who bear an uncanny resemblance to his legal dream team: Johnny Cochran, Robert Shapiro, F. Lee Baily, and others. Players move around the game board with a roll of the dice and win chances to collect more legal fees from Simpson. The game play money looks like checks drawn from the football legend’s bank account and never runs out.

The game was created by Robert McLellan and Dan Mueller, two Glendale, California entrepreneurs who invested $75,000 in the venture by tapping out the limits on their credit cards.

The game is complete and includes: a folding board game, six defense attorney player pieces, two dice, 32 investigator magnifying glass pieces, 12 expert witness briefcase pieces, 16 press and 16 new evidence cards, legal briefs, and limitless checks. Housed in a two-part box. Near fine. $250
DON'T DROP THE SOAP
Lawrence, Kansas: Gillius, Inc., 2006

Similar in play to Monopoly, the object of the Don’t Drop the Soap board game is to get paroled. This controversial, prison-themed board game was designed by John Sebelius, son of former Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and U.S. Magistrate Judge K. Gary Sebelius.

John Sebelius designed the game in 2006 as an art student at the Rhode Island School of Design. It was sold in a limited edition of 3,000 copies beginning in 2008, attracting national media attention because the Kansas governor’s mansion was used as his return address. The game maker’s mother was governor at the time.

Sparking even greater controversy was her support of his efforts. Through a spokeswoman, the former Governor and her husband said they “are very proud of their son John’s creativity and talent.”

Kansas lawmakers called for an investigation and activists concerned about prison rape called for a boycott, saying the game with the tagline “where no one playing enters through the front door” made light of a serious problem.

Sebelius called the game entertainment for adults and admitted he wasn’t attempting to make a political statement, according to a January 28, 2008 interview with www.Lawrence.com. The game was born out of a college class project, which turned out to be a big hit with his classmates and then his friends and family when he brought the prototype home during a break for everyone to play. He designed the original version of the game relying on a few newspaper articles, a few documentaries, the HBO show “Oz,” and his imagination for the portrayal of prison life.

Players begin in booking with seven packs of smokes and fight their way through six different locations in hopes of being granted parole. Escape prison riots in the Yard, slip glass into a mob boss’ lasagna in the Cafeteria, steal painkillers from the nurse’s desk in the Infirmary, avoid being cornered by the Aryans in the Shower Room, fight off Latin Kings in Gang War, and try not to smoke your entire stash in The Hole. A player who runs out of smokes or pulls the “you dropped the soap” card must immediately return to booking. A player who lands on the Coat of Arms space challenges the player of their choice to a real-life arm wrestling match. The winner receives an extra turn and the loser forfeits one. If a player lands on the Gang Initiation spot, they must name five gangs from a list provided with the rules. Winners receive 10 extra packs of smokes, losers return to booking.

The game is complete and includes five player tokens representing a bag of cocaine, a handgun, and three characters: wheelchair-using “Wheelz,” muscle-flexing “Anterny,” and business suit-clad “Sal the Butcher,” a folding game board, a pair of dice, seven decks of prison location cards, seven snap-on location icons, soap dish parole card holder, deck of parole cards, stack of play cigarettes, and a book of instructions. This copy also accompanied by a signed certificate of authenticity for the limited edition. Fine. $300
SUBWAY VIGILANTE GAME
Bethesda, Maryland: Paperback Games, 1985

The object of the game is to make it to the Bronx alive. Pick a gun, six bullets, and hop on the subway in Brooklyn. Along the way, you need to use your bullets to “deter” a few punks, but don’t run out, you may be mugged and have to start over.

Mike Marine, a Washington, D.C. accountant, said he drew on the experiences of subway vigilante Bernard Goetz for the game’s design. In 1984, a year before the game’s release, Goetz shot four young men who attempted to mug him on a New York subway. A jury found him not guilty of all charges except for one count of carrying an unlicensed firearm. One of the men shot, who was left a paraplegic with brain damage, received a civil judgment of $43 million against Goetz in 1996.

“Are you fed up seeing punks and hoodlums terrorizing the weak and infirm?” the promotional copy for the board game asks. “Do you feel that our criminal justice system is too lenient with these troublemakers? Do you wish you could FIGHT BACK?”

Some called the game insensitive in light of the divisive incident and called for its boycott. Among the moves: “Put gun to punk’s head - move ahead two spaces,” reads a typical “Make My Day” card. “Punk shot, but still moving - use two bullets,” reads a “Punk” card. But according to BoardGameGeek.com, the net result of the media attention was that the game sold about 40,000 copies. Sales picked up again around the civil trial in 1986 but interest waned when the notoriety of its inspiration fell off the front page.

At the end of the rules, the game maker has provided a series of questions for a roundtable discussion and contact information for assisting victims of crime. “Although the Subway Vigilante Game was made to amuse and entertain, we hope that playing the game will stimulate interest in the real issues involved,” the rules state. The game includes a deck of 28 pink Punk cards, a deck of 29 red Make My Day cards, a page of rules, a die, four player pieces in the shape of handguns, 24 bullets, and a folding heavy paper playing board. Housed in the original box. The box is lightly soiled. The contents are very good. $100

THE SUICIDE BOMBER CARD GAME
Seattle, Washington: Bucephalus Games, 2008

Billed as a “dark humor” game, the object of Suicide Bomber is to achieve the highest score by blowing up important public figures and buildings.

