Virtual Societies:
A JOURNEY OF POWERTRIPS & PERSONALITIES

A Dramaturgical and Ethnographic Study of Winnipeg's Original Live-Action *Vampire the Masquerade* Role-Playing Game Community

BY

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Anthropology
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VIRTUAL SOCIETIES: A JOURNEY OF POWERTRIPS AND PERSONALTIES: A DRAMATURGICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF WINNIPEG'S ORIGINAL LIVE ACTION VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE ROLE-PLAYING GAME COMMUNITY

BY

BRIAN LAWRENCE MYHRE

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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Abstract

Play is more than an activity; it illustrates the diversity and malleability of human social relations. It is our awareness of the flexibility of everyday social routines and our freedom to control the styles and definitions of our presentations. This thesis is exemplified during the interplay of participants of Winnipeg's original live-action role-playing game, *Vampire the Masquerade*. Although, initially a community of strangers, by role-playing fantasy characters, participants shaped not only the shared fantasy of their gothic-horror game, but also their everyday understanding of social reality. The in- and out-of-game interactions of metaplayers epitomise how we use common schemata and roles to manage our impressions of the social order, augmenting our self-identities and the format of our social existence. Players were socialized into this virtual community when they realized the actual relationships that shaped their interpretations of character-actions and player-reputations. Information for this thesis was obtained through participant-observations, and interviews of seventeen player-consultants. Like all game players, I created and role-played a fictional character. This character allowed me to discover and explore game rules, in-game stories, character-goals and the out-of-game politics that motivated community life. Just as in the everyday world, when we become engrossed in public character-roles, we chance to see through another's eyes to assess their comprehension of our behaviour. Our receptiveness to routine roles strengthens our social development. The roles we play in everyday life and evaluations others make of them, help us determine what public presentations should influence our private self-conceptions and what should be avoided. Erving Goffman's dramaturgy (1959; 1961; 1974) acts as a working model for describing play as a social catalyst. By examining both

the dramatic-play frame of character-interactions and the everyday frame of player-associations, the reader is shown how often they overlap to alter the meanings and presentations of social interactions. Understanding play as an attitude, rather than an activity, is crucial for understanding social reality. Without it, there would be little room for innovations and social accommodations. It is the key to communication. Play is not just for our entertainment or development; it allows us to present public roles, conceal our true intentions and to communicate during an array of situationally dependent social formats. Through play we can seriously toy with and change communal conceptions of social reality and the distinctiveness of our self-identities to escape ready-made semantic and behavioural cliches and restructure our ideas and experiences. In the game, all players privately acknowledged that they each determined the reality of their game storyline, yet all deny it. Ideally, their game-interactions were "just play," however, game rules were interpreted by those who played most convincingly. In *Vampire*, as it is in the everyday world, we publicly role-play primary everyday cognitive frameworks, while subtly adjusting these frames through a secondary cognitive system called our imagination. For the discipline of anthropology, this thesis serves to highlight play as a cross-cultural attitude; an attitude expressed by all children early in their development. Our ability to role-take, allows us to incorporate various roles and schemata taht are crucial for social development. Play enables us to imagine and become engrossed in the social reality of our our communites. The second benefit of this thesis is to remind live-action role-players how seriously their hobby can alter their self-conceptions and community relationships. Through play, the definitions of all interaction frames are negotiable.

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It was after several readings of Gary Alan Fine's *Shared Fantasy* (1983) that I realized the direction of my graduate student training and the topic of this report. His enthusiastic, yet critical suggestions led me to study what I normally played at. After all, role-playing has been a hobby of mine since before any school. By adding to this, Bateson's insights into the paradox of play, helped me make sense out of Geertz's metacultural anthropology. Geertz's cast of cultural insights set the stage for my appreciation of Goffman's dramaturgical vision of social reality. Goffman's eclectic style of presentation provided me with the final push into this, my research into play. I must thank these gentlemen for pursuing such intriguing careers and for being such inspirational cornerstones.

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Above all, however, I must bow low to kindred both human and undead; the player-characters who acted as my field consultants. To protect their masquerade, they have remained anonymous. Let it stand that our social sandbox has grown infinitely larger since our meeting. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and feelings about our fantastic world.

CONTENTS:

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iv

Figures x

Preface xi

***Chapter One*: Introduction** **1**

(1) Thesis Statement 1

(2) Description of research field 5
-----(2.1) Role-playing games as models for examining social interaction 5
-----(2.2) Population of Study 7
-----(2.3) Research design and procedure 8

(3) Chapter Summaries 11

***Chapter Two*: Theoretical Explanations: A Dramaturgical Model of Social Interaction** **16**

(1) A Dramaturgical model of social interaction 17
-----(1.1) Goffman's dramaturgy 17
-----(1.2) How we communicate [messages and metamessages] 20
-----(1.3) Interaction Frames [cognitive styles] 22
-----(1.4) Schemata and the roles we play 28
-----(1.5) Role-taking, distancing and impression management 31
-----(1.6) Joint impression management: Team presentations 36
-----(1.7) George H. Mead's conception of the socially dependent self 38

(2) Defining play 40
-----(2.1) The trouble with play 40
-----(2.2) Gregory Bateson's play paradox [simulated realities] 42
-----(2.3) Description of the play metaframe [play as mood] 45

(3) The mechanics of play within the social order 49
-----(3.1) Playing with the order 51

(4) Playing games as virtual societies 54

Chapter Three: Research Results and Analysis: Embracing the Vampire 57

(1) Game participants as private/public self identities 58
-----STAGE ONE: Ideal relationships 58

(2) Dramaturgical frames of the Game Community 61
-----(2.1) Description of the Everyday frame [the players] 62
-----(2.2) Description of the Dramatic-Play frame [the characters and the story] 76
-----(2.3) Description of the Metaplay frame [the player-character] 92

(3) Metagame: Personal responses of private self-identities 99
-----(3.1) Cross-frame flipping 99
-----(3.2) Status quo and its effect on player-self-esteem 102
-----STAGE TWO: Desired relationships 103

(4) Emotional relationships and the dynamic association between in/out-of-game players 104
-----(4.1) Association between character-self and player-self concepts 106
-----(4.2) Important behaviour of vampire game players [metagaming and rumours] 106

(5) Increase in players' out-of-game relationships and in-game participation 111
-----(5.1) Evaluations of player motives and values 111
-----(5.2) Evaluations of character intentions and influence on others 112
-----STAGE THREE: Actual relationships 113

(6) The Metaplayer: Player-character paradoxical adaptations 114
-----(6.1) Types of meta-role-players [styles of play and game value] 115
-----(6.2) My experiences with play paradox with the game community 118
-----(6.3) The product of player-character combinations: The balancing of private and public identity 126
-----(6.3a) Team metaplay 127
-----(6.3b) Solo metaplay 131
-----(6.4) Change in private self-identity of public/private person 132

(7) Metagame social environment 134
-----(7.1) The language of metagaming [four types of communication] 134
-----(7.2) Power and community creation: A summary of behavioural rules and personal politics 137
-----(7.3) Routines and relations: A description of the community social order, Hierarchy and clique/solo player dynamics 139
-----(7.4) A comparison of vampire role-play in other groups: Clique power, metagaming and city clique structure examples 143
-----(7.5) Game fissioning and new Winnipeg vampire game groups 151

(8) Dramaturgical cooperation of cliques and the "All's Well" front of play 152
-----(8.1) Understanding the social order 153

***Chapter Four*: Personal Reflections: Paradox and the Participant-Observer 156**

(1) A workable ethnography 157

(2) Personal dilemmas with the metagame 159
-----(2.1) Personal Journal Entry [02/02/97] "Emotions and Lost Objectivity" 159
-----(2.2) Letter to Storyteller [02/08/97] "Complaint" 161

(3) Concluding thoughts on the research process 165

***Chapter Five*: Summary & Conclusions 169**

(1) Summary: Key-Issues of analysed research results 170
-----(1.1) Purpose of the *Vampire* game community 170
-----(1.2) Motives for player involvement 176
-----(1.3) Production and maintenance of virtual society 178
-----(1.4) Public issues reflecting private concerns 181
-----(1.5) Metagame and the potence of play 182

(2) Consultant conclusions 184
-----(2.1) Mordechai-P's descriptions of characters and players 184
-----(2.2) Istvan-P's assessment of game rules and organization 188
-----(2.3) Emic assessment of problems with game play: 'The metagame' 193

(3) Research Conclusions 195
-----(3.1) *Vampire* game community metaplay 195
-----(3.2) Play as metaframe of social interaction 196
-----(3.3) The Designation of social reality through self-identification and group role-play 198

(4) Conclusion: The Lessons of play 200

Appendix A1: Flow chart of participation & engrossment into the *Vampire* game community & Summary 204
Appendix A2: 1996 Demography of game community participants 210
Appendix A3: Model and Actual Social Hierarchy of Main Characters in Winnipeg's 1996/97 *Vampire* Society 213
Appendix A4: Diagram of clique member associations 215

Appendix B: A Glossary of definitions 216

Appendix C1: Focus group meeting agendas 226
Appendix C2: Interview 'afterthoughts': Guy-P Informal Interview 227

Appendix D1: Informal interview questions 228
Appendix D2: Formal interview questions 229

Appendix E1: Ethics Forms: Explanation of research for interview consultants 233
Appendix E2: Ethics Forms: Participant consent and anonymity forms 234
Appendix E3: Focus group consent and agreement form 235
Appendix E4: List of consultants interviewed 235

Appendix F: A Crash-Course for those who know little about RPGs 236

Appendix G: Bad press about role-playing games 240

Appendix H1: 14 Live-Action character backgrounds for Winnipeg *Vampire the Masquerade* 252
Appendix H2: In-game history and player-character journals 287

Appendix I: Sketchings of a few vampire game characters 338

References Cited **344**

FIGURES
Found in Appendix A:

1.	Flow Chart of Participation and Engrossment into the Vampire Game Community & Summary [A Guide to Chapter Three]	204
2.	1996 Demography of Game Community Participants	210
3.	Model and Actual Social Hierarchy of Main Characters in Winnipeg's 1996/97 *Vampire* Society	213
4.	Diagram of Clique Member Associations	215

Preface

"Play enables us to distinguish text and context and thus, to keep our perspective on reality and our sense of inner control. We test a wide range of roles and risk playing those that are most authentic for ourselves. We can create and revise the play frame of our lives so that we can play these authentic roles comfortably and joyously. We can communicate with others within and without of the social context; and thus negotiate for ourselves better texts for performing our roles. We can use play as a fine tuning device to stay in touch with our most intense and personal feelings and thoughts. And we can bend reality of the present social and physical world to imagine and to plan for the world of the future. Play is the medium through which we can learn to risk the pain and joy of realness. Children know this intuitively and, underneath our layers of sophistication and socialization, so do we. Play helps us learn that becoming real involves risk taking and willingness to be hurt, get shabby, and become loose in the joints. In our search for realness, we may have to follow new scripts, discarding or revising the scripts we rehearsed and memorized in childhood. We may be required to face dark and scary visions and thoughts or give up tightly held areas of control... And we may even need to acknowledge that many of our social maneuvers and our work goals, which seem to be such serious business, are games after all."

(Bergen 1988: 301)

Chapter One:
Introduction

(1) Thesis Statement:

The social world is far less predictable and static than we imagine it to be. All of us contribute to and manipulate social reality through public presentations. Convincing impressions redefine community relations. Without our ability to imagine the world around us, we would be unable to change it. This thesis shows how we use play to initiate and manipulate the meanings and presentations of our interactions. Play is more than a form of entertainment, it is the attitude/mood motivating our search for personal identity. Our ability to experience play frees us from strictures of everyday interactions, allowing us the liminal space (Turner 1983b) to shape the social worlds defining our identities. We reflect on self-identity by comparing our public role presentations with common social routines. In doing so, our play enables us to define the purpose or direction of our interactions, discover the world views that make each of us unique and the status quo that promotes a common order. The *deep* structure of social orders can be revealed by examining dramaturgical frames. It is here that the true motivations and meanings of our interactions are revealed; with *deep* structured metamessages.

This thesis is best demonstrated in the everyday interactions of players in Winnipeg's original live-action *Vampire the Masquerade* role-playing game. Through the creation and role-play of fictional characters, players learned to manipulate their social

relationships. By imagining possible character-interactions, players formed a virtual society. Their experiences are proof of the flexibility and multiplicity of social reality. The ethnography of this game group serves not only to describe the social setting of game players, but revises present theories on play.

Over a period of one year, *Vampire* game players developed, modified and identified with the imaginary characters they role-played. Characters were created according to the genre and rules of the *Vampire* game system. Players chose lists of attributes measuring their characters' physical, social and mental capacities, known skills and abilities, negative personality quirks and fabricated biographies. Through role-play, character personalities became nearly as intricate and complex as personalities in the everyday world; developed through socialization interactions. Players who became engrossed in their character-play initiated and reacted to other characters as if they were real. Their interactions were fictional public performances, governed by everyday, social routines. Nearly all imagined or rehearsed schemata were performed in this theatre. Players were constantly reminded how their everyday reality frame shaped their shared fantasies. Ultimately, in-game play was defined by the creative motives and relationships of all participants.

Since people normally play with those they trust, participation within a role-playing game community should consist of cooperative players who contribute to each other's conception of social reality. Nevertheless, play can be used to conceal clandestine behaviour. The game encouraged players to role-play negative aspects of others or themselves as their characters. Relationships were formed between player-characters as

they do in the everyday world. The absence of out-of-game discussion between certain players promoted the impression that out-of-game relationships motivated character-actions. Unexplained in-game actions were interpreted as being motivated by out-of-game circumstances. Although antagonisms developed in-game, if they were not justified out-of-game they served to shape players' everyday relationships. This is similar to how society is driven by private unions [society of self conceptions] and public presentations [e.g., roles]. The in-game is similar to our role played life in the everyday world, something that relies on out-of-game or private motivations.

Game characters, are similar to everyday role-presentations, serving to highlight and hide within the social order certain aspects of our inner self-conceptions, such as our motives and social awareness. Characters, like public roles, can be used to express certain things and hide others. As impression managers, we use blatant or surface schemata enacted in public roles to promote certain understandings of others, while conspiring with members of our idioverse to communicate metamessages of our true intentions. In our attempt to understand ourselves, we act out commonly conceived cultural ideas as public role-presentations. Privately, we self-play whom we imagine ourselves to be. Through public presentations we present versions of our self-identities to those around us. Successful public presentations that complement private self-conceptions help define our social world (Schlenker 1986). Only through our identity-play do others come to perceive our reality as part of theirs. This ethnography shows how we negotiate social reality [or cognitive frames] between frames, through metaplay. Metaplay is our ability as outsiders to penetrate masked identities and pseudo-truths and to comprehend hidden agendas,

while concealing our intentions.

Players who shared private self-conceptions [i.e., clique members] negotiated common conceptions of social reality through the metaframe of play. Players who realized the similarities between out-of-game and in-game interactions, disregard the differences between players and their characters and treated them as one entity. These players were the metaplayers of the group. During social interactions [either in or out-of-game] the intentions of characters and players were indistinguishable. When engrossed in character-play, the emotions of the character were the emotions of the player. The consistency of these presentations serves to gauge conceptions of social reality. Through role-play and impression management (Goffman 1959) we can control the content and signature of our relationships within the social order. We contribute to our community's cumulative world view through everyday role-performances.

Although seemingly 'just a game and just play,' the interactions of game players show quite clearly how the experience of play makes serious things joking while affecting serious consequences. Hidden behind the ruse of character interactions are personal agendas. Players join the game to advance their characters within the fantasy environment, but out-of-frame interactions contribute to a social dynamic that unites some players and characters and isolates others.

Game community relationships serve to remind us that we all use masks of playful intentions to comprehend and manage the impressions others form of our behaviour and motives.

(2) Description of Research Field:

(2.1) Role-playing Games as Models for Examining Social Interaction:

In fantasy role-playing games [FRPG] players assume imaginary personas that have lives and adventures of their own. During a game, characters are presented with circumstances profiled by a game storyteller. The fulfilment of the outline depends upon a verbal exchange of ideas between storytellers and players as they explore the world presented, taking actions to cope with the situations in which they find themselves. A storyteller is a real person who has taken the time to create enjoyable scenarios for his or her friends. Players create and role-play characters such as medieval knights, space-faring aliens, cowboys from the Old West and many others. In role-playing games, players use psychotherapeutic techniques such as role-taking and role-fixing to participate in shared fantasy worlds (Fine 1983) created and developed by storytellers and monitored by narrators. Similar to childhood games of 'make-believe,' this world is animated by the actions of all players involved.

In live-action *Vampire the Masquerade*, players familiarize themselves with the gothic-horror fantasy genre of the *World of Darkness* (Rein-Hagen 1992), suggested story ideas, game rules, and character creation procedures. Live-action role-playing games are especially useful as there are definite distinctions between players' in-game and out-of-game public self-presentations. Although the game is role-played in-character in the gothic-horror fantasy world, players occasionally 'drop out-of-character' to emphasize or explain their in-game actions. During these temporary respites, players discuss game

scenes, clarifying props and costumes used by their characters and suggest plotlines and actions that may be used in-game to motivate character-play. Out-of-game interactions served as the primary social field for my study. Initially, this field was useful in revealing players' expectations and goals. Players were forewarned of possible character conflicts and alliances. These discussions led to the formation of out-of-game cliques that later competed for the attention and direction of players and storylines. Out-of-game private self-conceptions and motivations served as everyday templates, comparing players and characters. Players used their characters' self-presentations and actions as public fronts. These fronts concealed not only private goals, but were essential to game participation. In- and out-of-game role-play epitomizes how we use common self-presentation styles to manage our impressions of the social order.

To witness the dual reality of this live-action game, I joined the group and generated a character named Isaiah Asper. By playing Isaiah, I became privy not only to in-game storylines and character-plots, but also to the out-of-game politics that motivated the dramatic field. The main roles I played were Isaiah-character, Isaiah-social manipulator, Brian-researcher, Brian-friend, Brian-player, BrIsaiah and participant-observer. As participant-observer and character-player, I experienced first hand, the paradox of playing roles. To make participant-observations, I needed to attend to each research role, acting as participant and as observer. These roles were public presentations. The role of the research-observer was to witness social interactions, converse with players, analyse interview notes and personal experiences, and to present research conclusions. My research existed within the frame of the community and was

therefore influenced by its rules. To remain a researcher in the game, I had to become a real player and to participate as much as any other player in the game. Despite the form and outcome of my participation, theoretical goals needed to be kept in mind. Without this design, my experience would be undefinable. This ethnography is an experiential thesis, embodying one community's conception of their virtual society.

(2.2) Population of Study:

In September of 1995, members of the Challenge Corp. role-playing club at the University of Manitoba, formed Winnipeg's first live-action *Vampire the Masquerade* game community. Games were held in conference rooms at the *University of Manitoba Student Centre*, on Sundays and Wednesdays at the *Die Machine Cabaret* in Osborne Village and at several historical sites within the Winnipeg area. Games were scheduled every two or three weeks and lasted between four and five hours. Players often met between sessions and role-played smaller scenes between their characters. In total, players role-played their characters anywhere between seven and fifteen hours a week. At its formation, the group consisted of sixty to eighty people between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six. Most players were approximately twenty-three years of age. Game events were organized by a group of four to eight narrators. Motivated by the dramatic license of storytellers, narrators acted out the temporary and situational character-roles that players encountered during game-play. These identities are called non-player-characters. Storyteller-plotlines helped to establish routine dramatic interactions between player-characters. The virtual reality of this vampire society was established through these

interactions.

(2.3) Research Design and Procedure:

My participation within Winnipeg's *Vampire* society began shortly after its formation. Like all players within the community, I created and role-played a vampire character. My involvement was defined by Isaiah's in-game actions and my own out-of-game relationships as a resident researcher in Osborne Village. Through my participation, I have made a few friends, many acquaintances and a few enemies. These relationships enabled me to experience the insiders' perspective that proved vital to my understanding of consultant reports. This study is based on one year of game play and the reflections of players. Our perspectives were shaped by our similar experiences of game community politics. Together, we are expert witnesses to game events and interactions.

Information on the organization and social dynamics of this cognitive society, including my rationalization of the behaviour of players, was retrieved using several methods common to anthropological research. A large part of my research was conducted through my participation in the game and through my association with players 'behind the scenes.' To preserve consultant confidentiality, players' names do not appear in this report. Where applicable, player-names are substituted with character-names, hyphenated with the letter 'P' for 'player'. For example, the name of the consultant who role-played an in-game character named Mordechai is written to designate 'Mordechai-P' as an out-of-game player and 'Mordechai' as an in-game character. Through my interaction with players such as Mordechai-P, I formed principal questions regarding my experiences. These

questions were used to query seventeen participants who became my consultants. To reduce misrepresentation, I formed a focus group of consultants that guided me along through my experience in the field and helped in the formation of pertinent questions. It is through this conglomeration of participation, interviews and the focus group that I have come to understand the *Vampire* game community. Below, I have detailed these resources.

1. The Interviews:

The main data gathering device used in this study is the Interview. Both informal discussions and formal interviews were utilized. Seventeen consultants were asked to record their responses, so that their reports would serve as testimonials of their experiences in-game. Consultants were asked to explain the details of their reports. A list of five open-ended questions was used during informal interviews. These questions examined how and why each consultant joined the game, character choice and development, comparisons between player and character, the best aspect of the game and reasons why people quit. Consultants were given these questions one week prior to their interviews. The interviews took place in my apartment in Osborne Village and at various coffee shops around town. Each session was casual, lasting no longer than three hours. All consultants proved very insightful, providing me with sufficient information on their game community. Some consultants volunteered printed journals of their in- and out-of-game experiences. The second interview schedule, consisting of forty-one questions, extrapolated on ideas consultants presented during informal discussions. These questions

were useful for examining character play, personal motivations and game influences, game mechanics, organization and storytelling, player prestige, cliques and game community politics. Consultants were contacted whenever their reports needed elaboration.

2. The Focus Group:

To understand community relations, five experienced players were brought together in a focus group to share their ideas. The group consisted of players: Guy-P, Istvan-P, Damos-P, George-P and Mordechai-P. These players acted as research assistants, although they were never privy to confidential interview data. Four of these members also served as consultants. All members agreed in the signing of a written agreement that asked them not to use focus group discussions to discriminate against non-consultants or deliberately alter in-, or out-of-game interactions [see Appendix E3: 210].

The focus group discussed the validity of interview questions, assessed summarized interview results, and prevented the misrepresentation of its players. The group met, initially, to determine a selection of open-ended questions that served as an informal interview survey. Seventeen consultants were chosen and interviewed, informally. The focus group helped in the analysis of abridged de-personalized interview results and helped design formal interview questions. The formal interview was scrutinized and augmented by the focus group. Members suggested new questions and rephrased questions that were misleading. Results from formal interviews were summarized by myself and examined by the focus group. The specific details of interview data were

withheld from group analysis as they may have led to breeches in consultant confidentiality, or affected the continued drama of the game. Please refer to Appendix C1:201 for information regarding focus group meetings.

3. Research Procedure:

The details of my research procedure are found in the Appendices. The appendices consists of sections A thru I. Section 'A' contains charts and lists of the group membership and structure described in Chapter Three. Section 'B' contains a glossary of words and ideas found in the report. Section 'C' documents the agendas of focus group meetings and my 'afterthoughts' of an interview with Guy-P. Copies of informal and formal interview questions are provided in Section 'D'. Section 'E' includes ethics material, consent forms and a list of consultants. Section 'F' contains a description of role-playing games. Section 'G' is composed of information on bad press related to role-playing games, such as live-action *Vampire*. Section 'H' documents consultant-volunteered observations and insights on the game storyline and backgrounds of characters. Finally, in section 'I', sketches of vampire characters are provided by Mordechai-P to give texture to the text. The information provided in the appendices is useful in supplementing chapter information. In to order to highlight pertinent issues, chapters two to five are summarized below.

(3) Chapter Summaries:

Chapter Two begins with a review of the theoretical perspectives, methods and ideas used in shaping and describing the ethnography of this thesis. The main body of the

chapter describes Erving Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interaction (1959). It introduces the idea of analysing everyday 'face-to-face' social interactions, describing the structure and meaning of personal communication, primary frameworks of game-play interactions, public and private role schemata, impression management, team presentations and the construction of the socially dependent self. Works by George H. Mead (1934), Johan Huizinga (1970; 1983) and Gregory Bateson (1962, 1972) are used to define the cognitive-dramaturgical frameworks we use in everyday life to transform how we understand social interactions and experiences. According to Mead (1934), people respond to the behaviour of others based on a loose consensus of understandings and expectations. This knowledge is couched in an actor's ability to imagine how others may respond to his or her actions and to tailor his or her behaviour accordingly. By imagining and performing the roles of others, we gain certain insights into their behaviour, to praise, blame, or encourage them. Through playing with others, we are forced to reflect on their routines. We develop our sense of self-identity by comparing our motives and actions with others. In coming to understand the schemata of motivations that coordinate their behaviour, actors join a consensus of intentions, consolidating self-conceptions with public impressions. When faced with unknown situations we imagine and improvise new schemata. In this way, people can successfully initiate new interaction frames that transform the significance of their social reality. By presenting play as the catalyst for framed social interaction, Goffman's dramaturgical perspective is made into a working model for explaining how people shape the varying realities of their social existence.

Chapter Three presents the analysed results of my research. A description of game

rules provides the clues for understanding how players created and impression-managed their group's fantasy. The mechanics of developing alternative character identities were crucial to participant-involvement in-game and social relationships out-of-game. In the section titled Embracing Vampire, the reader is taken on a participant journey detailing the process of joining the game and becoming an active member of the community. The section was constructed out of consultant interview notes and my experience of the game. It depicts an archetype of the 'classic' player. The 'classic player' highlights the personal politics, the sequence of character engrossment and the personalities that influenced game-play. Participation is exemplified through a description of player-relations, player-character development, evaluations of players' motives and values, evaluations of character intentions, a depiction and explanation of team and solo deep-play (see Geertz 1973) and a description of the metagame social environment. The metagame and its surrogate metaplay (Hurley 1994) are multi-framed role-play. During this form of play, players exchange messages on two levels of social reality, as their game characters and as themselves in the everyday world. Through an exchange of multi-purpose messages, participants recelebrate everyday behavioural schemata and negotiate a shared social reality. To understand this ethnography, the reader will learn how participants combine rules for in-game and out-of-game behaviour to overcome the paradox of acting as both player and character. Groups of players or cliques in the game community, cooperate through a belief in the "all's well" (Fagen 1992) front of play. Everyone knew the game was just a game, but its rules were negotiable. An important point to recall while reading this thesis is play is not always what it appears to be, and not all is well when players play

seriously.

Chapter Four describes my personal reflections of being a participant-observer. To explore the game fully, I had to become a key player in its politics. My involvement in both the positive aspects of the game [friends and entertainment] and negative relationships should have forced me to resign. After discussing the dynamic relations of my involvement, I show how I coped with the problems of being participant and observer.

Chapter Five begins by summarizing my theoretical standpoint, research results and personal insights. Conclusions are generated through key issues derived from consultant interviews. These issues include descriptions of role-play in the everyday world, the purpose of the gaming community, the production and maintenance of game fantasy, motives for involvement, achievement of group status quo and the potency of play. To emphasize actual participation, consultants present their conclusions as emic observations. Theoretical relevance, or the etic perspective, shows how players coped with the intensities of interacting within the game community both as themselves and as the characters they role-played. The paradox formed through this multi-play was used within the community to shape behavioural status quo and play ideals. The resultant metagame driving both the in- and out-of-game social reality of the group, demonstrates the power play has over the meanings of our interactions. People play in everyday life to compose their social realities. Our ability to communicate with each other is based on varying degrees of intimacy and social awareness. We determine and understand our relations with others through an awareness of their actual behaviour, managed by the impressions we make of them. Play allows us to act like the other, to understand them. However, play

obscures our intentions as much as it reveals them. Character actions and player motives determined the social reality of the game community. Players who cooperated to shape reality understood the metamessages being presented by competing players and characters. These vampire game players are true impression managers, using masked intentions and identities to make their play.

Chapter Two:
Theoretical Explanations: A Dramaturgical Model of Social Interaction

Social reality is a grand illusion conceived through playing public roles, supported by impressions of private goals and altered by our imaginations. Things are made real through routinization of publicly engineered impressions. We create public records that reflect repeated or replayed actions and expressions. These scripts are useful in guiding group interactions and the sense we make of them during a variety of social encounters. Each type of interaction calls for a revision of behaviour and thought process. These activity groupings are called interaction frames. A few examples of these frames are ritual, drama and business employment. Each of these frames requires a specific patterning of behaviour and cognition. Although stereotypes, these interaction frames allow us the leeway to present ourselves in a variety of social contexts. Rules of conduct in each frame are set through everyday public negotiations. People agree on the form and mood of these presentations. Play is our ability to alter or revise interaction moods. During play all other frames become ambiguous. All routines can be played in new ways. When groups of people begin to share these new frames as routines, they become everyday and real. This model is a synthesis of Geertz's metamessages (1971; 1973; 1984), Bateson's idea of bracketing (1962; 1972), Garfinkel's cognitive styles (1967), George H. Mead's 'I/Me'

definition of self (1934) and Erving Goffman's (1959) dramaturgy. For our purpose, this chapter describes Goffman's dramaturgical model of social interaction, defines play as a metaframe and shows how play at public performances alters our impressions of social order. This chapter provides a theoretical guideline for interpreting research results presented in Chapter Three.

(1) A Dramaturgical Model of Social Interaction:

(1.1) Goffman's Dramaturgy:

Goffman's Dramaturgy (1959; 1961; 1967; 1974) is a study of both everyday face-to-face life experiences of individuals acting in society and the creation of consensual meanings of thought and behaviour through role-taking. Culture is organized in our minds and stored in a framework of shared semantic/behavioural schemata or social scripts. Through a belief in commensurate culture, people have an active role in creating, expressing and maintaining that order. Culture is ambiguous. It resists being called one thing and not another; changing its form and function to suit the community of people who use it. Location and identity within the social order influence our understanding of the order.

Cognitive salience or mental agreement is determined through a negotiation of cultural propositions, social knowledge and experiential anecdotes. Propositions are descriptions of social norms (Spiro 1984: 323). According to Spiro, these propositions are learned and incorporated into the behaviour and beliefs of people as they socially interact. Social knowledge is composed of our interpretation of rules and schemata governing role-

presentations, personal relationships and our ability to regulate, maintain and transform those relationships (Curry and Bergen 1988: 125). Cultural and social knowledge produces behavioural and linguistic routines that define the roles people use in everyday life. People formulate personal perspectives of propositions and social knowledge through a re-presentation of their experiences. Gradually, these propositions are incorporated into a person's world view.

Propositions about reality achieve cognitive salience through a five-step process. This process includes learning the propositions, routinization, internalization, structuring of perceptions and actions (Spiro 1984: 328). Social actors are introduced and become acquainted with propositions through society-specific, standardized enculturation techniques. Certain propositions are considered traditions or social routines. Through practice, some of these routines are internalized by the actor and become personal beliefs. The combined beliefs of a person make up their world view. These beliefs affect our behaviour by helping us interpret the behaviour of others, effectively 'setting the stage' for social interactions. In the last stage of cognitive salience, cultural propositions lead to emotional and cognitive awareness. In this stage, propositions become a part of the operating individual, connecting them to a larger meaning system [or cognitive frameworks]. Once cognitively salient, a proposition about probable reality becomes a fact about actual reality. The hierarchy of cognitive salience explains how propositions or expressions about reality become ways of understanding particular social interactions. The process of acquiring social knowledge about these interaction types is socio-cultural development.

Socio-cultural experiences are common enough to ensure a degree of communication between people, and diversified enough to accumulate new propositions on social reality. Through their associations and roles in a community, people shape their world views according to organized representations of experience, called idioverses. Each person's idioverse is constructed out of his or her self-identity and his or her position in the social order. Cliques are formed when cognitive salience exists between people of similar idioverses.

The routines in speech and behaviour allow for communication and sharing of ideas about the universe. It establishes a network of relating individuals who view each other as belonging to the same group, or society. These people speak similar dialects, behave in prescribed ways and come to practice schemata or social routines that simplify their existence. Our knowledge and ability to socialize with others can be understood through dramaturgical frames. It is through a deep understanding of what, who and how we behave in society, that we come to share culture. Culture consists of common definitions about the physical, artifactual and social world. These definitions help us interpret the thoughts and actions of others. These 'traditions' are shared between people through a subtle system of symbols, associations and shared histories. Their meanings are metacommunicative, in that they are conveyed and learned by people through their involvement in community affairs. Through trial and error, individuals realize what is right and wrong, how to behave, what to think, and are exposed to group power relations that define their communities.

(1.2) How we Communicate [Messages and Metamessages]:

Cultural and social knowledge is exchanged between people through blatant public presentations or *surface* structure, and through relationship-dependent, subtly expressed, *deep* structured private metamessages (Geertz 1971; 1973; 1984). Communication is an interchange of thoughts and feelings, subtly expressed through body language, facial expression, linguistic dialogue. All communication is presentational, although presentations can be either blatant or subtle, direct or indirect.

1. Blatant Presentations [Surface Structure]

In blatant communication, signs directly correspond to each other. The meaning of any word, body movement or facial expression is determined by the social system. By stating, "I am the author of this text," I am telling the reader that I wrote this text. Blatant presentations also act to conceal falsehoods. For instance, if I state, "I am the author of all texts," the reader, based on their experience of reading other texts by different authors, assumes that I am telling a lie, or perhaps 'making a joke'. I am either 'booed' or applauded for my message. However, if I state, "I am the author of another text," I could be lying or I could be telling the truth. Truth is difficult to detect and is dependent on my reputation and status as a writer. This is an example of Impression Management (Goffman 1959). It is the way that people interactively communicate to each other in a group, while maintaining some control over their self-identity. It is the way we act in groups.

> Members of a common culture know each other not by the deep structures [see Geertz 1971; 1973] or hypothesized processes underlying their thoughts, but rather by the surface content of what they say or do to each other in the here and now. The more we attend to surface content, the less

> common is the culture of men [and women] (Shweder and Levine 1984: 48, brackets are mine).

People share culture by acting and thinking similarly. Such surface presentations are interpreted at face value. They are common descriptions and explanations of human behaviour. We depend on those expressions for our sense of belonging. However, surface presentations just as easily differentiate people. Personal styles exacerbate individuation. Slight differences in performance styles are easily overemphasized, leading to ambiguous and contradicting descriptions of social groups. This problem is overcome by examining the subtle messages exchanged between people. By examining the *deep* structured metamessages patterning our idea of community, we may reveal the hidden lines of similarity that unite people culturally. A few examples of these metamessages are performances of approval, disapproval, allegiance and power mongerring. All other observational formats rely too heavily on surface expressions and impressions and how individuals personally affect their position and status in their society through impression management (Goffman 1959; 1961; 1967). To understand a culture, one must penetrate and understand the rules for the "presentation of self in everyday life" (Goffman 1959).

2. Subtle Presentations [Deep Structure]

Another way we communicate is less direct than everyday speech or body language. It is the 'text' between what is said and done (see Mead 1939). Geertz (1971; 1973; 1984) clearly shows in his ethnography on the Balinese people that cock-fights signify much more than a sporting of birds for the entertainment of the community. These cock-fights were metamessages regarding the social tension between community members.

They represented power, prestige, community authority and control of the lives and families of participants. Winners were awarded the recognition of their community and his peers, and losers were defeated socially and financially. The expense of losing a cock in a fight was costly, potentially sending the owner into debt or family ruin. Only the Balinese who participated in these contests can fully describe the metamessages of the cock fight. However, my point is that our actions and words are loaded with alternate/additional meanings that have the potential of greatly influencing the course and result of an interaction. Contrasting how blatant presentations emphasize differences among us, subtle presentations contribute to group dynamics. People who comprehend each other's metamessages support the status quo of their idioverses and interact within specific cognitive styles or frames. Frames aid us in our perception of social reality.

(1.3) Interaction Frames [Cognitive Styles]:

Our understanding of interaction frames is the result of an evolution of ideas beginning with W.I. Thomas's (1934) social psychological dictum on reality. His dictum states that if people define situations as real, they are real in their consequence. For instance, once we define what we mean by 'society' or 'family,' these terms become independent institutions. In 1869, phenomenologist William James in *Perception of Reality* (1869: 283-324) asked under what circumstances do we think things are real? Under what conditions do we conceptualize our social reality? James called these conditions selective attention [variation in perception and understanding], intimate involvement [we become so involved in the situation, that we believe it separate from our

thoughts and actions -- we objectify it] and social consensus [common stories explaining 'proper' and 'inappropriate' behaviour]. James's proposition suggests that social reality was not fixed and there exist multiple subworld realities. Goffman (1974) eventually defined these subworlds as metaframes. In 1945 Alfred Schutz, in *On Multiple Realities*, focused on the conditions required to shape our reality. Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckman's 1966 examination of this hypothesis redefined social reality as "cognitive styles". Social reality or cognitive styles were considered personal interpretations of public behaviour.

Harold Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) explained cognitive styles as the rules of conduct people require to behave appropriately in social situations. In 1972, Gregory Bateson examined two situational genres, non-serious and serious encounters. He explained that serious behaviour is modeled in non-serious actions [we learn how to play based on everyday roles]. Bateson redefined Husserl's (1869) idea of "bracketing" [originally defined as 'conditional propositions'; If X is defined as Y, then X equals Y] to explain how people recognize the types of encounters they experience. Using Bateson's term, Goffman created 'frame' analysis. Goffman's (1974) metaframes, or primary frameworks, explain how people of different roles initiate and act within identical frames.

Dramaturgists label 'keys' the semantics or behaviour responsible for announcing a frame of reference during social interaction. Dramaturgical keys connote procedures of social interaction (Goffman 1974: 45). These keys can be phrases, body language, changes in facial expression and many other things. Most, if not all people recognize the cues for certain types of behaviour and cognition. In other words, people know how to recognize

play, ritual, business, or theatrical frames of reality. Frames are keyed by bracketing or drawing attention to a specific environment or thought process. Good examples of bracketing are dimming the lights, raising the curtain in the western theater, hammering the gavel in court, the prologue to a story, etc. For instance, the wide eyed or hunched over body language of a preschooler may tell his co-sociates that he is playing with them. This language of behaviour seldom stops before play ends.

People initiate interaction frames in either a straight or a deceptive way. In cases of blatant impression management, people may attempt to deceive those around them into believing that they are who they emote. An example of this is when someone pretends to be someone or something that they know they are not. This presentation is illusionary, but occurs within a social frame where participants generally trust each other. Deceptive framing also occurs when someone mistakes another's playful behaviour as real and serious. This miscuing often results in confusion and antagonism. The second mode of framing has participants comprehending the scene; understanding people's behaviour and intentions (Goffman 1974: 301).

> When an individual finds himself obliged to engage momentarily in activity that is quite unsuitable for him, activity that cannot easily be seen as consonant with what he brings to his roles and takes away from them, he may playfully guy his actions, transforming what he does into unserious playfulness, so that the whole scene is conducted out-of-role (Goffman 1974: 274).