The game is between two players, who draw and play people and building cards and bomber cards. Points are accumulated, depending on the building and person blown up. For example, blowing up a CEO or a high priest are top point takers, while blowing up an innocent bystander, true believer, or puppy will earn you negative points. If you blow up two nuns, their point rank elevates from two points each to four points each, and if the marketing weasel, televangelist, and tax collector are all in your kill pile, you score an extra two points.

In his review posted on boardgamegeek.com, gamer Matt Drake admits “it is really, really dark, and the timing on the humor might have been better. It’s light and tricky and fast and sick and funny. I recommend it, as long as you’re the kind of sick bastard who can find humor in getting a couple more points because you scored the televangelist/tax collector/marketing weasel trifecta.”

The game makers provide a caveat: “Bucephalus Games does not condone, endorse or understand the act of suicide bombings. We express our regret to the families of those impacted by these horrible, senseless, moronic acts.”

The game is complete with a deck of 47 people and building cards, a deck of 31 bomb and action cards, rules, and 12 bomb tokens. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Fine. $75
The creators of this game are no strangers to controversy. Already fighting protests and boycotts of their popular board game “Public Assistance – Why Bother Working for a Living?” they decided to tackle the death penalty.

The object of the game is for players to get all of their “criminals” to a combination of life imprisonment, death row or the electric chair. However, a player may also use “liberals” which start in the “ivory tower” to put a criminal back on the streets. The game can be won with this second victory condition: put criminals on the street to kill all fifteen of an opponents “citizens” and send them to Heaven.

Although it likely caused some furrowed brows, this game didn’t create nearly the same type of public outcry as Public Assistance, which civic and community leaders asked the public to boycott.

In 2005, the game’s creators Robert Johnson, a small publisher, and Ron Pramschufer, a graphic designer, published a now defunct website which offered a downloadable Celebrity Edition of “Capital Punishment.” Celebrity criminals included O. J. Simpson, Osama Bin Laden, Charles Manson, and Susan Smith. Celebrity liberals included Hillary Clinton, Dan Rather, Al Franken, and Jesse Jackson.

The board game is complete and includes: Game Board, 16 capital criminals in four colors (a murderer, rapist, arsonist and a kidnapper), 8 liberals in four different colors, 60 innocent citizens and 2 Dice. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box with the rules printed on the back of the box. Minor wear to the box; otherwise very good. $300

TRAFFICKING
Los Angeles, California: TM – The Underground Games Company, 2000

Pot not included.

However, this board game does come with coupons redeemable for one 1/4 ounce of pot at a chain of Colorado pot dispensaries called Strainwise. First produced in 1983, the game was reprinted in 2000 and repackaged for Colorado, which legalized marijuana in 2014.

There are two different ways to win the game, depending on the player role you choose. Dealers wheel and deal and play to become the first dealer who can sell a kilo (36 ounces or “lids”) of marijuana. If you are playing the role of the Narc, you win by tracking down and busting all the dealers before they can sell a kilo. This special edition takes board gaming to a higher level by encouraging players to redeem their pot coupons and package their product to use in game play.

After nearly selling out of the first printing of 10,000 copies in Canada, the game’s creator Gary Lane said he decided to try his hand in the U.S. market and quickly found the game blacklisted. First Lady Nancy Regan had just launched the “Just Say No” campaign and pressured stores not to stock it. A record store in Riverside, California ordered 50 copies and placed a display in their storefront, but protestors came out in force and called for a boycott of the business.

Lane said the internet and the direct distribution channels it provides solved his protest problems, so now a second printing of the game has been selling more rapidly, particularly since many states are considering marijuana legalization laws. A component was even added to the game, providing players with small baggies so they can buy a legal ounce of pot with the game and divvy it up and use it in the game play.

The game is complete and includes a folding game board, 16 sour grapes cards, 16 flip out cards, eight THC transit passes, one marker crayon, nine plastic player pieces and punch-out tokens depicting characters, a pair of dice, play money, plastic bags, game instructions, and a Bic lighter. Housed in a two part box. $200
POT LUCK: The Game for Dopes of All Ages

This game brings new meaning to taking a trip around the board. The objective of Pot Luck is to become the wealthiest player in the game through buying, selling, and dealing pot.

Similar in play to Monopoly, players roll the die and move around the board. But instead of buying up real estate, they collect pot spaces and can increase the value of a space by purchasing additional bales of Maui Wowie and Panama Red instead of houses and hotels. Players who land on the space pay a toking fee. The game board and Bum Me Out and Far Out cards have colorful cartoon art, while the pot property cards have color photos of the different types of pot you can own.

The game was created by Ohio residents Robert Carroll, a former social studies teacher in Shaker Heights, and Robert Kaplan, a former insurance salesman. The pair quit their jobs and told a reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer they had hopes of selling one million copies of the game, which retailed for $14.95.

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, five wooden colored player pieces, light and dark color wood blocks representing marijuana bales, far our cards, bum me out cards, pot ownership cards, play money, four pages of rules, and a pair of dice. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. As it precedes the D.A.R.E. movement, perhaps it’s no surprise the game rules contain no “drugs are bad, kids” caveats, or even suggested age for play. It is, in fact, the “game for dopes of all ages.”

Sought after by collectors of “contraband games,” Pot Luck is scarce. Near fine. **$400**

A second example is also offered and is well used, with tape repairs and staining to the box and game cards. There is one small burn mark to the edge of the game board, perhaps where a game-inspired “cigarette” was laid to rest during a roll of the die. A hemp draw-string bag has been added. **$300**

REHAB: A Wild Drinking Game
Seattle, Washington: Kheper Games, 2004

If only getting sober was this easy. The winner is the player who accumulates the most gold stars and becomes the reformed alcoholic.

Fraternity parties, Club Swank and Willy’s Bar and Grill all stand in the way of a player’s sobriety. As the game rules state: “recovery requires many trips to REHAB and it does not take until the fifth successful release from REHAB.”

Unlike some adult games that use irony to send a message about a social issue, REHAB and its close cousin ROCKSTAR REHAB, just seem to be for fun, or at the very least, to be sending a mixed message. The game box advises: “not recommended to be played with alcoholic beverages.” However, part of the rules state that if you catch a player taking a drink (Do you think they mean a glass of water?) while their player piece is in rehab, you can kick them out and they do not receive a gold star.

The game was published by Kheper Games of Seattle Washington, which publishes and distributes an array of creative adult novelties and board games. Among their titles: “The Lords of Cannabis” board game and “Who is the Biggest Pervert” card game. While Rehab and Rockstar Rehab are out of print, Kheper offers plenty of other alcohol-related games – among them the Drinking Driedels and Drinking with Stupid, the drinking game that celebrates the stupid things you and your friends have done.

The game is complete and includes: a folding board game, 45 REHAB game cards, 30 Gold Stars, six playing pieces, one die and a one-page set of instructions. Housed in a two-part box. Near fine. **$100**
SERIAL KILLER: The Board Game of the 90’s

N.p.: A Mor-de ‘Bres Production, 1991

In the board game community, Serial Killer is considered the “holy grail” of banned board games, rarely being offered for sale on the open market with some reports that just 12 copies are known to exist in private collections.

Created in 1991 by infamous serial killer enthusiast Tobias Allen (1966 – 2007) and Jill Herman, of whom little is mentioned or known, the game was banned in Canada even before it hit the shelves. Allen spoke about making the game in the 2000 documentary “Collectors,” where he is also seen playing it with infamous murdererabilia collector Rick Staton. Allen says he handmade all the games, which come packaged in a body bag and feature plastic babies as tokens that players receive for making a kill.

“The Serial Killer board game has been both a really fun thing I’ve done and a total bitch and the curse of my life as well,” says Allen, who swallowed enough Valium to overdose and drowned himself in Lake Washington just shy of his 40th birthday. “I caught a lot of shit from a lot of different people a lot of years ago. A lot of people had the wrong idea about what it was without even seeing it.”

Allen first conceived of the game while attending the Institute of Art in Chicago and intended it as dark humor for adults. He handmade copies until he was approached by New Jersey-based Comic Zone Productions about mass-producing it. They placed an advertisement in a Diamond Comic Distributors catalog, which was seen by officials in Canada who moved quickly to ban it even before it was produced. Making things worse, Allen said, he was asked to leave his job at a Seattle-area children’s daycare because of the negative publicity.

This copy of the game includes a silk screened game board map of the United States mounted on black art board, a four-page set of rules stapled, a one-page cover sheet, one die, four plastic player pieces in blue, green, red and yellow, 26 plastic babies, 19 pieces of light green construction paper cash with a skull and “serial killer game” printed on the front. There are a variety of construction paper cards, which include: 48 red crime cards; 34 orange outcome cards; construction paper penalty cards: 12 green free cards; 12 blue $4 cards; 11 violet $7 cards.

The documentary shows Allen playing a version of the game with what he calls “Bundy bucks.”
Each player begins with a dollar and starts wherever they choose. They then draw a crime (red card) and may choose to do the crime or skip it. If they choose to complete the crime, they roll the die and move along the spaces. If the player has a successful outcome, they collect tokens (babies) and money, if any was earned. An example of a low risk crime: “hitchhiking is dangerous! Someone should have told this girl!”, while a high risk crime: “a local high school keg party could provide an evening of violence. (Beware of jocks!!).” Outcomes can be good or bad for the player, for example “You have the public shaking in their boots! Another good job,” or “Your victim pulled a knife and nearly snuffed you! Try again next time.”

Each player is allowed to retire after successfully completing four crimes — “although this is allowed it might be a rather boring and un-thrilling method of play,” the rules state. It is assumed that ultimately, all players will be captured and move onto the “penalty phase” of the game. Players then use the money they accumulated to select from a penalty pile. According to the rules: “The cards might be thought of as lawyers and, as we all know, the more money you spend on a lawyer the more shifty and sly of a lawyer you are going to get!”

If a player is caught in a non-death penalty state, indicated by orange on the playing board, they can either buy a penalty card or give up three tokens and end their game. The winner of the game is the killer with the most tokens.

The game board shows the following states with no death penalty: Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, West Virginia, New York, Maine and Vermont. The death penalty map has changed quite a bit since the game was created. There are now 19 states with no death penalty, and a few of the states have adopted the death penalty, such as Kansas, which re-enacted it in 1994.

Criminologist Stephen Giannangelo has a copy of the game in his private murderabilia collection and sometimes lets students in his abnormal psychology class play it at Illinois State University.