The above example shows how personal role-play in everyday life is a continuum, bracketed by various ways of understanding and acting within a delusionary, but a consistent social world. Actors believe their presentations are real. However, their

identities are constantly filtered through many social frames, serving to amalgamate various roles enacted and situational identities presented as a single self-identity. Actors alter their behaviour to correspond to the rules of immediate interaction frames. Roles played during each encounter manifest certain aspects of personality, while hiding others. If co-sociates share frames of experience, they learn more about each other. Without such a perspective, however, each of us is simply a collection of cognitive styles and personalized situational adaptations [or roles].

Interaction within frames serves to accentuate aspects of person-hood [identity] and down-play other aspects that are not directly connected, associated, or applicable to a scene. So, in the frame of play, the playful, joking, imaginative, creative aspects of our identity show through, while the utilitarian, serious, moral and emotional aspects do not. Frames inform participants of simplified social-behavioural rules and suggest motives, values and norms. Two examples of primary frames are dramatic/performative frames and the frame of everyday social interactions. Dramatic frames are markers that engage onlookers in a social arrangement that transforms their roles and relationships (Goffman 1974: 133).

> It is perfectly obvious to everyone on and off the stage that the characters and their actions are unreal, but it is also true that the audience holds this understanding to one side and in the capacity of onlookers allows its interest and sympathy to respect the apparent ignorance of the characters as to what will come of them (Goffman 1974: 136-137).

Although dramatic play can be considered a fictional performance or 'make-believe', people's understandings of play are real and true to their identities. To act real, one must become engrossed in the reality that not all character-actions are fake. It is the

performative self in a creative action [the framework of play allows the most space for improvisation, compared with serious frames]. In drama, roles are obvious. Comparatively, in "everyday affairs, one is not always aware of a particular individual's part in life, that is...their biography, [with] awareness often focusing more on the roles he performs in some particular connection --political, domestic, or whatever" (Goffman 1974: 129). With everyday life, roles are situational fronts, used in multiple ways to desired goals.

A particular frame of interaction is kept active if participants remain engrossed in their requisite roles and identities. Frames are metacommunicative, allowing for an understanding of the interactions shared by all involved. Each person conveys this understanding by insinuating and subtly cuing or keying a desired frame. Frame rules change when members key other frames or when they are adversely affected by out-of-frame distractions, are fatigued, or affected by scene anxiety. A businessperson changes the meaning of his or her interaction frame when s/he begins a board meeting with party hats, noisemakers and a cliched cartoon-like phrase, 'we kicked their butts!' The format of the interaction would either be changed from formal, reserved, serious, organized, strait role play to a playful celebration of the success of the company, or be considered 'out of order.' Frames are also changed through distractions. In these cases, a non-participant unexpectedly enters the scene using a different key. When children are playing and a mother walks into the room to tell her son not to make so much of a mess, her everyday frame interrupts his play frame and his non-serious thoughts and behaviour becomes serious. Engrossment is the key here. When participants are forced to concentrate on

other issues/events, frame engrossment and play are ended. Frame changes also occur when participants are fatigued. When tired, hungry or depressed people are less aware of their social environment and more connected to physical conditions of consumption and recuperation. As a scene becomes too stressful or threatening to a person, it forces s/he to retreat to a more comfortable frame. This is called *flooding-out* (Goffman 1974). It is a term used for describing the kind of frame breaking that occurs due to scene anxiety. Laughing reduces the seriousness and psychological stresses of individuals. Apologies associated with miskeying, results in a temporary flooding-out of participants. Another example is nude modeling. Through the frame of 'art model', the nude model feels relatively clothed. However, direct eye contact may result in the artist switching the frame [through unintentional keying] and flooding-out. Such keying elevates the intimacy between the model and the artist, spoiling the artistic frame.

Frames are not always broken by people flooding-out. Occasionally, people are simply drawn into ordinary, everyday involvement and lose their frame engrossment (Goffman 1974: 361). "Students of interaction often have the same problem when they start attending to a particular element of the scene but soon find that they have been drawn into ordinary involvement and are no longer attending to the special focus of observation they had set themselves" (Goffman 1974: 361). A useful example of this occurs in the play frame. When a person attempts to seduce and 'pick-up' another person in a bar, one wrong word or body posture can change the scene to an everyday frame, ruining the person's chance of 'getting a date.' The serious intentions or motives of the seducer can reduce the scene to a serious, rather than playful encounter. Frame continuance depends

on actors using similar social routines. Without these routines, interactions are impossible.

(1.4) Schemata and the Roles we Play:

Social routines are called schemata. Schemata are styles of engrossment. They focus our behaviour and rationality. We afford social immunity to the clowns and jokers of our society, as long as they joke and charm us at the correct time and place. Schemata, whether semantic and behavioural (Shweder and Levine 1984: 26), limit our self-presentations. "As people develop, they acquire access to a choice of routines, an enlarging repertoire accumulated through experience and loosely bundled in familiar roles" (Foote 1990: 66). These shared categories of meaning in culture, or common understandings of social experiences, are based on a consensus of stereotyped social actions, traditions and language (Shweder and Levine 1984: 68). One example of semantic schemata is the beginnings of conversations between acquaintances. "Hello! How are you?" "What's up?" "What's new?" "How have you been?" The respondent generally states that they are "Ok" or "Fine" [despite how they may actually feel, so as not to involve the acquaintance in a possibly intense personal conversation]. Casual conversations are rehearsed situational schemata. Examples of behavioural schemata are body language: positive facial expressions during a conversation, or little nods of your head to say you are paying attention and understanding the speaker. Self-conscious preparation/stylization enables people to act similarly in order to communicate more efficiently. The above social schemata are largely rehearsed semantics and behaviour -- learned through a life-long process of socialization. Schemata are dependent on the context of social scenes [at school, at work, at play]. However, not all schemes are

rehearsed; some are spontaneous.

Spontaneous schemata are our unrehearsed reactions to social situations. Although these schemata occur with little preparation, they are based on expectations and adaptations. When surprised by first time experiences, we react by reflecting on related experiences, expectations of new experiences and the impressions others may receive of our presentations (Abrahams 1986: 64).

Schemata allow us to understand the meanings of an interaction without mentioning those matters strictly through the format of the conversation (Garfinkel 1967: 34). These matters are shared experiences, or common understandings based on underlying patterns of dialogue and keywords that point to other events/thoughts. Our knowledge of the biography of speakers defines our understanding of schemata. To onlookers social interactions appear ambiguous. Common discourses depend on our familiarity with insinuated meanings and our recognition of communication 'cues.' Even as observers, we are able to understand social interactions, imagining possible outcomes/reactions people may experience and particular types of stereotyped behaviour. Our ability to recall social scenes suggests original behaviour may be a performance scheme.

Many schemata are used in social interactions. The roles we play in everyday life are clusters of schemata that allow people to manage vast selections of learned behaviours. Roles provide us a position within each type of interaction. Realistically, a police officer on duty will react differently to an encounter with marijuana smokers than one who is off-duty. If in the right company, an off-duty police officer may participate in this drug

use. While in uniform, however, his or her behaviour is restricted by his or her responsibility of performing an institutionalized role, that is warnings and arrests. While out-of-role, the frame of an interaction and requisite schemata determine how we should act and the roles we should play.

Our behaviour and self-identity are shaped or influenced by the roles we play. The typical inquiry "What do you do?" is a semantic scheme for identifying a person's character. We are expected to fit into one role or another and when the reply is "I do nothing" our value is diminished, for it becomes more difficult to relate to that person. So the roles associated with our self-identity award us the approval of co-sociates (see Turner 1990: 94). Roles become incorporated as personal definitions when they are cherished by an audience of equals (see Goffman 1974). Without approval, a role is considered merely a mask or a "front" (Goffman 1959). Individuals who implicitly/explicitly signify certain social characteristics ought to be what they claim to be. "Moral demand [is exerted] upon others obliging them to value and treat [the actor] in the manner of his kind" (Goffman 1990: 136). "He also implicitly forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be, and hence forgoes the treatment that would be appropriate for such individuals" (ibid 136). Performers key onto the subtle behavioural and semantic variance of social situations, instantly determining and reacting appropriately to their interactions. When a conversation is initiated, people force each other to relate their experiences and attention to a topic, or politely end their discussion. They have a responsibility to be true to their expressions and to expect that others portray themselves as they truly are. Although this seldom occurs in everyday interactions, it is the starting point from which all social

interactions begin and are maintained. When it has been determined that a person is acting inappropriately or unlike themselves, they are exempt from participation.

In summary, social schemata and frames are interaction tools used in managing the impressions others make of us. This is the key issue to an understanding of dramaturgy. If we perform schemata for others to communicate certain impressions and to hide others, then social existence is dramatic, performative and dramaturgical.

(1.5) Role-taking, distancing and Impression Management:

We know that during socialization we gain access to an enlarging repertoire of routines accumulated through experience and the practice of familiar roles [loosely bundled routines] (Foote 1990: 66). Goffman realized that all people learn schemata differently, for different reasons, and thus all personal scripts have distinctive motivational relevance (1974: 8). People comprehend the meanings of other people's actions based on their understandings of the roles they play. Actors can distinguish between and selectively perform roles through role-distancing. Single role fixation [engrossment] is impossible since we must act differently in a variety of social circumstances. Role-conceptions and play define our character and personality. If people are tactful in their interpretation of other peoples' actions/performance, they must realize that people do not always act the same, nor do they consistently express the same impressions in all relationships. I play the roles of student, research assistant, role-player, significant other, son, grandson, brother, person and employee. All these roles require my selective attention during certain times, in certain places and in view of certain audiences. Although I play many roles, I can focus my

attention and performance on particular roles when it is required of me to do so. I may even be convinced that my performance and impressions of reality are true (Goffman 1959: 81).

> When an individual engages in an encounter, his conscious awareness can bring certain shared things to life and deaden all other matters. By this spontaneous involvement in the joint activity, the individual becomes an integral part of the situation, lodged in it and exposed to it, infusing himself into the encounter in a manner quite different from the way an ideally rational player commits his side to a position in an ideally abstract game (Goffman 1961: 38).

People expect us to speak and behave appropriately within certain social scenes. We accomplish this feat by selecting appropriate roles to play in every occasion, such as student, short-order cook, bar-jock, mother's favourite son, or a member of a parliament.

In the *Vampire* role-playing game, inappropriate behaviour is caused by distractions, or confusion regarding the status, gender or condition of a co-sociate. Occasionally, some player-characters misperceived or ignored the tactfulness of their audience and continued to act inappropriately. Such behaviour propelled players out-of-game to justify their role-playing ability and character actions. It is at this point that the game becomes a vehicle for social criticism.

> Knowing that his audiences are capable of forming bad impressions of him, the individual may come to feel ashamed of a well-intentioned honest act merely because the context of its performance provides false impressions that are bad. Feeling this unwarranted shame, he may feel that his feelings can be seen; feeling that he is thus seen, he may feel that his appearance confirms these false conclusions concerning him. He may then add to the precariousness of his position by engaging in just those defensive maneuvers that he would employ were he really guilty. In this way it is possible for all of us to become fleetingly for ourselves the worst person we can imagine that others might imagine us to be (Goffman 1959: 236).

The audience helps the performer by dropping hints or ignoring faults in favour of the performance. "The performer must be sensitive to hints and ready to take them, for it is through hints that the audience can warn the person that his show is unacceptable and that he had better modify it quickly if the situation is to be saved" (Goffman 1959: 234). When the performer does not correct his behaviour, his or her out-of-game face is exposed and people [audiences] identify with the performance as a mask. This person gets a reputation of being controlling [based on personal testament and field notes]. Their behaviour is seen as a front (see Goffman 1959) to obscure self-interests. Nevertheless, it is our ability to project certain social fronts that make us excellent actors. The reactions audiences have of our behaviour determine the performative schemata we use while in their presence. To perform schemata, people must remain aware of the motives and self-purposes of others. If one uses the incorrect schema, one may be socially ignored. We must learn to tailor our fronts and schemata according to the frames of our presentations.

Frames regulate and define behaviour, comment on probable meanings of particular situations and allow people to understand the actual and possible behaviour of others (Goffman 1974: 9). "During any state of activity, participants will ordinarily not only obtain a sense of what is going on but will also become spontaneously engrossed, caught up, enthralled" (Goffman 1974: 345). All interaction stems from the basic character of each of its participating members. Role-presentations vary according to style. "A person's acts are in part an expression and outcome of his perjuring self... presented behind the particular roles he plays at any particular moment... each utterance or physical

situation... contribut[ing] to a current situation...rooted in his biographical, personal identity" (Goffman 1974: 294, brackets are mine). Just as individuals use semantic and behavioural schemata to sort-out the world of meanings and images, they also comment on them through public presentations (Goffman 1974: 39). As individuals share schemata, they also share frames of reference. Through a combination of anticipatory schematic behaviour and memories of experiences, people draw attention to certain primary characteristics of interaction. It is within these frameworks that they negotiate the order of their social reality.

Social schemata, roles and impression management are closely connected to each other. *Social schemata* are the semantic [or rehearsed conversation outlines] and behavioural routines used during specific social encounters or frameworks. *Roles* are the bundles of schemata responsible for adding social cohesiveness, or a sharing of social meanings, to community life. Economic specialization would be very difficult without such a shared understanding of behavioural tasks. Every person would use social schemata differently, leaving plenty of room for role misinterpretations. Without roles, social interaction would be exacting. Public identity would not be predetermined by social stereotypes such as social status, occupations and utility. Spontaneous interactions would be impossible, for individuals would remain publicly undefined. So we watch other people's responses to our behaviour, adjusting our performance according to their appreciation or disfavour [general intent], whichever is more desired. The impressions we receive of other people's behaviour allow us to imagine the purpose of their presentations. In the following passages, Goffman summarizes the performer-audience impression

management relationship:

> The Performer:
> The individual tends to treat the others present on the basis of the impression they give about the past and the future. It is here that communicative acts are translated into moral ones. The impressions that the others give tend to be treated as claims and promises they have implicitly made, and claims and promises tend to have a moral character. In his mind the individual says 'I am using these impressions of you as a way of checking up on you and your activity, and you ought not to lead me astray.' The peculiar thing about this is that the individual tends to take this stand even though he expects the others to be unconscious of many of their expressive behaviours and even though he may expect to exploit the others on the basis of the information he gleans about them. Since the sources of impressions used by the observing individual involve a multitude of standards pertaining to politeness and decorum, pertaining both to social intercourse and task-performance, we can appreciate afresh how daily life is enmeshed in moral lies of discrimination (Goffman 1959: 249-250).
>
> Witnesses or Audience:
> If they are to be gentlemanly, and play the individual's game, they will give little conscious heed to the fact that impressions are being formed about them, but rather act without guile or contrivance, enabling the individual to receive valid impressions about them and their efforts. And if they happen to give thought to the fact that they are being observed, they will not allow this to influence them unduly, content in the belief that the individual will obtain a correct impression and give them their due because of it. Should they be concerned with influencing the treatment that the individual gives them, and this is properly to be expected, then a gentlemanly mean will be available to them. They need only guide their action in the present so that its future consequences will be the kind that would lead a just individual to treat them now in a way they want to be treated; once this is done, they have only to rely on the perspectiveness and justness of the individual who observes them (Goffman 1959: 250).

Impression management is our ability to react to messages others broadcast to maintain conversation and social identity within a social arena that is manageable and predictable. Whenever we pretend to be what we are not, we must actively attempt to correct the impressions we give off through explanations, apologies, righteousness [casting others in a

negative way], or jokes. Without social identity, we have no basis for interacting with others.

(1.6) Joint Impression Management: Team Presentations:

Whenever individuals work together to form a common understanding of their world view they participate in joint engrossment (Goffman 1967: 80). When successful, these groups easily sway the opinions, perceptions, motivations and thus behaviour of the out-of-group individuals they influence (Goffman 1959: 102). Teams are:

> ...set[s] of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained. A team is a grouping, but it is a grouping not in relation to a social structure or social organization but rather in relation to an interaction or series of interactions in which the relevant definition of the situation is maintained (Goffman 1959: 104, brackets are mine).

Goffman's definition of teams serves as a useful theory for explaining the group structure of cliques in the vampire game. Cliques are subcategories of teams. Cliques form within all organizations (see Payne and Cooper 1981) due to a nearness of individuals in time and space. Members interact frequently [share similar behaviour], possess descriptive similarities [age, sex, race, job, class, hobbies] and share a common need [social support, access to information]. "People who belong to the same groups are more likely than others to form new groups reflecting their common interests" (Moreland 1987: 85). Cliques exist to give social influence over other individuals of equal status. To be fair, all players in the vampire game are considered equal participants. None should be treated with any more respect than the next. Cliques are formed to allow friends to play with each other. "Children who play frequently together generally play more competently, with more time

spent on the management or production of the play then in negotiating in order to play" (Magee 1989: 196). This exclusiveness is usually concealed from non-members, with members appearing to work against each other in public, while conspiring for shared renown (Goffman 1959: 84). Occasionally, not all clique members support group thinking. In such cases, the individual usually backs out of the discussion, relying on other clique members to present a convincing front. Despite disagreements concerning clique goals, members keep their criticisms private by maintaining cooperative fronts. The product of their cooperation is social support, bolstered public identity, increased prestige and friendship.

In comparison with majorities, members of clique-minorities experience more divergent ways of thinking, are exposed to greater social pressure to conform and are more likely to be converted to its mission or cause. Its association with the majority [interrelating cliques and satellite individuals] creates the need for continual impression management [for example, the group is always right - 'defend your friends']. In response, members of minority cliques must act quickly in monitoring how they wish to be perceived by the majority. This procedure involves intense cognitive processing and a keen awareness of the intricacies of their social location.

Allison and Messick (1987) describe in the following passage how group decisions lead to 'status quo':

> The tendency for people to accede to a group decision because they think that everyone else in the group favors the decision. When no one speaks against the proposal in the content of the discussion [i.e., during rules seminars, where certain players are awarded the responsibility of teaching players how to game-play vampire- and no real progress can be made in

> rules adaptation due to group thinking- based on positions of authority] will be primarily positive and supportive, convincing listeners of the popularity of the idea. This type of pluralistic ignorance, in which each person believes him/herself to be unique in opposing the group consensus, allows group decisions to be made that reflect the desire of none of the members (Allison and Messick 1987: 119-120, brackets are mine).

Through the successful impression management, minority cliques can manipulate and designate the social reality of the majority. They are trusted with monitoring and maintaining group ideals and expectations. This shows how a clique minority has the power to designate and manipulate community status quo.

The group thoroughly influences the effectiveness of personal presentations. Group approval determines the value of personal achievements. Groups are more able than individuals to maintain frame interactions. The more people who support a group's cognitive reality, the harder it is for individuals to alter that reality. Convincing performances lead to changes in mood and character or are interpreted as playful and harmless.

(1.7) George H. Mead's Conception of the Socially Dependent Self:

The primary motivation in all forms of social interaction is the development of self-awareness or social location, through a communicative relationship with the external world of relating individuals. The self is a total social-mental construction based on a lifetime's interaction with strangers and significant others. Even our intimate/private self-conceptions are based on our cultural reflections and emotional reactions to environmental stimuli. Our initial ideas of self are produced through our awareness and practice of social schemata and duty roles within the everyday frame. These schemata and roles influence

how people perceive and comprehend each other's intention and motives. From this frame of reference, each person reflects on their association with other people, internalizing experiences and conceptualizing a private self identity. Self-direction or purpose is determined through a dynamic interplay of publicly evaluated performance roles and through the influence of public evaluations of our private self conceptualizations (Schlenker 1986). Without the social/public self, we are disqualified from public interactions.

Competent performers can 'fit in' by assessing the behaviour and motives of other interactants. The intentions of others can be known by studying how they physically and emotionally react to our public presentations. Through a combination of their words, actions and our interpretation of those presentations, we learn what aspects of identity should be kept private and what should be expressed to further our search for social location and purpose (Schlenker 1986). Audiences interpret and evaluate public behaviour and serve as guidelines for re-development of the private self. This information is processed and packaged by viewers based on a common understanding of social schemata. The possible meanings of a presentation are evaluated within a particular interaction frame. The individual is conceived as a performer whose activities function to create the appearance of a self or character. Presentations are successful when audiences believe in them (see Messinger et al 1990: 78). Our awareness of social evaluations compels us to 'think before we act' and to adapt our self-presentations.

Adept performers can protect their self-esteem [e.g., save face], safe-guard or at least respect other people's self-esteem with appropriate lines of dialogue and reactions

and contribute to a cumulative impression management of everyday social reality. The play metaframe gives actors the freedom to manage expressions of self intentions, to conform to known frames and adapt to new ones.

(2) Defining Play:

As a metaframe, play is the primary frame people use to alter social schemata and consequently, other interaction frames. The following section describes aspects of play theory that are necessary for understanding the dramatic relations between player-characters.

(2.1) The Trouble with Play:

Play is an ambiguous activity. It resists being called one thing and not the other. Play has been said to be instinctual *and* learned, arousal seeking *and* relaxing, have no function *and* a biological function, to be a mental/spiritual exercise *and* a part of unconscious social development Huizinga (1970). Reflecting this problem, theories fit neatly into either of two paradigms. Researchers focused either on the context and function of play, or on its essence and structure. Contradictions in the literature are created when we examine play in association with other phenomena. Advances in play studies are stunted by academic and societal preconceptions.

In contextual/functional studies, play theory is directed to explain play activities such as games, sports, art, religion and employment. Thus, while examining adolescent minor-league hockey, play is serious, based on skill and luck, repetitious and a stress

relief. When we examine the play of successful, rich, NHL hockey players, we define play as serious, based on skill and strategy, teamwork, and resulting in stardom and economic idolism. Although context should affect how we play and when we play, it does little to define it. It says nothing to dispel the play/not-play dichotomy. Essential/structural studies, address what play *is*. How does it affect our behaviour and thoughts? What is the difference between play and not-play? What are the common emotions associated with playful interactions? How does one initiate play? Do adults and children play differently? This paradigm's weakness is that it is interpretive. In this case, play is examined as a complete phenomenon that is separate from not-play. This cultural assumption influences the types of observations and conclusions researchers make about play interaction.

Huizinga (1970; 1983) describes play as a series of contests and performances. In games, sports, art, religion, work and playfulness, people compete for the attention and value of others on a stage where every actor is both performer and witness. Although competitiveness does vary with play contexts, all play is a negotiation of something. Whether or not people are aware of the contests of their play, all are rewarded for participating. In competitive sports, winners are rewarded with public recognition of their abilities and large salaries. In art, skill, creativity and renown are important. Everyday playfulness bestows a hidden treasure to its participants, namely, social significance and unity. Play is not simply an event or encounter, it is an experience. Play is one way we have learned to communicate with each other on a subtle, non-linguistic level. It is our first contact with the social world.

Huizinga (1959) bypassed the play/not-play dichotomy, defining play as orderly

and rule-bound, but also fun, free and somehow disconnected from and disinterested in everyday routines. If play is rule-bound then it is not simply the pastime of curious children and bored adults, but an underlying experience that affects, even permeates all forms of social interaction. Given that we alter the severity, rule-boundedness and intensity of play in all social interactions, play can be defined as "any activity undertaken for its own sake" (Stone 1989: 64). Although entertaining, play does promote personal development and can seriously affect our well-being and identity.

(2.2) Gregory Bateson's Play Paradox [Simulated Realities]:

During play, participants communicate with each other by replaying or recreating everyday social frames. Play establishes a reality where nothing expressed is understood at face value. The signs and signals conveyed during these frames are ambiguous and in a certain sense untrue and non-serious. In play, "the playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite" (Bateson 1972: 180). Bateson explains that in contradicting itself, play sets up an *Epimenides-like* paradox that is only resolved within the activity itself. Although we ordinarily signify a nip to be a bite and a bite to mean aggression, play suspends such logical reasoning (1972: 180). During play, the nip can signify 'play with me'. Another example of this type of paradox is the phrase "I am a liar! I am lying!" Based on everyday reasoning, only one of these statements is true. The paradox cannot be resolved in the everyday frame. Communication is halted by the rationale that when subjects are defined, their definition remains constant [i.e., a bite is aggressive].

We must turn to Bateson (1962; 1972) to explain how the play frame is keyed. Bateson determined that all animals express *mood-signs* that are essential in communicating thoughts, actions and general well-being. Mood-signs are equivalent to blatant, everyday forms of communication. The mood-sign for a nip is aggression. His argument can be settled through a simple equation. If 'A' equals biting, 'B' equals 'intention' and 'C' is associated with 'aggression,' then A + B = C. At face value, a nip and a bite both designate aggressive behaviour. With play, however, normal rules of behaviour are suspended. A playful 'nip' does not automatically signify an 'aggressive bite'. Within the frame of play, the rule of A + B = C does not apply. A is A and B is B. The key "this is play" makes all that is said and done within the context non-serious, fun and enjoyable. The nip may broadcast aggressiveness, playfulness, or a hundred other meanings. Bateson describes these subtle presentations as *simulated mood-signs* (1962, 1972).

Bateson names our ability to distinguish between simulated and regular mood-signs, *metamessage receptivity* (1962; 1972). Metamessage receptivity is the ability of the receiver to interpret hidden metamessages by distinguishing between mood-signs and simulated mood-signs, or to move from not-play to play. If we are unaware that someone is playing with us, their actions can be misinterpreted. The innovations of play create a boundary between not-play and play. This boundary is paradoxical. Play is innovative for it allows us to be what we are not. The paradox both causes and is overcome through play. "Crossing the boundary means to simultaneously do one thing and its opposite" (Handelman 1992a: 4). "Paradox implicates the separation of self and other so that self

can become other in play" (Handelman 1992b: 37). "To pass through the paradox, the self must choose to relate to the otherness within itself, thereby relating to others through this" (Handelman 1992a: 37). We can change ourselves be acting like others in play. This innovation allows us the reflexivity to attempt untried actions, and to contemplate complex issues such as the malleability of social reality. Play makes personality negotiable. When one is not playing, it is difficult to distinguish between joking and serious behaviour. Should a person desire, their behaviour "can be discounted because they are playing. Similarly, when the play frame edge[s] too close to non-play, the play frame is over" (Lavenda 1992: 23, brackets are mine). Goffman (1959) says that we are in either one frame or the other. Our use of downkeying and upkeying allows us to choose between play and not-play.

Another way of making sense of how the mind deals with play paradox is to examine it as possessing primary and secondary processes. The primary process of our minds becomes engrossed in the flow of framed interactions. The secondary process of our minds is our imaginations. Play is only considered secondary to everyday actions while a person is in an everyday state of mind. Although play is fictional and secondary, it becomes primary and real through our engrossed and imaginative manipulation of the everyday frame (Bateson 1972: 184). The benefit of being able to switch from an ordinary, everyday state of mind to a play state, is that it exposes people to alternate ways of perceiving and interacting. This reflexivity allows for innovations of cognition and personality.

While in a state of play, we perceive and react to the world differently. However,

given that play and engrossment are related, we cannot reflect on perceptual changes, until we are interrupted or cease playing. Sutton-Smith provides us with an example of the ambiguity of play, stating "when adults viewed episodes of play fighting [among children], they labeled it as fighting, not play" (1989b: 58, brackets are mine). These children continued to insist that they were playing. The process of changing from the ordinary frame to a play frame, has immediate effects; eliminating the actor's confusion of whether they are playing a front or role, or acting like themselves.

Although play causes a paradox, such incongruity is resolved through the metamessage "this is play." "This metamessage enables us, with speed and ease, to override the paradox of passage from one kind of abstraction, one kind of reality, to another, on a routine and mundane basis, without paying heed to the magnitude of our accomplishment" (Handelman 1992a: 4). The paradox is in the boundary between play and not-play. Once in play, we have overcome the boundary and are aware of the meanings of our play. When we become engrossed in the flow of the activity, we are the characters we portray. Without flow, we are caught in between places, relating to the world through schizophrenic eyes. We are unable to discriminate between frames and consequently misconstrue the significance of our co-actor's words and behaviour.

(2.3) Description of the Play Metaframe [Play as mood]:

When we enter the frame of play, all presentations are judged twice. Our behaviour is evaluated for mood-signs and for simulated mood-signs (see Bateson 1962; 1972). The implied meanings of presentations are determined through an audience's interpretation of

metamessages. How well these messages are received determines audience reactions and conclusions. So with play, the basic keying is "this is play!" Play actions that mimics everyday 'serious' reality, appear serious. The play frame makes all activities inconsequential. However, through an experiential understanding, all players learn the metamessage stating that play is partially serious and simply another way of dealing with serious issues in a non-threatening environment. Through an interpretation of simulated mood signs, we are forced to reflect on our private self-conceptions. The exercise of performing alternative schemata and roles generates the qualities of inner character or self-identity that adds value to our existence and meaning to our conception of reality (see Stone 1989: 70). Play, like the everyday, is productive, but is measured on personal growth rather than personal gain.

Although the products of play and not-play are distinct, the experiences themselves are inseparable. Both pursuits involve people reacting to real world affairs, environments and situations that "requires exertion, self-restraint, and the ability to delay gratification" (Stone 1989: 66). It is different from everyday activities for it contains no exact procedures. It is the way we improvise our interactions. The rules of play determine the definition of the action. These rules are learned through participation and they change to suit the dynamics of each interaction. For instance, in the live-action *Vampire* game, actual rules are learned through trial and error, much like real life. Before their participation, players were encouraged to create characters that would fit into the Machiavellian theme. Once at play, however, players were required to fend for themselves in a 'sea' of experienced and inexperienced players, powerful long-term characters and newly created

[frail] characters. Only though game-play did players learn to negotiate alliances and to role-play their characters with realistic integrity. Such interactions are made possible through our ability to play in everyday life.

Play is the habitual experience of replaying stereotyped social roles and conversational schemata and spontaneous innovation through creative excursions. It is a repetitious and creative excursion in shaping social reality. The roles people play, although repetitive, allow them to escape from the confines of their identities. "It allows one to transcend the self, to be utterly serious over, and preoccupied with, something other than one's immediate and private interests" (Stone 1989: 68-69). External goods such as wealth and power are not paramount while playing the role of another. The role of *the other* frees us from that requirement. Stone's final property of the play experience is that its rewards are never forthcoming. Play can be disappointing for it provides no guarantees. Play obscures the intentions of others, forcing us to evaluate events and behaviour through a combination of pre-existing schemata, or to improvise. Even when a participant has determined the motivation and direction of a playful interaction, they are never quite sure whether the performance is serious or joking. The outcomes of play interactions are evaluated by comparing them with established everyday norms.

> A coherent theory of play would assert that play and ritual are complementary, ethologically based behaviours which in humans continue undiminished throughout life; that play creates its own (permeable) boundaries and realms: multiple realities that are slippery, porous, and full of creative lying and deceit; that play is dangerous and, because it is , players need to feel secure in order to begin playing; that the perils of playing are often masked or disguised by saying that play is fun, voluntary, a leisure activity, or ephemeral - when in fact the fun of playing, when there is fun, is in playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting accepted

> procedures and hierarchies; that play is performative involving players, directors, spectators, and commentors in a quadralogical exchange that, because each kind of participant often has her or his own passionately pursued goals, is frequently at cross-purposes.
>
> Security is needed at the outset of play more than later on. Once play is under way, risk, danger, and insecurity are part of playing's thrill. Usually there is a safety net, or a chance to call `time out`, or appeal to an umpire or other nonplaying authority who take care of the rules. But in informal play, and in what I call `dark play`, actions continue even though individual players may feel insecure, threatened, harassed, and abused. This pattern of moving from safety to danger is true of performance workshops that need to commence in an atmosphere of safety and trust but, once under way, are places where very risky business can be explored (Shechner 1988: 5).

Shechner agrees with Sutton-Smith (1989a: 190) in choosing to describe play as an attitude, mood or social interpretation. Because it is an attitude, it can occur anytime and last for as long as participants respect its frame. Moods are regulated through interpersonal relationships. Moods are based on an intimacy and trust between people. Emotional sensitivity in interpersonal relationships regulates the fronts erected during playful interactions. They influence the mood of encounters and the extent that private self-conceptions are changed. People enjoy playing with their friends (see Kelly-Byrne 1984: 178). Emotional sensitivity in these relationships allows players to play more intimately. In contrast, people who are distant from each other resist exposing their self-conceptions, producing 'internal goods' that conceal their true thoughts and emotions. Their play is of a more serious nature, for every word and action could secretly be a lie, used to criticize or chastise.

Although play mimics the social order, it just as often subverts it (Sutton-Smith 1972). Play is a public performance with alternative societal and behavioural meanings.

Our actions influence how others perceive us within social scenes. Our ability to play proves that we are all impression managers (see Goffman 1959). The cumulative interactions of players constitute their fantasy play world. "Play is that paradoxical language of communication and that disguised expression of human feeling which allows us to live as masked while in polite company" (Kelly-Byrne 1984: 197). If we could not play at our roles in everyday life, we could not adapt them to publicize the full range of our self-conceptions. Play allows for the performance of multiple perspectives and self images. Through play we select aspects of ourselves to present, imagine the motives of others, play their roles and negotiate our identities within a social order.

(3) The Mechanics of Play within Social Order:

Social interaction/communication is entirely dependent on interpreting the frame of another's performance and acting within it. We become engrossed in play because we experience it as real. Play is a gateway to explore multiple realities and to influence the behaviour and thought processes of our contemporaries. The social validity of personal experiences must be recognized and verified by others to highlight them as experiences (see Kapferer 1986: 189). In choosing to perform publicly designated roles and to behave according to the loose rules of cognition/dramaturgical frames, we remain connected to the people who constitute our social order. A smaller version of the social order is community. Community is defined by a relation of individuals united by geographic location, belief and enforcement of local laws, common language and mission.

"The problem in the play world becomes the representation of real problems with knowledge in our world; the fictive problem enable us to contemplate those problems in a specific setting but independently of any need to make 'responsible interpretive or moral choices'" (Gorfain 1986: 215). This may be one reason play is considered as a practice at 'real life', and why developmental play studies are so popular among scholars. Since a person knows when they are playing and that they are free to act, they should also realize the fictional presentation of their role play. This does not "so much threaten our faith in appearances as allow us a holiday; we are freed to play with the translucency of culture. The seeming opacity and permanence of social arrangements become retractable in the prism of a fiction or reflexivity" (Gorfain 1986: 210). Restricted to our imagination, the innovative nature of play may seem unruly and unpredictable, however, "it reveals... the possibility of changing our goals, and therefore, the restructuring of what our culture states to be reality" (Turner 1983a: 233-234 cited in Shechner 1988: 4).

The opportunity to approach issues and events with innovation, instead of reacting in culturally schematic ways, awards people the opportunity to use their imaginations, discover new patterns, ideas and experiences, to seek new ways of behaving during routine situations (see Shechner 1988: 17). Through play, we can escape the confines of ready-made social cliches, including phrases, ideas and behaviour to assist in restructuring ideas and experiences (see Bateson 1972: 16). In this way, play becomes defined as both functioning as the flux of social structure and as the act of the experience itself. When we replay aspects and schemata of the everyday world, we are representing behaviours and thought processes of the everyday. If our performance is accurate, the action may be

perceived as everyday. What this says is that the better and more consistently we perform our roles and ourselves [role and self play], the more they are considered real and not just play. One must play seriously to be serious. Play is a reframing of everyday social schemata. Reframing of reality is a sort of replay of the everyday, using the metamessages that play paradox allows us to communicate new ideas about ourselves and the world around us. If performed well, role-played reality becomes cognizant, affecting inner self conceptions and the impressions others receive of our behaviour. An excellent example of the process of how play affects and becomes everyday reality, is expressed below by Duncan.

> The pronouncement of justice occurs in a court or spatially limited background. Judges follow strict sets of rules, and the proceedings are conducted in an orderly way. The officials of the court wear special costumes (wig and gowns) that set them apart from ordinary life and create an aura of mystery and secrecy, and so on. Because law shares the functional and formal characteristics of play, Huizinga then argues that law arises from play... culture and civilization arises in and as play (Duncan 1988: 31).

Other cultural institutions, such as war, poetry, myth, philosophy and art are also permeated with this quality of play. Play serves as a vehicle for the negotiation and spread of culture, and consequently, the innovation of social mechanisms.

(3.1) Playing with the Social Order:

Social order consists of two suborders, the public and the private. The public order is the "order that governs the conduct of persons when they are in each other's immediate presence" (Williams 1988: 15). The private order is the order that governs the conduct of persons when they are alone. Technically, the private order is restricted to private

thoughts and hidden actions of the individual, although others may join this organization. Usually people that classify themselves as good friends are included within the same or very similar private social orders. Play allows us to rearrange the public and private orders. Internal goods are reflected in the re-ordering of the private self-conceptions presented within the public order.

Role-play is a form of Public Play. Public role play is depicted by play scholars by its repetitiveness, its stereotypes, its recursiveness, non-seriousness, routines/scripts, rules and predictability. There is no process or paradox here. This type of play relies solely on the replay of existing, everyday social schemata. It is contained/restricted within its context unable to innovate from the stereotyped, scripted, social schemata that rule its presentation. In this form of play, metagaming and thus metamessages, are impossible. This is the play of everyday routine roles. It is also the type of play promoted within the fantasy environment of the fantasy live-action *Vampire the Masquerade* game. It is responsible for establishing the mood, genre, possible storylines and themes, the social structure/organization of clans and encourages stereotyped game play. Game characters are social scripts or schemata.

It is the player who becomes engrossed in the emotion of their character's experiences. Although a large part of character-play is dramatically fictionalized, emotions felt during play are not as precisely mimicked. Self play is private play. Private play transforms the consciousness of the player. Such players enter a liminal space (Turner 1983b), balancing public-character performances with private motivations. It is within the flow/engrossment of this sort of play that the character roles and the players' personality

become one identity. Unbeknownst to most players, they are subtly manipulated by the successes and failures of their characters and by the in- and out-of-game interactions of other self-players. Where players became engrossed by their characters, they became emotionally and socially influenced by in- and out-of-game relationships and experiences.

It is through liminal (Turner 1983b) self-play that players manifest real self-identity [part player, part character] that straddles the two major contexts or frames associated with the game community [i.e., the everyday and the dramatic play frame]. Although just a game, players altered their self-conceptions to correspond to the social reality of their interactions. Private self play is a spontaneous, unpredictable, ruleless activity with the potential of serious consequences. When participants successfully manage the impressions of others through the public performance of their inner self, innovation of the private self is possible. Where there is disagreement between the public and private selves [when we are different inside from how we present ourselves], the resulting paradox causes anxiety, social loafing and inaction. Such negative pressures often result in a reduction of personal self-worth and withdrawal from the social scene.

The play frame can also be used to manipulate the impressions others receive of a person's behaviour by hiding true motivations within the artifice of friendly interaction. The trick to social interaction and impression management is to know your audience, its active frames and to evaluate through role-taking [or role-playing another person], the best expressions to portray. Reactions to and evaluations of our identities should be used to adapt public self presentations so that they are consummate with private self identities. Mental and social well-being exists when validated public presentations are attuned with

private-self expectations and motives. Through social awareness, a person safeguards their position and purpose within the social order. Our personal identities are intimately connected to the groups of people with whom we interact.