The game board is lightly worn with some scuffing and a few of the cards are lightly bent and stained. The body bag has yellowed a bit from age. Overall, a very good copy of this scarce board game.

$2,000

“The Serial Killer board game has been both a really fun thing I’ve done and a total bitch and the curse of my life as well.”

- Tobias Allen
BEAT DETROIT
The Game that will Crack You Up
Hollywood, California: Antler Productions, 1972

If you are plagued by constant car trouble or bought a lemon, it’s unlikely anything about the Beat Detroit board game will seem funny.

The message of the game is Detroit makes lousy cars. Cars break down constantly, costing you tons of money for insurance, maintenance and repairs. “You know that if you can travel 50,000 miles before you go broke or your car falls apart, you beat Detroit. Well, that’s what this game is all about,” the game creators Hollywood scriptwriters Leo S. Posillico and James F. Morierty, Jr., state on the box.

To win the game, players “Beat Detroit” by driving their car player piece over 50,000 miles, the equivalent of five circuits of the board. But getting around the board and avoiding peril is impossible. Out of the 52 spaces, just five spots generate positive or neutral outcomes. “Write a letter to Detroit: this is the only space on the board where nothing happens,” the rules state.

The rest of the spots will cost you money. And if you are unlucky enough to land on the Victim of Advertising spot, you must return your car to the start, lose credit for any laps completed, and begin the game anew. Peril lurks around every corner: “car stripped by neighborhood gang – pay $800.” If a player lands on a spot occupied by another player, the person who originally occupied the space must yell “whip lash, whip lash,” and then they can proceed to sue the other player.

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, owner’s manual (list of rules), six player pieces in the shape of a car, six insurance cards, 12 “extra car” title cards, 18 warranty coupons, 24 service cards, a pair of dice and $49,000 in game money. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Light wear to the box, otherwise very good. $200

LA LAWLESS
Bakersfield, California: Moves (Decision Games), April-May 1993

Published just a year after the Los Angeles riots, LA Lawless involves two players, in a war game-style game that give players a chance to use different strategies to simulate the confrontation between police and rioters. The players in the game are either Authority, representing the city government, law enforcement agencies, and the general forces of law and order or the Rioters, representing the people conducting the disturbances.

“The basic idea behind the game is to show the tradeoff between the use of force and popular reaction,” the games creator Joe Miranda said. “A riot is a form of ‘propaganda of the deed.’ The purpose isn’t just to tear up the city, but to get certain political ideas across. Riot control is the same; obviously, the police could suppress a riot in short order by shooting to kill, but to do so would be a political disaster.”

The game was published in issue 75 of the game magazine Moves. The components are printed on the pages of the magazine and include an 11”x17” map sheet, 120 uncut and unmounted counters, five pages of rules, two pages of charts, and three pages of designer notes. Fine. $150
Its detractors called Public Assistance racist and sexist, but the creators of the controversial board game said it just mirrors reality and a broken system that allows people to live off welfare rather than work for a living.

Created by Robert Johnson, a small publisher, and Ron Pramschufer, a graphic designer, the board game was featured on The Today Show and hailed as one of the hottest games of the year by the New York Daily News.

But leaders from the NAACP called the game racist and encouraged the public to boycott its purchase. The creators sued the head of the New York City Human Resources Division after he sent a letter to department and game stores, urging them not to stock the game. An appeal went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused in October 1983 to hear the case. Despite protests, Hammerhead Enterprises quickly sold out on its 15,000 first printing of the game.

The game’s creators denied they were being racist or sexist. In a 1980 New York Daily News story, they said they came up with it one day after sitting around complaining about the system and decided to make a game of it. “America has become the land of the free handout,” Johnson said. “We’ve spent more money on the war on poverty than on Vietnam or World War II. Anyone who objects to the game because it mirrors reality too closely is supporting freeloading able-bodied people who won’t work.”

The object of the game is to accumulate the most money on 12 trips, representing months of the year, around the board, which has two paths: the able-bodied welfare recipient promenade and the working person’s rut. The best way to accumulate wealth is to remain on the welfare promenade but there is a danger of landing on certain spots that pull you onto the working person’s rut. Players begin with a $500 welfare grant and get rich by collecting illegitimate children, dealing drugs, and winning craps games.

The board game is complete and includes: a folding game board, four player pieces and four identical player pieces representing the players live-in spouse, cardboard pieces representing illegitimate children, cardboard markers to use in front of players to keep track of the number of turns around the board, three dice, Working Person’s Burden cards, Welfare Benefit cards, bank notes and play money and a four-page set of rules.

Housed in a two-part box. All very good condition. $300
Now is your chance to know what it is like to be a “true liberal,” boast the makers of Political Asylum, a board game that allows you to earn “Certificates for Politically Correct Social Activism.” The winner of the game is the first player elected to public office in the Liberal Party.

There is a decidedly conservative and mocking bent to the game. A set of pink liberal cards with a pig on the front has actions such as: Pink Slip – lose your job, or if unemployed collect bonus entitlement of $100 after “feminists targeted your earth moving equipment business as one that was too-male dominant.”

The game is copyrighted by Windbreaker Entertainment, whose president is Robert Snavely of Elk River, Minnesota. Snavely is a frequent speaker at homeschool conventions and also runs Moti-Ventures, a program to motivate homeschooled kids through adventure. According to the company’s website, he grew up a missionary kid in rural South Africa. He and his wife Kathy met at a Minnesota bible college and homeschooled their children, who now work for the company. His attitude concerning public education comes through on the game board. A spot with a school is labeled “Public School…for a good educatoin!” – which one assumes is an intentional misspelling.

The game is oozing with other sarcasm. In the description of the objective, the rules state: “You’ve decided to run for public office as a liberal politician. What you need now is positive media attention for yourself while making the other candidates look bad! Quietly freeload off society (while mocking the traditional values which made the society great), you watch for Opportunity Cards for politically correct causes to support...”

The verso of the game box advertises a second Windbreaker game entitled Attorneys at Flaw. The object of the game is to ‘earn’ a million dollars in CASH. Since the only way to earn money is win lawsuits against ‘negligent’ or ‘insensitive’ businesses, move toward the ‘TIP’ locations to obtain your first lawsuit, but you may be competing for the same tip with other players.

The game is complete and includes: a folding board game, calendar counter, a pair of dice, six player pieces, play money, play food stamps, gotcha cards, publicity vouchers, liberal cards (sow), conservative cards (eagle), opportunity cards, certificate for politically correct social activism, tent cards to indicate gainfully employed and administrators, and four pages of rules. Housed in a two-part box. Fine. $200
Class struggle was envisioned as a lesson in socialism, but for the game’s creator it became a hard lesson in the ways of capitalism.

The game was developed by Bertell Ollman (b. 1935), a professor at New York University, who was offered the opportunity to chair the University of Maryland’s Government Department, pending approval from the provost. Maryland’s elected leadership caught wind of the possibility of a noted Marxist scholar heading up a university department and he was denied the position. Ollman then decided to focus his energies on developing and marketing the game he envisioned as a foil to the popular board game Monopoly. Before he knew it, he was CEO of his own company and found himself immersed in capitalism, haggling with store managers, toy manufacturers, and banks. He wrote the book Class Struggle is the Name of the Game: True Confessions of A Marxist Businessman (1983) about all that he went through developing the game.

“Even my political commitment was beginning to fray at the edges,” he writes in his memoir. “I had always been delighted by each downturn of sales reported in the marketplace — ‘People buying less junk,’ I thought. Now, the same news appeared somehow threatening. I caught myself thinking, ‘If the collapse of capitalism could wait just a little longer, until we got our business on its feet.’”

Class Struggle sold around 230,000 copies and was translated into Italian, German, French, and Spanish. Despite the apparent success of the game, manufacturing and loan costs ate up profits. After three years of struggle, the professor and his partners sold the game to Avalon Hill, a company that specialized in war games. The game disappeared in 1994.

The original box for the Class Struggle board game features Karl Marx arm-wrestling Nelson Rockefeller. It is intended to reflect the real struggle between the classes in our society. “The object of the game is to win the revolution…ultimately,” the rules state. “Until then, classes – represented by different players – advance around the board, making and breaking alliances, and picking up strengths and weaknesses that determine the outcome of the elections and general strikes which occur along the way.”

The game involves two to six players taking on the roles of capitalists, workers, farmers, small businessmen, professionals, and students. They move around the board while dealing with elections, strikes, wars, and Chance Cards, which include messages such as “You are treating your class allies very badly” and “Your son has become a follower of Reverend Moon.”

Speaking of rules – there are two sets of them, which both begin “Don’t be scared by all these rules.” One set of 10 pages is for beginners and the second set of 26 pages includes the “full rules” and “tournament rules.”

The game is complete and includes: a two-part box, a folding game board, 12 wooden blocks to support player pieces and notice cards, six player pieces to place in wooden blocks, which denote players/classes in the game: Workers (hammer), Capitalists (top hat with dollar sign), Farmers (tractor), Small Businessmen (cash register), Professionals (briefcase), and Students (mortarboard hat); 4 Minor Class cards (Farmers, Small Business, Professionals, Students) to remind you of your alliances; 2 Event Cards (“Trade Unions Formed” and “Workers’ Political Party Formed”); 2 decks of Chance cards (35 each), one for the Workers and one for the Capitalists; 120 Asset coupons and 60 Debit coupons; 1 six-sided “genetic” die (symbol of each of the six classes on each face); 2 six-sided moving dice, each one numbering 1-3 twice; 1 Beginner’s Rules pamphlet of 10 pages; and 1 Full and Tournament Rules pamphlet, with designer’s notes and commentary of 26 pages. Minor wear to the box; otherwise very good. $300
SOB: Save Our Bureaucrats
Whitefish, Montana: Gary Tallman, 1980

Politically inspired, SOB: Save Our Bureaucrats is a form of parody that encourages players to “go broke and go on welfare with the help of government grants and boondoggles.” As players move around the board, their starting money eventually dwindles so they no longer payout or receive money and instead draw exclusively from the welfare fund. The game continues until the welfare fund is depleted, and the winner is the player who receives the most welfare.