Social reality is negotiated through a combination of peoples imagined and conceptualized world views. It is understood through a performance of private self conceptions [self play and our ability to understand/communicate with the world views of others], our location in the social field [or self-awareness], our purpose for existence [or self-direction] and our understanding of the locations and purposes of others. Live-action role-playing games, like everyday interactions, contribute to the shaping of a virtual reality, authentic enough to revise the self-identities of its participants. This vehicle provides participants with more than entertainment, but with an opportunity to explore themselves, their relations with others and a context to understand the cultural universe they are part.

(4) Role-playing Games as Virtual Societies:

Analysis of the vampire game community is based on an evolution of thought. Goffman's dramaturgical model provided the structure for understanding play interactions described in Chapter Three. These research results not only described the community and demography of players in the vampire game community, but revealed the social mechanics responsible for participant interactions. The first section of Chapter Three identifies the dramaturgical frames and rules necessary for comprehending players-character

interactions. Included are descriptions of the players, their everyday world, their motivations for participation and notions of personal identity. It describes the "shared fantasy" (Fine 1983) of the players, character creation, development and motivations. The everyday frame of player-interactions and the dramatic-play frame of the fantasy environment are described. These two frames detail the interactions that support the metagame frame where the social reality of participants is patterned. The remainder of the chapter discusses the social patterning displayed within the game community, and explains the value of studying how our play shapes and manages our impressions of social reality.

The live-action game not only describes the mechanics of Goffman's impression management, but serves as an excellent illustration of the public/private person. There are several character precepts in the game that resemble personality study concepts, such as the play of private self and public self. Player-definitions of *person* and *self* are explained using game descriptors *nature* and *demeanor*, *player* and *character* and rules for in- and out-of-game role-play. Observations and consultant interviews explain how players create not only the game reality, but also the everyday context in which players' actions are interpreted.

The essential feature to recognize in fantasy role-playing games such as *Vampire the Masquerade* is the activity of role-play itself. Role-playing is not limited to fantasy role-playing games. Indeed, role-play occurs in the early stages of child development and socialization. In trying to make sense of both themselves and the external world, children play at being many things. At some point during the socialization process, children start acting out roles of important people around them. During adolescence and early

adulthood, people begin seeking their identities. Traditionally, the person's 'character' was defined by the work they did for a living. Presently, scholars have discovered that character formation is much more complex than originally thought. We constantly play at being ourselves. People play roles in everyday life to simplify social interactions. Nevertheless, people are not simply the roles they play in everyday life, they are the identities that exist between and behind the roles, and between frames of interaction (see Goffman 1974). Roles guide us through cooperative and communicative procedures of social life. Their very presence demonstrates the human capacity to change and adapt the structure of social reality. Live-action *Vampire* provided players with the environment to test their capacity for change. Limited only by their imaginations and social awareness, players were immersed into a reality of their own design.

Chapter Three:
Research Results and Analysis: Embracing the Vampire:

Unlike many ethnographies, the thrust of this report relies on the reader's ability to imagine themselves as participants in Winnipeg's original Live-Action *Vampire* role-playing game community. Rather than introduce a multitude of extraneous data, this chapter draws the reader through the process of learning the rules of the game and joining it, becoming engrossed into the virtual society and adjusting to the metaplay (Hurley 1994) of community life. Although a description of social structure and demographics are important in understanding community social structure, they add little to a non-player's conception of game mechanics and social dynamics. As a participant-observer, I became aware of how players learned to manage their group reality. Interviews with game players proved useful in highlighting common role-play experiences and reactions to those experiences. Consultant interview journals proved invaluable in producing a theoretical model of the 'classic' vampire game participant.

Involvement in the vampire game entails a gradual socialization into its world view. As players became familiar with game rules, their character-relationships and community memberships were strengthened. In the following section, it is shown how a classic player learns about the rules of the metagame and how they are drawn into another social world. The political structure of that world is regulated by three levels of relationships: desired relationships, ideal relationships and actual relationships (Davis and

Roberts 1985: 148). These stages of participant relations are associated with a deeper and deeper engrossment into character play and out-of-game involvement. Each stage of game play resulted in players quitting or becoming more involved in story and personal politics. So sit back and read as though you were the new player, learning how to fit into a community that is managed in the everyday, while thriving on shared fantasy.

(1) Game Participants as Private/Public Self-Identities:

STAGE ONE: Ideal Relationships:

In ideal relationships, political orientations between people are initially routinized and institutional. Traditions are good examples of these types of relations. These relationships may have been based on a mutual sharing of ideas and desires when the group was first formed, but they have little to do with present day-to-day affairs. Ideal relationships (Davis and Roberts 1985: 148) establish routines in learning, with little attention to the meanings of those routines. Everyone is 'outside' the social order and must learn to fit into its construction. Davis and Roberts (1985) describe this paradigmatic world as a "pre-fab world" or a "conventional social template." There are "extreme restrictions on behaviour potential, [including depersonalization] since a person is barred from acting on any reasons other than those called for by the person's position." Standards are non-negotiable. When a person does X role, they must perform it a certain way, follow certain rules and behave within a clearly marked style of presentation. These presentations are rotes, mechanical routine in learning; repetition without attention to meaning. An example of ideal relations in the *Vampire* game are the rules that White Wolf

game company asks players to follow. For instance, 'no real weapons of any nature should be used in the game,' and 'body contact is only permitted after acknowledged permission from all interactants concerned.' Prop weapons were used. These rules were seldom observed for they interrupt the flow of the game and the engrossment of its players. Instead, players followed rules that did not inhibit their entertainment. Players agreed to suspend game rules that obstructed their role-play. What was good for the players, was good for the group.

The classic player joined *Vampire* in search of communal acceptance and social value. Through their involvement, players were given the opportunity to present themselves in what first appeared to them, as a brand new world. Characters were limited only to game mechanics and players' imaginations. The everyday world served as a social template for game interactions. This explains how such a diverse group of people successfully fabricates and presents their fantasy world. The fantasy environment and character role-play were based on players' understandings of their social world. Role-play provided them with an enjoyable way of doing things that we in the everyday world cannot do. The world of play is separate from the world of worrying about rent and bills, employment, food and nuclear war. This was the world of make-believe, where people were allowed to creatively explore their darker selves, behaving in ways they may never have dreamed of acting in the everyday world.

The 'classic' player learned about the game through his or her friends or associates. Usually, however, it took no more than a game session or two to separate those that played on with those that quit. Most prospective players were introduced to the

game as spectators and later enlisted the aid of storytellers or friends to construct their characters. This character became their 'ticket' to play. Through role-playing their characters, players were introduced in-game, to various personalities, all of which were fantasy characters. It was not until after the game that they had a chance to meet and speak with the actual players. They learned in their first game the basics of rock-paper-scissors, rules for character descriptions and how to interact within a new social framework. Within this dramatic-play frame, only the lives of characters were endangered. The game was dramatic, for most interactions were improvisational and structured according to a loose storyline that the storytellers and narrators created and monitored. When the classic player experienced his or her first game, s/he was brought into an existing social structure, with existing relationships between characters and groups of characters. Only through their characters did they discover and survive this fantasy society.

Since we are born into a company of others, it is no small surprise that we depend on them for our education, identity, moral support, self-esteem, guidance, company and basic necessities. From birth we are submerged into an arena of interacting individuals who uphold certain values, traditions and laws, whose cooperative behaviour form familial networks of community. We are raised by our primary care givers to speak their language, share their world views and rationality, and comprehend their behaviour. We are further embedded into our society through our classmates, teachers and friends. Through them we learn to relate to the emotions and experiences of others and to understand and practice essential forms of behaviour, inherent to their culture of relations. We reconstruct and

adapt the world views of our communities to relate to our particular life histories. However individualistic our society demands us to be, we never escape the web of social relations that connect us to the social reality in which we exist. Although we each possess slightly unique perceptions of the world, we are forever prone to the persuasive influence called society.

(2) Dramaturgical Frames of the Game Community:

The following is a description of how a classic person joined the live-action *Vampire* game, generated a character and was gradually absorbed into community of relations. The flow chart in Appendix A1:187 serves to assist the reader in visualizing how people joined the game, became player-characters and role-played within two simultaneous frames of interaction. These two frames are the dramatic-play frame of the 'in-game' "shared fantasy" (see Fine 1983) and the 'out-of-game' everyday frame of associated friends and strangers. In this thesis I explain how the participant becomes exceedingly involved and engrossed into in-game and out-of-game actions of the metagame. The metagame is a commentary on the personal values and politics, self-development and exploration and the everyday impression management of *status quo*. It all begins in the everyday world, with learning the rules of the game.

(2.1) Description of the Everyday Frame [The Players]:

1. Rules for Live-Action Vampire by the White Wolf Game Company

Vampire Masquerade was first published as a table-top role-playing game like *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* (Gygax 1978, 1979). In *Vampire,* players create human-vampire characters on paper. The game is refereed by storytellers who narrate what player-characters experience and perceive within their modern fantasy world. In this fantasy world, supernatural and occult forces more impressively influence day-to-day social and economic activities. The success of player-character actions are determined by dice rolls. All game characters are quantified according to proficiency. A character that is very strong has a strength rating near the top of the scale, and a character that is physically weak has a lower rating. For example, a rating of seven points would be considered the strongest a human can be without mechanical or magical augmentation, and a rating of one point representing the weakest human. All other aspects of a character, including mental and social capacity, skills and abilities, magical powers [called *Disciplines* in the game], and background merits and flaws are similarly scaled according to this system. To experience the shared fantasy, players and storytellers interact as their fantasy characters. Storyteller characters, called non-player characters, are temporary personas used to further the story being told. Interactions, although verbalized, occur mainly in the imaginative minds of players. Participants are required only to have created an appropriate fantasy character and to sit with others while describing their character's actions through role-play and third-person descriptions. A player never needs to dress in the costume of his or her character and rarely is asked to act out described actions physically. All

interaction is conversational, between player-characters and between players and the storyteller. It is a group virtual reality or shared fantasy (see Fine 1983).

Live-action role-playing games differ from table-top games. In Live-Action, players dress, speak and act as their characters. This form of role-play is similar to childhood games of 'make-believe.' Although no actual physical contests are enacted, physical scenes between characters [i.e., fighting or otherwise] are staged by participating players. Staged scenes reduce injuries while still preserving game realism. Live-Action role-play involves players in not only the mental fantasies of tabletop role-playing, but more significantly, within a physical environment that overlays the everyday world. The game can be whatever players wish, anywhere in the city. Thus, body language and other non-verbal communication were used in establishing the *Vampire* fantasy-reality. Spencer-Hale best sums Live-Action role-play in the following passages (1993: 153-155):

> Live-action is a group effort. It depends on the cooperation of all involved to work. The Storyteller is not solely responsible for providing the players with ideas and encounters; it is everyone's job to do so. In a lot of ways live-action is like a play. It is an environment where all characters are equally important and depend upon the actions of others to determine their own actions. It requires a degree of give and-take to function properly.
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> Live-action role-playing calls the players' attention to the importance of the story over the achievement of the goal. It brings the players in touch with each and every scene, allowing them to interact with the other players and formulate goals of their own. This adds a multidimensional feel to the game as the players not only seek the goal that is presented to them by the Storyteller, but seek to achieve their own desires as well. This can help the game in many ways, the least of which is taking some of the work off the Storyteller. She no longer needs to present the players with plot after plot, which leaves her free for other things. The players create their own plots and the Storyteller need only assist them as necessary.

Player cooperation is essential for story consistency. This cooperation is mostly realized

through the interactions of player-characters within a game world determined by the lead storyteller.

Mental and social interactions are all role-played through conversations and out-of-character descriptions players share with other player-characters during a game session. Success and failure are determined first by a private negotiation between interacting players of a scene and resolved through staged scenes and role-play, or are determined by a quick game of *rock-paper-scissors*. Player and non-player characters need only face each other and state their intentions and defense. To play *rock-paper-scissors*, both players clench their right hand into a fist and simultaneously cock it back-and-forth three times, revealing on the third strike one of three basic hand-symbols. These hand symbols are rock, paper, or scissors. The symbol for paper is represented by an open hand with its palm faced downward. Rock is represented by a clenched fist, and scissors, by presenting the index and middle finger as a scissor. Rock wins against scissors, scissors wins against paper and paper wins against rock. So if the player-character who initiates the challenge shows scissors and the defender shows paper, the initiator wins the test. If both present the same hand-signal, it is a tie, and the character with the largest number of appropriate ability traits wins the contest.

The rock-paper-scissors test is a simple solution to diceless role-playing systems. In live-action *Vampire the Masquerade*, characters are constructed out of a detailed background describing past events in the character's life that influenced who they are today [the present, where the game occurs]. Personal attributes are quantified according to physical, mental and social capacity, abilities and skills, and magical disciplines. These

attributes are represented by adjectives. For example, strength would be represented by words such as brutal-ferocious-quick, mentality by witty-observant-clever, and social by words such as charismatic-persuasive-seductive. Each point of strength in the table-top version of *Vampire* is represented by a word in the live-action game. A character with three brutal, two ferocious, two quick adjectives would possess seven 'traits' to use during a physical rock-paper-scissors test. If this player-character and another with less than seven strength-related traits scored a tie on their rock-paper-scissors test, the character with seven traits would win. When a player loses one of these contests, s/he temporarily lose the trait s/he bid. It is regained at the beginning of the next game. This is to account for a character expending themselves [either physically, mentally, or socially] on a contest of wills. This is the basic system of rock-paper-scissors. Things are more complicated than this because a player-character can retest a challenge by bidding an appropriate skill or ability. In a hand-to-hand fight, the skill descriptor called Brawl could be used to retest. In this case, whoever lost the previous test would lose a trait and retest the challenge using Brawl. If they won this rock-paper-scissors test, they would have succeeded at their actions and have damaged their opponent.

To keep game flow, players try to incorporate out-of-game rock-paper-scissors challenges into their in-game conversations. A physical test will be used as an example. My character, Isaiah Asper, is having a conversation with greater antagonist Spyder the Malkavian. Spyder would incorporate the following statement into his conversation with my character Isaiah, "Cleverly I Dominate you to Sleep!" Clever is the mental trait Spyder-P has chosen to initiate his challenge, and Dominate is the name of the magical

power [i.e., discipline] he is using to put Isaiah to sleep. I would respond by saying, "well I am too observant to fall sway to your trickery, Spyder," and would hold out my clenched fist and await Spyder-P doing the same. In this case, I have chosen Observant as my defensive trait. Sypder-P and I would play rock-paper-scissors to determine if he was successful in dominating Isaiah to sleep. Whether he won the rock-paper-scissors test or in the case of a tie, possessed more mental traits, Isaiah would fall asleep. This would be enacted by simply falling to my seat, or to the ground, and staying silent for at least fifteen minutes of game time. Each magical power in the game has set durations. In the case of dominate, lower powered effects last for ten to fifteen minutes. Spyder could then act as malicious or kind he wished. He could either kill Isaiah by attacking his motionless body, or leave a message stating "next time, I will carve this note into your chest!" Because challenges are so extensively incorporated into the role-play of the game, there are far too many to describe here. Let it stand that rock-paper-scissors challenges are used to determine success wherever role-play does not suffice or where there is a chance to harm. The rest of the game occurs though role-played interactions. Players determine what aspects of their characters' biographies will be presented through role-play. This information is recorded on character sheets.

Including the physical, social and mental attributes already described, character biographies consist of lists of skill-descriptors, magical disciplines and details regarding a vampire's bloodline. Usually, players begin the game creating humans that have already been *embraced* or transformed into vampires. In these cases, players describe events of their characters' past that led up to their embrace and consequent presence in the society

of Winnipeg vampires. The following is a brief explanation of the descriptors players used to animate their characters. Every character sheet is a personal script, a guideline to how players should role-play.

Character creation begins with players creating their characters' backgrounds. Everything that occurred in their past should affect their present state of character. Appendix H1:226 provides several examples of player character backgrounds. The difference between an experienced player and a beginner is most beginners spend little time and imagination fleshing out their character backgrounds. More experienced players claim that these backgrounds become the central basis on which all other descriptors are dependent.

The second two characteristics are demeanor and nature. Demeanor is the equivalent to George Mead's concept of "Me" (1934) in his description of the self. It is the way that a character presents him or herself to others. This presentation is seldom the true self of the character, and like the public self concept "Me," is merely how we behave in public. Inner self is represented in-character as Nature. This is similar to Mead's (1934) definition of the "I.." The private self-identity more accurately captures the essence of it. Game rules suggest that players use personality archetypes such as manipulator, conniver, care-giver, fanatic, bravo, deviant, jester, loner and others as descriptors for both their characters' nature and demeanor. Descriptions of these and other archetypes are generalized so players may tailor their characters' personality and behaviour. Archetypes are equivalent to role-schemata. Distinctions between character archetypes are strengthened by skills and abilities.

Characters begin the game with relatively the same number of skills and abilities. These skills and abilities are descriptors for the general adeptness of each character. Each ability is qualitatively rated in the same format as other character descriptors. A character with two brawl descriptors would be twice as adept as a character with one, and half as skilled as a character with four. If I were to develop a character based on my life, I may possess abilities like alertness, empathy, leadership, drive, etiquette, research, occult and two anthropology traits. A skill of Drive, would make me a seasoned driver, and the two anthropology traits would represent a master of arts university degree. During the game these ability descriptors can be used to retest R-P-S challenges. The more skill and ability a character has, the more likely they will succeed in their actions.

Characters are restricted by their negative descriptor traits and derangements. These traits can affect physical, social and mental faculties. A character could be considered obnoxious, or untrustworthy, delicate of frame, or condescending. Derangement descriptors signify psychological limitations, psychosis and phobias. Negative descriptors and derangements represent interaction limitations or bad habits of characters. They add to an understanding of a characters' motives, values and behaviour, and allow players to role-play their characters more realistically.

The final feature of a vampire character is their magical disciplines. Every vampire clan is distinguished by certain innate powers associated with their bloodline. These are considered mystical properties of the blood. Individual powers are too numerous to mention here. There are ten fundamental categories of powers. Animalism is a supernatural affinity used to control animals. Auspex is extrasensory perception,

awareness and premonitions. Celerity is supernatural quickness and reflexes. Dominate is mind control practiced through a piercing gaze. Fortitude is represented as an unearthly toughness that protects vampires from the destructive effects of fire and sunlight. Obfuscate is the ability to remain obscure and unseen, even in crowds. Potence is supernatural strength and vigor. Presence is the ability to attract, sway and emotionally control people and crowds. Protean is the ability to shape-change [such as into a bat or a wolf] and Thaumaturgy is the study and practice of sorcery.

In summary, there are six features on the character sheet that encapsulate character-play: attributes including physical, mental and social descriptors, background, demeanor and nature, skills and abilities, negative traits and derangements and magical disciplines. These features comprise the character roles that players enact during game play. The everyday interaction frame consists of the players and their self-identities and motives and characters. Together, they comprise the out-of-game rules of conduct.

2. Game Locations and Meeting Game Community Members

The everyday frame of interaction is the world in which everyday life occurs. It is our consensual understanding of the work-a-day world, the social reality where the game is grounded. It was the place where the game was held, and where players congregated out-of-game [in Osborne Village, in *Die Maschine Cabaret*, *Somepl@ce* restaurant and at *Coffee Island* for example]. Most conversations involved talking about game scenes and events, or planning future scenes between characters. Out-of-game player relationships determined in-game character associations. New player-characters were appreciated by

older player-characters for they could be used to further their goals and to control game-play. Players befriended other players they felt added to their game influence. If a player was lucky, she or he was welcomed into another player-character's plotline, thus guaranteeing their involvement, In-Game. The popularity of the game increased with its population. It all began in August of 1995.

The idea for forming the first known Live-Action vampire role-playing game in Winnipeg came into existence through conversations between a person named Tier-P-Storyteller and other enthusiasts. In 1995, Tier-P-Storyteller moved to Winnipeg from Edmonton. He was surprised to discover that no organized vampire game existed in the city. The first game session was organized through conversations with people involved in the *University of Manitoba Challenge Corp.* game club and other people who regularly attended Wednesday goth/industrial music nights at *Die Maschine Cabaret* [a night club in Osborne Village].

Games were played in seminar rooms on the fifth floor of the University of Manitoba Student Centre. The main room was decorated with black candles, dark table coverings and accompanied by eerie music. The game was advertised by 'word of mouth.' Players of all backgrounds were drawn to the game. There were students, cabaret owners, small business owners, an opera singer, artists, welfare recipients and others. Many dressed in black and possessed a certain recognizable dignity. They respected each others' space and person, and a few were close friends. The game provided strangers the opportunity to meet, develop friendships, allies, rivals and contacts. It was during this first game session that the ground work of the community was established. The storyteller was

Tier-P. Ramsey-P acted as director of the University of Manitoba *Challenge Corp.* student group, and helped Tier-P with game administration and initial character generation.

Although most game sessions occurred at the University, a few games were held on Sundays at *Die Maschine Cabaret*, the only day of the week that the bar was officially closed. It was fitting that players would spend this evening at the bar, as it was their regular meeting place. Cabaret co-owner, Domingo-P, offered the game administration a place to play at *Die Maschine Cabaret*. Domingo-P had been curious about the game and eventually joined it.

Games were also held at the *Saint Boniface Bacillica*, the *Saint Norbert Monastery*, the *Winnipeg Art Gallery*, the Revolving Restaurant, at various cafes, Assiniboine Park, outside the perimeter and many other locations. When a location was needed for a scene, storytellers and players alike either established the scene using props and lighting, if they were available, or held the game at a location that 'looked the part.'

Game stability was determined by the game location and player-character political relations. Players quickly realized although their game was played bi-weekly Sunday nights, players continually discussed in-game actions and character goals between games. Players met in-character for clan meetings and private gatherings. In-game social interactions occurred so often that players knew each other more as their characters, than as players. The game became one of the most important and entertaining pastimes in many players' lives. Of course players had everyday out-of-game lives, but the game also provided a social network and community in a place that should have exuded it, namely

Osborne Village.

3. Player Demographics

The demographics of the participants in the everyday world of the game are defined by their population, gender, age, economic status, ethnicity, occupation, residence, social activities and player-character personality descriptors.

The number of players in the game constantly fluctuated. During the first five months of the game [August-December] eighty players participated as characters. Due to people quitting the game, by September of 1996, approximately fifty players remained. Players quit for various reasons, including a lack of time, loss of interest and overpopulation [it can be difficult for so many players to become directly involved in game plots and storylines]. Approximately thirty players participated in the game between October of 1996 until its completion in June of 1997. Many of these players became good friends and most, if not all, became increasingly involved in out-of-game activities. This cemented their commitment and participation in-game.

The population of players has invariably consisted of sixty-five percent males and thirty-five percent females, all between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six. The average age of players was twenty-three. Most players were Caucasian, of middle to lower economic status. Common player occupations, in order of greater to lesser frequency, were students, unemployed, manual laborers in the telemarketing and food industries or self-employment. Players lived in various areas of the city and congregated out-of-game in Osborne Village, at places like *Die Maschine Cabaret* Wednesday nights, coffee shops

and after game sessions at *Perkins* restaurants. For a demographic list of players, please refer to Appendix A2: 189.

The vampire game attracted quite a variety of people. When the 'classic player' joined the vampire game, his or she did so at a particular moment in his or her life. Few players were well established in society by clearly defined roles and obligations [e.g., small business owners, professional careers, etc.]. Such players were between twenty-five and thirty-six years of age. Players who were university students occupied temporary social roles that afforded them a certain niche within their community. Those without defined roles or obligations, experimented with various roles and world views in order to search out social identities unique to their conditions. These people tended to be recent high school graduates, either unemployed or unsatisfied with their job situation, and contemplating the possibility of their post-secondary education. They also shared an interest in science-fiction and fantasy genres [fiction, movies, etc.].

Consultants were also defined by their personality. Consultants listed both positive and negative descriptors. Arranged from greatest frequency to the least, players listed their positive self-aspects as: friendly and outgoing [listed six times out of seventeen consultants], imaginative, creative, care-giving and protective [listed four times...], intelligent, jovial and witty [listed three times], and social, eccentric and non-violent [listed two times...]. Consultants listed their negative characteristics as: self-conscious, insecure with low self-esteem [listed six times...], reclusive [listed five times...], critical, stubborn, defensive, confrontational and egotistical [listed four times...], moody, emotional, controlling, compulsive, reserved, withdrawn and indecisive [listed three times], and

depressed [listed two times...]. In total, consultants listed twenty-eight positive and thirty-eight negative descriptors. These personality characteristics generally define the 'type' of people who joins the game.

4. Qualities of a Good Player

New players were occasionally accepted into this social reality through player-cliques. Unless players acted inappropriately in- or out-of-game, their play was guaranteed. Members were required to act-out clique schemata and work to benefit other members' plotlines. In-game character antagonisms between clique members resulted in expulsion. Most players, however, were patient enough to allow new players to 'find their place' and 'fit' into social order.

Game players pursued specific commodities in their everyday world. They learned to pursue everyday commodities validated by their successful presentations in the game world. Players sought the following everyday commodities: popularity [in Osborne Village and at *Die Maschine Cabaret*], charismatic prestige, social status, friendships and political monopolies. These relationships were guided by the level of intimacy between players. Who they socialized with, opinions of other players, who was dating who, and who was considered a close friend were all factors influencing player-character relations.

5. Game Administration

At the outset of the Winnipeg game, players' Tier-P and Ramsey-P were responsible for attracting the players' population. New storytellers were determined during

administrational meetings through an agreement of narrators and former storytellers. As a voluntary position, the post of storyteller was open to all experienced live-action vampire players who had gained the confidence and support of older game players. These players generally occupied posts in the administration. Storytellers were responsible for recruiting narrators to act out non-player-character roles. N.P.C.s are ordinary people that kindred may encounter, such as a police officer, a rock star or perhaps a panhandler. Narrators function to advance storylines developed by the storyteller. The storyline provided players with rudimentary ideas that were fleshed out during character interactions.

One technique for advancing the storyline was to introduce a super-antagonist, or a mystery, or to encourage interclan politics. Storytellers had to watch and listen well to how player-characters reacted to their narrator-driven scenes. Ideally the storyteller and narrators acted to make the game more enjoyable for all players. This ideal was seldom actualized, however. When game information was distributed more readily to friends of the storytellers or narrators, other players felt their character actions would never influence the grand storyline. So the game was played by those who had the right connections or who where lucky enough to stumble across a narrator/storyteller's meeting at a local cafe or at the university. Nevertheless, only the friends-of-the-administration and the administration itself were informed. Informed players did not always intentionally conceal information about the game from other players. Occasionally, it was assumed that everyone would discover what was occurring in the game by talking to each other. The underlying factor was that not all players talked to each other. Sometimes rule changes, story events and opportunities, and general character reactions to events were restricted to

certain groups of players. These groups were called cliques. Groups of players who shared information on game events tended to cooperate in solving mysteries and destroying great in-game antagonists.

(2.2) Description of the Dramatic-Play Frame [The Characters and the Story]:

It was the above population of players that met and role-played regularly and associated between games. These players gradually learned the rules of their game. Players were encouraged to interact according to what was possible in-game and to disregard primary frame out-of-game relationships. The Winnipeg game certainly challenged this rule. The out-of-game always influenced the development of characters and story ideas played out in-game. As players became accustomed to the gothic-horror setting of their character-play, they learned to emulate those same behaviours during out-of-game interactions.

The genre of *Vampire the Masquerade* is based partially on the fantasy world outlined in Anne Rice's Vampire chronicles (1981; 1985; 1988; 1992) and augmented by popular fiction and folklore about vampires. In *Vampire*, players generate characters who are part of an existing fantasy world. This world is called the *World of Darkness* (Hatch 1993). Within the horrific setting of this world, paranormal, supernatural and occult are commonplace. Ghostly apparitions, lycanthropy, faerie folk, ancient magus and other inconspicuous denizens prowl and prey upon humanity. Behind all human politics, war and corporate maneuvering there may exist vampires masquerading as ordinary humans. Their missions are full of dark purposes. Player-characters became a part of the hidden order of

this society. Some characters began the game as mundane humans and were later embraced [or made into vampires], while others were introduced as visiting vampires. Regardless of how they arrived in the *World of Darkness* version of Winnipeg, they were given roles and status within the social order.

1. Gothic-Horror Fantasy World

The context of the Vampire fantasy world/society was defined predominantly by four elements: political structure, status economy, clan infrastructure and conspiracy [hidden agendas, etc.]. These elements inspired characters' plotlines and directed the main storyline.

Vampiric society imitates the dictatorial politics that existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe. At the top of the hierarchy is the position of Prince. The position of Prince, like all positions within the Society, could be occupied by female or male kindred [a game term, meaning vampire]. The Prince was elected by a ruling council of elder kindred called Primogen. Each primogen council member was elected into their position by members of their clan. They were the official city clan leaders. It was the duty of the Primogen to see to the administration and orderliness of the society. They existed to make the rules and acted as council to the Prince to bestow honors and execute justice. Each Primogen remained on the council so long as s/he was supported as leader of his or her clan. Clans consolidated kindred of common bloodlines. In many ways clan bloodlines are symbols of the family, although clan kindred are related through their actual blood and the clan designation it carries. As leaders of their clans, Primogen were responsible for

representing fellow clan members, maintaining authority and rules and enforcing justice determined by the investigations of the Primogen council and the Sheriff. The Sheriff was a kindred who was elected by the council to police the society. It was the Sheriff's role to see that the political and social order was maintained [through use of force if necessary] and that defilers of that order were brought to justice. Another position determined by the Primogen was the Harpy. It was the Harpy's responsibility to act as rumour-monger, listening to the deeds and misdemeanors of kindred in order for status to be properly allocated. For instance, the Harpy would remove status from a council member who ignored one of his or her own laws, for such behaviour is considered beneath his or her station. In reverse, if a kindred committed a heroic act, the act would be recognized by an increase in status.

In-game character-roles are comparable to role-relationships in everyday social life. For instance, vampire clans may be modeled on early western extended-family kinship patterns. The eldest in the family takes on the responsibility of 'head of the family'; acting to protect their lineage, settling disputes between members, acknowledging new members and acting as 'town' council member. All clan primogen shared these duties. The 'town' council may determine a god-father, chief, mayor, or chairperson to oversee council decisions and to arbitrate disputes. In the game, this person is called Prince. The game was based on a combination of imagined medieval European dictatorships and western politics. Similar to family-heads, primogen were either elected or appointed as elders of their clans. Just as in the 'real world,' vampire clan members respected their elders. Princes were accountable to archons and justicars. These last two positions were extensions of the

political kinship structure. They represent a form of ancestor worship. The democratic edge of dictatorial game politics allowed players to identify with the in-game authority structure. The positions of Sheriff and Harpy are comparable to law enforcement agencies and the public media. Public opinion polls and the influence television, newspaper and radio media have over the status of individuals in our society were played out through the rumour-mongerring of the harpy [responsible to the Primogen Council]. The role of Sheriff is patterned after the duties of police officers, with the ruling council and Prince acting as judge and jury to all infractions.

Similarities between the vampire game world and the everyday world are not restricted to role-positions, however. The six rules governing the in-game community are easily compared with rules for organized crime [Mafia, etc.]. Any kindred who broke these laws were usually ostracized or publicly executed. The first game tradition states kindred should never reveal themselves as vampires. Information on the presence of vampires is a guarded secret. Vampires in the game feared being hunted down and destroyed by human antagonists and severely punished any kindred who exposed his or her kind. The first tradition is comparable to keeping family criminal activities secret. The second vampire tradition is called the right of Domain. Essentially, domain is a territorial right. Those who enter the domain of another must show them great respect and defer to their rules and punishments. Kindred are like landlords, masters of their land and property. The third game tradition states no kindred could create another of their kind [called the embrace] without first obtaining their elder's [i.e., Primogen, or Prince] permission. This is comparable to asking for a parental blessing when marrying into the

family or birthing a child. The family elder is granted the right to regulate who becomes a family member. The fourth game tradition is the Accounting. Kindred were held accountable for the education and behaviour of the humans they transformed into vampires [called progeny]. This is similar to a parent's responsibility for their offspring. The fifth game tradition, called hospitality, states whenever a kindred enters a city they must declare themselves to the ruler of that domain. This is comparable to calling on and greeting the 'master of the house' when entering his or her home. To enter a place without permission is similar to trespassing and is just as punishable. The sixth game tradition is the right of destruction. This law restricts killing to the eldest vampire, usually the Prince. It is their duty to decide guilt or innocence and to command that the guilty are executed. Kindred who did not follow this law, and kill for themselves, are executed as murderers. They were subject to similar judicial processes as people are in modern western societies. Murder was an offense determined by and punishable by characters of the court.

Court positions [such as prince, primogen and sheriff] and game traditions allowed players easy access to the game social system. Characters were developed within this structure as they are in the everyday world. Game rules were tailored to be comprehended by those that play the game. To ensure good role-play game structure was based loosely on everyday rules of social interaction. The game provided a practice-space for the invention, development and practice of the social role relations that constitute society. A few examples of these relations are superior/subordinate, parent/child, grandparent/grandchild, employer/employee, husband/wife, clergy/worshiper and jailer/prisoner.

Vampire prestige was granted to kindred who served the society through public roles. This prestige was called Status. It was a measure of how kindred perceived each other in the social hierarchy. Each status-descriptor trait a character possessed increased his or her prestige in the social order. A few examples of these traits are: recognized, acknowledged, honored, respected, or well known. So a kindred with two or three status traits would be more respected and influential than a kindred with only one or zero traits. Each official role comes with its own status. The Prince character has seven or eight status traits. No other kindred had more status than the Prince. Primogen had varied Status, but generally had between three and five traits that reflected their position of power over others. Other kindred had status of zero to three depending on their deeds and how their primogen perceived their actions. Primogen could award or strip a clan member of status to reflect their behaviour in the social order, or designate personal boons.

Boons were another aspect of the status economy. Whenever one kindred did another a favour, it was publicly recognized as a Boon. The kindred who awarded the favour gave a boon to the recipient. In exchange, the recipient owed a favour to that kindred. It was reflected in a temporary loss of their status. Boons were scaled according to the severity of the favour from minor boons [small favours] to Blood and Life boon [huge favours -- e.g., saving another kindred's life, etc]. Boons are a species of prestige. They allowed kindred of lesser status and rank to have some power over their superiors. This is similar to getting a loan at a bank to live a wealthier lifestyle. Until a boon was repaid, recipients were treated with more respect and favour.

Status and Boons cement vampiric society. Without them, order would never be

maintained and no official roles would be recognized. Why would an immortal kindred care about the rules and social etiquette of vampire society, when they could simply move to a city with no vampires and live in freedom? The status and boon system forced kindred to respect and protect each other. Without them, kindred could be discovered by humans and be hunted and destroyed. Status and Boons were central ingredients of the vampire community. The grand storyline was complemented by status relations between clan bloodlines.

Characters were embraced into specific clan ancestries. Clans define a character's ancestry and magical disciplines. There are seven clans described in the basic rules of the game: Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere and the Ventrue. Each clan is based on ancestral blood-relations that signifies certain advantages and disadvantages. The Brujah are rebels who seek to defeat weak organizations. The Gangrel prefer pristine wilderness and abhor technology and civilization. Malkavian clan members are mentally insane, yet exhibit great insights about the world. A Nosferatu's horrid appearance isolates him or her from most elite social gatherings, yet allows him or her the seclusion to gather important information. Toreadors seek to embrace artists or renown social poseurs. Members of this clan have acute prescience regarding beauty and the symbolic significance of social affairs, yet are quite distracted or entranced by 'pretty things.' The Tremere practice blood-magic, enabling them to shape reality as they will, however, their seclusiveness and secrecy furnish them the reputation of being evil-deceivers. The advantages and disadvantages of vampire clans are based loosely on the exquisite and despicable qualities of human beings. Blood connects characters to their

ancestry.

To belong to a clan was to belong to a particular bloodline or family of related blood. Each clan got its name from the ancestor that established its bloodline. According to one mythology within the fantasy game world, vampires believe that their kind began with Caine [game-publishers' spelling]. Caine's curse caused him to be banished from humanity, forever cursed to walk in darkness as the outcast, the marked one, to "prey upon the blood of men." According to Kindred legends, Caine created three *childer* [vampires] from his blood so that he would not be lonely ruling over the city of Enoch. These three vampires created a third generation of kindred who were called the antediluvian. Although Caine destroyed his childer for passing his curse onto humanity, he failed to prevent the third generation from creating the fourth generation. In his ignorance, Caine allowed his curse to be passed on to successive generations of kindred. To rectify the error, Caine ordered the antediluvian to seek out and destroy all kindred. This includes the fourth and fifth generation kindred who technically are responsible for starting the seven clans. The clans have since unified under common traditions and have called their society the *Camarilla*. To hide from the antediluvian and human retribution [e.g., the crusades and 14th to 18th century witch hunts], they formed the most important of rules: the Masquerade. The tradition of the Masquerade states that no kindred should reveal the presence of him/herself or other kindred to humankind. It is the Masquerade that keeps the clans working together in peace and that grants kindred the opportunity to practice their maligned conspiracies. Clans are political stereotypes. Such stereotypes are potent reflections of player self-identities.

Players role-played vampire characters that reflected certain aspects of themselves. Fifty-two percent of the seventeen consultants formally interviewed claimed they role-played, through their character, certain aspects of their personality. The remaining forty-eight percent of consultants claimed to role-play folk-heroic characters found in history, folklore, or popular culture [comic books, movies, and novels]. In an article on the San Francisco vampire game, Rushkoff (1995: 39) points out that players role-play clans that matched their personalities. Malkavian clan characters tend to attract exhibitionists or-outgoing players that view the world in a uniquely personal way. In the game Malkavians are insane, attracting players with malleable personas. They embrace humans who are or have the potential to be, mental ill. The spooky, mystical and spiritual attitude of Tremere clan characters appeals to players with similar self-images. In the game, the Tremere are magicians, and embrace those who are interested in the study and practice of magic. They are the stereotypical Lugosi-styled scientists. Nosferatu clan characters are grotesque beings who live life in the shadows, protecting the secret beauty of their inner lives from the effect their horrid exteriors have on others. They are the vampires of silent horror movies. Nosferatu are deformed and ugly in appearance. Their advantage lies in the fact that unattractive people tend to be ridiculed and then ignored. While others' eyes are turned to more appealing sights, the Nosferatu gather secrets. Only those who consider themselves unattractive in appearance, or who think they possess inner knowledge, insight or wisdom, are embraced as Nosferatu. Ventrue clan characters tend to be militaristic, corporate-minded and power-hungry. Their flare is in business, controlling money and through money, people. Ventrue embrace those who have a great business and commerce

sense and who are greedy for monetary possessions and worldly influence. Brujah clan characters tend to be the rebels of society. They are the people that collapse decaying or weak empires and institutions. They are the Napoleons, Genghis Khans and Alexander the Greats in history. Brujah only embrace those who are strong willed, physically and/or mentally and prepared to overcome impossible odds. They are the punkish "Lost Boys" [this was a vampire movie from the 1980's in North America], always looking for a challenge and worthwhile opposition. Gangrel tend to be rural, solitary beings, who scorn the technology of the modern world. Toreador clan characters tend to be creative, even artistic. They tend to be beautiful, rave-club-people, more concerned with beauty in themselves and in the world than anything else. Their life quest is that of the guilt-stricken romantics of Anne Rice's novels. Only artistic-types are embraced by the Toreador.