Players each begin with a Susan B. Anthony playing token and a set amount of money. Each player then deposits one unit of real currency on the “welfare” space. Using the dice barrel labeled “pork,” each player rolls to move around the pentagon-shaped board. Land on a “rip off” spot and you may have to pay $50 – your share for “dining rooms for top military brass in the Pentagon are subsidized $1.3 million annually by the taxpayers.” Land on a boondoggle spot and you may be required to pay $200 because “you are required to file an environmental impact statement.” Several of the cards name President Carter explicitly. You may be forced to pay $150, your share of the new Carter-created Department of Energy “with a budget of $10.5 billion, and has yet to make its first watt of energy available to the public.”

In a bit of irony, the game’s makers, Gary Tallman and Wayne Shanahan of Montana, used an $85,000 Small Business Administration loan to create the game.

The game is complete in a two-part box with a folding game board, six player pieces, cash, a pair of dice, and directions, as well as grant, ripoff, and boondoggle cards that have not been punched out. One corner of the box is lightly dented; otherwise near fine. $200

SOCIETY TODAY
Del Mar, California: CRM Books for Psychology Today, 1971

Society Today may have been a reflection of society in the 1970s, but it is not a reflection of society today. Developed by Communications, Research, Machines, Inc., (CRM) the publishers of Psychology Today magazine, it is one of a series of games from this era designed to make people think.

Players move around the board and collect “prestige points” based on cards drawn and correct answers given to questions. You may be appointed a captain of industry or receive an inheritance to earn prestige points. It seems the game’s creators had little regard for the New York City School Board, since when your player is appointed to this government body “you lose 10 prestige points.”

Many of the questions and answers provided in the booklet would likely be viewed as progressive for the day, but not by 2016 standards. See Question 10 in the booklet: “Homosexuality is inborn?” Answer: “False. From the available evidence it appears that homosexuality is a learned rather than an inborn trait.”

The object of the game is to reach “The Best of All Possible Worlds” before any other player, using your knowledge about people and social institutions, your intelligence, and sheer luck to overcome the many obstacles that life—and your opponents—may put in your path.

But whatever you do, don’t land on space 70 – it’s “Doomsday! Nuclear war – no winners. Game over for all players.”

The game is complete and includes: eight player tokens, 32 refusal tokens, 32 shot-in-the-dark cards, 16 limbo cards, 24 imponderable cards, a timer, dice, and a 20-page rule book with 300 questions. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Fine. $175
According to a 1989 Los Angeles Times interview, Run for the Border was created by Roland Fisher, Jose Mata, and Frank Rodriguez, who all lived in the California/Mexico border city El Centro and hoped to sensitize the game-playing public to the plight of illegal aliens. “People laugh at illegal aliens, but they’ve got no idea how difficult and frustrating their lives are,” Rodriguez said. “Our game is more than just fun, it makes a statement.” Fisher is a former Border Patrol officer.

The game was sold on a limited basis at video stores in El Centro, Brawley, and Calexico. But it was pulled from the shelves in 1993 when Taco Bell’s parent company Pepsico sued the entrepreneurs for infringing on their slogan - Make a Run for the Border, a tagline that was later dropped after being deemed insensitive.

Every player starts with $200 and may collect or lose money along the way based on the squares they land on. About a third of the game is played in the “border town” and the remainder leads up to this region. It is rife with pitfalls such as snakes, jail, and heat stroke. Landing on the risk space results in drawing a risk card, which more often than not turns out bad – such as paying fines to police or banditos robbing you. If you run out of money, you must go back to the start, where you will receive another $200. Once you reach border town, you may land on a Coyote card spot, which helps you to advance. You can also go for the quick win by landing on one of the five jumper spots. You pay $100 for each jump attempt, which involves flipping a plastic border coin from the jumper board to the “Welcome to LA” spot on the board.

The board game is complete and includes: game board, risk cards, coyote cards, border cash, 4 game pieces, a Run for the Border token, jumper, rules, and 2 dice. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Minor wear to the box; otherwise very good. **$400**
BLACKS & WHITES
A Psychology Today Game
Del Mar, California: Communications/Research/Machines, Inc., 1970

A board game based on Monopoly, Blacks & Whites was intended to demonstrate how the odds are stacked against black people in society by having a different set of rules for each race in the game.

White players start with $1 million, blacks with $10,000, and each race has different opportunity decks. While whites can buy property in any part of the board, blacks are limited to certain areas until they accumulate at least $100,000. They are outright banned from property in the “suburban zone.” The board is divided into eight neighborhoods, which include Lesser Suburbia, Upper Integrated, Inner Ghetto, and Older Estates. According to the rules: “When a white player goes bankrupt, he is out of the game, psychologically defeated. When a black player goes bankrupt, he goes on welfare and collects $5,000 from each white player.”

The board game turned out to be one of the most controversial of all time and even merited an article in Time magazine:

“…The game was developed at the University of California at Davis by Psychology Department Chairman Robert Sommer. It was conceived as a painless way for middleclass whites to experience - and understand - the frustrations of blacks. In Sommer’s version, however, the black player could not win; as a simulation of frustration, the game was too successful. Then David Popoff, a Psychology Today editor, redesigned the game, taking suggestions from militant black members of “US” in San Diego. The new rules give black players an opportunity to use - and even to beat - the system…”

The game is complete and includes: a playing board, a pair of dice, five plastic white and four plastic black player pieces, play money, a complete set of deed cards, opportunity cards and cardboard pieces, and a set of directions. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Minor wear and light fading to the box; otherwise very good. $250

BLACKBOARD: The Real Story
Hoboken, New Jersey: Innovative Designs, 2002

On the face of it, Blackboard plays a bit like Trivial Pursuit. But instead of slices of the pie, players discard removable foam links, representing slave chains, from their Amistad ship playing piece every time they answer a question correctly. The first player to run out of links wins the game.