Clan values were reflected in player self-conceptions. Consultants described their characters as possessing the following positive personality descriptors: confident and self-assured [occurring seven times], accommodating, fanatic, daring, and jovial [occurring three times], and fair, honorable and protective [occurring twice]. Consultants described the negative aspects of their characters as violent and cruel [occurring seven times], bully, rebel, oblivious, rash and egotistical [occurring four times], direct [occurring three times], and conforming, withdrawn, unfeeling, controlling, emotional, paranoid and confused [occurring twice]. Due to the similarity between players' self-conceptions and clan stereotypes, players easily took on the roles of their characters and role-played the genre of the game.

It is the tradition of the Masquerade that allows kindred to exist in human society,

and to conspire to have dominance over it. Secretly, vampires have influenced and manipulated human society. Areas of influence include politics, bureaucracy, industries, media, finances, police force, health organizations, high culture and underworld crime circles. Kindred exist in a landscape of masquerade and Machiavellianism. In manipulating the mundane world Kindred have secured themselves the title and disposition of *hidden enemies*.

There were few typical adversaries in the game. One group of adversaries were the Sabbat. The Sabbat were vampires who had turned away from the protection of the Camarilla masquerade. As the stronger species, Sabbat vampires believed that humans should be treated as blood-bags, for their nourishment. It was their purpose to undermine the political structure of the Camarilla and to either destroy its members, or convert them to their world view. They were the hedonistic, cruel vampires that had little humanity left in them. They were controlled by their 'beasts within' and were mostly unredeemable. They were the unknown terror in the darkness, considered utterly evil. In contrast, the Camarilla labored to maintain kindred humanity and tranquility, while controlling the life-blood of human relations. Other examples of adversaries are werewolves, and the Society of Leopold [or the same Inquisition that inspired the witch hunts in medieval times]. Players enjoyed stories about unseen enemies that masqueraded within their group. Such stories made players paranoid and forced characters to scrutinize each other and to expose 'trouble-makers.'

2. Character Demographics and Actions

Character demographics are defined by gender, typical actions and plotlines, the types of relationships between characters, personality and clan. Although players tended to role-play characters of corresponding gender, a few players chose opposite gender roles. Mordechai-P and Casper-P are examples of female players who role-played male characters. Mordechai was an elderly Jewish man, and Casper was a deranged fifteen-year-old boy.

The 'dramatic-play' frame consisted of the relations between characters and player attitudes [public performance] toward other players and the storytellers' administration. The vampire game genre encouraged participants to form alliances with some characters and antagonisms with others. These relationships defined the social environment where players role-played their character. Do players role-play fairly? Do they cheat at rock-paper-scissors challenges? If other players perceive them cheating, either through rumour or direct observation, players may choose to avoid them, thereby restricting their role-play. Do they role-play their character properly? To maintain game consistency, player-characters had to remember previous character-conversations and relationships. Players who failed to incorporate experiences and relationships into their character-play [e.g., forgetting a truce] were perceived as insane or concealing devious conspiracies. Players also reacted to this behaviour in a private way. In-character betrayals could be blamed on out-of-character rivalries. Whether known or imagined, rivalries that persisted throughout many game sessions, seriously damaged out-of-game relationships. Due to the intensity of character interactions, players learned to value game relationships that furthered their

characters' ambitions.

Valued in-game commodities consisted of power and authority over other characters, status, prestige [the respect granted to player-characters proven to be excellent role-players, or 'nice people,' i.e., they have not offended anyone], sympathetic character relationships that increased involvement and the establishment of consistent character-personalities. In a few cases, however, the existence of these commodities was difficult to determine. Nevertheless, these commodities were strengthened through game experiences.

Players were rewarded experience points by attending scheduled games and by inspirational role-play. Experience points were used to increase character- proficiencies such as social, mental, or physical traits, abilities, and disciplines. All aspects of a character could be developed and improved. Characters became more powerful through experience and proficient role-play. Newly created characters were usually weaker than older more experienced characters. A player-character's game influence was increased by his or her engrossment, emotional investments and involvement in game politics. Players that advanced the main storyline were awarded more experience points, giving them a competitive advantage over less experienced player-characters. The pursuit of power was a primary motivator of game-play, serving to establish unannounced friendly competitions.

Players who were able to predict the course of the storyline and took advantage of that information, advanced much quicker than less fortunate player-characters. Familiarity with the storyline motivated players to befriend storytellers and their friends. Players who were members of cliques were more visible to other players as affecting the game fantasy and more ably created plotlines that increased their popularity and influence. These players

tended to take more of a responsibility for the well-being of their characters. Although some players believed themselves detached from their characters, they still feared character death. When characters were killed, players became anguished, unhappy, angered, dissatisfied and frustrated. When characters died, players either quit the game, or generated new characters. Without characters, players were separated from the in- and out-of-game community of interactions. They were unable to fully identify with, or were interested in conversations regarding the game, and usually took a 'back-seat' in conversations regarding the game.

Classic character actions included the formation of character alliances [called coteries], setting up antagonists, usurping or being elected into a position [Prince, Primogen, Harpy, Keeper, etc] and confrontations with Sabbat vampires or storyteller-motivated antagonists. In-game coteries were mainly formed by players who associated with each other out-of-game as friends or acquaintances. Antagonisms were formed between groups and individuals who had similar relationships out-of-game. The lack of communication between these players served to maintain in-game antagonisms. Such antagonisms began during court election at the first organized game session.

In-game character elections were held to determine Primogen council membership and who would be Prince. These role positions were the primary focus of most game sessions. Who will be in charge? What is acceptable behaviour? How should characters be punished for infractions? These questions were eventually answered, but not until players realized that the real game was played between player-characters with positions. It was this group that truly influenced the game storyline. Those chosen to occupy these soon-to-

be-valued posts became real players in a struggle between themselves and others. The positions served not only to keep these players entertained but also kept them active and informed about game activities. The player-characters selected to become primogen members, vigorously performed their in-game roles. Some players learned that there was no better way to learn about the game society than to become arbiters of social-truth. Wolfram-P realized that game influence depended on game involvement. He was tall, handsome and an excellent public speaker. His character, Wolfram, was unanimously elected Prince, first ruler of the vampire society. The reason for his election to the position of Prince is unclear, although his charismatic approach to conversations and speeches did influence players' opinions. Because people knew each other only casually through *Die Maschine Cabaret*, players relied solely on the informal in- and out-of-game publicity campaigns, popularity and their physical suitability for each position. Wolfram-P, who found himself privy to story ideas and story ideas created by Tier-P and Ramsey-P, later became a narrator.

The following is a list of characters who became primogen of their respective clans. Mordechai became primogen of the Nosferatu for two reasons: She played the only Nosferatu at the time and she dressed the part wearing a grotesque mask and an excellent costume. McAllister became primogen of the Venture because he had been supported by Wolfram and was the first player-character chosen to be Prince. Of the Tremere clan, the soon-to-become-infamous character Mr. Nore was elected because of his overpowering personality and confidence; which may have appealed to less outgoing individuals in his clan. Morrigan of the Brujah clan was elected by her male co-clan members, since none of

the others wished to claim the post. For similar reasons, Tiger of clan Gangrel was eventually chosen as the primogen for her clan. Acting on the discretion of Zippy [Zippy-P and Wolfram-P were good friends] and Spyder [also possessing convincing, outgoing, overpowering personalities], Malkavian players decided to elect a puppet named Yrtle as their primogen. Although Spyder may have used the puppet to refer to his control over the Malkavians, the idea was odd enough that none opposed it. Later, it was discovered that Spyder and Zippy would control the clan through Yrtle. Finally, my character, Isaiah Asper, became Toreador clan primogen. Isaiah achieved his position by winning the sympathy and support of other Toreadors and out-of-clan members through his participation in several unofficial pre-game events. These events lead to the formation of an in-game group called the *Alliance*. Members of the Alliance promoted pre-selected clan members to positions of influence, including primogenships. Despite his control over the Alliance, Isaiah would later be betrayed by Mr. Nore and his childer Mara, both of clan Tremere, Spyder of clan Malkavian, and Dimitri and Helena of clan Toreador. Mr. Nore would order his childer, Mara, to spy on clan Toreador while acting as a Toreador. Spyder concealed his own deviant interests and actions by persistently using his hypnotic dominate power set-up Isaiah as his scapegoat. Dimitri and Helena would undermine Isaiah's primogenship by exposing his in-clan confessions. Together, these events shaped his villainy. Cafe Elysium, however, inevitably served to revitalize and boaster his reputation. This process of support and betrayal regularly occurred in the game. My popularity in-game as Isaiah and out-of-game as Brian, fluctuated greatly throughout the two years of game play. Unbeknownst to me at the beginning of the game, players' out-of-game

associations greatly influenced their characters' positions in-game. Plotlines begun in-game to force the politic of the society were determined by staged cooperation between people who regularly conversed with each other. In other words, players banded with players to coordinate role-played scenes. Yet, players denied any coercion. To these conspirators, what is out-of-game remained out-of-play. Players decreed their game was 'just a game' and was separate from reality. When in-game, participants were considered player-characters. As both script writers and actors, player-characters entertained themselves by shaping their story to their liking.

(2.3) Description of the Metaplay Frame [The Player-Character]:

The primary way that players related to each other was in-character within the game world [the frame of play]. The second level of association was their everyday social world. In-game events that boosted a character's status improved that player's reputation in the real world. Adversely, player characters that became antagonists in the game were treated similarly outside the game. This phenomenon occurred despite avid player declarations that in-game role-play did not, and should not affect out-of-game relationships [and vice versa].

1. Personal vs. Character Knowledge

The context of the dramatic-play environment is extensive. The storytellers, for instance, had to "ensure that the players [were] aware of things that their characters would definitely know" (Fine 1983: 192, brackets are mine). The context of the game combined character knowledge, character roles [profession, clan, etc.], the world of darkness, player

knowledge about the game system [including rules], awareness of game events and knowledge of the everyday social world. The game environment was not totally set, however, for the storyteller "must create the world as the game proceeds, according to the needs of the characters" (Fine 1983: 194). The structure of the live-action *Vampire* game is similar to live storytelling. The storyteller knows the basic story, but his or her audience's reaction determines the pace and intensity of the oration. Congruency, as Fine notes, is determined and maintained by the storyteller and by players' willingness to refrain from metagaming. Where metagaming occurs, the borders of play and not-play are breached and players enact themselves and their characters, simultaneously. This is dangerous, as storytellers then have the power to change a player's real social existence. Such involvement intensifies the engrossment in the dramatic play frame, by simultaneously extending the frame to include everyday interactions within the gaming community. "A person consists of a bundle of identities that are more or less compatible, but when enacted must presume a lack of awareness that other identities are possible" (Fine 1983: 195-196). This is a crucial point in coming to understand how people adjust their public self-conceptions through role-taking, while maintaining a more private identity. While playing a role within the game, players were encouraged to 'act the part' and to refrain from the role-playing other roles. In other words, they were required to consistently act as the characters they portrayed. The combined interaction performances of all characters shaped the social reality of the game community and tailored players the self-images. Role-playing games make us aware of the possibility of altering our public self-presentations. This explains why it was so easy to merge character and player

personalities. This is a form of liminality (Turner 1983b). The participant was the combined player and character. They have a reciprocal effect on each other, much as our private and public selves shape social reality. When a person joins the game, he or she must generate a character. At first, player and character were separate entities, each having their own memories, histories and personality. Character actions were determined by player goals. Only the player knows the mind and motives of their character. Other players must learn about characters through role-played interactions. As player-characters interacted, bonds formed between them. Characters were increasingly role-played more realistically. Secrecy between player-characters led to emotional investments that further united players with their characters. It was this attachment that enabled players to be engrossed into the fantasy environment of the game.

The character, at least within the context of the game community, became a public self presentation. It was the role a person played. Fantasy characters are no different from other roles we play in everyday life. Roles influence our behaviour and relationships with others. Because we interpret people's motives and intentions based on their public behaviour, character performances easily affect other players' private conceptions of our out-of-game attitudes, values and motives. The result of this process was that in-game interactions influenced out-of-game relations, just as public self-conceptions affect private self-identities. The participant was the public-private person and the character-player.

The everyday and dramatic-play frames meet to form a paradox of intentions within the community of interacting player-characters. Players' motives were altered when they were forced to respond to character goals, instead of player insinuations. All players

who role-played at least two sessions formed similar in-game and out-of-game relationships. The paradox was overcome in just the same way that Bateson (1962; 1972) described. Participants announced whether they were out-of-character or in-character. During the game, out-of-character actions were signified by displaying one's index and middle finger over one's left collarbone. It was vital for participants to recognize when other players were in- or out-of-character, so to distinguish between players and their characters. However, this system did not always work. Players often manipulated the impressions they presented to each other through character actions and out-of-game cordiality. Players who disliked each other out-of-game safely labored against each other in-game. The metamessage conveyed was that in-game actions 'should not' be equated with out-of-game relationships. Ideally, players were protected from out-of-game reprisals, since game actions were unreal and merely character-play. However, like other roles, characters can be used as fronts for behaviour. Ideally, the recipient player-character should not retaliate against the offending player, because the offending action was experienced in-game. Game frames do not stop the player-character from forming coalitions against that player's character, responding within the context of the fantasy environment to 'get even.' This was one of the largest problems with the game. Participants sharing in-game and out-of-game information with their friends and allies, obscured, lied and deceived their enemies [in and out-of-game] by spreading out-of-game rumours. These rumours shaped the impressions others received about the reality or falsity of community values, player actions and words. Cliques controlled the direction and use of their metagame. Metagaming was defined by *Vampire* players as the use of out-of-game

information to a player's in-game benefit or out-of-game reputation. Another metamessage exchanged between players was their love interests. Although relationships formed between Kaylin-P and Yule-P, and Seraph-P and McAllister-P began out-of-game, they were intensified through in-game courtships.

Out-of-game friendships were also cemented through in-game interactions between characters. Personally, my acquaintance with players Domingo-P and Istvan-P were strengthened through in-game interactions between our characters. Domingo was the in-clan rival who usurped Toreador primogenship from Isaiah when he was distracted by interclan politics. The in-game relationship that developed was one of mockery and one-upmanship. Interactions consisted of pompous "I'm better than you are" conversations in view of fellow clan members. Istvan-P and I solidified our friendship through Domingo. Once Domingo became Toreador primogen, he allied with the Brujah Primogen Istvan. These two players were out-of-game friends. Introductions between myself as a player and as a character occurred nearly simultaneously. Because the three of us role-played so many scenes together and were involved in overlapping plotlines, we tended to socialize between games. This combination of in- and out-of-game association strengthened our relationship. Domingo-P was part owner of *Die Maschine Cabaret*. Istvan-P worked at the cabaret as a bouncer. I was a regular patron. The atmosphere of the game provided players with an excellent opportunity to learn about each others' private self-conceptions and idioverses. Through the process of playing a game with strangers, they became acquainted and were drawn into their virtual society and consequent community.

2. Association between Player and Character Self-Conceptions

It was mentioned earlier that players role-played clan characters that reflected certain aspects of themselves. Interview results demonstrates nearly half the population of players role-played themselves as characters, while the remainder role-played aspects of themselves [including personifications and emulations of others] through their characters. Players role-played their characters mainly for their entertainment, although their involvement also granted them a sense of sociability, connection to community and an escape into a 'therapy' of cathartic self-exploration. Players chose whether to role-take a public identity, or to exercise a dimension of their private personas against the testing board of public performances and scrutiny. Below, consultants disclose their thoughts on character play, describing player-character personification and the therapeutic benefits of character-play (Interview Notes 1996).

> *Damos-P*
> I remember vividly sitting in front of my keyboard starting a journal entry, then realizing quite suddenly that I was done. As I worked, part of reality shut itself down in my mind, and let my character take control. The journals were written in a style I cannot copy, and contained complaints and frustrations through the eyes of my character.

> *Dr. Jacob Crowe-P*
> Jacob wasn't so much "constructed" as clarified. As with any other Role-playing character, Jacob is several negative aspects of my personality combined with some positive ones and amplified to the Nth degree. So, when I wanted a character, I thought long and hard, and when I stopped thinking Jacob stalked full-grown out of my imagination and told me all about himself. It was really no work at all. Jacob's background is based on a recurring nightmare I had upon my return from my last tour as a Peacekeeper, and his ethnicity is probably inspired by my Grandfather O'Brien.
>
> Jacob and I are similar in that we're both Irish and have both been to war.

However, Jacob has no compunctions against killing, whether in self-defense or as a pre-emptive strike. He draws no joy from killing, but at the same time feels no remorse. It's just a natural function for him. I, on the other hand, have only ever killed two people, both in combat and for self-defense reasons. It's still not something that I talk about, so please don't ask. To finish, Jacob is the romantic ideal of the Tragic Hero, I've always secretly fancied myself as being. Jacob and I both struggle for control with inner demons, but Jacob's are winning.

Mordechai-P
His development is hard for me to track. Because he practically stepped out to me fully-formed in a lot of ways, it's hard to tell where he's changed. Most of the things I've noticed are how he's become more 'solid' in my mind, more real. Now it's easy for me to 'shift gears' into Mordechai's personality. He's very distinct. I don't have to be in costume any more or wear the mask for people to know who I'm playing. They just listen to the voice, while watching the gestures and the shuffling walk. This guy is so real to some people, they almost expect me to drop my 'disguise' and admit that I really am a 119 year old Nosferatu named Mordechai.

Seventy-six percent of consultants interviewed claimed that they had evolved both as players and as characters since joining the game. Character personas became increasingly bold and dynamic. Players benefited through an increase in confidence and self-awareness. The relations between players and their characters, and the outcome of those positive relationships showed how role-play aids personal and community development. This should come as no surprise, since the game reflects how we are socialized in the everyday world.

Damos-P
I had no idea what I was getting myself into, then later I wondered how my life would have differed had I never met the LARP group.

In the beginning, I knew next to nobody. But as that changed, so did my approach. By nature, I have a very low self-esteem (something of a common trait with people of the game), so interaction is oft times difficult for me. However, I decided my character would be outgoing. By playing him as outgoing, I interact better in public with people who are not related

to the game as a result of playing Damos. I'm not as shy.

Group interaction stimulates self-improvement by bringing to the forefront privately conceived notions and perspectives that are tested publicly for their value and then adopted or ignored.

(3) Metagame: Personal Responses of Private Self-Identities:

(3.1) Cross-Frame Flipping:

The main consequence of the influence between characters, players and player-character combinations was the personal effect it had on players' private self conceptions. Players have claimed to have been left mentally exhausted after emotionally intensive character-play. The emotions they experienced were real. The meanings of their emotions determined how in-game interactions were interpreted. Deliberately or otherwise, players occasionally interpreted their in-game emotions as personal. This affected their private self-conceptions. Out-of-game relationships determined how players reacted to intense role-play. Where players were friends or associated between game sessions, their emotions were known and understood within the context of the game. Each player formed an understanding of how other player-characters perceived his or her character's actions by examining out-of-game associations. The emotion experienced between Spyder-P and myself were often obscured due to our 'less-than-friendly' out-of-game rivalry. Since we socialized little with each other out-of-game, interactions between our characters and the motives driving our in-game relationship were seldom fully understood. Spyder-P never

revealed his character's intentions to me, nor I to him. In-game actions were misunderstood since they were never clarified out-of-game. Our relationship was structured on a growing antagonism, performed within the pseudo-safe arena of the game.

Players occasionally stated derogatory things to each other under the ruse that they were in-character and thus not serious. Such performers can socially attacked out-of-game rivals without fear of reprisals. This behaviour frustrated players, for if the rival responded aggressively [with words and deeds], s/he would be accused of metagaming, 'losing touch with reality.' Such behaviour resulted in game-suspensions. "If an individual can claim unseriousness in order to avoid penalty for an act he has committed, the claim being made after the fact, then certainly at times the individual may from the beginning arrange his actions so that if he is called to account he can argue for its unseriousness" (Goffman 1974: 332). Joking behaviour is often used as an excuse to repair misframed social breaches in conversation. When the wrong thing is said or done, joking behaviour can be used to 'deflate' the situation. Play is the prime excuse for botched everyday actions and behaviour. Social breaches or misframed behaviour are a form of frame-flipping. Each is defined as switching from the dramatic-play [in-character] frame of interaction to the everyday frame of interaction, without socially keying such a change. The game environment is always based in the everyday world. Miscommunication occurs when players failed to exclude the everyday interactions from their shared fantasy.

The frequently shifted boundary of play and not-play is a necessary aspect of the vampire game. "That boundary... is shifting constantly in an effort to redefine itself... without the shifting boundary there could be no play" (Salamone 1992: 33). Frame

shifting connected players to a game fantasy that shaped their social existence. These changes influenced how co-players and game events were conceptualized. The arbitrariness of role-play in *Vampire* demonstrates an important point on how play is used in social change. It shows us how we come to understand social reality based on our interactions with our environment. We rationalize everyday people and objects through our personality and life-experiences. It reminds us, finally, that all systems are ultimately arbitrary.

The problem with riding the fence between play and not-play was that a player could inadvertently switch interaction frames and metamessages without group awareness or approval. A 'joke' is an example of a cross-frame encounter. While acting in the play frame, the joker acts as if he or she is in the serious frame. The target of the joke acts in the serious frame and is drawn into the play frame (see Goffman 1974). My relationship with Rasputin-P exemplified this process. I became frustrated and angered when Rasputin-P sat on my lap out-of-game and mockingly role-played his Anonymous-Artist [A.A] character. This only reminded me that his character was attempting to ruin mine. Rasputin-P was confused when his 'joke' was not received well. Confusion arose when participants failed to agree on their definitions of play and everyday. It was here that rumours were formed. These rumours have a dramatic and lasting consequence on the players they involve. "Parties with opposing versions of events may openly dispute with each other over how to define what has been or is happening" (Goffman 1974: 322). Goffman goes on to say that "an individual might come wrongly to suspect that he is being deceived in some way and, in consequence, to doubt some of the world around him" (ibid

322). Members of cliques relied on the social reality presented in-game to change socially or crush challengers.

(3.2) Status Quo and its impact on Player-Self-Esteem:

Vampire game players were very critical of each other's successes. Accomplishments were either criticized or downplayed by players who misunderstood their significance. When fellow players respond with "you really don't understand it all", "that's not right, you're stupid" or "you're getting there," the full meaning of the announcer's experience is lost. Player responses to other player's successes and failures were partially defenses against having nothing new to say. If we cannot reflect on an experience that adds to our self-image, our comments about the successes of others serve to bolster our identity. An announcer's self-esteem is sustained by their recognition of public support or suspected misunderstandings. Those who challenge our self-images endanger our self-esteem. Since cliques give individuals public support, they are useful for protecting our conceptions of social reality. This explains why cliques have authority over social loafers [those that fail to contribute or react to our actions]. Within cliques, behavioural precepts are known and interpreted more accurately. People join cliques, in part, for that intimate connection. This explains why people follow the lead of popular cliques.

The most popular clique determines community public opinion and dominate culture. Culture, in this sense, is the "anxiety-buffer against threats to the self-esteem" (Gollwitzer 1986: 198). Where players teamed together in cliques, the impressions they

managed and the meanings of other player-characters' actions, were imagined by the group. No individual member was blamed for monitoring and interpreting the behaviour of others. Group decisions were more accepted than individuals' opinions. Non-members must accept the interpretation of the *status quo* determined by the ruling clique minority. Their reactions had the potential of becoming group schemata.

Players' personal responses to game interactions were determined through interpretations of the performance of character roles. Self-presentations influenced private self concepts. Players reacted strongly to being criticized for their actions for they revealed private motive; self-esteem and player-relationships were at risk. Consequently, character-play altered players' opinions. In the initial membership stages in the community, players believed the rules they were encouraged to memorize. These rules promoted a game system that was isolated from the rules of everyday social affairs. However, the ideal setting of the game system does not last long. Personal interests supersede common goals. Where imagination is exercised, no social system remains constant. It adapts to the desires of private persons and their public presentations. Imagination helped players build desired relationships from ideal conceptions.

STAGE TWO: Desired Relationships:

Through various relationships with characters, players and cliques, each person expected to have their actions viewed and carried out by the storytellers. Players utilized their abilities to befriend, delude, intimidate and confuse other player-characters in the game. Players knew that their play was "only a game," but game rules fostered the idea

that all players were equal and all could succeed. The outcomes of desired relationships are comparable to Turner's (1983c) 'communitas.' All participants are considered equals, coexisting in a productive, accommodating social environment. These are mutual relationships. Every person contributes to the meaning of social reality. Although desired relationships are mistaken as ideals waiting to be achieved in our society, they are not. Desired relationships (Davis and Roberts 1985: 148) are co-created and shared. This paradigm states that everyone is 'within' the social order and contributes to its form and evolution. The social order accommodates a full range of behaviour, regardless of position or beliefs. Recall the commitment clique members shared in believing and upholding group schemata. "All standards are mutually agreed upon and subject to negotiation. Each person is recognized and treated as a fellow person, with his or her own interests, values, potentials, and so on" (Davis and Roberts 1985). Within the state of desired relationships, human freedom is valued above all else.

(4) Emotional Relationships and the Dynamic Association between In- and Out-of-Game Players:

When players learned how character-actions influenced out-of-game relationships, they either decided to tolerate, or to avoid intense game-play. When queried, players who quit the game, claimed they had become bored or laden with work or family responsibilities. When the game was considered boring or unentertaining, players became despondent and were less able to become engrossed in the shared fantasy. Further, these players were more likely to fraternize with each other in the everyday frame. "The game

breaks down when the 'as if' character cannot be maintained or when the reality proximity [or anxiety caused by an intrusion on personal space] is too great" (Goffman 1961: 71, brackets are mine). "A feeling of boredom, that nothing is likely to happen can arise when the same persons spend all their social moments together" (1961: 79). Whether in- or out-of-game, players spent many hours in each other's company. Scenes role-played between characters were at the discretion of players, occurring anytime and anywhere. Scheduled biweekly games, held on Sunday nights at *Die Maschine Cabaret* or the University of Manitoba, served to unite and involve players in the main storyline of the storytellers. Personal plotlines were developed between groups of friends, between official game sessions. During these meetings, characters of the same vampiric bloodline and political affiliation met to discuss interclan politics. Secret meetings between conspiring characters were also common. Other plotlines involved players in romantic rendezvous, ambushes of rivals and many other scenes, played out in the evening or early morning. A player either became intensely involved in the game and progressed within the society, or were excluded from developing plotlines and the various intrigues resulting from impassioned role-play. Players who associated in-game always formed strong out-of-game relationships. These relations became increasingly personal as various groups of players interacted in-game. Out-of-game alliances were formed. The game became personal and a large part of everyday social life. Rumours and opinionated reports on the intentions of other players and characters were always heard. These reports formed the auxiliary 'everyday' environment of player-character interaction. Within this rumour-mill, players risked exposing their actual feelings about other player-characters.

(4.1) Association between Character-Self and Player Self Concepts:

The repercussion of emotional character-play led to serious character-play. Such play affected the private self-conception of players. Characters acted to exaggerate or rearrange private aspects of player-self-identities. Through character-play, players found new ways of behaving within the social arena. Through the role-play of publicly comprised character roles, participants learned to treat each other as the roles they play. Participants reacted as their characters, but interpreted all actions as influenced by out-of-game motivations. Since players evaluated their experiences in a private, emotional way, and since emotions influence self-esteem and identity, negative degrading or humiliating experiences reduced self-esteem. Reduction in self-esteem diminished the competency of public self-performances and contributed to the devaluing of private self-identities. The behaviour of characters, like the behaviour of players was governed by player interpretations [private self] to character interactions [public self].

(4.2) Important Behaviour of Vampire Game Players [Metagaming and Rumours]:

Player- and clique-interactions were instigated by friendship ties, rumours, metagaming and concealment through politeness and false sincerity.

1. Friendships

The vampire game attracted groups of friends and individual strangers, who mixed through a matrix of in- and out-of-game interactions, influencing the development of friendships, alliances and impartiality. In order for friendships to be preserved, cliques

were formed. These cliques influenced how the game was played and how players' actions were interpreted. Peer relations and friendships contributed to an understanding of the intentions and motives of others. In the early stages of a vampire chronicle most players knew nothing of each other, yet considered possible friendships. Players socialized with each other out-of-game to discover their game intentions and motivations. This knowledge was essential to effective game-play. "Friendships provide a primary context for assessing motives and their appropriateness, and this in turn shapes player's judgements of the acceptability of actions under the rules of the game" (Mackie and Goethals 1987: 289). The etiquette displayed by non-relating players was a front for social familiarity. It was used to gain in-game advantages. You have to know your crew to perform well with them. The motives and values of players were initially determined through character interactions. Out-of-game conflicts began when players treated disliked players as their characters. Actions, intentions and motives were confused further, since players refused to 'get to know' those they disliked. Thus, for the remainder of the game, character words and actions determined interactions and personal goals between those players; despite large discrepancies between player- and character-personalities. Just as in the social world, "we do not respond simply and objectively to what people do, but rather on the basis of what we interpret actions and events to mean" (Harre and Secord 1972).

2. Rumours

Cliques corresponded through rumours and suppositions. Blatancy and subtlety were used in their broadcasts. The accuracy of this information was not always known.

Because people are motivated by each other's life-stories, current news was valuable news. As in other small communities, conversations about our experiences are central to our social well-being. Rumour-mongering was popular for was used to unite people. Players grew bored when they ran out of interesting anecdotes and circumstances. Such stories became rumours when they were not kept 'within the group.' When rumours spread, each person learned a version of the 'facts.' The authenticity of facts was determined by the level of intimacy between messengers and receiver. Kept between close friends, rumours more likely remained factual. This is because personal reactions are based on private relations. If the content of a rumour was not taken seriously, it was ignored. Depending on the nature of the rumour, whether it was personally malicious, players and their friends investigated and reacted to it. Usually rumours took one of two forms. They were petty, spiteful, defamatory and thus intentional, or were the result of misinformation and misunderstandings. Because players based their public views of others on various lengths of conversations, the closer players related, the more truthful their communication. So ideas exchanged between clique members tended to be more truthful than information exchanged between non-members. Consequently, rumours were used to convey out-of-game information regarding player-character actions and personal assessments of the behaviour of certain players. It is through rumours that players' lives were most dramatically affected. Backstabbing and wrecked reputations were examples of negative relations, while praise and popularity were examples of positive associations. Despite statements to the contrary, all players participated in the metagame.

3. Metagaming:

There are five types of metagaming that occurred within the vampire game. Although most players refused to admit they metagamed, most of the players evidently did it in one form or another. It was integral to game mechanics. Five forms of metagaming observed in-game are: player narration, confused actions, self-directed improper story involvement, collusion and conscious power-gaming [or cheating]. With *player narration*, players planed future scenes for their characters. Such scenes usually involved interactions between other characters and were beneficial to the game, adding depth of story and emotional engrossment. This form of metagaming was commonly used by cliques to drive the storyline and influence their success in the game.

Confused Actions occurred when a player confused in- and out-of-game sources of information. Because the game was so exciting and characters are not always directly involved in other character plots/actions, sharing this knowledge out-of-game is easy. This is something that gamers have always done. Too often what was heard, seen, or imagined was forgotten or misinterpreted as in-game knowledge to be used in-game. Players also used forgetfulness as an excuse for reinterpreting past events. This is a form of impression management. Cliques that have good relationships with the storytellers' clique were able to influence the direction and content of the main storyline, or in the very least, began their own plotlines.

With *self-directed improper story involvement*, players became involved in scenes they observed out-of-character, or used out-of-game knowledge to become involved where their characters had no in-game likelihood of being involved. This type of behaviour

occurs when players adapted their characters' action to make sense of, discover, or be responsible for in-game scenes/actions, based on out-of-game information.

Collusion between players existed when two or more characters agreed on in-game actions, despite how uncharacteristic those actions may have been. This occurred through solo and team clique play. *Collusive* presentations signified subtle out-of-game restructuring of in-game events.

The fifth form of metagaming was the assumption or suspicion that certain players consciously power-game. These players manipulated and reinterpreted game scenes and events, and shaped the game so as to be most influential and powerful. This was simply the way that rivals perceived and discredited each other. Although all players flat out denied they cheated so as to control other characters [and thus players], it was their struggle for power combined with their talents for managing conceptions of fair-play that shaped the metagame environment. Players recognized, yet did nothing to change this power dynamic.

4. Player Etiquette

Players expressed positive impressions of themselves to other players through polite and respectful conversations. Although seldom genuine, this behaviour served to maintain an attitude of cordiality and cooperation between cliques and individuals.

(5) Increase in players' out-of-game relationships and in-game participation:

The relationships between characters and players intensified as players became more emotionally engrossed in community game-play. Stronger relationships were formed between participants who trusted each other. Those who were seen as 'up to no good' were ostracized. Cliques turned against each other, second-guessing each other's actions and the actions of rival individuals. This out-of-game interaction fueled rumours that shaped the public opinion of each player's private 'or inner' self. In- and out-of-game, status is administered by players who control group opinion. Role-playing proficiency and the relations between players began to be regulated by those who occupy storytellers' and narrators' posts. Truth in the game was determined along lines of friendships and player to player evaluations.

(5.1) Evaluations of Player Motives and Values:

Another effect of continued involvement in the game, was intensified role-play. As players became engrossed into the pseudo-reality of the community, they became more involved in scene-play. Thus most scenes occur between players who were friends out-of-game. Through increased out-of-game relationships [friendships and rivalries], the classic players' private self-conception was challenged or changed. His or her self-identity is augmented by the opinions and impressions of other players. Similarly, the classic player constructs personality profiles of others based on observations of in-game and out-of-game interactions. In either case, impressions are formed from combined evaluations of

associating players. Players of the same clique come to share similar ideas about the motives and values of other players. Usually, however, the hidden agenda of every player was determined by the majority of players. The majority depended on which version of the truth players believed, whether they derived it from the opinion of an individual or a well-liked clique. Regardless, players were often compelled to quit the game when they felt personal freedoms were compromised by out-of-game affiliations. Players, who continued playing the game despite player-player favouritism, choose to focus on the value of their own participation over the participation of others.

(5.2) Evaluations of character intentions and influence on others:

The actions of all characters influenced the development, success and popularity of every character in the game. Although players may have planned on their characters evolving due to their backgrounds, character interactivity caused players to role-play attitude changes and to participate in other character plotlines. In other words, the stories of all characters were told through a combination of player-ingenuity and how other characters interpreted such performances. A player-character may have attempted to become Prince of the city only to find that another had more support, and was forced to change goals, to defame the rival, or initiate new actions. When a character's actions was constantly criticized or ignored by other characters, a player may have felt ostracized from game play and quit. There are many cases early in the game where some players felt excluded from plotlines and scene play. This points to the great value [or necessity] of playing with friends. The people that did not associate out-of-game had little to do with

each other in-game. These participants simply observed each others' play. Despite their expectations, some players realized that the social reality of the game could not be controlled by individuals alone. Actual player-character relationships defined who succeeded, was ignored or chastised for their achievements.

STAGE THREE: Actual Relationships:

In actual relationships, a minority is typically in charge of generating, monitoring, maintaining, and interpreting the meaning of social reality for the majority (Davis and Roberts 1985: 148). Within most organizations, society, business, religion or game community, groups who include the most influential people make the rules. Multiple clique memberships constitute and guarantee their influence. Such clique clusters are governments. An example of this in the vampire game is the storyteller clique administration. They had the power to shape the way the majority conceived player-character interactions and behaviour. Despite protests from other cliques, members of this group were regarded highly enough that players followed their lead and example.

Once players had experienced the favour or disfavour of storytellers, they learned they could not simply play by the rules and succeed at the game. Favour was exemplified in players who were awarded more than their share of experience points for character actions that always influenced the storyline. Players were disfavoured when storytellers ignored their actions and presence in scheduled games. These players learned to award their own experience points for in-game actions. The number of experience points awarded was determined by an assessment the quality of a player's participation and how

his or her actions motivated game-play. Disgruntled players learned to befriend storytellers or narrators and to socialize out-of-game with them, in order to have their actions recognized and applied to the game storyline. These are the actual rules of the vampire game community. Players learned their game consisted of player-relationships and interactions, not simply what White Wolf game company provided as written rules. This is a social game, played by the normal rules of everyday social conduct. Those that influenced and instigated actions in-game won the attention of the majority of players. Once a player's scene influenced other characters' actions, they became more involved and the storytellers took notice. These players learned to straddle the fence between play and not-play, consolidating private play and character presentations.

(6) The Metaplayer: Player-Character Paradoxical Adaptations:

Whether based on personification or private fantasies, character play and players public relations were transformed into a metaplay (Hurley 1994) that altered private self-conceptions. Players learned that they were perceived as both player and character, sharing motives and ideals. Players who were shy became outgoing. Players who perceived themselves as possessing low self-esteem became increasingly more self-confident and proud of their participation. Their successes as characters strengthened their personal resolve, shaping them to be more like their characters. Failed actions were blamed on out-of-game rivalries and metagaming, or are dismissed as unreal. As a result of private change, each player reinterpreted his or her character's development. After all,

characters are extensions of idealized player self-conceptions. Players produced slight changes in their characters to reflect changes in themselves. So players with increased self-esteem played more willful characters and pursued riskier goals. The private self-identities of players were altered to correspond to public impressions of their behaviour. Players who survive this process, are left with renewed identities and purposes.

The combined player and character should create a paradox, but usually did not. Because of play, participants either played their characters, or themselves through their characters. Cross-frame flipping enabled players to experience the full genre of the game, namely dark-play. Subtly, players used the game to transmit metamessages to each other, for better or worse. This is similar to how the Balinese use the cockfight to communicate personal status through the meanings associated with the relationships existing between families and the success of their birds (Geertz 1973). There exists a web of social relations consisting of allied and feuding families that knit the community together. All of these relationships play an important part in determining the impressions witnesses derived from the cock-fights.

(6.1) Types of Meta-Role-players [Styles of Play and Game Value]:

Metaplayers are defined by the internal value of their participation. Player-character-presentations can be described as psycho dramas and/or social dramas [fixed-role-play] (Jones and Peters 1952; Edwards 1940; Kelly 1955; Goldstein and Simonson 1971). Psycho-dramatic role-players impersonated fictional or fantastic character-types with whom they identified. These characters are bigger-than-life mythical characters that

appear in comic-books or fantasy novels. The character called Tiger exemplified this form of character-play. Tiger-P used the background of a comic-book character she created before the game to create Tiger the Gangrel. Other examples of mythical archetypes are the wandering mercenary-for-hire, a person of nobility, or a great vampire hunter from a White Wolf game supplement. These characters are not only fun to role-play, but allow the player a format for their actions. Attire, behaviour and accent are predetermined, allowing the player the room to 'play the character the way it is.' Although a form of entertainment, role-playing is also an escape from the day-to-day of everyday life. Its therapeutic value should not be underestimated.