But knowledge of black history alone isn’t enough to win this game, as the rules caution: “Blackboard takes you through the high-roads and the perils of the past and present experience of a Black American. You might escape from slavery and be captured, or you could make it to the underground railroad and on to freedom. But beware, Reaganomics will send you back and there’s always a Tom waiting to betray you.”

In this case, the underground railroad, Tom, and Reaganomics are spaces on the game board that will impact your game play. Links are discarded by a player every time they pass the start space. But land on Reaganomics, and it will literally set you back to the start. “During Reagan’s presidency, many federal programs which benefited American minorities, were systematically dismantled,” the rules state. “It is widely believed by historians that the Reagan era is responsible for the most devastating setback to the Civil Rights Movement in modern times.”

Instead of discarding links, you may be compelled to add them to your playing piece if you answer a question incorrectly or land on spots such as “driving while black.”

The game is complete and includes: a folding game board, two dice, seven player tokens, chains, situation cards, four pages of rules, and multiple choice question cards covering the subjects of entertainment, politics, science, invention, art, literature, sports, law, and education. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. As new. $100
GHETTOPOLY
Stolen Property Fencing Game
Saint Marys, Pennsylvania: Ghettopoly.com, 2002

A board game based on Monopoly, “da object” of Ghettopoly is “to become the richest playa through stealing, cheating and fencing stolen properties.”

After it was criticized for being offensively racist by black clergy in Pennsylvania and NAACP chapters in Florida, it was pulled by retailers including Urban Outfitters. eBay’s Offensive Material Policy also prevents it from being sold. The game’s 28-year-old creator, David Chang of Pennsylvania, was subsequently sued by Hasbro over Ghettopoly’s similarities to its trademark game Monopoly. The court ultimately awarded Hasbro $400,000, after estimating Chang’s profits from the game at $8.7 million.

The four railroad properties are replaced by liquor stores. Other properties include a massage parlour, a peep show, and a pawn shop. The Community Chest and Chance squares become Ghetto Stash and Hustle squares, while taxation squares are replaced by police shakedown and carjacking squares. Instead of building houses and hotels, property owners can build crack houses and projects.

According to a 2003 USA Today story, black clergyman in Pennsylvania called for a ban of the game and a boycott of any retailers selling it. The Ghettopoly board depicts figures labeled “Malcum X” and “Martin Luther King Jr.” — intentionally misspelled — noted Rev. Glenn Wilson, pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia. “This is beyond making fun, to use the caricature of Dr. King in this regard,” Wilson said. “There’s no way that game could be taken in any way other than that this man had racist intent in marketing it.”

But Chang, the game’s creator, told the St. Petersburg Times in an October 4, 2003 interview that he wanted embrace ethnic stereotypes and create a game with the kind of “urban edge” found in video games such as Grand Theft Auto, Palm games such as Dope Wars, and rap, a genre that often details violence and drugs. Chang, a University of Rochester graduate who moved with his family from Taiwan when he was 8, said, “I can’t see how people are taking it seriously. It’s satirical. It’s satire about stereotypes in this country. If you’re going to say my game is offensive, then take a look around, there’s a lot of offensive things out there.”

The game is complete and includes: game board, loan shark tray, 40 crack houses, 17 projects, pink slip cards, ghetto stash and hustle cards, 7 game pieces (pimp, hoe, 40 oz, machine gun, marijuana leaf, basketball, and crack), counterfeit money, and 2 dice. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box. Minor wear to the box; otherwise very good. $250
THE PLEASURES AND PERILS OF 5 COLOREDGIRLS

Denton, Texas: Jollity House Games, 2009

Real life may not be as complicated as playing The Pleasures and Perils of 5 Colored Girls board game.

The object of the game is to assemble the most pieces of the puzzle to create as complete a woman as possible. Puzzle pieces are earned as players move around the game board, collecting babies, boyfriends, jobs, and traits – and perhaps even an STD or two. When passing start – labeled “Your birthday” on the board, a trait, can be redeemed for a puzzle piece.

The game play is complicated and controversial, with many variables and conditions. For example, at any point, a player who wants to avoid paying their bills may go to the ladies room to hide. She can stay there as long as she likes but other players may steal anything she owns while she is hiding out. But if a player does steal, they must discard their trait cards. A player may also opt to enroll in college, or perhaps to become a Diva and literally play by a different set of rules.

Then there’s “the bag test,” which is clarified in the frequently asked questions: “Bag tests determine melanin levels. Occasionally, options change and actions occur when a player’s skin tone is lighter or darker than a paper bag.” But how does this apply to the game? You draw the card: “RITE OF PASSAGE: Your Sons have been profiled. Bag Test! Forfeit each son that rates less than 5.” However, no further explanation is provided about how to “rate” the blue plastic booty representing your sons.

The game was created by D.J. Norman-Cox, who sponsored a Coloredgirls board game tournament as part of the release of the game during Juneteenth celebrations in Denton, Texas. “Given the purpose of the Juneteenth Holiday, this tournament allows participants to immerse themselves in African American culture, evaluate progress and reflect on the lives of the contemporary women,” he said in a press release.

Players are faced with numerous controversial decisions. For example, a player who pulls the “birth defect” card may opt to invoke the abortion card to discard this,” or “every time you cross the Hospital pay $4 ($1 if your household has insurance.)” Players may also have more than one boyfriend or discard unwanted men if they land on the recycle bin spot. Boyfriends may earn money for the household, but they also create problems – a lot of problems. One card causes a player to go to the shelter spot on the board because their significant other is abusive.

While many board games have rules that may cause a player to lose everything and start over, this game takes it a step further. If a player encounters any combination of three lifestyle “glitches” at the same time, she’s done. “When a player expires, the surviving players must decide how to distribute her children and possessions,” the rules state.

Instead of a banker, game play is governed by “Ms. Thang.” Babies are collected when landing on a stork spot, money is collected when passing payday and the amount is dependent on whether the player holds a degree, the job they hold, and the job(s) of their boyfriend(s). “A jobless, manless player may collect stimulus payments when she lands on Payday,” the rules state.

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, game rules, one-page frequently asked questions, a spinner, five puzzles, five vertical pawns, five horizontal pawns, three orange pawns, 16 buttons, 15 baby shoes, 280 cards, and game money. One sauce pot not included. Housed in the original pictorial box.

The game is out of print and a website devoted to its play is no longer available. Light wear to the box, else as new. $150
WOMAN & MAN: The Classic Confrontation
Del Mar, California: Psychology Today Games, 1971

It was true 45 years ago when this game was first published and still true today. As in life, women begin this game at a disadvantage, starting with fewer points and have a harder time earning points as they play.

Developed by Psychology Today to draw attention to “the way one sex has managed to squelch the other,” the Woman & Man board game aims to correct this blind spot. Men are encouraged to play the game as a woman and “feel what it’s like to be a ‘mere female,’ to compete in a frustrating world that caters to men.” But women are also encouraged to change roles and “get a taste of male supremacy, and compete with the sweet certainty that the world is made in a male image.”

To win the game, players must accumulate 100 status quo points and cross the finish line with an exact roll of the dice. The game rules allow female players to team up and pool the number of points needed to win.

Each player draws a goal card depending on their player gender, which tells them the number points they begin with based on their present status (job). All the male players begin with 35-60 points and roles such as editor-in-chief. The females begin with 5-40 and roles such as editorial assistant. One female status card notes you are a state congresswoman. Goal: “President of the United States. Impossible. PICK ANOTHER GOAL,” the card states.

When drawn, status quo cards are played immediately and read aloud along with the number of points a player earns or loses – “You get your husband to spend 50% of the time with kids, so you can go to work. Gain 10 status points.”

Power cards can be played any time and give you an unfair advantage over the opposite sex. Just before an opponent rolls the dice, shout “Power!”, read your card and claim your reward – “As a handsome young professor, you have hundreds of female students adore you. They obey your every word, even when you tell all female players to move 5 spaced back and give you 5 points.”

The game is complete and includes: a folding playing board, a pair of dice, six plastic player pieces, blocking cards, confrontation cards, status quo cards, and a 24 page booklet of directions and player questions. Housed in the original pictorial two-part box.

Minor wear to the box with a bumped corner and some light staining to a few cards; otherwise very good. $250
WHAT SHALL I BE? The Exciting Game of Career Girls
Bay Shore, New York: Selchow & Richter Company, 1966

It’s difficult to imagine young girls today playing What Shall I Be? Not only are the jobs limiting and sexist: model, airline hostess, ballet dancer, actress, teacher, and nurse, the personality and subject cards for the game could never be seen as esteem builders.

Players roll the dice and move around the outer board and through any of the six career bypaths to collect career cards, personality cards and subject cards. Land on a heart and you may have your heart broken: “You are overweight. Bad for: airline hostess, ballet dancer and model.” Time to draw an orange circle card? “Your make-up is too sloppy. Bad for: airlines hostess and model.”

The game, first published in 1966, ends when one player has collected four school cards for one profession and two subject and two personality cards that are good for that profession. So if you failed biology, know how to use make-up, and you have a nice smile and are graceful, you can become an airline hostess!

A version of game was made for boys by the same makers in 1968. The boy career choices were: law school – statesman; graduate school – scientist; college – athlete; medical school – doctor; technical school – engineer and flight school – astronaut.

An introduction to the game redeems the makers, a little bit. “Today, women can be found doing anything from performing surgery to designing spaceships. Maybe you would make a better pilot than a stewardess or a better photographer than a model. Be sure to look into all the possibilities before you decide. Remember that what you will be in the future depends only on what you want to be.”

A 1976 edition of the girls was a bit more enlightened. Not only are the girls depicted more racially diverse, they could now choose between going to medical school to become a surgeon, the riding academy to be a jockey, flight training school to be an astronaut, college to be a commentator, drama school to be a director, and law school to be a lawyer.

The game is complete and includes: a folding Game Board, four player pieces, 30 school cards, 16 round subject cards, 16 heart-shaped personality cards, and a pair of dice. The rules are printed on the verso of the box lid. In a two-part box with some minor soiling and splitting. Very good. $350

Also offered a 1972 second edition of the game. Only the box cover art was changed for this edition. $250