Psycho-dramatic character-play can also be cathartic. In this form of play, characters are developed out of aspects of a player's personality. Players role-playing characters such as serial killers, drug-addicts, social and mental misfits and other social deviants explored darker aspects of themselves (see Bateson 1962). Dark play enabled players to role-play normally restricted everyday deviant and abhorred behaviour. Here players either learned to appreciate those aspects of themselves or become disgusted with themselves and ended their catharsis by killing their characters. Consultants who claimed to play this character-type unanimously agreed to have "worked-out" inner problems and warned themselves against ever acting out those darker-aspects in the real world. Psycho-dramatic character-play, more often than socio-dramas, affected players' private self-conceptions.

Socio-dramatic player-character performances entail the fictionalization of players' public or private self-aspects. In these cases, players injected varying degrees of their

personality and emotions and motives into their characters. These players were as much like their characters as their characters were like them. Since characters were used as public masks to hide private motivations, experiences in-game were felt emotionally out-of-game. Players substituted character-backgrounds in place of their own, while acting as themselves in-game. It was here the paradox of play and not-play was first realized. Players wondering why the game had so much of an effect on their lives had only themselves to blame. In choosing to play public presentations of themselves, their social life became regulated through character-play. These players role-played their characters when they wanted to, not just during scheduled games. They became more like their characters. They were metaplayers who responded to the meta-interactions between players. The game became a substitute for 'everyday' social life. With some players, the life they led had an affect on the conceptions and performances of their characters.

Some player-characters used both forms of character-play. Aspects of the private self that reflected public fantasies were emphasized. In such cases, players role-played mythical heroes or imagined dark halves of personality believed to be cathartic. True catharsis occurred through the psycho-dramatic character-play of private self-conceptions. Players who experienced such a catharsis were changed for the better. This cathartic form of psycho-dramatic character-play is similar to and just as beneficial as a player playing themselves as a character. 'Playing self- as-character' is a 'private sociodramatic performance' encouraging dark-play. Players who expose aspects of their private self-identities through their characters, enact 'socio-dramatic public identity plays' of their 'psycho-dramatic fantasies.' Both socio-dramatic and psycho-dramatic self/role

performances directly influence the self-esteem necessary for development of self-identity. They differ in their presentations, reflecting private or public conceptualizations. One half of the player-character divide is emphasized. Participant relationships determined the distribution of player-character presentations.

(6.2) My Experiences with Play Paradox within the Game Community:

My analysis of the research frame co-existed within the dramatic dark play frame of the vampire game community. I was both player-participant and researcher-character. The main roles I played were Isaiah-character, Isaiah-manipulator, Brian-researcher, Brian-friend, Brian-player, BrIsaiah [see below] and inside-observer. Participant-observation epitomizes the play-paradox. To be a participant-observer the ethnographer must create a separate identity that uses both public roles. The researcher-role is a public self with the intentions of observing, conversing with players, analyzing interview notes, personal experiences, and constructing and presenting this report. My research existed within the frame of the community and was therefore influenced by its rules. To remain a researcher in the game, I had to become a real player, and to participate as much as any other player.

It is through intensely emotional scenes that player-character combinations became engrossed in-game. Players reacted privately or internally to situations that should have only affected their characters. This occurred because most players role-played exaggerated aspects of themselves. They reacted as characters and as players. The game encouraged the dark play of player personalities. Players interacted according to a similar guideline.

The metameanings of game interaction resulted in players interacting and communicating with each other in the everyday world, maintaining their out-of-game friends and enemies that influenced how their characters reacted to in-game scenes. Players who distrusted each other out-of-game were wary in-game to interpret character actions at face value. Through the role-playing of negative personality traits, players became emotionally and socially practiced in those roles [much like mask-wearing affecting behaviour/emotion]. Play paradox was experienced by players who role-played public self-identities while simultaneously maintaining private initiatives. It was fantasy play, but also a self-play, motivated by out-of-game desires, dreams, fantasies and relationships.

Recognition of this player-character paradox was idealized through my participation. One focus group member who witnessed a gradual change in my personality since I joined the game, humorously evaluated my participation by calling me 'BrIsaiah.' Isaiah, the social manipulator and conniver, manifested himself in my everyday routine of socializing with my friends. Although I can be controlling at times, I had never realized how subtly manipulative I had become. I noticed little of this change until I witnessed it in others. Later, the player who role-played my character's wife commented out-of-game that I was manipulative. When queried, she said I was manipulative in a "positive" way, explaining that I often united people and influenced the development of relationships between people who may not have otherwise met. Initially, I was shocked by this comment. I see myself as no different from the next person, requiring a certain amount of social cohesiveness. However, I failed to realize how blatant this characteristic had become. I was more like Isaiah, although Isaiah simply used people in the end. In fear of

this transformation, I avoided it. Within three or four game sessions, Isaiah experienced events that changed him and me. In partial reflection of my beliefs, Isaiah became religious and millenarian. Few players missed this change in my character.

One player that recognized the paradox of BrIsaiah was George-P. He and I had always had a rocky relationship. Throughout the game [in- and out-of-game] he and his character would oscillate from being protective and supportive of Isaiah and myself, to being my/Isaiah's accuser and condemner. This relationship was witnessed by *Die Maschine Cabaret* employees, Sir and Lady [both are pseudonyms]. They explained during an informal interview that they often saw vampire players at *Die Maschine Cabaret* take out-of-game problems in-game [and vis versa], and that George-P exemplified this behaviour. Lady related and Sir confirmed that George-P had seemingly out-of-game conversations with Lady about his profession in archaeology as his character George. Although George-P called me Brian at the bar, metamessages were directed at Isaiah more than myself. George perceived Isaiah as an "annoying manipulative, untrustworthy opponent." During a few conversations with Sir and Lady, George-P referred to me in the same paradoxical fashion, especially when other player-characters shared his accusations. George-P dealt with the BrIsaiah paradox by constantly filtering my out-of-game behaviour through the eyes and emotions of George. By treating me like my character, he could more easily relate to me as a person and perhaps as an anthropologist. Despite this relationship, George-P and I have remained good friends.

Another example of role-play paradox is shown in the relationship between Bean-P, Rasputin-P and myself. Although we were good friends, our relationship fluctuated

throughout game play. When the game first began, Rasputin-P and Bean-P did not know much about each other. Rasputin-P spent much of his time with his platonic friend, Morrigan-P. In-game, Rasputin and Morrigan were very supportive of each other. In fact Rasputin was blood bonded [enchanted or enslaved to a vampire through the drinking of that vampire's blood] to Morrigan. In-game, Rasputin developed a quick hatred of Isaiah when Isaiah attempted to charm his master socially. Out-of-game, Rasputin-P and I hardly knew each other, while Morgan-P and I knew each other from another social scene. Although Rasputin never tried to kill or mortally harm Isaiah, our relation was antagonistic.

Shortly after Rasputin-P and Bean-P began dating each other, Rasputin was sent by Mordechai [Morgan-P's out-of-game roommate and a friend of Rasputin-P] on a mission that sent him out of the city. This temporarily removed Rasputin from the game. Meanwhile Rasputin-P role-played a character named Isaic [more associated with Rasputin-P's personality]. Although Isaic and Bean were both Malkavian vampires, they seldom interacted with each other. Player relations changed distinctly after Rasputin-P was encouraged to role-play a scene in his past. The plotline resulted in Isaic being kidnaped by his biological faerie mother. Isaic was temporarily removed from the game and Rasputin returned.

Before the reappearance of Rasputin, it was discovered that Isaiah was Isaic's biological father. The two characters developed a close [almost loving] relationship and treated each other with a respect similar to the respect we had for each other out-of-game. Corresponding to this event, Rasputin-P, Bean-P and I became close friends. We spent

many hours socializing with each other at the bar, movies, conversation and at parties. At the height of our relationship Rasputin-P said that he trusted me with Bean-P more than any other guy in the game. This friendship lasted for about one year. Then gradually Rasputin-P and Bean-P started to spend more of their time with players Guy-P and Sara-P. They became intimate friends. At that time I felt resentful for being used by certain friends of mine. Bean-P seemed to take me for granted, often 'crashing' at my apartment after the bar. I was seldom compensated for her continual requests for food or money. When I began socializing with friends outside the game community, I explained to Rasputin-P and Bean-P that they could no longer rely on my apartment for their 'crash space.' Retrospectively, my conscious distancing from Rasputin-P manifested itself in-game through Isaic's disappearance; a scene I helped produce. Due to game events, our everyday friendships were suspended for several months.

Simultaneous with Rasputin's return to the game, Rasputin-P began role-playing a temporary, storyteller motivated Sabbat character named Anonymous Artist [known as A.A]. Rasputin-P's interactions with me in the game took the form of severe antagonism between Isaiah and Rasputin and a weird obsession/hatred relationship between A.A. and Isaiah. Out-of-game Rasputin-P began to taunt both Zoe-P [who played Isaiah's wife] and myself. On occasion he would act like his character and gaze at us with the obsessive and crazy visage of A.A.. He would cryptically explain how he would 'screw' with our character's lives. Such behaviour was acceptable since it regarded game play.

Almost in response to out-of-game play with Rasputin-P, I began socializing with Istvan-P. Istvan-P's new character, Tommy, had been staged to be Isaiah's best friend. Our

characters bonded instantly. We role-played many intense scenes together and became fast friends out-of-game. Slowly we noticed, however, that not all players role-played equally well with each other. Character engrossment seemed only come to those that were comfortable playing with each other. When in-game antagonisms became out-of-game contests, Istvan-P and I began a private conversation regarding the out-of-game nonsense that was disrupting in-game play. Istvan-P and I began working in- and out-of-game to direct the flow of interaction and role-play. We strove to add 'story ideas' to the game and to encourage or inspire meritorious role-play between players. We became more engrossed in the role-play between us. Rasputin turned his antagonism toward Tommy. As a result of our fictional character-plays, my out-of-game friendship with Rasputin-P was severely challenged. But this was only the beginning.

Isaiah has a prejudice against Malkavians. He thought them worthless and disposable. Bean's election to the position of Seneschal [in place of Isaiah] corresponded to my blaming George-P's possible eviction from his apartment on Bean-P. She believed that I despised her and wished to ruin her character. This was reflected in-game. As far as I am consciously aware, the out-of-game event should not have inspired the in-game disagreement. Regardless, Rasputin-P and Bean-P supported each other. Although Bean had done little to prove her worthiness, Rasputin supported her as Seneschal. Occasionally, Bean-P would complain that her character was excluded from plotlines. Rasputin-P may have seen Bean's position as Seneschal as a way to get her more involved [this has been identified as metagame-player narration]. Rasputin's support of Bean was unlikely, yet it occurred. Their characters had little to do with each other in the game and

were of different clans. Rasputin had no patience for foolery, was considerably violent and mostly uncaring. Why would such an individual help the terribly distressed and mentally crippled Bean? He should at the very least have cared little for her since she was incompetent and mentally disturbed.

Bean's second benefactor was a character named Guy who was Prince at the time. Guy seemed to go out of his way to protect and provide excuses for Bean's actions [or inactions]. Rasputin was employed as Guy's greatest supporter and law enforcer. Rasputin's *wraith* friend [i.e., ghost], also played by Rasputin-P, became an extension to this relationship. Why did Guy, Bean, Rasputin and the wraith get along so well? What in-game reason existed for their friendship? Rasputin-P claimed that Rasputin voted for Bean in a Primogen meeting so Isaiah would not be elected Seneschal. Rasputin-P claimed his character wanted a stable Camarilla that was not ruled by Toreadors [Isaiah's clan] and thus supported Guy for Prince. Rasputin-P claimed the *wraith* [like a ghost] was used to spy on Isaiah because Rasputin hated him. If Rasputin truly despised Isaiah he should have murdered him. No, it was an excuse for his relationships with Bean and the Prince. Now, without knowing the out-of-game relationship between Rasputin-P, Guy-P and Bean-P, there was no proof of collusive metagaming. However, months before this Guy-P and his wife Sara-P, Bean-P and Rasputin-P became excellent intimate friends. The close relationship between these players was expressed in-game by a similar relationship. Guy-P was older than both Rasputin-P and Bean-P, was more established in the community, and was in the process of adopting a child. Both Rasputin-P and Bean-P may have perceived Guy-P as a leader figure, or at least someone to emulate. The association between their

out-of-game and in-game relationships was very strong. Their relationship was certified by the fact that Guy-P had told a few people out-of-game that his character and Bean had a sexual affair. This information was quickly suppressed by Guy-P and Bean-P when they realized that their in-game association may have highlighted their out-of-game relationship. Players could have used in-game presentations to discover out-of-game relationships.

Another example of metagaming was the relationship between players Yule-P and Kaylin-P. Kaylin-P had admitted during interviews that the game was another way for people to meet new friends and lovers. This idea was exemplified in her character's relationship with her 'boyfriend's character, Yule. The qualities that Kaylin sought in her 'boyfriend' were the qualities that Yule-P expressed while at *Die Maschine Cabaret.* For example, when Kaylin-P was 'propositioned' by Mephetopheles-P (another man), Yule-P threatened to "kick the shit out of him." Although Yule-P was unlikely to act out his threats, they reflected Yule's attitudes.

Finally, my personal metagame was exemplified through my relationship with Sypder-P. His character became Isaiah's greatest enemy. The severe antagonism between our characters began over an out-of-game situation involving a woman. As a result of those interactions, we became bitter antagonists. We hated each other, both in and out-of-game. We have since worked out our differences and have become good acquaintances. Our past relationship stands as a reminder of the intensity between members of the game community. We had succeeded in resolving the paradox between in- and out-of-game role-play.

The solution to the Bateson play paradox (1962; 1972) involves perceiving either play or not-play, not both. Regardless of how we play in real life, we are one person with the ability to perform various selves in various frames of cognitive and behavioural interactions. The play paradox established the environment of the community metagame and enabled the translation of all messages exchanged between players. The metagame frame was composed of encounters and conversations regarding earlier interactions with in- and out-of-clique members, real or imagined; conceptualized for clique consumption and acceptability. George and Isaiah, just as George-P and myself were a part of that communication. Game interactions overlapped with our everyday existence. In order for game interactions to be considered "just play," participants had to completely trust their play partners. In all other situations, play became something else; precarious or a prank.

(6.3) The Product of Player-Character Combinations: The Balancing of Private and Public Identity:

The product of engrossing game-play was the reformation of player personality and self-worth. Players confidently socialized with each other in- and out-of-game when their public performance roles [game characters] were consummate with their private self-conceptions. Private understandings and self-worth were identical to public opinions and conceptions. Such a person was well-adjusted to his or her community of relations.

When characters' values and motives were interpreted by other players as expressing unappreciated personality traits, they [as players] were ostracized. They become 'loners' and felt isolated when lacking self-esteem, or liberated when secure with their personal/private identities. Low self-esteem led to disempowerment, depression and

social loafing [they become a witness to events and eventually quit]. When a player developed a realistic character in-game and expressed valued social commodities, s/he was perceived seen as possessing those qualities. With proper encouragement, these qualities were incorporated into a player's private self-conception. Players restricted their participation to in-game interactions when their characters became more valued than themselves. Out-of-game, these players were ignored or avoided by players with more socially redeeming qualities and commodities.

(6.3a) Team Metaplay:

1. Controlled Frames: group Presentations, Fronts and Bias

Players joined the vampire game with the assumption that all participants were equal. However, the genre encourages secrecy between people, promoting power-mongers and deception. It is only fitting that players formed out-of-game relations that influenced the flow and direction of the game. It was stated earlier that the players shaped the story being promoted by the main storyteller. More specifically, groups formed in- and out-of-game drive the story onwards. Goffman (1959) calls these groups 'teams' of co-impression managers.

> Persons who are admitted to this secret communication are placed in a collusive relationship to one another vis-a-vis the remainder of the participants. By acknowledging to one another that they are keeping relevant secrets from the others present, they acknowledge to one another that the show of candor they maintain, a show of being only the characters they officially project, is merely a show. By means of such byplay, performers can affirm a backstage solidarity even while engaged in a performance expressing with impunity unacceptable things about the audience as well as things about themselves that the audience would find unacceptable. I shall call 'team collusion' any collusive communication

> which is carefully conveyed in such a way as to cause no threat to the illusion that is being fostered for the audience (Goffman 1959: 176).

Cliques concealed collusive relationships. The group as a whole refused to acknowledge these activities. They promoted the 'all's well' impression that none of their members labored to control or entrap players. Since the game depended on the illusion of fair play, public accusations to the contrary jeopardized in-group participation.

There is a game bias that favours in-group ideas, perceptions and personality attributes over out-of-group associations. "In-group performances are generally evaluated more favourably than out-group performances, and in-group members typically favour the in-group over the out-group in the allocation of rewards for performance, even in minimal social situations" (Tajfel 1978 *cited in* Stephan 1987: 20). The saliency and attribution biases explain why positive outcomes are so important in intergroup contact situations. If outcomes are negative, out-group members are likely to be blamed, particularly if the out-group is initially disliked (McArthur and Soloman 1978; Pettigrew 1979). Even when the out-group is not disliked, group members evaluate the negative behaviour of non-members more extremely than their own (Linville 1982; Linville and Jones 1980 *cited in* Stephan 1987: 18). This explains why out-of-clique members were always blamed for problems with the game. "There is a tendency to seek out and prefer information about members of other groups that confirms preconceptions concerning their traits" (Stephan 1987: 18). When people proved stereotypes wrong, in-group members reacted with prejudice.

2. Reasons for supporting clique self-presentations, identity and actions

Cliques were formed through friendships and motivated by rumours. Members were converted to a group view of social reality, which validated their impressions of game-related rumours. Actions and behaviour were rationalized by group support. Such support served to protect individuals' self-esteem and promoted the identities of all members. Inconsistent behaviour was attributed to out-of-group actions.

> Individuals may seek to avoid disapproval by creating impressions that are completely defensible or entirely innocuous. Expressions of the protective self-presentations, can be seen in complaint and conforming behaviours, and in highly modest presentations of personal characteristics and accomplishments. Social avoidance and withdrawal may represent extreme examples of protective self-presentation (Hill, Weary, Williams 1986: 219).

An example of a storyteller who acted this way was Wolfram-P. Wolfram-P's presentational style was full of restraint, modesty and honesty. His behaviour, like our own, was motivated by the suspicion that others watched for faults in his performance. "The individual may privately maintain standards of behaviour which he does not personally believe in, maintaining these standards because of a lively belief that an unseen audience is present who will judge him, and his performance" (Hill, Weary, Williams 1986).

Groups are the audience that monitors our behaviour. They force us to reflect on and tailor our public presentations. In our attempt to act as others expect, we compare our private self-conceptions with public standards of excellence (see Mullen and Baumeister 1987: 190). These salient standards are established by popular subgroups [or major cliques].

3. Clique vs. Non-Clique Authority:

The clique with the most support determined the status quo and cognition of the community (see Mullen and Baumeister 1987: 190). Private self-evaluations of players were welcomed within cliques more than outside them. Cliques who persuade non-members to accept their understanding of social order also appear to support public expectations of game-play. Since people base their impressions of others on a public performance of values and motives, evaluations of public selves are considered evaluations of "real" identity [or the public self through the perception of the player]. "Compared to majorities, minorities trigger more creative, original, and divergent cognitive activity, leading to the detection of novel, correct solutions" (Maass et al 1987: 62).

> Those exposed to the minority are more likely to focus on the stimulus, engage in more divergent and less defensive thinking, and more likely to show private/latent rather than public/manifest attitude change.... People move toward the minority in private but toward the majority in public, even when they are exposed to a consistent majority and a consistent minority(Maass et al 1987: 63-64).

Cliques manipulated impressions of the game community by exemplifying the majority. Players were required to believe in the majority, and to adopt for themselves a personal view of the minority.

A few examples of teams within the vampire game were the administrators, newbie players, the old players and the cliques. Cliques were personally denounced, but publicly recognized groups of friends who worked together to shape the fantasy reality of the game, and thus supported each other's self-identity and reputation out-of-game. Team

members were employed to support the impressions that metaplayers advertised to player witnesses, thereby supporting their social reality. This occurred whether out-of-game at *Die Maschine Cabaret*, or in-game during a scene that was important to a character's development. Team memberships were not only useful for involving characters in game actions, but also provided players with supportive friends.

(6.3b) Solo Metaplay:

Occasionally, a player resisted the favouritism of teams, effectively removing themselves from the metagame [and thus from social threats]. As strong role-players, these players were appreciated for inspiring good role-play in others. Mordechai-P is an example of a solo metagame player. She found that people appreciated her character more than herself. Her in-game popularity as an influential character enabled her to role-play with many players [making up various cliques]. But, her character's popularity would be lost if she joined a clique. In such a case, Mordechai's actions would either be blamed on clique directors or general out-of-game politics. Mordechai-P improved her private self conception through creative character-play. Mordechai was well liked and trusted. Since characters are conceived as extensions of players' private social-understandings, Mordechai-P was most likely influenced by the public perceptions of her character-play. Her character's redeeming qualities attracted positive player-character interactions. Through in-game play, Mordechai's valued presentations were augmented in Mordechai-P's everyday interactions. From role-playing her character, Mordechai-P made many new acquaintances and probably as many friends as Mordechai made. Through direct character

play and subtle impression management, Mordechai-P adopted many of Mordechai's redeeming qualities.

Team and solo metaplay are similar in the way they protect and nurture player-character self-conceptions. Solo metaplayers used their characters as public fronts. Similar to the out-of-game fronts of teams, solo metaplayers presented impressions of themselves that boosted their self-images and confidence. By feigning specific impressions, metaplayers successfully manipulated the reality of those around them.

(6.4) Change in Private Self-Identity of Public/Private Person:

The *Improvisation-Interfering Response* hypothesis states that "the greater the physical effort required in publicly reading and understanding a communication discrepant from one's own attitude, the greater will be the resulting, dissonance and consequent attitude change in the direction advocated by the role performance" (Zimbardo 1965: 106). Any thought actualized [or acted upon] becomes a reality. Prolonged performance of any activity, believed or not, routinizes and strengthens our ideas. In other words, thoughts regularly enacted become solidly personal and fundamental to self-conception and identity. "The 'improvisation-interfering response hypothesis...stresses the importance of self-stimulation, since in thinking of new supporting arguments the person, is forced to consider cogent illustrations" (Zimbardo 1965: 107). Our private conceptions of self are altered through a combination of an influential audience's assessment of our motives, behaviour and experiential justifications. Private self-identity is strengthened by positive approval of public role-play and weakened by negative assessments.

> To further support the above point, the *cognitive dissonance theory* states that A player's private thoughts and attitudes are displayed and monitored by a group consensus on behaviour. One must act appropriate to be a member of the group; a forced public compliance.... Conditions which demand greater effort for the performance of a role increases the effectiveness of role-playing in changing attitudes (Festinger 1957 *cited* in Zimbardo 1965: 105).

Players who become intensely engrossed in character-play were lured by public motivations to express private emotions. Character that expressed realistic emotions induced similar presentations in observing characters. Convincingly role-played performances inspired realistic responses from other player-characters. Such intense role-play produced marked changes in a player's private self-conceptions and identity. Intense character-play resulted in the adoption of new public schemata that promoted private self-interests. Players became more like the person they presented themselves to be.

Players provoked each other by creating plotlines that created competitive opposition between their characters. In-game role-play served to justifying antagonistic relations and to mask real-player motives and intentions. Those who accepted each other's presentations succeeded in using the unseriousness of play to metacommunicate true feelings without the fear of legitimate reprisals or retaliation. Any accusations of out-of-game grudges were dismissed because the game 'was only a game and not real.' Reprisals were assumed to be restricted to in-game play. A player was forced to respond to their antagonists in-game, where true intentions were seldom witnessed by other players too busy with their scenes to 'read between the lines' of the metagame play. However, in-game actions always motivated out-of-game definitions of relationships or they created new ones.

(7) Metagame Social Environment:

The Storytellers-clique successfully promoted its version social reality, altered only by the impressions of associated cliques and solo metagame players. Members of this administration have the power to influence the overall story line, to set, describe and ultimately control the stage. Storytellers controlled events in the game, the reactions of non-player-characters and the success or failure of player-character actions and plotlines. They were also final arbiters of in-game rules, determining how they were interpreted. Players allied with the main clique were granted administrative roles and responsibilities, such as treasurer, character record and story keeper, narrator, non-player character actor and various temporary assistantships. Using their power to control game social reality, storytellers determine the value of metaplayer actions and behaviour and have right of final arbitration on game community affairs. Only through metagaming did players gain control of their shared fantasy.

(7.1) The Language of Metagaming [Three types of communication in groups]:

1. Backstage Communication

Backstage behaviour and conversations are a form of blatant communication, relying on half-truths and rumours. It is a group conversation about the actions and words of others not present. Such communication allowed clique members to negotiate social reality; establishing certain impressions of various non-group members, discussing

techniques for securing clique solidarity and its public fronts. A few examples of backstage [i.e., unofficial] communications are "innuendo, mimicked parses, veiled hints, purposeful kidding, expressive overtones, and many other sign practices" (Goffman 1959, brackets are mine). It is through backstage words that rumours find their way to the ears of non-group members, occasionally to incite argument, but mostly to send subtle messages regarding their status in the community. It is a clique's duty to decipher and express felt emotions and feelings about people in the community. Even when "two teams establish an official working consensus as a guarantee for safe social interaction, we may usually detect an unofficial line of communication which each team directs at the other" (Goffman 1959: 190).

2. Staging Talk [Pre/Post Game Conversation]

It is during stage talk that backstage clique-agreements were made. It was under the guise of 'talking about the game' that players discussed their semi-serious intentions. Their conversations were performance fronts.

> Before the talk [performance], talkers talk to their friends about what will and will not hold the audience, what will and will not give offense; after the talk, all talkers talk to their friends about the kind of hall they spoke in, the kind of audience they drew, and the kind of reaction they obtained (Goffman 1974: 176, brackets are mine).

Goffman's idea of stage talk epitomizes our freedom to manipulate schemata and performance roles. Stage talk occurred before and after each game session. Pregame conversations consisted of discussions of interesting or 'cool' scenes, speculations on future scenes and explanations for negative experiences. Postgame conversations consisted

of discussions of game locations, costumes and props used, inquiries determining who noticed whose scenes and evaluations of scene play. Half-truths or stories explaining game-play, became rumours that influenced players' perceptions of game community events. Staging talk allowed cliques to shape the social reality of the game community. When staging talk failed to rally player-support, trouble-makers were silenced with overvalued administrational tasks. Players who accepted these tasks 'bought into' the social reality of the game *as* presented.

3. Double Talk

Double talk is a form of staging talk used by storytellers to prepare scenes or to persuade players to role-play non-player-characters. Players were also called upon by the storytellers administration to arbitrate rule-discrepancies and to complete small labor-oriented tasks. To delegate these less-that-enjoyable tasks, storytellers made them irresistible by associating them with various increases in status and responsibilities. So as not to mislead a prospective 'helper', storytellers used the innuendo of double talk to relegate tasks. Thus, "double talk occurs during interaction between a subordinate and a superior concerning matters which are officially outside the competence and jurisdiction of the subordinate but which actually depend on him" (Goffman 1974: 194). Similarly, subordinates may suggest ways of improving the flow of the game. "By employing double-talk the subordinate can initiate lines of action without giving open recognition to the expressive implication of such initiation and without putting into jeopardy the status difference between himself and his superior" (Goffman 1974: 195). In other words,

players such as Dimitri-P, Spyder-P and Tier-P successfully influenced the decisions of storytellers by subtly suggesting courses of actions. Usually, suggestions coming from fellow clique members were quickly actualized. A personal example of double talk was my suggestion that the storytellers create an administration for delegating responsibility [e.g., secretary, treasurer, etc.]. Although this idea was initially squashed, it was not forgotten. Nearly six months later, the same idea was 'independently' suggested by a storyteller. Another type of double-talk occurred when players conversed out-of-game to learn how characters reacted to their character's actions.

(7.2) Power and Community Creation: A Summary of Behavioural Rules and Personal Politics:

Once a player adjusted to the metagame played out through 'everyday' player associations and dramatic in-game character-play, s/he discovered the actual politics controlling game and community development. It is within this paradigm that players finally interacted. Rules were arbitrated by storytellers, narrators and friends of the administration. Rules were invented, controlled, and interpreted by those who had clique influence. How a rule was applied depended on the context of an action's occurrence. Occasionally rules were reworded or reinterpreted by 'players of influence' so that they and any concerned clique members gained advantage of game interactions. Rules were malleable and could "be interpreted and reinterpreted toward preferred meanings and purposes, selectively invoking or ignored, challenged or defended, changed or enforced to suit the collective goals of different groups of players" (Hughes 1991: 289). When storytellers were asked about previously agreed-upon rules interpretations, they usually

responded with personal interpretations, rather than group understandings. The game discipline of Dominate was often interpreted as both having and not having power over characters whose eyes were protected by sun-glasses. Other case-examples included rule disagreements on the use of willpower traits to retest challenges, or the use of the Auspex [E.S.P.] discipline to detect obfuscated characters. This behaviour occurred when an older player improperly described a rule that led to their advantage over a new player's character. Game and story familiarity combined with another's ignorance of the game 'sets the scene' for reinventing community social reality. Through their behaviour allies were made to appear as villains and villains to appear as saints.

It was through clique-directed interpretations that the administration regulated public opinions about participating players. Such interpretations determine what actions were valued and the definition of unfair or inappropriate behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour was defined as 'forcing a player to role-play scenes they could not handle well,' such as intense scenes that cause out-of-game emotional reactions. If an offended player felt 'hurt' or otherwise 'mistreated' because of an in-game encounter, the player-character could be chastised or penalized. It all depended on whether or not popular players empathized with the offended player's plight. The popular minority of players determined what behaviours were welcomed and what were prohibited, by evaluating captivating character-play. So long as players were not harmed by their in-game interactions, they served to promote game-play. Friends seldom overreacted to intense character-performances. Only those who seldom associated out-of-game had problems with this finely tuned balancing act.

Social reality of the vampire game was shaped by the combined idioverses of primary clique members.

> An imperialist does not recognize his own role as a world creator and a status assigner. When it comes to his world creation, it appears to him that 'that's just how things are.' His tyranny over others is often in the name of truth -a truth that he has helped to create, but which appears to him as merely external (Davis and Roberts 1985: 147).

Initially, Rasputin-P and Bean-P failed to recognize the politics and cliques that directed game-play. They were a part of an invisible order. Wherever there are leaders, there are people to follow their interpretation of reality.

(7.3) Routines and Relations: A Description of the Community Social Order, Hierarchy and Cliques/Solo Player Dynamics:

The social order of the community was based on positions of authority within the game administration. Head-storyteller was the most coveted administrative position. It was the duty of this storyteller to develop storylines for the game, arbitrate rule-disputes, and coordinate the set-up and tear-down of the game set. Usually the storyteller appointed several narrators. Narrators role-played short term non-player characters, arbitrated rules during game sessions, helped with set-up and tear-down of the set, and motivate the flow of game play and story. Apart from game oriented positions, clerical duties were relegated to a treasurer/secretary. The treasurer/secretary was accountable for registration monies received from player during scheduled games. Funds were allocated for the purchase of new game props, rented space and office supplies [i.e., photocopies].

Positions within the game were highly coveted, resulting in many players seeking to befriend game administrators in order to be called on for game-related duties and

associated titles. Participation in the administrative clique exposed players to that agency's understanding of game rules and negotiations of the main storyline. Membership guaranteed their character's advancement and entertained participation within the game. Such advancement were regulated by a character's achievements, rank, or position within the ruling hierarchy.

Status and prestige associated with player-authorities were carried over into the 'real world.' Players-with-positions in the administration hierarchy possess out-of-game status and prestige. Storytellers were highly respected by out-of-game players. Apart from the attention brought on by ceaseless player requests, the treasurer/secretary was mostly ignored. Average players with few affiliations to the storytelling clique were also ignored. They receive minimal attention from players outside the game. Players with positions gained title and authority over players [less power than the positions advertise], while their duty supported the hierarchy of out-of-game status and respect. Roles and status was allocated, both in and out-of-game, based on a dynamic relationship between administrative duties, the success of a character to control others with a smile and a player's association to the head storyteller.

Status, positions and role-playing aptitude contributed to group stereotypes called role archetypes. Goffman (1959) described these role archetypes as clique directors, star performers, figure-heads, side-kicks and 'the players.' Clique directors suggested possible character-interactions, interpreted the behaviour of non-clique members and motivated game events. Zippy-P and Wolfram-P, Rasputin-P and Bean, and Istvan-P and I acted as clique directors [see Appendix A4: 192]. Star performers were inspirational role-players

that occupied honorary roles within cliques. Although there are few star performers in the game, those that play are true impression-managers. Players who occupied these roles were Mordechai-P, Damos-P, Casper-P and Guy-P. Figure-heads, while lacking in the necessary skills and status, occupied administrational positions. Figure-heads were used by 'up and coming' clique directors to broadcast clique value judgements, or to act as scapegoats during elections. Dimitri-P and Tier-P were used to such effect. Side-kicks were mistrusted, un-focused, emotional idiots, who served to contrast and emphasize the trusted, controlling, objective yet understanding authority of figureheads and directors. The role of the side-kick was used to emphasize the skills and status of the authority figure [usually the head-storyteller]. They share

> ...an obligation enlarging the side-kick role so that is [they] will always be available either to witness the impression his master makes or to help convey it. Thus, on back-wards in mental hospitals one can find attendants and patients who have grown old together, and find that the patient is required to be the butt of the attendant's jokes at one moment, while receiving an aligning collusive winks from him at another, this therapeutic support being given the attendant whenever he is pleased to demand it. Perhaps the current military office of aide-de-camp can also be seen in part in these side-kick terms, the incumbent providing his general with a teammate who can be dispensed with at will or used as a member of the audience (Goffman 1959: 206, brackets are mine).

'The players' included all players without administrative or clique authority. They were treated anonymously and are forgotten during game events. These were the people that acted as the cast to view the main characters in the in and out-of-game drama. They served as audiences and witnesses, and often 'rumour-mongerred' player-character popularity.

Archetypal roles were transferred between clique members. When a director's

honor and reputation as a fair and unbiased authority figure was challenged, they had to forfeit their position. Their role as clique director was transferred to another clique member. Group collusion was used within cliques to unite members, and to protect the status of their public fronts. The *Vampire* game community was held together by its cliques. By acting as popularity meters or impression regulators, cliques defined and sustained community relations. Without cooperative cliques the community and the game risked fragmentation and discontinuation.

It is the upper-end politics that directed the flow the game and character-stories. However, the true defining quality of the organization was the communication of fronts and rumours that served to drive the game and maintain pseudo cooperation and community. Close friends of the storytellers always knew the true reasons why decisions were made in a certain way, why meetings were missed, and how players should be perceived. With this knowledge, players who 'knew their place' successfully interacted within established virtual frames. These players knew how to behave and whom to converse with while out-of-game. For example, there was a way of reacting to people at the Die Machine Cabaret on Wednesday nights. The dress code was erotic, gothically elegant or grunge, and behaviour was polite, conversational and respectfully flirtatious. Some players did not like to be approached about in-game issues at the bar, for they served to segregate players and non-players. Only a few official storyteller-sanctioned games were held at Die Machine Cabaret. Since then, the regulars or 'old crowd' at the Die Machine Cabaret have nearly fragmented and disappeared. The game that united them, fragmented them into players and non-players. People who were uninvolved in the game

cared little for it or despised those who played. This demonstrated the value of projecting non-game fronts while in non-gamer company. The true impression managers of the group used their multiple fronts to safeguard their membership in the community, while manipulating its players.

(7.4) A Comparison of Vampire Role-Play in Other Groups: Clique Power, Metagaming and City Clique Structure Example

Dark play was central to live-action *Vampire*. For the sole purpose of entertainment and inner reflection, vampire enthusiasts were invited to role-play disapproved aspects of humanity. However, the Winnipeg *Vampire* game community was far from unique. Game-play in Brandon [Manitoba], Edmonton [Alberta] and San Francisco [California] emphasized similar in- and out-of-game status/prestige hierarchies (learned through 1997 discussion with Brandon and Edmonton players; and Rushkoff 1995). In-game power gave players out-of-game influence and out-of-game influence and performance affected in-game interactions. All interpretations of game and out-of-game reality were negotiated by the associated authority of revered cliques. Metagame politics not only occurred in live-action role-playing games, but were also exhibited in everyday interactions of neo-vampire enthusiasts. Although unconnected to organized game groups, teenagers in the United States took their social reality to an extreme. Their play ended in several arrests for the murders of two Eustis [Florida] residents.

The following case examples demonstrate the consequences of serious play. The social reality engineered during their interactions is an excellent example of impression management. Play is distinct from everyday interactions, but always influences its

structure. Virtual societies, although constructed out of fantasy role-play, are never ignored by work-a-day world.

1. Edmonton and Brandon Live-Action Games

The community structure of the live-action vampire game in Edmonton, Alberta consisted of three basic cliques: the goths, the university jocks, and the gamers. Each group of players regular socialized out-of-game. Like the Winnipeg game, the Edmonton community was constantly threatened by conflicts between cliques, within and separates from the game. This was also reflected in the Brandon, Manitoba game. Players said that the age of players and game experience determined who did what and when. Older players were favoured by storytellers and were awarded new plot ideas for their participation. Newer players were expected to involve themselves in game-play, but were usually driven away. Play-partners and directors were chosen through everyday player politics.

2. San Francisco Live-Action Vampire Game: 'A Tourney of Wills' between the Prince and his Enemy

The San Francisco game provides us with the best comparison in group structure. This game was based on the out-of-game politics between two key players. One player used his wealth to 'wine and dine' player-characters he wishes to ally with (Rushkoff 1995). The other player was regarded as a well-experienced role-player and a regular *Vampire*-expert. Each person allied with friends and acquaintances who supported their in- or out-of-game actions. "The intrigues within the story of this game are overshadowed, if not totally eclipsed, by the real-life blood feuds between the players" (Rushkoff 1995: 40). "The Prince in the San Francisco game relied on his title and out-of-game status to

maintain his alliances and position. [Players said] he lack[ed] effectualness and foresight, relying on his title in lieu of any earned alliances" (Rushkoff 1995, brackets are mine). The player derived his influence from his character role and would quit the game before his character was killed. He used his character as a pass to play a game of everyday politics.

The player who role-played the Prince of the San Francisco game was twenty-two years of age in 1995, a socially dominant Bay area resident with a desire to run for political office. He was raised by wealthy, politically motivated upper class parents. They gave him a trust fund that would pay for his education, and gradually motivate his political career.

> Like a modern-day Prince Hal, this dashing young aristocrat embraces the subculture but always maintains his ability to disengage and return eventually to the duties of his lineage. His immersion in the world of geeks and tripsters has served as more than diversionary entertainment; it has armed him with the skills he feels are necessary to be a good leader (Rushkoff 1995: 42).

His desire to 'run for office' was first demonstrated in the way he played in the vampire game. His character was named Vitosius. Vitosius quickly learned that one must make enemies to make political progress.

The Prince's Enemy in the San Francisco game was played by a twenty-four-year-old wealthy jock/goth who turned down parental support and university sports scholarships in favour of 'finding his own road.' He said "for something to be cool for society, someone has to come up with something creative so people go wow, I never thought of that. I'd like to jump on that train of thought." (Rushkoff Interview 1995: 41). The prince's adversary was called Lord Julius. Like a true impression manager, he shaped

game social reality just as well out-of-game as he claimed to in-game. His influence over the game stemmed from his employment at a local role-playing game store, and his knowledge about the game system. He was a popular gamer, and could influence in-game trends. Julius-P claimed Vitosius-P used money and a condo to earn friends inside the game.

> Like his character Prince Vitosius, [Vitosius-P] has assumed after the game to enjoy his weekly wine, cheese, and bong party. Although utterly social, it is at these parties that [Vitosius-P] often lobbies, discreetly, for the support of other players. 'We should stage a dual between us,' he suggests to the guy who plays Lord Julius (Gaming 'Guru'), 'that way we can settle the conflict without either of us dying (Rushkoff Interview 1995: 42, brackets are mine).

Rushkoff inferred Prince Vitosius would most likely be killed in a battle between the two characters, so his out-of-game affairs were strategies for preserving his personal front and character identity.

When the Prince took action against Lord Julius killing another player-character [who had previously agreed to the death scene] it caused a war between the characters and their allies. Since this action had the potential of undermining the political structure and story of the game, storytellers intervened and asked the two player-characters to come to an acceptable non-violent arrangement. The storyteller halted the game and told players that "this scene never happened" (Rushkoff Interview 1995).

> As [Vitosius-P] suspected, people like the game pretty much as it is, and are willing to violate the reality of the masquerade in order to keep things the way they are. Apparently, [Vitosius-P] has picked up more politics by playing this game than one might suspect. He has learned -and this may get him far- that events within the game are best controlled from outside the game, not the other way around (Rushkoff 1995: 42, brackets are mine).

The above is an example of the *actual relations* between game players. The game was more than play because it influenced the everyday lives of its participants. Their game reality served as a socialization frame. They could easily accomplish similar political goals without playing the game. The everyday world was affected as much as storytellers allowed it to be. When players disregarded troupe enjoyment, they risked seriously affecting those involved. Their interactions, if not curtailed could end in dire consequences.

3. Vampire game related Murders: The Everyday Vampire: Serious consequences of Vampire Role-Play

The flexibility of play in a role-playing game group can be dangerous if not properly regulated through attentive storytellers and firm game rules. Fluidity and ambiguity in role-playing games have done more harm than good in shaping a public image of the mental worlds of players. Players often reminded each other that their game was 'only a game, and just play.' Nevertheless, cases of teen suicide and murders raised public concern within the media of whether players could distinguish between make-believe and everyday social reality. Non-gamers reacted with fear to role-playing games, accusing players of gambling on their sense of what was real and what was play (see Mechling 1988). This perception is reflected in two decades of reports relating mental illness, suicides and murders due to the deaths of fantasy characters. Such cases have raised doubt on the safety of playing role-playing games.

On November 25, 1996, Richard and Ruth Wendorf were bludgeoned to death in their Eutis home, near Orlando [Florida]. Three days later, on Thanksgiving Day, in Baton

Rouge, Louisiana, five teenagers were arrested on suspicion of murdering the Florida couple. Among the accused were the murdered couple's fifteen-year-old daughter Heather Wendorf [alias: Zoey] of Eutis [Florida], sixteen-year-old Howard Scott Anderson [alias: Nash] of Mayfield [Kentucky], and sixteen-year-old Charity Keesee [alias: Sara Remington], nineteen-year-old Dana Cooper [alias: unknown] and sixteen-year-old Roderick Ferrell [alias: Vesago] all of Murray [Kentucky]. All suspects, except Wendorf, were tried in a Florida adult court. Wendolf was tried as an accessory under the Young Offenders Act. Anderson, Keesee and Cooper were charged with accessory to murder. Ferrell, a self-proclaimed leader of the group, was indicted on murder charges.

In Ferrell's statement to the Orlando *Sentinel* newspaper, Ferrell blamed the murders on a rival vampire clan leader from Murray [Kentucky]. The clan leader was described as sending four people to Florida to incriminate Ferrell's friends, thereby punishing him for his disobedience. Ferrell had ordered Nash to marry Zoey, but her parents [the Wendorfs], refused. The marriage of Ferrell's clan members is reminiscent of Anne Rice's conception of vampires. According to Rice, vampires possess little sexual desire. Instead, they develop strong spiritual and emotional bonds with their partners. The other clan leader likely objected to the wedding, because it would involve minors playing in their game. *Vampire* is ideally a game for adults only, but Ferrel was not playing *Vampire*. His 'gang' used the game's political structure as a cultural style. Within the genre, the vampire model for marriage is quite attractive and may have served as motive to the murders.

According to Murray Police Sergeant Mike Jump, Ferrell organized forty Murray

[Kentucky] youths into what he called a "Vampire Clan." Jump suspected the group participated in graveyard blood rituals as part of their role-playing vampire game. He said, "they like to cut their arms and suck the blood out of each other's arms. They've been known to kill a small animal and suck the blood out of it, supposedly to give them more power" (Brad Liston, interview, Baton Rouge *Reuter.* December 6, 1996). Murray State University psychologist Judith Sheiman said the Murray cult was started by a man from New Orleans who was an avid reader of Anne Rice novels. Sheiman explained stories like Ferrell's were often the products of delusional minds. She also said that many different kinds of people play *Vampire.* Ferrell was inspired by the genre of the live-action vampire role-playing game, to organize his gang.

> Because I think the teenagers in question were adopting a cultural style, albeit a potentially powerful one, and do not, in fact, believe themselves to be vampires, it doesn't surprise me that the victims were bludgeoned and suffered no "ritual" injuries. As for 'sucking the blood from small animals,' I bet that description comes directly from the anxious imagination of outsiders though I would put money on the claim that they sampled each other's blood. This is performed with disturbing frequency among the vamps here, disturbing because it's such a dangerous vector for viral transmission. Interestingly, I have noticed it most notable among younger vampire enthusiasts and wonder if they don't use it as a form of intimacy or bonding, considering other forms of sexual contact to be, ironically, unsafe...As for the blood sucking, I mentioned in my previous post that the "blood of small animals" bit is probably either the stuff of an emerging myth about these kids, or, something that the kids told people in order to enforce their new found difference/superiority. "If you can't join 'em, scare 'em" in other words. But the sharing and tasting of blood amongst themselves is another matter. The game doesn't call for this, obviously, but the fact that the players are adopting vampiric personas, defined fundamentally by their need to drink blood, is a pretty good push to try it. It serves as a bond of trust and intimacy among the vamps I've met, no matter how unwise it may be from a medical stand point, and although it might seem shocking to a lot of people, it doesn't seem that far removed from "blood brother" rituals that I participated in while a youth at camp. (Scrymgeour 1996)

Ferrel's out-of-clan rival was likely another Primogen in the Murray game. Ferrell may have considered himself Primogen of a clan. Due to the 18+ adult age restriction on White Wolf live-action games, it is likely Ferrell had adopted the vampire genre as a lifestyle, rather than a hobby. This style, called neo-vampirism, is followed by Anne Rice enthusiasts who dress and act like vampires in everyday life. The aliases adopted by four of the five accused, granted them membership in their secret order. However, instead of freeing them from restrictions of the everyday world, their play bound them to it. It is obvious these players got more out of the game than the game designers had planned.

The vampire-clan related murders, although gruesome, show how play can become anything its participants pretend it to be. The game served to introduce the accused to the fantasy world that they most likely adopted into their everyday lives. Their game was no longer contained within White Wolf's (Hatch 1993) rules. The game became their everyday reality. It was unlikely they believed they were bloodsucking vampires, but the genre became the frame that defined their group identities and gave them a social purpose.

4. Understanding Dark-Play

For better or for worse, the *Vampire* game has the potential of turning out both murders and heroes. Unlike most games that demand nothing more from the players than their participation, role-playing games are dependent on players assuming imagined self-identities. These identities, can be used to fulfill private aspirations. The metamessages of the game played between clique members demonstrated how play could be used as an excuse for deviant or unpleasant behaviour. These people may have developed similar

relationships in the everyday world. The game provided a mechanism for covering up true felt feelings, motivations and actions.

Fear of public disapproval forced groups of players to role-play privately away from the supervision of the scrutinizing public. Misinformation and unfamiliarity with gaming groups breed ignorance and fear regarding their purposes and goals. What makes the headlines are the outcomes of a few groups 'taking the game too far,' but the details of why these groups commit crimes never reaches the press. A few aberrant communities negatively affect the reputations and identities of all role-playing game-players. The game is an extension of the relationships between players.

(7.5) Game Fissioning and New Winnipeg Vampire Game Groups:

As a result of retro-actions [or event editing] of storytellers in the Winnipeg game, certain players quit the 'main game' early in 1996 to coordinate their own. The two new groups began in reaction to problems each founding-player had with a previous storyteller-administration. Ignored actions, inconsistencies in rules arbitration and an inconsiderate bureaucracy served to isolate these players from the main storyline of the game. These players lost their patience with the game, claiming the administration favoured storyteller clique members, and ignored actions, requests, and complaints. The new games were established by players who grew tired of the personality conflicts that ensued between rival cliques, themselves and storytellers. Players from each group accused other groups of metagaming and irresponsible storyteller-administrations.

Fissioning of the original vampire game community illustrates how fascinating and

engrossing *Vampire* was for players. Even in the face of out-of-game social conflicts, players adapted by forming or joining groups of players who 'played well together.' The main reason people play is for their enjoyment. Play is an experience not dissimilar in character to the condition of engrossment. This would suggest that play may serve a larger role in social interaction than has been thought. Play is not just fun, however; it servers as a masquerade to many other metacommunicative meanings and motives. Recall how dark play involved participants in serious, often dangerous situations. Although 'just play,' such interaction were used to conceal true felt emotions and hidden agendas.

(8) Dramaturgical Cooperation of Cliques and the "All's Well" Front of Play:

Play's dark secret of conspiracy was manifested in the role-played interactions of the live-action *Vampire* game. Often when a player flooded-out [an emotional over-reaction that breaks the play frame] because another player-character appeared to have insulted or harmed him or her, when confronted the instigator innocently smiled and said "sorry, did you think I was serious? I was just role-playing. It's a game!" (see Goffman 1959: 191). For instance, when I asked Rasputin-P to be less intimidating out-of-game, he denied that he acted that way at all. The "all's well" (see Fagen 1992) front of play was the primary form of impression management practiced by members of the larger, more influential cliques of players. Their exclamations of truths were backed by a presentation of truthful, fun-loving, friendly, innocent, cordial behaviour. When confronted with a player's complaint, a storyteller clique member would smile and state "that is just the way

it is," gently implying that it is out of their control, because the world view reality of the vampire community makes it that way. This metamessage states that community support is bestowed by those that make the rules. Privately, storytellers knew their power gave them more clout as player-characters; they controlled a game of their own design. The game encompassed the fantasy reality of those players that were the arbiters of truth and story. These players realized their advantage and were proud of it. Their smiles were reminders of their success as impression managers of the actual and fantasy social reality of fellow players. Players who believed the 'all's well' of play trusted storytellers and respected their roles as 'fair' administrators. Player co-operation guaranteed storyteller-clique-member friendships in the everyday world, allowing them to play themselves in a world of their design. All social infractions made in the real world could be dispelled through their community. It was this political authority that controlled and maintained the game community; a social structure shaped by the reality of the storytellers.

(8.1) Understanding the Social Order:

"Whatever it is that generates the human want for social contact and for companionship, the effect seems to take two forms: a need for an audience before which to try out one's vaunted selves, and a need for teammates with whom to enter into collusive intimacies and backstage relaxation" (Goffman 1959: 206).

> By social exercise of linguistic power, man creates his own identity and reinforces that of others. In this sense, identity is simply the measure of power and participation of the individual in the *joint cultural staging of self-enhancing* ceremony. Only by proper performance in a social context does the individual fashion and renew himself by purposeful action in a world of shared meaning. Loneliness is not only a suspension in the very

> fashioning of identity; cut off from one's fellows, one cannot add his power to the enhancing of cultural meaning or derive his just share of it. Social ceremonial is a joint theatrical staging whose purpose it is to sustain and create meaning for all its members (Becker 1990: 122).

Most role-play was tailored and scripted by player narration based on friendships and clique interactions. Without these out-of-game cliques, players risked forming in-game antagonisms that would have damaged out-of-game friendships. The entire structure of the community was supported by the group 'backing' and reality interpretations of players interactions and the behaviour of team-co-impression managers (see Goffman 1959). Clique minorities quickly achieved majority support when members were also members of the storytelling team.

The species of play performed by vampire players, both in and out-of-game, expressed metamessages about collusive team efforts to control and shape the reality of lesser playmates. Here, play was not just for fun. Play became the excuse for a minority of players to shape and to command a virtual reality of others. The play frame was used for the proliferation of personal conspiracies, supported by group efforts. The metamessage insinuated that this game of power and politics was played efficiently because it was played in two overlapping frames of interaction. Players constantly reminded each other "it's only a game and not real" and "you should know the difference between reality and fantasy." This is the "all's well" front of play. In the reality-game played by these gamers, there was only one reality co-existing in two distinct cognitive frames. This reality was a game of social interaction. The game exemplifies of how Goffman's theories on dramaturgy can be applied to the study of everyday interactions. "Within the hall of a

social establishment we find a team of performers who cooperate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation. This will include the conception of our own dream and of audience and assumptions concerning the ethos that is to be maintained by rules of politeness and decorum" (Goffman 1959: 238). This thesis demonstrates the mechanics of impression management and the sociopolitical evolution of a game community playfully performed to a reality play just as real as the real world. Only through play are we allowed to toy with norms and morals and learn to accept life as more than a production of regularity and abnormality, but as the transforming context of our [sub]conscious existence.

Chapter Four:
Personal Reflections: Paradox and the Participant-Observer

This ethnography is constructed from a dramaturigcal perspective out of consultant interview notes, personal observations and my direct participation. I have relied on my participation and the recorded experiences of consultant players to present a process of participation. Rather than attempting to describe all aspects of game community life, this ethnography merely represents common experiences of player-characters. The model of the 'classic player' explains the experiential process of how players transform the social contexts of their interactions. Although the community of the vampire game relies on the dramatic-play frames for its presentation, players-interactions show how play is used to build or undermine everyday interaction frames. In other words, play can be used to show how tenuous our definitions of social reality really are. It shows how our public participation and private motivations shape the meanings of our propositions about social reality. Each of us is deeply submerged in the culture of our relationships. Our conception of culture and society is determined through the roles we play in presenting ourselves in everyday life.

My purpose in this chapter is to detail the paradox of participant-observation. The apparent research bias in this chapter acts as evidence of my political involvement and

private reactions to the research process. My role as the objective researcher was often challenged by my in-game participation. I quickly discovered that my role as in-game observer could only be practiced through the perception of Isaiah. Without committing myself to the dramatic-play frame, I was unable to blend into the virtual reality presented by other players. My own in-game experiences were validated by comparing them with consultant interview results. To understand the 'insiders'' perspective, I had to become like them through role-taking. The actions and perspectives of our characters shaped our personal biases that defined our locations within the social field. They encompasses our motivations, expectations and private understandings of our interactions with others. My reactions to the game administration are comparable to those portrayed by the 'classic player.' Isaiah was the key that both maintained my entertained engrossment and forced me to defend my version of the social reality presented. This ethnography is a journal about social relationships. It is constructed through participants' images of society and analyzed through an extra-cultural framework called dramaturgy.

(1) A Workable Ethnography:

Knowing the dangers of attempting to represent the culture and society of unfamiliar peoples objectively, I turned instead to a group closer to home. Instead of looking to *otherness* for answers about western industrialized, commercialized, institutionalized society, I examined a community within my own social sphere. I have been involved as a role-player in a variety of other games since the early 1980's. My

participant knowledge of this field has rewarded me with a kind insight whose propositions begged investigation. Certain scholars believe that anthropologists should not study their own culture, for they are too biased. To these scholars I pose the question "can *others* be objectively represented without cultural bias?" As with all scientific pursuits, researchers always use "conditional propositions" to describe the phenomenon of their occupations (Husserl 1889). Personal biases become problematic only when researchers fail to acknowledge them as a part of their research. Being socialized as a 'gamer' has given me the keys to enter and decipher hidden community messages. These metamessages may have gone unnoticed if I were not involved in the subculture. A simple reminder of the complexity and significance of metamessages are expressed in Geertz's disclaimer that as an outsider he could not fully describe or make sense out of all metameanings exchanged between Balinese cock owners and witnesses (1971, 1973, 1984). People define cultural symbols by using them in everyday life. Although ethnographies are interpretations of culture, internal politics (and relationships) are more accurately known through personal experiences. Their meaning is contextualized by our membership within the field of our inquiry. My intimate involvement in the Winnipeg game group has allowed me to form both an emic ethnography and, through Goffman's (1959; 1961; 1967; 1974) and Bateson's models (1962; 1972), an etic evaluation of pertinent subject matters. Certainly, I could have used other theories to make sense out of interview responses, observations and experiences, leading perhaps to contradictory conclusions, however, nothing apart from Goffman's dramaturgy and Bateson's theory of play (1962) could have prepared me for the emotional roller coaster ride that I have been a part of

since joining this game in 1995. I acknowledge the reality I have chosen to defend in this thesis is based not only on the possible imaginations of social-psychologists, but supported by my field observations.

(2) Personal Dilemmas with the Metagame:

No training could have prepared me for the range of situations and associated emotions I experienced while in the field. My experiences as a researcher within the vampire game community were often frustrating for, although every other player could quit the game if it became "too much to handle," I could not. With endurance, I persevered through stages of research and game-related boredom, stages of political unrest and bitter rivalry. The stress associated with particular aspects of field work was vented through letters I wrote to game storytellers and to myself. The following journal entries and letters serve as examples of my frustration in the field.

(2.1) Personal Journal Entry [02/02/97] "Emotions and Lost Objectivity":

> I become frustrated at times with playing the vampire game and writing my thesis on it for I feel where I would normally have quit the game I have to stay involved. You see it is possible to stop playing my character Isaiah, but I would not be as involved in the out-of-game interaction between players. When a player quits the game, they are unintentionally ostracized from the community. This would make it rather difficult to be a participant-observer and to see the invisible connections that bind and control the in- and out-of-game community. So I stayed involved in the game, becoming increasingly connected to the role-play of Isaiah, both emotionally and mentally.
>
> Recently, a Storyteller has explained to me that eight characters in the

game wished and will succeed in killing Isaiah, and that I should find an agreeable way of ending the character's life. This made me feel a little pressured although I was happy that Zippy-Storyteller was looking out for the character. Then on February 2, 1997, Isaiah and Tommy played a scene where I had to get very angry at him. It resulted in us switching faces for court that night and masquerading as each other. This went over well, and I thought that it was possible to tell a story in the game without a storyteller's hand-of-god actions. When we succeeded, Tommy was punished instead of Isaiah, and the narrator/ST character Archon was duped. Isaiah was blood-hunted for the action. The following day Zippy-Storyteller left a message for me stating that Isaiah had been found (by the ghost of Mara) and that he would be punished.

I got very angry! I could not stand that the ST was canceling our previous scene with a possible HOG (hand-of-god). I wanted to quit the game! I wanted to yell at him. I wanted to start my own game. Apart from Istvan-P, I was pissed at all the players in the game. I felt that the game was foolish and that it was not about storytelling, but about personal manipulation and powertrips. Namely, that Storytellers had the power to make their characters immune to trouble and danger and to make them integral to the story, while other player-characters must stand-by and act off the cues. The storytellers made their characters invincible and immortal. I had created many stories involving most players throughout most of Isaiah's existence, and now characters suddenly wished to kill him. It had been stated earlier that some players felt that Isaiah was protected by the storytellers because of my running Cafe Elysium, and that he would never die. I think that they wished to dispel this rumour.

The point is I became so intensely involved in the game that I was distracted from my analysis. I began to doubt the positive significance of the game and its players. I felt that perhaps, this group was not 'worthy' of sociological analysis. Apparently, my participation had compromised my objectivity. How could I trust that my analysis of Zippy-Storyteller's interviews would be accurate, and not simply my angered bias? If I made any trouble, how could I expect the cooperation of Zippy-Storyteller and the others involved? As much as my involvement has revealed information on the community mechanics, it has also restricted my personal reactions to community events and altered my perspective of game-play.

(2.2) Letter to Storyteller (02/08/97) [Complaint]:

Dear Wolfram-Storyteller,
I am a little disturbed at how the Narrator/Storytellers and some players are handling recent events in the game. Istvan-P has kindly acted as my advocate for the last few weeks because I did not want to directly involve myself, due to my Thesis. However, I have reached my limit of cooperation and silence.

The gist of the problem lies with the players themselves. It is the mission of the game to tell a dark story about vampires in the World of Darkness. Besides the Sabbat involvement and a few scenes with some older players, I have not observed this. What I have witnessed and what I foresee in the future is more Warhammer 40k-like game play (this is a *Games Workshop* fantasy war-game); where players want instant actions, so react to current events without story foresight or player-character consultation. Setting aside the story (perhaps it should not be the point of the game), the second most important aspect is good Role-play. Now I realize that we have several new players who may have never role-played before, players who may be unfamiliar with *Vampire* storytelling, but this is no excuse for player-characters to react uncharacteristically. Namely, when Zippy-Storyteller explained to me that I should plan on killing off Isaiah, due to the number of out-of-game actions threatening Isaiah's life (I think the number is now around eight), and then preceded to take control over the destiny of the character by declaring a 'world-wide blood hunt' against him after Tommy and Isaiah had duped everyone in court by masking as each other. This was probably to keep in action Narrator/Storyteller interference/aid in protecting Isaiah long enough so that the February 14 Toreador action against the Sabbat could occur. Well boy has this screwed things up. The Malkavian Archon (I do not know exactly why a Malkavian Archon was called in, because we had a Gangrel Archon in the city already) most likely took offence in being duped, however, the switch-a-rue could easily be rationalized as a Malkavian-like prank and applauded. I sense that Zippy-Storyteller just wanted me to say that Isaiah returned to the Archon and everything would go as he planned (i.e., the two-week torture of Isaiah at the hands of the Malkavian Archon). Well, reacting as Isaiah, a kindred witnessing the great sacrifice of his dear friend Tommy, and knowing that the Archon could not lawfully destroy Tommy for the prank, he stayed in hiding. Then, based on practically no evidence or crime at all the Malkav called the Blood Hunt that most players fully appreciated(?). Most jumped the band-wagon and the others began asking if Isaiah was dead yet.

The events leading up to the Blood Hunt and the eight-characters wishing to kill Isaiah are an example of inconsistency in role-play and Instant Action gaming I spoke of earlier. I personally knew of no real threat against Isaiah until after the court where he acted as Keeper. Now based on the fact that most, if not all character-actions became out-of-game rumours and I heard no one speaking about Isaiah needing to be killed, nor little of Guy's dissatisfaction of Isaiah's misdemeanor (that added to the Gothic horror of the game), I am surprised what I have described above has occurred. Perhaps it is player boredom in the month of February. Perhaps it is a result of players believing that Isaiah has been protected all along by the narrators/storytellers due to my running of the Cafe.

If I do not know the names of the players whose characters wish to kill Isaiah, then I cannot work with them to prepare a story where they are involved in the demise of my character. I am not an idiot Wolfram-Storyteller, I have plenty of role-playing and game master experience, and I want nothing more than to create a great story for the game (why do you think we developed the Toreador attack on the Sabbat?). Let me work with the players in planning the death scene. It involves Isaiah eventually joining the Sabbat out of frustration with the Camarilla (and so that he may gain control over A.A. who has become Isaiah's most driving goal; consuming his darkening existence). Then when Zoe is seen with the "known" Sabbat Isaiah, she is accused of aiding-and abetting, and is hunted. The two of us then play out the *Romeo and Juliet* story. We realize that it is corney, but the whole romance of the characters was meant to be sickeningly sweet (so that less-than-observant players would take notice and be able to react to our role-play more appropriately). I can give you more information on how Isaiah would connect with the Sabbat on your request.
After court last Sunday, Tommy had the party that he had planned before we knew the mess would begin. Isaiah made an appearance in the form of Psychic Projection (manifested). He spoke with Sebastian and Sebastian agreed to protect Isaiah (and Zoe, because there was no way that Isaiah could prevent frenzying if Zoe left -beast trait Desire --due to the actions he is taking against A.A. and clones). Tommy then quickly met with all Primogen (during 24 real hours of game play) and secured his position as Harpy. He presented the evidence for Isaiah's innocence and for Guy's destruction (due to a huge breach of the masquerade in front of the Cafe a few months ago --recall Guy levitating some poor sap in the middle of Corydon Avenue around midnight when people were leaving the closing restaurants -Isaiah had covered this up -but it is all on tape CKND). Tommy succeeded in gaining the permission and signatures of Primogen support. It was agreed (by all but Guy) In-character, In-game, motivated by good role-play and vampire politics (we are playing a political game, are

we not?). There was to be a Primogen meeting Saturday or Sunday, and Guy was going to be either deposed or blood hunted by the same Archon who blood hunted Isaiah. Then Istvan-P told you. And you said no! You explained that deposing the Prince would ruin the game and players would quit, or there would be disorder. I remind you again Wolfram-Storyteller that we are playing an interactive Role-play-based Storytelling game. The story is never set. The story is based on character actions motivated by narrator 'encouragement', as story ideas and unpredictable occurrences. What kind of game are we playing, when well thought-out role-played reactions are canceled (such as the winning over of the Primogen to Isaiah's side, to spontaneous ill-devised actions of other characters --i.e., a blood hunt). It makes me question why I am playing this game. If you let Guy (current Prince) be deposed and the Council rule, it will definitely change the structure of the game. You should trust that most of your older players are competent enough role-players and concerned about the story enough that the council-rule will only work for a short time and a Prince will be placed back in power. Meanwhile, the new players will definitely have something to react to. Their Primogen will have the power and authority of the Prince. I am sure that they will be more than willing to do jobs for their leader that will get them involved in the game. As it stands anything that happens in the game is grabbed up by the older characters (because they have the Finance, contacts, disciplines, experience, contacts, etc.), leaving the other players to picking their noses, complaining, or acting rashly for a 'quick role-play fix'.

When I heard that you had convinced Casper-P and George-P to disregard the excellent and involving role-played scenes between Tommy and the Primogen, I was outraged. We put time, effort and imagination into the scenes and the politics. You should not retro that. The last thing I heard was a rumour that Guy-P believed Guy had captured and destroyed Isaiah. Are Isaiah and Guy now non-player-characters?

I will leave off this letter now, for I believe that I have said what I need to say. I have sent Zippy-Storyteller a copy of the letter, so that he may reconsider his response to the in-game situation; a situation, if not dealt with soon, will lead to many older players quitting the game in favour of Yule-P's new game. Frankly, the game is not worth it when I become more frustrated by bad role-play, story and personality conflicts, and stone fisted administration, than I have fun playing the game. I don't need the aggravation, I don't have the time for it and most of all, I need not create enemies' out-of-game that will compromise my research interviews.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please give me a call on

> the phone. I would gladly sit with you and Zippy and go over the whole mess. Thanks again."

In response to my complaints, Wolfram-ST directing me to Zippy-ST. During a phone conversation with Zippy-ST, I was told that despite in-game events, Prince Guy would retain his position so that new players could familiarize themselves with the dictatorial structure of vampire society. Zippy-ST explained that without the Prince, new players would never learn about or adjust to in-game politics. Zippy-ST said that I had to accept Isaiah's predicament, because "that's just the way it is." I was not alone in my criticisms of the game administration, other players such as Istvan-P and Domingo-P, expressed their concerns, but these to were dismissed. Months later, in April of 1997, growing player discontent led to Zippy-ST's and Wolfram-P's resignation. Domingo-P was elected main storyteller. During his reign, Domingo-P introduced a storyline that led to the destruction of all Winnipeg kindred, effectively ending the game in June of 1997. Without character-play, the game community redefined itself according to the membership of others *Vampire* games in the city. The original game community was dissolved.

The above letters serve as reminders of the limitations of doing social scientific research. When in the field, the researcher must first be a contributing congenial member of the community and second be very observant. The paradox of participant-observation highlights important problems with ethnographic research. Personal and cultural preconceptions or biases serve as the first stumbling block for accurate reportage. This is followed by the juggling act of being both participating >native= within the community and an indifferent observer. Finally, the presentation of the finished text runs the risk of

objectifying research results.

(3) Concluding Thoughts on the Research Process:

I began this research hoping to uncover the truth of the community of gamers, and what I found was more real than I would have liked to believe. Role-playing games, especially live-action role-playing game, are virtual worlds, espousing unlimited forms of entertainment and interaction forms. Role-playing games typify impression management and how we make people believe what we want them to believe. The realities generated by storytellers and those that influence those storytellers, can shape social interactions between player-characters, influencing the meaning of those interactions and the relationships that develop both in and out-of-game. Like nearly all virtual experiences, such as computer-generated virtual realities and the make-believe of imaginative children, role-playing games can be used seriously to alter how we perceive and conceive our world. Role-play games are commentaries on the malleability of social encounters and reality, but they also teach us to be more efficient impression managers. If player-characters are equivalent to private-public self-presentations, role-playing games such as *Vampire* are similar to everyday life. They only differ in their frames. The play frame allows us the cognitive space to experiment with new roles and self-presentations. When an actor's presentations are accepted by an audience *as* real, they become serious and everyday. Reality then, is determined by those who control what is considered real. Although we all began playing for fun as children, as we develop, we enter larger more

complex systems of interaction [such as economics or religion], we stop playing for fun, and create situations where fun is not allowed, where procedure, format and design take supremacy over creativity and inspiration. My in-game experiences prove that play is not just a pastime, but a vehicle for impression management.

Although Isaiah Asper is a fantasy character, he is also a role or public mask. Through his perspective, I had a role in shaping the virtual society of the game. Out-of-game politics changed not only my character-play, but forced me to reevaluate research objectives. As I had expected, my research design changed as my relationships with players changed. The focus group I formed in the beginning of the research remained a useful tool as long as members kept confidential, information discussed during their meetings. When information on a player was leaked to the community and a consultant complained about it, the focus group became just another vehicle for the community=s rumour-mill. Through this unfortunate incident I witnessed rumour-mongering in-action. The focus group allowed me to interact with a few player-consultants discretely and to witness personal politics 'in action.'.

My relationships with people in the community varied. Some people hated me, some were my friends and others knew me only as 'Isaiah' or as 'Brian the Researcher'. At times, it was difficult to believe that I was doing research at all. During these moments, I was mostly participant, experiencing the woes and wonderment that all players are entitled. Nevertheless, my role as researcher required me to observe and comprehend of these interactions. I was caught between two worlds, restrained from quitting the game when times were rough and distracted to the point of ignorance when engrossed. My

everyday frame of existence was the research, my discipline, and the logic of my participation. My character, Isaiah, was a painter of fifteenth century church art. He was also the owner of a business called *Cafe Elysium*, which I managed as a real cafe for the gamers six times a year. For each *Cafe Elysium*, we rented space at coffee shops, lounges, art space and bars. We decorated each space in hanging tapestries, black table coverings, contrasting vases of red roses and black candles, accompanied by erie background music. Volunteers, business owners and I provided food, drink and hosting services. Live entertainment was provided through the performance of glam-rock, folk and jazz bands. The *Cafe* gave players another virtual environment to play within, and allowed me to view their interactions. As host, I was respected. As researcher, I was admired. Why should I be granted a degree for writing about their game? Nonetheless, when it came time to choose consultants for interviews, players were volunteering their services and their thoughts. I had to turn down more than half the players who volunteered to be consultants. The impression I got from this enthusiasm was that every player believed they possessed unique insights of the game. All players chosen to act as my consultants were overly generous with their time, their ideas and their game observations. To preserve their ideas, consultants were given the interview questions in advance, so they could review their answers before being interviewed. During interviews, consultants discussed the meanings of their written responses. In this way, I hoped to represent their words and ideas more accurately. My findings are justified not only by my participation in the game, but are based on metameanings revealed through the interviews. Suspicions I had of unadvertised clique influence of the game community were made clear.

This thesis is titled AA Journey of Powertrips and Personalities,@ because the research process was an adventure. I often wonder how the game would have changed for me if I had not chosen to research it. How would players have interacted with me as 'just a gamer'? As a participant-observer, I was forced to examine ordinary relationships that people have in everyday life, and to witness, with reflection, the metamessages of this play community. I did not simply study play and not-play, but participated in the joint-paradox experienced by participants, while they played at being themselves and at being their characters.

Chapter Five:
Summary and Conclusions:

The evolution of ideas used in this thesis, are photographs of sorts, that capture in their frames the transforming qualities of play. Through a detailed examination of structured interactions between role-played player-character personalities, a political and psychological landscape is revealed. Examination of this landscape demonstrates the elasticity of human social relations. Of particular importance is the effect play behaviour has on manipulating personal impressions of public actions. Although not an ideal model of everyday social relations, the dramatic-play frame of live-action role-playing games shows how flexible people are in determining the social reality of their communities. By examining the in- and out-of-game behaviour of players, we are shown how they initiate their interactions and manage the meanings of messages exchanged between them. By examining play as an experience or mood rather than an activity, the complexity of social interaction is unravelled. Play as a proto-behaviour is the primary source of our ability to interact with others. Play is inextricably responsible for initiating cognitive dramaturgical frames that serve to define the meaning and context of all face-to-face communication. The ethnography of this thesis serves as a magnifying lens through which to witness and understand the mechanics of impression management. This point cannot be overstated. There are several key issues within this ethnography the reader should keep in mind. These issues have defined the field of my inquiry and influenced my conclusions.

(1) Summary: Key-Issues of Analysed Research Results:

There are four important issues to remember while reading this thesis: the purpose of the game community, the production and maintenance of the fantasy world, the motives and mechanics of community involvement, how public issues or themes reflect private concerns and an explanation of how the metagame demonstrates the potency of play.

(1.1) Purpose of *Vampire* Game Community:

Through character role-performances, players learn the routines or schemata necessary for forming a social structure that supports their character-identities and promotes the formation of an out-of-game community of relationships. Informal interview notes suggest the primary reason people join the game is to exercise their imaginations and to become part of a community. Although players join the game with preexisting social identities, the game provides them the space and community to perform and adapt such identities. Players seek cliques and the general court of gamers as a community for it gives them a social structure through which to practice/form/evaluate identity, and to learn the expectations people have of those identities. The median age of players corresponds to a time when the expectations and structure of social life are partially dissolved. From birth to high school graduation, everything is predetermined for a person. After this, there are few social expectations, apart from public pressure to become employed. Expectations of identity at this stage of life are entirely dependent on the individual. The vampire game not only provides an enjoyable space for participants to review imaginary personalities and identities, but it also connects people with an everyday social network. Within this

network, personal identities are monitored and compared to group social expectations, such as etiquette, moral support and interesting company. The way people react to group evaluations determines whether they are accepted or excused from the group. Either way, game interactions increase player confidence, empowerment [through group representation] and purpose [social direction and behaviour]. Players joined the game for they enjoyed interacting within a fantastically contrived, but sensible social world. By working to shape game events, players contributed to a new version of everyday social reality. Just as players altered their characters' behaviour based on their interactions, the everyday frame was similarly altered through role-play. In consequence of their character-play, participants readjusted their private conceptions and learned to keep game events and player-motivations in mind while interacting in their new everyday frame. Involvement in this game increased participant-confidence, empowerment and purpose. The flexibility of this everyday group enabled players to learn new perspectives, behaviours and skills. To support this observation, players' Damos-P and Mordechai-P comment on how they joined the game:

> Damos-P relates (Interview Notes 1996):
>
> My first introduction to the game was through a girl I was dating at the time. She had a friend who had a friend who heard about the game. I was given the hype about the game itself and a rough rundown of clans and whatnot. Not really much to go on, but enough to peak my interest. At this time I worked part-time as a doorman at the *Die Maschine Cabaret*, and one night when Seraph-P and I were at the bar, she pointed out some people who were in the game. I had seen these individuals a few times, in fact, I remember the day a group of them came into the bar after a game. Costumes and outlandish make-up everywhere, but it solidified my desire to find out more about this game.

Under the prompting of my girlfriend, I sought our Wolfram-P-ST, whom I had not met previously, and asked him if I could join. Wolfram-P-ST was very outgoing and helped me [develop] a character on the spot. Much of the character generation was completely alien to me, and I didn't have a very good idea what I was getting myself into. Half an hour later though, I had a character.

After the first game or two I began to settle into my character. The first game I was merely a generated character with a silly name. But over time, I began to get into who Damos was. His actions and reactions developed out-of-game when I would think up situations and decide how the character would react. I tried different facial expressions in mirrors, tried guttural voices when I was alone, and in general, began to work on my masterpiece.

All in all it took me 3 games to get a good idea of my character's personality and psychological make-up. I had begun to see how costumes and make-up could help transform my character more believably. Perhaps in truth, I did that for myself and not visually for others. I have always loved the make-up and costume side of the game, like playing make-believe as a child. After a while, I noticed how differently I acted and moved while in my make-up. By putting on the stripes [on my face] and [wearing] the costumes, I was actually applying another personality to myself.

Mordechai-P relates (Interview Notes 1996):

Usually, to get the creative juices flowing, I'll draw the character. I was scratching out his appearance, 'an 18th century fop.. With major warts), and just wondering where I was gonna find a lace shirt and frock-coat, when a little old man's voice popped into my head [saying] "I can tell you stories about the Shtitls in Krakow..." What the fuck?! Who the heck are you!? "My name is Mordechai Ben Joachin Abromovicz and I was born in Krakow, Poland. When I was mortal, I was a rabbi..." Holy crap! Get me a pen! Paper! Go on... "I was born in 1876 to a very traditional, orthodox family, no rebel was I, no, I became a rabbi as my father did, and my grandfather before me..." Scribble, Scribble... Man, this is weird!

Wow! Where'd this come from? I have no idea. Mordechai just sort of walked into my head, pretty much fully fleshed, so to speak. He has changed, in small ways, and large. At first, it took a bit of effort (despite the extensive background) to play him. I'm female and young. He was 65 years old when he was embraced. I had to alter the way I moved, my

> speech patterns, adopt an accent and mannerisms I would normally never use. I had to change the way I thought to become him. I had to alter my voice to sound older and male. The costuming alone...oy! How does a 119 years old man dress? And how the heck am I gonna make myself ugly!?
>
> His development is hard for me to track, because he practically stepped out of me fully-formed. Its hard to tell where he's changed. Most of the things I've noticed are how he's become more 'solid' in my mind; more real. Now it's almost easy for me to 'shift-gears' into Mordechai's personality. He's very distinct. I don't have to be in costume anymore or wear the mask for people to know who I'm playing, they just listen to the voice, watch the gestures and the shuffling walk. This guy is so real to some people, they almost expect me to drop my 'disguise' and admit that I really am a 119 year old Nosferatu named Mordechai (at least, that's the impression I get sometimes, and I might be wrong). I've occasionally played out small scenes with one or two people, in private, long conversations, and at the end of it, the reaction is 'whew', how do you stay in-character like that? Wow! I gotta write this down in my journal for the narrators, this just adds all kinds of neat plots to play with, and they go off muttering about what they're going to do with the stuff we just played out. Mordechai's progress as a character has been slow, patient and methodical. He's spent a lot of time building his contacts, has friendships and systems of favours given and favours owed and his reputation as a guy who knows things and gets thing done has been growing as a result of his laid-back, friendly, non-elitist approach to vampire politics.

Characters Damos and Mordechai are psycho-behavioural guidelines. Players tailored their characters' presentations according to imaginary motivations. Once other players discovered these motivations, characters reacted to each other as if they were real. Their interactions helped establish a dramatic-play community that players accepted as their alternate everyday frame. In the following excerpt, players Jacob-P and Damos-P explain the value of their contrived community:

> Jacob-P relates (Interview Notes 1996):
>
> My in-game and out-of-game relationships have changed. When I started playing, I didn't know a bloody one of you from Adam, and now, after almost a year, I think I've made some pretty good friends; the most

shinning example of which is Damos-P, my roommate and closet friend in Manitoba.

Damos-P relates (Interview Notes 1996):

> In the beginning, I knew next to nobody. But as that changed, so did my approach. By nature, I have a very low self-esteem (something of a common trait with people in the game), so interaction is ofttimes difficult for me. However, I decided my character would be outgoing. By playing him as outgoing, I became less afraid of talking to strangers. I also interact better out-of-game with people who are not related to the game, as a result of playing Damos.
>
> Of the many bonuses I have derived from the game, nothing is more important to me than the building of a new esteem. When the game began, I was shameful of my body, my personality, in short I hated myself. But the game brought me into a world of people who enjoyed one another on so many different levels. Appearance plays next to no role during the game, and because of this, I began to look at myself differently. My self-esteem rose, and carried over to reality. In truth, I am a different person now because of how the game allowed my insight into myself.

Within the context of the community, players developed character-personalities that reflected their own. Preferred character roles were found to be exaggerations of the self. In other words when players are realistic, their characters are realistic, and when players are power-mongers and egoists, their characters are likewise. This is supported by interview data that shows fifty-nine-percent of consultants [ten consultants] still searched for self-identity, while forty-one-percent [seven consultants] knew they were more than the roles or careers they enact in everyday life.

Damos-P relates (Interview Notes 1997):

> Damos isn't as smart as me, and I'm surprised how easy it is to play. I just don't think actions through as much as I normally would when playing him. We both are fiercely loyal. Chivalrous would be the best way of putting it. Damos is very dedicated to the Camarilla he serves, yet I lack having

something to serve in my real life.

> Here is a secret that nobody really knows. I am 6'2", 230 pounds. I played football for 4 years, hold belts in various martial arts and have worked as a bouncer for several years. Yet, for all of this, I still have a mortal fear of hurting people. Not a fear of fighting or being hit, but a fear of doing physical or mental harm to a person. In the game, I have the chance to be what I always wanted, violent, pushy and abusive, not having to worry about the consequences of my actions. Somebody 'mouths off', [and] slap! It is not your place to disrespect me, so unlike Damos-P, the person who would just let that roll off,... Damos secretly wishes he could slap that person who just insulted him in real life.
>
> Damos is the personification of myself as a super anti-villain. The calm cold violent hero who abuses those around him, but would at the same time lay down his life for them. I play a character who embodies everything I wish I was, and he is everything I fear to become.

Although all consultants explained they played parts of themselves through their characters, seventy-one-percent believed it was wrong to do so. They say players who play themselves lack imagination and initiative. Regardless, it still occurred.

By playing at being aspects of themselves in-game, players formed an out-of-game community, reflecting the impressions they received and their responses to those impressions. Huizinga (1959: 12) confirms that a shared play community establishes and maintains its form even after play has ended. The game was an excuse for people to meet and socialize with others, including strangers. It is a focus for social life. Each gaming group interprets, defines and transforms cultural elements in its source of knowledge into the framework of an 'imagined society' (Fine 1983: 2).

(1.2) Motives for Player Involvement:

Game sessions had an openness to them, attracting numerous people of varying ages, economic status and maturity. A lack of perceived power in everyday life was mentioned most often by consultants as a reason for their participation. The attainment of power over others in the game was a primary game motivator. Escapism from everyday life, the strengthening of ego, the benefits of out-of-game prestige and the 'love of role-play' were also mentioned. In their struggle to attain these limited commodities, players became more involved in serious interactions. Players were exposed to the actual relationships directing game-play. When in-game problems affected out-of-game entertainment, the play frame became another everyday frame, organized by competition for limited resources. In such a serious frame, however, not everyone attained their desired relationships and not all were entertained.

Players quit the game and removed themselves from community influence after serious unresolvable out-of-game personality conflicts [mentioned by nine out of seventeen consultants], becoming frustrated with storyteller irresponsibility and bias [mentioned by seven out of seventeen consultants], or when it was no longer 'fun' to play [mentioned by seven out of seventeen consultants]. Players that quit the game, typically did so after a few game sessions. The players that remained most likely realized their social positions within and outside the game and were successful impression managers within those frames. In the following interview excerpt, Damos-P comments on the power of staying involved in the game:

Damos-P relates (Interview Notes 1997):

> We have created an organization, business, society, hell world, where we play a vampire within a city of vampires. We have stress, enemies, contacts, battles, but all of it would cease to exist if it wasn't enjoyable. From an outside viewpoint, if characters didn't develop they wouldn't be fun to play. If the game wasn't fun, nobody would show up. Sure the game builds self-esteem, affords people to explore themselves, allows friendships to bond, but nothing would happen if it became a chore. The LARP game evolved because it allowed people from all walks of life to join with one another one night a month and have fun. What greater aspect in the game could you ask for?

Damos-P discovered his role within the community of players. In Goffman's words, he was considered a "star performer" (1959: 206). He understood the role his character played, respected other player-character's roles, and contributed to the group management and validity of both the in-game fantasy reality and out-of-game organization.

Despite particular reasons for playing, all players needed community acceptance to play the game. The 'ideal player' is one that has an active appreciation for good role-play, while supporting other players' actions and plotlines. These players are quickly gathered up by cliques and put to work influencing game events. Other players are simply left to the background, to serve as filler for the various interactions that occur through inter-clique interactions. The result of this recruitment process was that their game was private, open only to those who could fit into the existing in- and out-of-game society. Ultimately, friendships affected game-related behaviour. Undesirable players were often set up as antagonists for player-characters within cliques. Personality clashes were another source of antagonism, but these proved to disrupt the game more than improve it. Still, such tension strengthened the bond between clique members, and united other players into a

solid community with recognized and practised social rules of conduct.

(1.3) Production and Maintenance of Virtual Society:

The vampire game community was established through the cooperation of competing and allied impression managers. In the passage that follows, Becker summarizes how the out-of-game vampire game community was produced and maintained:

> By the social exercise of linguistic power man creates his own identity and reinforces that of others. In this sense, identity is simply the measure of power and participation of the individual in the joint cultural staging of self-enhancing ceremony. Only by proper performance in a social context does the individual fashion and renew himself by purposeful action in a world of shared meaning. Loneliness is not only a suspension in the very fashioning of identity; cut off from one's fellows, one cannot add his power to the enhancing of cultural meaning or derive his just share of it. Social ceremony is a joint theatrical staging whose purpose it is to sustain and create meaning for all of its members (1990: 122).

Unlike other games, the *Vampire* game was directed by both competition and cooperation. The social aspect of the game allowed for a cooperation between characters. This cooperation was best displayed during in-game crises, such as when a character was murdered, a tradition or law was broken, or a mystery was 'afoot'. It climaxed when the group of characters [i.e., Camarilla] had to defeat a super-foe, but quickly decayed into the usual competition associated with games, when the threat was allayed.

> The gaming world, like any social system, is a political world in which participants vie for rights and privileges that must be achieved at other's expense by the use of power. The resolution of the dispute will be a consequence of the local circumstances, however, once a problem is defined it must be handled or it will lead to the groups disintegration. (Fine 1983: 165)

Competition was best exemplified during interactions between rival player-characters. The strong views of rival players were publicized through their in-game interactions. Their game was publicly played as 'fun,' but intensely interpreted in the everyday world. Players began to metaplay when they united in friendly cliques and became engrossed into the drama of their fantasy world. Clique-members vied against out-of-clique player-characters. Successful cliques shaped group impressions of performed in- and out-of-game players' actions. Interactions were defined by these popular cliques.

One example of a powerful clique was the storyteller's group and associated friends. Despite storytellers denying out-of-game favouritism, it did occur. Specifically, storyteller-players and those who receive extra attention from the storytellers, had more power to influence game reality. Consequently, these players were awarded more experience points for scheduled game sessions. With these additional points, players vastly improved their characters and gained unfair advantages over other characters.

When a player had a problem with the game, it was usually regarding the unfairness of rules-arbitration, favouritism, or game disorganization. Players defended their character-participation by debating game rules and story narration. Storytellers responded to player-criticisms by asserting their authority as game directors. Such authority guaranteed their out-of-game status. In the end, however, it was the players who were most effective, for they were free to quit. Storytellers were obligated to notify other storytellers before retiring their posts.

The success of this game community depended on players performing required community roles. There are those who, despite wanting to be otherwise, occupied

positions of clique directors, star performers, figure heads, side-kicks or were considered a part of the pack of players (1959: 206). It was inevitable that certain players self-played these stereotyped roles, however, few chose them. Players cast themselves according to their public behaviour. Certain players, due to their popularity, persuasiveness, or role-playing ability were accepted as directors, while others, who were less supported by cliques, were classed as side-kicks or 'one of the players.' The orchestra of these roles contributed to the organization and function of the community. These roles are self-fulfilling, defined by the group impression management of player-actions. Players who accept their public roles revised their idioverses to include other cooperating players. Routine cooperation between these players increased group thinking and solidarity. Actions that validated this cohesion were promoted, while those that endangered it were criticized. It was through this behaviour that status quo was established. This discourse not only supported the organization of the game community, but provided players with cues for their behaviour, interpretations of characters' actions, and preserves/unifies the game storyline.

> To play [fantasy role-play] is to engage in the creation of a group fantasy, to produce the Grand Illusion of a world ethos by the deliberate suspension of one's disbelief... But even as the [referee] spins his web of illusion, the players themselves add to the performance by playing their roles... The storytelling -FRP in a very real way is a storytelling activity, becomes a group creation as the imaginary life experiences and actions of each player character are added to the basic concept provided by the referee. The experience is itself the thing, and once begun it becomes a group happening (Simbalist 1979, brackets are mine).

The game universe was a virtual society of sorts, filled with all the components, both real and imagined, that established the 'reality' of its interaction frames. The storytellers'

administration was responsible for maintaining this order. The environment was created by staging scenes at particular locales, by using decorative props and encouraging fantasy role-play. They advertised a gothic-vampire 'world view' that encouraged megalomania and enacted moral contrasts between good [a human side of the vampire] and evil [the beast within]. Every player authors their vampire character differently, virtuously or diabolically. By deliberating the meaning of their in-game actions, players role-conceive character-development. Scenarios, storylines and plotlines served as action filters, motivating realistic role-play. These predetermined story motivators placed player-characters in a goal achieving state of awareness. Everything could be reduced to a quest for one thing or another: preventing the corruption of the social order, the destruction of evil forces, establishing control/influence networks between allied individuals, or seeking revenge on rival characters. To encourage this game mechanic, storytellers were expected to follow the rules, care about the well-being and entertainment of players and diffuse out-of-game conflicts. When this was not possible, they were expected to refrain from influencing player actions. In other words, they managed the groups' impression of their shared fantasy (Fine 1983). In- and out-of-game, storytellers governed their players and were responsible for the continuance of their chronicle.

(1.4) Public Issues Reflecting Private Concerns:

The social reality formed by clique-impressions was accepted as community status quo. To determine the value of player-actions or whether specific actions were welcomed or not, cliques compared them with community standards of excellence. However, since

players comprehend in-game actions according to everyday schemata, in-game transgressions were often blamed on out-of-game motives. Fine's (1983) study of role-playing game players confirms this point. Players comprehend in-game actions according to everyday schemata. If players had out-of-game antagonistic relationships, they would likely not work to each other's benefit in-game.

The vampire game play community was built by trusted individuals, who pursued personal growth within the confines of a supportive social environment. Within the community metaframe, play excused antisocial behaviour. Players could safely express antagonisms they felt toward particular players through harmful in-game character actions. However, the reverse was also true. Friendships could be developed more slowly and safely because players could identify public expectations of their in-game actions and identities. The out-of-game social structure was based on the temporary friendships of allied individuals that "hung-around together" in- and out-of-game. Most cliques were composed of players who met out-of-game either during or before the game. Although out-of-game actions affected the in-game social site, most out-of-game friendships were altered through in-game actions and allegiances. Players learned to manipulate their self-identities by role-playing private self-conceptions as public-character performances.

(1.5) Metagame and the Potence of Play:

If players role-played aspects of themselves as their characters and if their personalities affected the meanings of their play, then in-game relations directly influenced out-of-game relations. There was a reciprocal relationship between in and out-of-game

status and popularity. According to seven consultants [out of seventeen], players mostly affected each other's participation through hostile out-of-game emotions, including envy, hatred and obsessions. Five consultants claimed their friendships were determined, influenced, or ended because of game relations. A player's association with the main storytelling clique had a substantial effect on determining their success and involvement in-game and acceptance and status out-of-game.

Through a combination of consultant responses to the question, "who associates with whom," there is no doubt that the vampire community was patterned on the political relations between valued individuals and groups. When queried, consultants defined cliques as "groups of out-of-game friends who control the action and success of characters in-game" [ten of seventeen consultants], or explained that they did not know for certain [seven of seventeen consultants]. An absence of responses to politically charged questions highlights actual player-politics. Based on their previous responses, I surmise consultants refused to spread rumours and gossip about other players for they felt it would fuel antagonistic relations between existing cliques. Why else would they withhold information about other players unless they felt it would jeopardize their fronts by exposing private impressions that could be used against them in the game community Rumours are powerful tools for shaping public opinion within the game community. Although 'just play,' live-action *Vampire* serves to remind us how seriously we act in shaping our day-to-day social existence. Role-playing games exemplify how we manage the impressions others receive of the roles we play in everyday life. They teach us how the roles we play affect our position and function within society. Our self-awareness and worth are

ultimately dependent on our 'presentations in everyday life' (Goffman 1959).

(2) Consultant Conclusions:

To reduce textual misrepresentation, I have included four documents written by Mordechai-P and Istvan-P that pertain to the metaplay (Hurley 1994) of identities and game community reality. These texts describe the political and social definition of reality presented in this community's metagame, namely play is not always what it seems to be. The intensity of player-player criticisms and their emotional reactions to in- and out-of-game actions provide enough evidence to this effect. The remaining sections serve to emphasize the importance of the study of play phenomena.

(2.1) Mordechai-P's Descriptions of Characters and Players (Formal Interview 1996):

> *Casper of Clan Malkav:*
> This is one deeply screwed-up kid who's turning into a religious fanatic, and believing all that Gehenna flot. Too much in him to go into.
>
> *Guy of Clan Tremere*:
> He is gentle, good-tempered, seems to be honest and deeply cares for his friends. He also is very worried for the fate of Winnipeg, due to recent events. Very odd for a Tremere. Whether his air of mystery is deliberately cultivated or natural is unknown to me.
>
> *Bean of Clan Malkav:*
> This kook does so much that is supposed to be typical of the Malkavs that she is often ignored. Yet she's Seneschal of Winnipeg. Her personalities are a treat.
>
> *Damos of Clan Gangrel:*
> He slowly altered through the course of the game into something barely human. He was fairly smart, but his beast was to strong for him and caused

him to become more bestial as time went on. His 'Parental' relationship with Casper was notorious and drove him batty.

Diago of Sabbat Clan Tzimisce:
This twisted fuck has been chasing Casper and messing with his mind so severely we're not sure how the boy is going to turn out. This guy is the evil mad scientist (with a dash of perversion) to a 'T'. Scary, smart and nasty.

Rasputin of Clan Brujah:
This one went through the most (and still is) changes, at least physically. He was fairly bestial when Mordechai met him, but now his 'looks' make Nosferatu look pretty, and he's still mutating. He has a problem with his memory, and the flashbacks alone can be scary to watch. On edge, violent and probably crazy, he's one of the more interesting characters in the game.

Mordechai of Clan Nosferatu:
Anyone who's read his background will notice one important thing, he was an ordinary man put into extraordinary circumstances. WWII, Auschwitz, becoming kindred are all extraordinary situations that went into shaping him. People tend to see him as 'everyone's favourite old Grandpa' and care for him. Being a Nosferatu (in my mind) enhances the scholarly bent he started with. He goes through a lot of crap and almost always manages to make it through. Folks genuinely like him, and not just the information he can give them.

Isaiah Asper of Clan Toreador:
Self-centered (until Zoe came along), conniving, manipulative little dweeb. Treated Mordechai like shit for a while, then the behaviour change. In public, the same stuff, in private, he's asking the old man's advise. 'Shrug?' Mordechai saw potential and tried to help him get out of the pit he was digging for himself (with little success). Isaiah just wants to be left alone to run his cafe, then all these other damned Kindred showed up. He's slowly been degenerating, giving into the beast too often. Part of it is situational (e.g., threats to Zoe's unlife, whom he married), and most of it is his own malinky plots backfiring on him.

Sebastian of Clan Ventrue:
Was Prince for a while...with his laws enforced by his 'SS' as people called them (Sebastian's Stoogies). They were often little more than cannon-fodder. Many people feared him, especially his influence. This guy practically owned the criminal underworld in Winnipeg (or so rumour

would have it). Mordechai would just smile whenever people expressed their discomfort with him.

Damien McAllister of Clan Ventrue:
A good friend of Mordechai and in his coterie. This one has also been giving in to the beast and is growing more and more violent. He now leads the Anarchs, which he refuses to call Anarchs, preferring the name 'Nightrunners'. As Shaitan, he's been causing a lot of trouble and almost got himself and the Anarchs blood hunted. Guy wouldn't listen until a hidden friend started to scatter notes about, demanding a fair hearing for them (Mordechai, hee, hee). The blood-hunt called wasn't really McAllister's fault, he was actually out of the city at the time.

Character-play cannot be understood without understanding the player behind it. Hidden behind character role-play are the private motives of players. The character is the front to a menagerie of player attitudes and behaviour. Contrasting the above character sketches are the profiles of game players. Mordechai-P reveals in his words, how such players have been influenced by their character-play.

Rasputin-P:
Never talks about anything else except game stuff (not just Live Action Role-play- other RPGs too, but mostly LARP). Steering him into another topic is not that hard, it's just that he'll return to LARP after a short while.

Mr. Nore-P:
Couldn't keep his personal feelings of anger and disappointment in his character's failures out of his relationships with people. He's now left the game (Conversely, it seemed that after a while, there was a campaign to chase [him] out by destroying his characters. I think some [players] planned to do this.) I Still like him.

Istvan-P:
Pushy. Rarely talks about anything else either. Seems to assume that he's always right (and smarter than most...) I still like him.

Sebastian-P:
I'm not sure if this game is a factor, but when someone says stuff like 'It's my game' and other similarly control-freak stuff, it gets annoying.

Helena-P:
Pathological liars should not be in our game unless its a character! She accused someone of using the game to get sex from impressionable young newbies (Bogus. She also accused an ex-boyfriend of hurting her and proof came out that she was lying. Yuck) She also used the game, in a peripheral way, to get what she wanted: Attention.

Wolfram-P:
His after-game (sometimes before game) stress release rants, where he bitched-out people for stupid shit. This became tiring really quick.. And they were a stress release for him! He was Prince at the time and people constantly badgered him at all hours and was annoyed. He's no longer Prince and he no longer rants at people.

Lintara-P:
Really only one affect here, she over-reacted badly to her character's demise. So much so, that she went into a teary, screaming hissy fit. I thought it was childish. Then Mordechai was killed and I saw how she felt. I just didn't react as loudly.

Mordechai-P:
I sometimes feel that people like my characters more than they like me. Is this stupid of me? I also sometimes feel like folks are out to get me: In both games [that] I'm in, the successes and failures of my characters were virtually the same and I feel attacked when my characters are fucked with. I'm not perfect.

Mordechai-P's account of game players and their characters, do not reflect the opinion of all participants, they were derived from her experiences with game characters. Players expose aspects of their identity through the role-play of their characters, highlighting aspects of themselves that are normally concealed by cordial everyday role presentations. Character-play served to magnify negative characteristics of players and expose the actual everyday politics that controlled game-dynamics.

(2.2) Istvan-P's Assessment of Game Rules and Organization:

After months of believing in the fairness of game-play, players like Istvan-P began to protest the biased rulings of administrators. Not all players were being treated equally. Players who rallied the storyline developed by the administrators, became involved in such stories. Ignored character actions, rule ambiguity and arguments between player-characters forced other players to challenge the administration. Their protests were encapsulated in a players' seminar Istvan-P directed to restructure game roles and administration. The following document inspired the formation of a players-union, which eventually regulated game activities, challenging unfairness and applauding role-play excellence.

> WARNING and DISCLAIMER: This was written by Istvan-P, after polling a number of players. Any similarities to anyone living, or (un)dead is purely coincidental. Long live the Player's Union(TM)
>
> The motivation for writing this was mostly frustration with the game; the way things have been going for the last few months. There have been too many miraculous actions (I'm not going to list all the excessive Hand-of-God again), far too many overly powerful beings that are drawn to Winnipeg. I can appreciate the reason for these beings' involvement in Winnipeg, but to make a physical appearance lacks all subtlety/style. I really don't picture Justicars as wandering around with little or no purpose, and throwing their weight around indiscriminately - it makes them look bad, and their social circles would laugh for centuries when they find out what was done.
>
> 1. Storytellers.
> The job of the Storyteller is to make sure that a story is being told/acted out. Plots (Player and Storyteller driven) are a really big part of the game, and the Storyteller should be able to work in Player plots, and tell the story of how the world reacts to them. I don't think that the Storyteller[s] should bring in powerful NPCs to

force the players back into the storyteller's plot. If the Players want to ignore plots, let them. The position of Storyteller isn't just a title given to the cool people that hang out at *Die Maschine Cabaret*, it's a real job, and I feel that the time commitment to the job has been ignored or pushed aside too often by the current Storytellers. This isn't a shot at Wolfram-P or Zippy-P. I'm just pointing out that they might want to reconsider how much time they really have available for the game.

2. Storytelling.
It has been my experience that plot devices haven't been thought through.

Jacob-P is a friend of the current administration, and his character was brought back from death (again), to seek vengeance against his killer. This is a great plot, but the admin are not implementing it properly. As it is written, a dozen or so players will have their characters destroyed by a player who's leaving the game, and Jacob-P isn't playing out the ending his character would be seeking.

Another example is Zippy-P's Malkav Archon. Isaiah-P had been told out-of-game that Isaiah wasn't going to die, etc, but when I tried to bring this knowledge in-game, Zippy-P's NPC character reacted in a way that was not fitting his social position, and there was no reason for his character to act the way he did.

3. More Storytelling
The Storyteller must accept the fact that players will do things that surprise them, or throw in unexpected twists. It's not up to the Storyteller to force the Players to play along with the "main" story, and Players hate being told "No, you can't do that" with no real reason. Player actions must be done between games, and not haphazardly two days before the next game (which should be scheduled in advance so people can make work schedule changes).

4. Even More Storytelling
The Storytellers should carry notepads around with them. I know how annoying it is to have a group of players come up and ask questions, demand an immediate answer, and then scream when you can't remember every conversation verbatim. I also think that a big part of the Storyteller's job is to let all Player driven plots work within the grand plot/other player plots. If Player plots are going to conflict, either let them, or encourage the Player to hold off their

plot for a while, and then let them introduce their plot. Again, I stress the importance of following up Player actions, and not leave them hanging.

5. Players
Most of the Players haven't been told what Vampire: The Masquerade Live Action Role Playing game is about. Most of the Players don't seem to want to be playing in a game of Gothic Horror, let alone know what it is. I would like to keep this document away from anyone that's not Wolfram-P or Zippy-P, but if players find out, oh well: A lot of players, and I don't think I need to drop names here, just want to be involved in a social thing, hang out, play rock-paper-scissors, look cool, and play (the word play is used derogatorily here). There's nothing wrong with wanting to do any of this, but I don't think it has any place in a game of Gothic Horror. A lot of Players will go to the Extreme to keep themselves alive, or prevent Bad Things from happening to their characters. Extreme things: whining 'till you're brought back from the dead - and I don't have to give examples.

6. Playing
If a Player decides that their character is going to do something, they should be able to immediately answer the question "Why are you doing this?" If they can't, they shouldn't be. I'm opposed to telling Players how to play their characters, but I'm very confused when things like this happen: Winter (? a nobody Toreador) is being held prisoner in the Cafe until the Blood Bond between her and Lyntara is severed with Thaumaturgy. Lyntara calls for a Strike Force to break into the Cafe, kill anyone that gets in their way and rescue Winter. Yule (Yule-P insists out-of-game that Yule is a super honorable person) knows that Tommy (who he owes 2 life boons to) and Isaiah (who he owes 1 life boon to) both live in the Cafe, and has no problems with the thought of killing either.

I know why things like this happens. Players get bored, and jump at the chance to play RPS. Here's a typical game: from "game-on" (7:00 ish) - 9:45 players scramble around trying to do retroactive scenes that should have been played out in the past three weeks. 10:00 court starts, and a lot of players know that this is their last chance for fame for the night, and do stupid things just to get noticed. 11:00 court is over, and people are still scrambling to do something impressive, or just feel that they belong.

7. Character Generation
I don't think that the [player administration interviews] were in-depth enough to ask the real game questions of: what is your character's motivation, why is your character in Winnipeg, what do you want to do with your character, etc Characters sired outside of Winnipeg should deal with the shock of moving. Characters from Winnipeg should be sired by existing players. Being sired gives someone the chance to get involved, be taught the social/political structure of Winnipeg, and again, a chance to get involved.

8. In-Game Seminar
Here's one thing I'm looking at doing next game: Court gets called, the scene with Isaiah is resolved, regular court happens, then Tommy is going to pull out a chair, sit down, and tell a story (Chicago by Night, the 3 minute version) to explain status. If a person ignores court given status, they ignore the court, and the court will ignore them. I'll read out the status list, and explain each of the status traits everyone has (5 mins tops). Then I'll ask each of the Primogen if they have a Harpy, and who it is. I'll ask the Harpies in turn who they think should have more respect than the average Joe. If they can justify why their suggestions should get more status, then I'll award it after all the Harpies are done.

If I have 10-15 uninterrupted minutes, I'm sure I can explain in-game what status is all about, and why the elders should be respected. After this, I'm going to announce that for the most part, my place in court will be at the back of the room, where I can drop not-so-subtle hints to the players about what high-status people want.

The less experienced players might jump at things like this, and the position of Leader of the Harpies can be turned into a plot introducing game tool, and keep the character playing as a real character, doing things of his own volition. I also intend to spend some time with the Primogen that don't have harpies, and find out what they want, and spend some time getting the harpies organized, and get them to do my legwork (giving more players a reason to interact in-game).

I'm not doing this just because I'm a nice guy, I've always thought the Harpy should be more influential (status trait given is influential).

A lot of out-of-game information can and should be filtered into game by the right channels. The Nosferatu should get info in their player packs, and the Malkavs should be given some insight once in a while.

9. Clans, Stereotypes, Coteries, and Stuff :
I like the idea of non-stereotyped Characters, but it seems that most everyone is playing a non-stereotype Character. The Brujah don't have to be Anarchs to be Rebels. The Malkavs don't have to be silly and childish to be insane, etc. The admin might want to keep this in mind before they approve new characters.

An idea that I've heard passed around is from the Prince's Primer - put a banner with each of the clan symbols on the walls of court, and have the Primogen sit under it (maybe have the rest of the clan behind the Primogen). This is good for game play for a lot of reasons: now the Primogen aren't dealing with other Primogen as individuals, they're dealing with entire clans, and the Primogen might think twice before doing something stupid.

All people with titles must have the time and make the commitment out-of-game to call people, and meet with people. The Primogen MUST call their clans, and set up clan meetings between games. If someone doesn't have the time available in their schedule for the occasional out-of-game event, they shouldn't have the position. If Primogen don't call their clan for the next game/meeting, they should be deposed as Primogen.

I also think that the Primogen are above the mundane tasks of day-to-day unlife. Primogen have whips to do their dirty work, and the rest of the clan to do menial tasks. Primogen should have all the time in the world to play the political game (which is starting to show it's head again).

10. Final Note
As much as I liked the idea of restarting the game, it's been pointed out many times that the problems we have now will still be around, the only difference being the Characters will be less powerful. If Players don't want to be in our game of Gothic Horror, there's other games they can play in - Mara-P's, Yule-P's, Star Wars, tag at Die Machine Cabaret, etc.

The older Players must be punished for doing stupid things -McAllister-P for starting up the Anarchs was silly, and I don't know if it's his Character's nature, but it wasn't thought out in or

> out-of-game, and from what I can tell, the whole Shaitan plotline was an excuse for McAllister-P to wear his Star Wars costume. As for the Anarch raid on the Sabbat, I heard no less than 4 people there in Character claim they knew it was a trap, but they were there to "save their friends", or some other such nonsense (truth is they wanted to play [rock-paper-scissors]).
>
> We need new venues for the game, and now that the weather's getting better, we can all look forward to playing outside (Ruins, Cathedral, etc).
>
> Istvan-Player

(2.3) Emic Assessment of Problems with Game Play: 'The Metagame':

The ideas expressed in the above section, although not entirely self-motivated, are reactions to rampant personal politics that controlled the vampire game community. The nature of this politic was often called 'metagaming' by participants. Prior to my analysis of this form of interaction, participants used the term to refer to biased support between conspiring individuals who met out-of-game to stage certain scenes that caused uncalled-for trouble for other player-characters. Most players believed metagaming was a form of cheating or collusion. Such accusations were seldom directed at storytellers or narrators. Storytellers and narrators were cited as committing another offence, using the 'hand of god' [HOG]. The 'hand of god' is a drastic storyteller intervention of player-character actions and plotlines. Storytellers were said to commit 'hand of god' when they felt a scene or plotline jeopardized the main storyline or endangered game continuity. 'Hand of gods' were used at least once every two or three game sessions and at the most, once a game session. Problems arose when a player or players, usually a non-storyteller-clique member, acted in-game to disturb the sequence storyteller-planned events, or so affected

another character as to make it unplayable. Intervention by the storytellers was frowned upon by most players, although there were a few cases where the 'hand of god' benefitted all characters. This occurred when a storyteller misunderstood player-characters' actions, placing them at a scene where they were unlikely to be. Such errors occurred when a storyteller was misinformed by a deceptive or confused player regarding the location or time of a particular scene between characters. For instance, a storyteller may have been convinced that a certain character was at the scene of a crime and staged the arrest by investigating non-player-character police officers. Understandably, this player would be quite annoyed of the predicament, if their character was no where near the scene of the crime. 'Metagaming' and 'hand-of-god' often resulted in players quitting the game, being expelled by storytellers, or after some time, the collapse of the game administration. Such fragmentation resulted in a temporary lapse in record keeping and scheduled games. In every case, however, players continued playing the game and a new administration grew out of the old. Often storytellers who quit would resume their posts when order was restored. The commitment players had for their game prevented community disillusionment. Players valued the interactions they could control within their personal cliques. Players acted as their own narrators to establish and maintain scenes where an administrational presence would be disruptive or not required. The play frame was supported by participants with similar conceptions of social reality, and criticised by divergent thinkers. The meanings of game interactions were regularly debated by players with conflicting conceptions. Player-disputes, normally defused within the game fantasy, were resolved within the common frame of everyday affairs. Game-play became a reality-

play. Convincing accounts of this reality led to alterations in everyday relationships.

(3) Research Conclusions:

The outcome of play is far less important than the activity itself. There are no purposes to play, only experiences. If play is the mediating experience responsible for our action in other dramaturgical frames of interaction, then play can express serious consequences, affecting participants in deeply psychological ways. Players became aware of this thesis through their realization and criticism of what they called the metagame. They learned that character-play obscured everyday motives. Although just 'make-believe', *Vampire* game play enabled participants to toy with public schemata and to influence private self-conceptions.

(3.1) *Vampire* Game Community Metaplay:

Discovery of the other forms of metagaming led to the realization that the game community functioned through unofficial channels. The game had rules that storytellers supported and encouraged, but the real game occurred through player- and clique-conceptions of their fantasy world. Despite unfair play, the emotional investments player-characters, combined with their dependence on the out-of-game community, were reasons enough to preserve the game. No player wanted to admit that their game had become serious and more than a game. Any person expressing this belief was chastised as 'taking things too far' or 'mistaking fantasy for reality.' In the end the vampire game was expounded as 'just play'. Few players admitted that the game influenced their everyday

self-conceptions. The consequences of serious out-of-game events, having no connection to in-game events, were ignored by players. Yet all players had experienced events in-game that influenced their out-of-game lives. Similarly, few Balinese admitted their cockfights had little to do with the cocks themselves or the bloody fights, but had everything to do with their metagame, a competition between owners over status, community recognition and wealth (see Geertz 1973, 1984). Cockfights, like game characters, serve as symbols for deeper social issues and interactions. The metameanings of these contests, allow groups to shape the meaning of their relationships.

(3.2) Play as Metaframe of Social Interaction:

Play is not always as it appears. We can play at many things, at having fun, at being serious, or at being religious. Have you ever played at being serious? Children play seriously at being adults and adults perform their societal roles very seriously. Play is a medium or motivation for social interaction; effecting a division between people's internal conceptions of themselves and their public performances. How do children adapt/conform to society? They form their self-conceptions, encompassing drives, goals, understandings, world views and motivations, based on their performance in a public arena, composed of routine rules for behaviour, expressed through roles. They form identities based on a negotiation of public selves and private understandings (Schlenker 1986). Role performances are the public masks people use to participate in preset social frameworks. These frameworks are similar to scenes player-characters role-play; stages of self-presentation, either seriously or joking. To understand things, we play at them. To

understand ourselves and the world around us better, we experiment with different ideas and behaviour. Through a play at public life, we have one.

Play eliminates the paradox of everyday social interaction. Play is the corrective/directive base/structure of social interaction. In Canada and the United States, the first social interaction an infant has with his or her parents, occurs within the play frame. Then the child plays at being a person in elementary school. In junior and high school, the child plays at learning to be an adult and a producer. For the rest of their lives, westerners are employed in society-enhancing productive roles and are drawn into a commercial play where consumption of products is necessary for a healthy life. For instance, we play at our hobbies, yet many of these hobbies are dependent on resources such as money or materials. They require us to play the game of working for money, so that we can afford the luxuries we are told we need for our happiness. We need go no further than imagining places in our heads. Our social and mental worlds seem to be independent institutions, beyond our control and shaped by the roles we enact and products consumed, however, play proves otherwise. Play alters how we communicate with others, the motivation and meanings of our behaviour, our roles as productive/functioning citizens and how we imagine the world around us. Through play, we create and maintain social definitions and self-importance. During play, children are at the center of their worlds. Adults require the same centeredness in their lives, yet often find themselves off-center. The key to self-esteem and value in public life are connected with the roles we play and how those roles are valued by others. But self-esteem is a derivative of inner contemplation, not just social acceptance. We are the final arbiters of

our identities, our public life is simply the context we use to decide what is valued and what is not. As adults we have become caught-up in public approval, when we need look no farther than our imagination. Children act as if they have control of the world, despite evidence to the contrary. Do they live in a fantasy world? Surely they do, yet so do we. We believe our social reality to 'be reality'. Their reality is perceived as the unchanging everyday static world. Whereas adults strive to control the realities of their lives, children simply imagine they are in control until they are told otherwise.

(3.3) The Designation of Social Reality through Self-identification and Group Role-play:

Within the *Vampire* play frame, participants construct and test various imaginary and untested fronts or boundaries socially, without fear of real social consequences. These fronts are public facades used to distance personal-conceptions from public scrutiny. It is a 'psychosocial wall' varying in height and thickness according to roles performed and the social environment individuals interact within. A person's distance from the wall of another is a metaphor for the level of intimacy between them. Where people are closer, they are more aware of the inner, private self-concepts. The size of the wall and the distance from it represents the social boundary that people use to separate their various selves [e.g., work, school, play, etc.] from their more intimate/private personalities. Self confidence stems from trusting in the public presentations of our private self-conceptions.

Players must trust each other to share in each others' metaframe. The Vampire game provides the rules and frame to trust the 'fair play' of virtual strangers, serving as an excuse to affect people in the real world without drastically changing them. Cliques

provide the necessary level of trust for group role-play. However, personality conflicts make it nearly impossible for players to play well. Antagonisms between out-of-clique players were inevitably interpreted in-game. Such out-of-game interactions were played out more seriously in-game. This form of metagaming created a tension between players that threatened group solidarity.

Early in the game players were distracted by the process of learning the rules and feeling out their characters [developing character]. Nevertheless, once they understood the rules and comfortably role-played their characters, most players claimed to have 'gotten to know' [perhaps superficially] each other. A reciprocal relation developed between in-game interactions between characters and out-of-game interactions between players. What affected characters ultimately affected players. Play united character and player into one consciousness. Player and character are united through constant and continual contact, association and socialization. Although players stubbornly claimed out-of-game information should not be used in-game, such interactions were unavoidable. Despite players' exclamations that they never metagamed, rumours always existed of players practising it. Associated with the action of metagaming are the social labels of cheater, delusional personality, egomaniac, powergamer and bad role-player. These labels could just as easily be applied to people in everyday frames of interaction. The vampire metagame community consists of the in- and out-of-game political manoeuvres of player-characters and cliques, and the commensurable adaptation of player self-conceptions and character-performances. Play is a catalyst for social change. By changing the way we present ourselves in everyday life, we can alter the impressions others receive of our

behaviour. Changes in private understandings lead to changes in public presentations (Schlenker 1986). Once popularized, these understandings reshape the frames of our interactions.

Our community of relations equips us with various set of rules and symbols for communicating and imagining the direction and purpose of our existence. By role-playing the *other*, we become them in process, understanding their perspectives and predicting their actions. Within the dramatic-play frame, serious play prompts everyday responses. We learn to play within months of our birth, learn to fit into society, and are then taught play is unproductive and unworthy of adult occupation. Innovations occur mostly when we are simply playing at what we are doing. Results are of secondary importance to a child playing at being an adult. Surprisingly, by playing as adults, we become adults who privately play like children in our spare time. By playing seriously, we become serious at what we do. When we play for fun, play is fun. Play is not an occupation. Play is an experience that engrosses us in the activity itself, with little concentration on goals or ends. The means is not justified by the end product. The end product is a secondary byproduct of finding new and innovative ways of playing at living.

(4) Conclusion: The Lessons of Play:

The lesson we learn through this study of play is that reality is socially definable by those who play at it in the most realistic way. People or institutions who influence status quo determine what reality is. So educators, academics, politicians, doctors and lawyers

have a large impact on what is important, what is 'real,' and what is not. They are believed, because they play socially accredited roles. Through the endorsement of valued institutions, experts are trusted by the general public. Such support affords them the role and responsibility to shape the institutions that accredit them. Accreditation and legitimacy are reciprocal. It almost seems like a childhood game of make-believe, where each participant is believed to be the person or thing they present themselves to be.

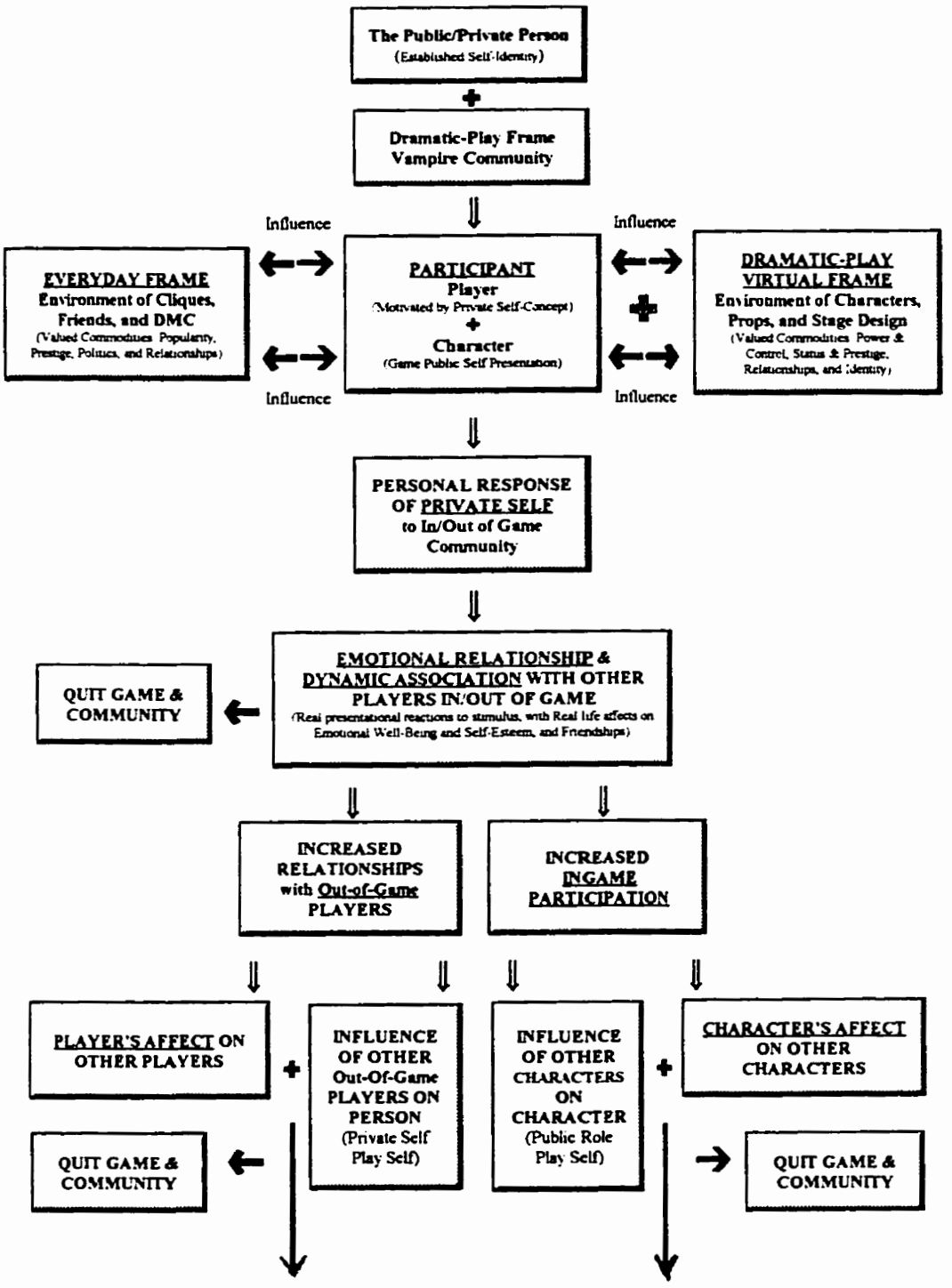
Through an informal or imagined consensus of the identity of others and the rules for behaviour, *Vampire* participants have formed a community of relations that supports their idea of reality. Both in- and out-of-game events contribute to this status quo. If this thesis were simply an ethnography, it would suffice to describe the status quo. Nevertheless, as status quos are determined by respected majorities, such a description may suggest the social order to be unalterable. Through our experience of the social world, we know this to be false. Our relations with people are constantly changing and correspondingly our society is re-definable. A far more insightful result of my field research explains how social reality is imagined and represented in everyday life. The live-action game serves as a model for this process. And although most people would consider the activity "just a game" or "just play," I have found that the activity is a 'front' to impression management (see Goffman 1959). Keeping Goffman's dramaturgical paradigm in mind, it is easy to relate to this behaviour to everyday social behaviour. Just as participants within the game, social reality is believed wholeheartedly by those people who add to it. Those with different political agendas, believe other realities as true. So when examining play interactions, most scholars have isolated play from the everyday world,

and viewed it with guarded speculation. Those people who say play is not reality, would also believe that children are not people until they stop playing at life and just act within it 'for real'. Few people should believe that a game that mimics social reality would possess the same behavioural structure as 'the everyday.' As this thesis has shown, social reality is situationally defined. What roles are valued and whose words are heard is not determined by a system of equality, but by those who can best present their case, by those that are good impression managers.

The social world of Winnipeg live-action *Vampire* participants reminds us of how we use play to shape the reality of our interactions. Play is shown to be more than a form of entertainment experienced in our 'spare time,' but as integral to everyday social interactions as language itself. The activity not only teaches us prescribed social schemata, but allows us the freedom to ad-lib. Without such freedom, our communication with others would be stunted. The subtle metamessages we continually exchange between us would be lost to regimented styles of behaviour. All behaviour would be interpreted at face-value and we would be unable to manage the impressions we receive from and create for *others*. Play frees us from primary frames of interaction, allowing us some control over the time and place of many behavioural and cognitive formats. Play is the metaframe that shapes other frames. It exists in the everyday frame of social interactions, and is used in the creation of new frames. Social reality is enacted or keyed by the significance actors give it. When a proposition of reality is incorporated into the regular routines of our existence, it works to influence our inner values and world views. This thesis is useful in reformatting existing definitions of play, and reminding us that our inner self-conceptions

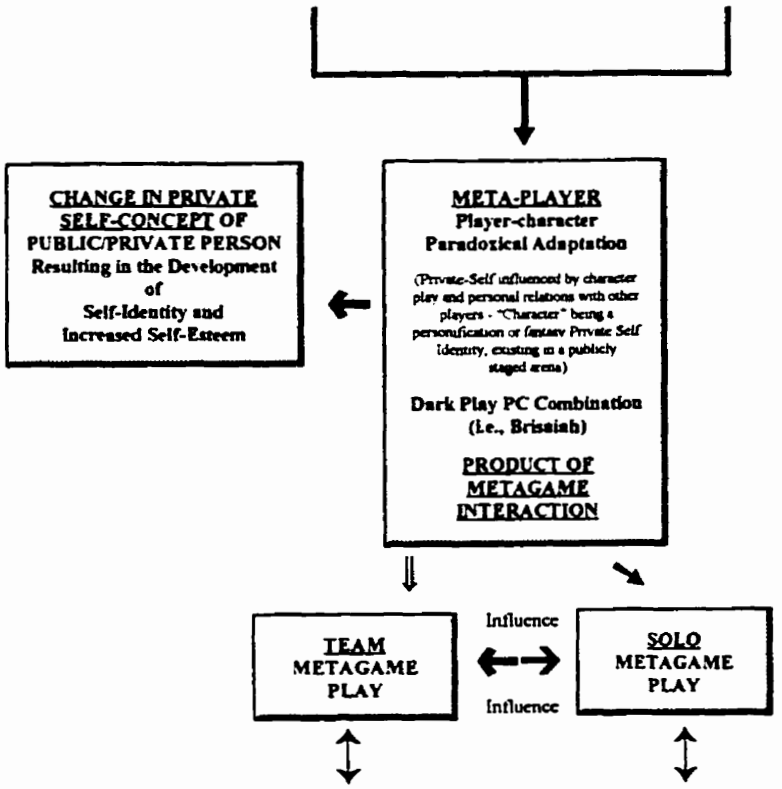
are as constructed as the roles we play. We change as we imagine we should. Our ability to play at life stems not from our need for restful leisure, for our leisure can be exhausting, but grows out of the experience of shaping our social-identity.

Appendix A1:
Flow Chart of Participation & Engrossment into the Vampire Game Community



Continued on 205...

Continued From 204



METAGAME SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Storytellers clique influencing and being influenced by associated cliques, and particular solo metagame players. Members of Storytelling Clique have the power to influence the overall story line, to set, describe, and ultimately control the Stage (e.g., events in the game, the reactions of non-player-characters, and the success or failure of player-character actions and plotlines), control what In-game rules are used and how they are interpreted, grant players (usually allied with the main clique) administrative roles and responsibilities (e.g., treasurer, character record and story keeper, narrator duties, non-player character actor duties, and various temporary gofer/helper duties), determine the meaning of a metaplayer's actions and behavior in the community (whether they are bad or good), and have right to final arbitration as to participation in the game.

Summary of Flow Chart:

Play is best defined through experience. To show how a person is introduced and engrossed into the Winnipeg *Vampire* game community, the reader should imagine he or she is the 'Classic' player. The 'Classic' player is derived from interview notes and participant-observations.

(1) The Public/Private Person:

The 'Classic' player is defined by his or her public roles and private motivations. Such a player is introduced to the *Vampire* game community by his or her friends. He or she is between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six and either a recent high-school graduate or is self-employed. Ideally, game participation provides the player with community membership and entertainment.

--IDEAL RELATIONSHIPS

The player quickly learns there are rules he or she must explicitly follow. These rules are written by *White Wolf Game* company. They are administered by game Storytellers and narrators. To participate, a player need only create, dress and act as a fictional *Vampire* character. Storytellers explain that all players have equal opportunities to succeed in their game, they must simply respect each other and "have fun."

(2) Interaction Frames of the *Vampire* Game Community:

Players participate in the *Vampire* game community using three interconnected interaction frames: the everyday out-of-game frame, the in-game dramatic-play and the dual participant frame of the player-character.

(2.1) Everyday 'Out-of-Game' Frame [The Players]:

This is the everyday frame in which players create their characters, discuss game scenes, and socialize with each other. Such interactions occur in Osborne Village at Die Maschine Cabaret Wednesday and Sunday nights, at Somepl@ce Web Cafe, or wherever players chose to meet. The 'Classic' player is friendly and outgoing, yet self-conscious and insecure about public performances. Out-of-game, this person seeks social popularity and prestige, and friendships with similar people. As a 'good' player he or she knows and follows game rules and respects the privacy of other players. Usually the person or group that helps the 'classic' player in creating a character, involves him or her in existing plotlines and politics. All new players are seen as game resources.

(2.2) Dramatic-Play 'In-Game' Frame [The Characters]:

Character role-play occurs in the dramatic-play frame. Players must suspend their disbelief, and pretend to be the characters they play. Player trust and cooperation are vital for game-play. Characters exist within a *World of Darkness* version of Winnipeg. In this world ghosts, demons and vampires are commonplace. Conspiracies thrive and evil lurks

always in the shadows. The 'classic' player's character joins a society of vampires who's mission is to blend into human civilization while manipulating its institutions and resources. Although once human, each character has been embraced into one of seven ancestral clans (Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, or Ventrue. Each clan has its advantages and weaknesses. The eldest of each clan in the city, is a member of the primogen council, a group that dictates the laws and punishments of this society. The eldest in the city is made Prince or ruler. The primogen council advises the Prince. This ruling council appoints other vampires as aids (e.g., harpy, sheriff, and keeper of elysium). Together, this group of vampires enforces their Traditions and maintains peace. A system of status and boons defines the social hierarchy. Status is a reflection of a vampire's esteem. Obviously, the Prince has much more status than a new vampire. In-game commodities include seeking power, status, the cooperation of other characters and impressive role-play. Actions include the formation of alliances, setting up antagonists, usurping positions, or fighting adversaries such as the Sabbat [amoral vampires] or Society of Leopold [vampire hunters]. Character development and achievement of commodities depend on each player's ability to predict the storyline of the Storytellers. Players who befriend game administrators gain access to this information more readily than those who simply play their characters. Out-of-game antagonisms form when players do not discuss the meaning of in-game antagonisms.

(2.3) Participant Frame (The Player-Character):

As players adjust to their character-play, they learn to guard in-game secrets and fear for their character's safety. Character engrossment is essential to player-character-participation. The game story depends on private-players' impression of public-character actions. Social acceptance is achieved by matching character performances with public expectations. As players succeed in their character actions, their participation in the game is justified. Players distinguish between in- and out-of-game actions by using hand signals. Nevertheless, some players deliberately use these signals to gain out-of-game information for in-game benefits.

--DESIRED RELATIONSHIPS

When players learned that they could befriend game officials and gain in-game advantages, they began interpreting their own rules. Personal imagination and goals began to supersede group cooperation. However, players could also befriend, delude, intimidate and confuse other player-characters about rules and story-events.

(3) Personal Response of Private Self-Identity:

Players became more engrossed into the virtual reality of the game community, as they responded emotionally to character actions. Although they were role-playing, players responded to their character actions as if they were real. Once they were dependent on their characters for their participation in complex storylines, their fear of character death increased. In-game contests became personal competitions for in- and out-of-game commodities. Friends could clear up any confusion between character actions and player

intentions, but strangers, or players who seldom socialized, could not. Player exclamations that their game "was only a game" prevented antagonisms from intensifying. Players that complained about unfair game-play were ridiculed for mistaking fantasy for reality. Such behavior became *status quo*. Since group decisions were more accepted than individual opinions, cliques of players could comment on the intentions of certain players to complicate their game-play. Any defense of public criticisms exposed a player's private motives and endangered his or her self-esteem.

(4) Emotional relationships and the Dynamic Association between In- and Out-of-Game Players:

Role-play intensified between player-characters who were friends. Personal plotlines were promoted and in-game political agendas were established. Despite differences in personality between characters and players, participants reacted as their characters, but interpreted all actions as influenced by out-of-game motivations. Rumors were used to glorify, criticise and create impression of player-motives. Such pubic 'assessments' led players to metagame. There are five forms of metagaming: player narration, confused actions, self-directed improper story involvement, collusion and conscious power-gaming or cheating. Although players denied the activity, all practised a form of it. Players learned to either tolerate this metagaming, avoid intense scene-play, or quit the game. Since players evaluated their experiences in a private, emotional way, and since emotions influence self-confidence and identity, negative degrading experiences led to lowered self-esteem.

(5) Increase in Player's Out-of-Game Relationships and In-Game Participation [Influence of Player & Character-Relationships]:

The private self-conceptions of players were challenged or changed by increased out-of-game friendships and support groups, called cliques. Certain groups began to interpret the motives of players through their characters' actions. Players who were evaluated as authentic role-players succeeded in-game. Characters influenced each other, affecting the players, who responded out-of-game with similar relationships. Some players quickly tired of these interactions and quit the game. Others who recognized the metagame, either ignored it, or used it for their own purposes.

--ACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Players learned that Storytellers and their friends controlled game rules, and interpreted the character-actions and player-intentions. Realizing that a minority controlled the *status quo*, some players began awarding their own experience points for in-game actions. These players learned to straddle the fence between play and not-play, consolidating private and public presentations.

(7) The Metaplayer: Player-Character Paradoxical Adaptations:

With practice, players learn to switch between the everyday and play frames, to present

their case, often narrating scene events before initiating them. The public performances of game characters altered players' private self-identities and behavior. Players benefited from their characters' successes by privately adopting their confidence and cherished characteristics. Players blamed their characters' failures on out-of-game rivalries and metagaming. Metaplayers experienced the paradox of role-playing public roles, while simultaneously maintaining private initiatives. Players learned to communicate with each other, both in- and out-of-character.

(7.1) Team Metaplay:

Since group values are favored over individual opinion, players banded together in cliques. Members valued all actions and ideas of their 'friendship groups' as equally important. Such groups were useful in managing the impression others received from in- and out-of-game actions. The Storyteller's clique interpreted all game actions by their *status quo*. By acting as popularity metres, cliques helped define and sustain community relations. Without cooperative cliques, the community and the game risked fragmentation and discontinuation.

(7.2) Solo Metaplay:

Solo metaplayers are stand-alone role-players. These players rely on their game performances to win favor from influential cliques. They are proficient role-players and are skilled at playing their own game.

(8) Change in Private Self-Concept of Public/Private Person:

Just as in the everyday world, as we gain experience presenting certain roles we become more proficient in them, players learned to role-play their characters as extension of their own identities. Characters developed as players adjusted to their successes and failures. The 'Classic' players' private identity was altered by influential public assessments of his or her motives, behavior and justifications. In-game actions were affected by impressive out-of-game circumstances. True feelings could be expressed in-game and denied out-of-game. To play in the community, players had to adjust to this dynamic and adapt their characters to suit a transposed out-of-game social scene.

(9) Metagame Social Environment:

Metaplay is our ability as outsiders to penetrate masked identities and pseudo-truths, and to comprehend hidden agendas while concealing our intentions. Through metaplay, we can negotiate cognitive frames and shape social reality. The metaplay of influential clique members determined the social reality of the Vampire social environment. By playing this game both in and out-of-character, certain players succeeded in regulating community affairs and controlling their shared fantasy. Rules, both in the everyday and in-game, were invented, controlled and interpreted by those with Storyteller-clique influence. Ultimately, the game encompassed the fantasy reality of those players that were the arbiters of truth and story.

Appendix A2:
1996 Demography of Game Community Participants

Player/Character	Gender	Age	Occupation	OOG Position	Character's Clan	Gender	Apparent Age	IG Position
Rasputin-P*	male	23	Gas Attendant	Player	Brujah	male	? Disfigured	Whip1 Primo2
Istvan-P*	male	25	Home Business	Player	Brujah	male	25	Primogen2
Yule-P	male	25	Asst. Man. Perkins	Player	Brujah	male	32	Archon
Morrigan-P	female	18	Telemarketer	Player	Brujah	female	27	Primogen 1
Shadow-P-NR*	male	24	Student	Player NR	Brujah	male	19	Sheriff1
Yeshua-P	male	36	ComputerProgramer	Player	Brujah	male	25	Ancillae
Sepp Deitrich-P	male	19	Student	Player	Brujah	male	22	Neonate
Aura-P	female	23	Student	Player	Brujah	male	23	Neonate
Stone-P	male	21	Wrestler	Player	Brujah	male	25	Neonate
Ramsess-P	male	21	?	Player	Brujah	male	25	Neonate
Tiger-P-NR*	female	19	Student	Player-NR	Gangrel	female	25	Primo1 Whip2
Jacob-P*	male	25	Military	Player	Gangrel	male	26	Archon
Damon-P-NR*	male	21	Student	Player-NR	Gangrel	male	?	Prim2 Arch W1
Kaylin-P*	female	18	Military	Player	Gangrel	female	21	Whip3
Mephestopheles-P	male	25	Military	Player	Gangrel	male	26	Archon
Garrick-NR (see Tier-P-NR)	as below	a.a	a.a	a.a	Gangrel	male	?	Anarch
Luv-P	female	19	Unemployeed	Player	Gangrel	female	22	Ancillae
Bean-P*	female	18	Unemployed	Player	Malkavian	female	20ish	Neonate
Spyder-P-NR	male	23	Self-Emp/Tech	Player-NR	Malkavian	male	28	Primogen2
Ramsey-P-NR	male	23	Manager Student	NR	Malkavian	male	29	NPC
Zippy-P-NR-ST*	male	21	Student	PY-NR ST	Malkavian	male	25	Harpy 2
Chriss-P	male	18	Entertainer-BagPipe	Player	Malkavian	male	18	Neonate
Casper-P-NR*	female	18	Child Care	Player NR	Malkavian	male	15	Neonate
Jezebelle-P	female	19	Salsbury House	Player	Malkavian	female	18	Neonate
Gabreel-P*	male	26	Waiter	Player	Malkavian	male	30ish	Harpy 1
Eve-P	female	21	?	NPC	Malkavian	female	20	Ancillae
Isaac-P (see Rasputin-P)*	as above	a.a.	a.a	a.a	Malkavian	male	21	Neonate
Stumpy-P-NR	male	18	Student	Player NR	Malkavian	male	20	Neonate
Christiana-P	female	24	?	Player	Malkavian	male	18	Neonate
Mordechai-P*	female	27	Unempl/Artist	Player	Nosferatu	male	65	Primo1 Senec2
Dimple-P	male	?	?	Player	Nosferatu	male	?	Neonate
Damius-P	male	?	?	Player	Nosferatu	male	?	Neonate
Wilt-P	female	18	Unemployeed	Player	Nosferatu	female	18	Neonate
Boris-P	male	36	Orderly at Hospital	NPC	Nosferatu	male	40	Ancillae
Cyranose (Morrigoo-P)	female	18	Telemarketer	NPC	Nosferatu	male	35	Neonate
Hoffa-P	male	?	?	Player	Nosferatu	male	?	Neonate
Jharum-P	male	18	?	Player	Nosferatu	male	?	Neonate
Bill-P	male	18	?	Player	Nosferatu	male	?	Neonate

Continued on

Continued from 210

Helena-P	female	20	Waitress	Player	Toreador	female	19	Whip2 Primo3
Isaiah-PR	male	27	Student	Player PR	Toreador	male	29	Primo1 Keep4
Dimitri-P	male	18	Student	Player	Toreador	male	25	Primo2 Whip1
Tier-P-NR	male	19	Student	ST/NR	Toreador	male	45	Elder
Domingo-P*	male	28	DMC Co-owner	Player	Toreador	male	25	Primogen=4
Tommy-P (see Istvan-P)	as above	a.a.	as above	as above	Toreador	male	27	Harpy =3
Sara-P	female	26	Seamstress	N.P.C.	Toreador/Angel	female	26	Neonate
Zoe-P*	female	20	Student FWI	Player	Toreador	female	24	Neonate Prim5
Park-P	male	18	Bike Courier	Player	Toreador	male	19	Neonate Whip3
Gergyluss-P	male	21	?	Player	Toreador	male	?	Neonate
Winter-P	female	19	Unemployed	Player	Toreador	female	19	Neonate
Melpomene-P	female	19	?	Player	Toreador	female	20	Neonate
Lintara-P	female	21	Unemployeed	Player	Toreador	female	23	Neonate
Modred-P	male	23	?	Player	Toreador	male	25	Neonate
Louis-P	male	18	Student	Player	Toreador	male	30	Elder
Dahlia-P	female	18	18	Player	Toreador	female	19	Ancillae
Kia-P	female	18	Student	Player	Toreador	female	19	Neonate
Delila-P	female	27	Unemployeed	Player	Toreador	female	24	Neonate
Melisande-P	?	?	?	Player	Toreador or Ventrue	?	?	Neonate
Morgan-P	male	24	Bar Tender	Player	Toreador	male	25	Neonate
Mr. Nore-P*	male	28	Courier	Player	Tremere	male	45	Primogen1
Guy-P*	male	32	Security Officer	Player	Tremere	male	32	Primo2 Keep2
Mara-P	female	26	Office Temp	Player	Tremere	female	26	Whip1
Dhalgrin-P	male	27	MNC Co-owner	Player	Tremere	male	30	Ancillae
Scruface-P	male	24	Sub Teacher	Player	Tremere	male	29	Sheriff2 Primo3
Seraph-P	female	21	As Man Subway	Player	Tremere	female	26	Neonate Whip2
Adam Knight-P	male	?	?	Player	Tremere	male	?	Neonate
Miles-P	male	25	?	Player	Tremere	male	?	Neonate
Radu-P (see Scruface)	as above	a.a.	a.a	a.a	Tremere	male	?	Neonate
Ethan-P	male	27	Student	Player	Tremere	male	?	Neonate
Randall St.Peters-P (see Mr. Nore)	as above	a.a.	a.a	a.a	Tremere	male	28	Neonate
Wolfram-P-ST-NR*	male	22	Student	ST/NR	Ventrue	male	27	Prince=1 NPC
Sebastian-P-ST	male	31	Canada Post	Player ST	Ventrue	male	30	Whip1 Prince2
McAllister-P	male	21	Graphic Designer	Player	Ventrue	male	24	Senechal=1
Wilhelm von Kruzt-P	male	22	?	Player	Ventrue	male	30	Neonate
David Simons-P	male	22	Canada Post	Player	Venture	male	28	Neonate
D'Arby-P	male	24	Bike Courier	Player	Ventrue	male	32	Neonate
Niente-P	male	21	Unemployeed	Player	Ventrue	male	25	Neonate
Samhain-P-ST-NR (see Tier-ST)	a.a.	a.a	a.a	NPC ST/NR	Ventrue	male	28	Elder

Continued on 213

Continued from 211

George-P	male	39	DMC employee	Player	Setite	male	29	Primogen1
AsserCriel-NR	male	21	Student	NR	Assimite	male	25	Ancillae
Rafaello-P (see Louis-P)	as above	a.a	a.a	NPC	Giovannii	male	?	Antagonist
Piedius-P (see AsserCriel-NR)	as above	a.a.	a.a.	NPC	Caitiff (clanless)	male	?	Anarch
Diago-P-ST-NR (see Wolfram-P-NR-ST)	as above	a.a	a.a	ST NR NPC	Tzimisce	male	27	Sabbat Antagonist

Abbreviations:

ST (storyteller)
NR (narrator)
PY (Player)
PR (Principal Researcher)
a.a = as above a.b. as below
Bolded names represent players mentioned in thesis chapters.
*Player-character Consultants

Results:

Accounting for players playing multiple characters
Average Age 23
65% (43/66) Males
35% (23/66) Females

Appendix A3:
Model Social Hierarchy in *Vampire* Society:

Ruling Authority

Prince
|
Senechal
|
Primogen Council
| | |
Keeper Sheriff Harpy

Clan Structure

Clan Primogen
|
Clan Whip
|
Clan Members

Actual Social Hierarchy of Main Characters in 1996/97 Winnipeg *Vampire* Society:

Prince
Wolfram van Höpner

Seneschal
Damien McAllister

Primogen Council

Toreador Clan	*Ventrue* Clan	*Tremere* Clan	*Brujah* Clan	*Malkavian* Clan	*Nosferatu* Clan	*Gangrel* Clan	*Setite* Clan
Primogen (1) Isaiah (2) Dimitri (3) Helena (4) Domingo (5) Zoe	*Primogen* (1) McAllister (2) Sebastian	*Primogen* (1) Mr. Nore (2) Guy (3) Scruface	*Primogen* (1) Morrigan (2) Istvan (3) Rasputin	*Primogen* (1) Yrtle (2) Spyder	*Primogen* (1) Mordechai	*Primogen* (1) Tiger (2) Damos	*Primogen* (1) George
Whip (1) Dimitri (2) Helena (3) Park	*Whip* (1) Sebastian	*Whip* (1) Mara (2) Seraph	*Whip* (1) Rasputin (2) Shadow	*Whip* (1) All (2) Zippy	*Whip* (1) None	*Whip* (1) Damos (2) Tiger (3) Kaylin	*Whip* (1) None

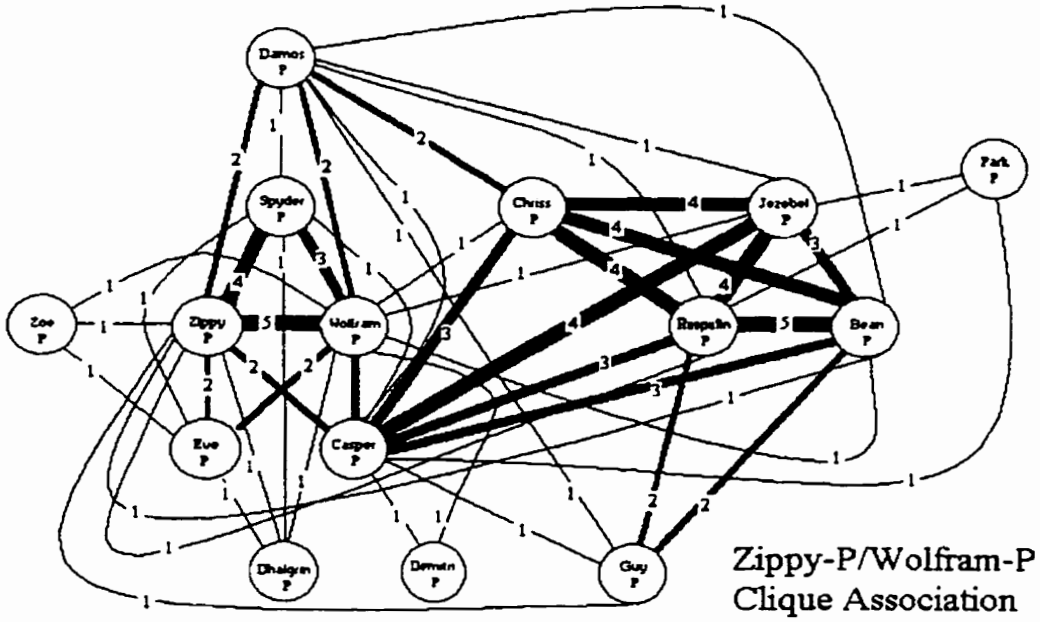
Primogen Appointed Positions

Keepers of Elysium	*Leaders of the Harpies*	*Sheriffs*	*Archons*
(1) Melpomenia (2) Domingo (3) Guy (4) Isaiah	(1) Gabreel (2) Zippy (3) Tommy	(1) Shadow (2) Scruface	Yule Mephestopheles Jacob Crowe

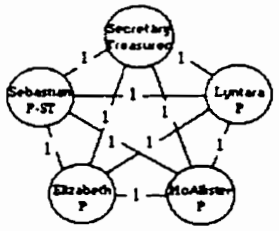
ToreadoClan Members	*VentrueClan Members*	*TremereClan Members*	*BrujahClan Members*	*Malkavian Clan Mbr.*	*NosferatuClan Members*	*GangrelClan Members*	*SetiteClan Members*
Isaiah Dimitri Helena Mordred Zoe Domingo Park Delilia Louis Tommy	McAllister Wolfram Sebastian Niente	Mr Nore Mara Seraph Scruface Guy Dhalgrin	Rasputin Istvan Yule Morrigan Shadow Yeshua	Spyder Zippy Casper Bean Jezebelle Christiana Ramsey Chriss Gabreel Stumpy	Mordechai Wilt	Tiger Jacob Damos Kalyin Mephest-opheles Luv	George

Appendix A4:
Diagram of Clique Member Associations:
Diagram based on 17 consultants' estimations of out-of-game player relations (November 1996 and January 1997)

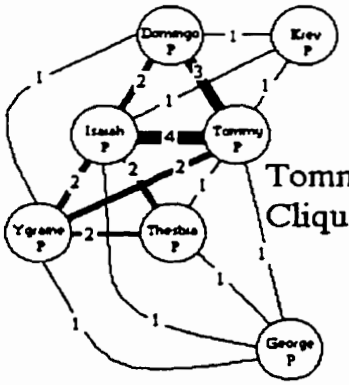
Showing the frequency of each player's association with other players.



Zippy-P/Wolfram-P
Clique Association



McAllister-P/Sebastian-P
Clique Association



Tommy-P/Isaiah-P
Clique Association

Key:

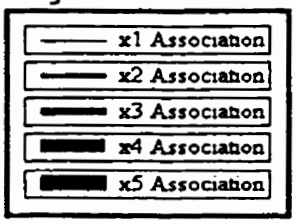


Figure 1
The thickness of each line represents the frequency and intimacy of players' public relationships and the depth of clique understandings.

Appendix B:
A Glossary of Definitions

Uses of *Meta:*

Meta-:
This prefix alters the traditional meaning and use of it's root-word. Meta, essentially, is metaphor, "the transferred use of a word or phrase, suggesting comparison with its basic meaning" (Oxford Dictionary 1991). Meta serves to remind the reader that it's root must be interpreted within specific contexts. The word dog, can signify a canine, or it describes someone's demeanor or character. Interaction frames alter the use and meanings of such words. The *meta*meaning of a cock-fight (Geertz 1973) is interpreted by cock-owners and families. Behaviour and language are defined by our personal relationships and the mood or attitude of our encounters.

Metaframes:
a) PLAY (In-Game play in Vampire LARP):
In the frame of play, all "statements and activities exchanged are in a certain sense neither true nor false, unintentional, and that which is denoted by these signals is nonexistent or imaginary" (Bateson 1972: 183). However, during the dramatic play of Vampire, statements and events are roleplayed 'as if' true and realistic.

b) EVERYDAY (Out-of-Game Vampire LARP):
The 'Everyday' meta-frame is what we consider the operating reality of everyday, mundane, routine, formal, and serious social life. I consider this reality to be the interlude reality or liminal reality existing between other frames. They are connector frames.

Metagame:
Use of multi-frames to control interactions. A form of impression management. Multiframe play enables people to control their scenes. Five forms of metagaming observed in the game are player narration, confused actions, self-directed improper story involvement, collusion and conscious power-gaming [or cheating]. (*Player narration*: Intentional coordination of character actions and scenes so as to promote emotional plotlines. Players plan future scenes for their characters to experience. *Confused Actions*: A confusion of in- and out-of-game sources of information. Players also use forgetfulness as an excuse for reinterpreting past events. This is a form of impression management. Self-directed improper story involvement: Players become involved in scenes they observe out-of-character, or use out-of-game knowledge to become involved where their character had no in-game likelihood of being involved. *Collusion:* Intentional alliances between players serving to coordinate character-actions so as to overly benefit characters involved. *Power-*

gaming or cheating: The fear that certain players strive to disregard game events and character interactions, or the rules of the game, in order to make their character more powerful, both through increases in characteristics or through influencing other characters.

Metamessage Receptivity:
Is the ability of the receiver to interpret hidden metamessages by distinguishing between mood-signs and simulated mood-signs (Bateson 1962; 1972)

Metaplay:
Our ability as outsiders to penetrate masked identities and pseudo-truths, and to comprehend hidden agendas, while concealing our intentions. Through metaplay, we can negotiate cognitive frames and shape social reality.

Play Theory Definitions:

Character-play:
The live-action interactions of fantasy role-playing game characters.

Game:
Referring to live-action *Vampire the Masquerade* role-playing game. A play system including: character creation rules, rules for challenges (physical, social and mental tests), rules of conduct, suggested plotlines, and society outline, regulated storylines and storyteller-based administration.

Game-play:
Participatory interactions of player-characters and storytellers/narrators in live-action *Vampire the Masquerade* role-playing game.

Life (Social):
"Life is a continuously staged social ceremony whose purpose is to create and sustain meaning for its participants" (Brissett and Edgley 1990: 115).

Private play (Self-play):
Private play occurs whenever an individual initiates it. During this form of play, actors maintain their identities and roles, while experimenting with the roles of others. The paradox of balancing identities enable us to metaplay issues and ideas too serious/stressful to communicate directly. They are played at. The unrehearsed and unstructured format of these interactions allow for innovations in self-identity.

Public play (Role Play):
Repetitive, stereotyped, recursive, rehearsed routines of interaction defined by rules.

"Activity undertaken for own sake" (Stone 1990). There is no paradox involved in these presentations, and they result in few behavioural innovations.

Role-playing:

"It is a means of personal expression on a highly creative and imaginative level. It is the spontaneous creation of a 'living novel' or a 'psychodrama,' interaction amongst players on many different levels as they create *alter egos* in the personas' of their characters and so enter into imaginative and exciting realms of existence denied to them in their everyday lives. The more fully they themselves capture the spirit of their characters and imbue them with rounded personalities, backgrounds and motivations separate from their own, the more the players become 'actors' on a stage of their own making... If one is going to create a world that is 'alive' and charged with real adventure, role playing is essential. One must get *inside* his character, breathe life into him as an individual and above all surrender one's twentieth century self to the illusion, and *be* that character - see, feel, think, and act as he would... We are all playwrights and actors and audience rolled into one. If it is a good performance, we are highly gratified and, though limp with repeated adrenalin surges, we make plans to meet for the next foray into 'Our World'." (Simbalist 1979 cited in cited in Fine 1984 :206)

Sociodramatic play:

The creation and adoption of new and changeable rules. The means by which children learn to communicate, negotiate, create, problem-solve, and understand social roles, roles and perspectives.

Frame Analysis:

Down-keying:

"Students of interaction often have the same problem they start attending to a particular element of the scene but soon find that they have been drawn into ordinary involvement and are no longer attending to the special focus of observation they had set themselves" (Goffman 1974: 361). Example: When Isaiah was seducing Zoe in the Toad N Hole pub, I felt a little uncomfortable and was embarrassed - aware of the inappropriateness and stagedness of the scene. I was also aware I wanted to be closer to her and it felt odd having Isaiah charm her in a false/fictional way for Isaiah was somewhat deceiving her.

Flooding Out:

-Dropping out of frame via laughing to reduce the seriousness of the frame or to apologize for some indiscretion.

Frame (Bracketing):

-Frames are the labels we use to describe the nearly undefinable nature of particular complex social interactions. The labels we use are the "keying" the frame "sustains"

(Goffman 1974: 82)

Example of Frame (PLAY):
-*Key* "This is play!".
-*Action* "mimics reality and appears serious."
-*Meaning* of the play frame is that it is "not serious and just play!"
-*Metameaning/message* states that the interaction is "sort of serious, and another way of dealing with serious issues in a non-threatening environment."

-"Frame is a scheme of interpretation in which the particulars of the events and activities to which we attend are organized and made sensible... the same event, is dependent on the framework from which it is perceived and thus many realities may be simultaneously occurring among (and even within) participants to the same set of activities" (Goffman 1974: 9).

-"Principles of organization which govern events, at least social ones, and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman 1974: 10-11). Frames regulate and define behaviour, comment on probable meanings of particular situations, allowing people to understand the actual and possible behaviour of others.

Frame Flipping:

-Multi framed interaction. Example: In/Out character transitions during a game -flipping between playful and everyday interactions.

Keying:

-"When there is one, [it] performs a crucial role in determining what it is we think is really going on" (Goffman 1974: 45, brackets are mine). All participants should be aware of the framing.

Primary Framework:

The primary frameworks of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture - classes of schemata and relation of these classes. The world is governed by social frameworks and acted upon naturally (read: no responsibility). The more planned a frame is the more ritual/ceremonial it becomes. Interesting Note: The primary framework in the western world, may be seriousness/pragmatics. Without a 'key', the play frame quickly dissolves into an everyday serious event.

Shift Keying:

Momentary shifting of frame. For example, a child being chased by another may occasionally become terrified and serious, rather than playful.

Strip:

"Any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences or happenings [like a scene in Vampire LARP], real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them" (Goffman

1974: 10, brackets are mine). These strips are arbitrary constructions used for conceptualization and analysis. They are not natural occurrences.

Dramaturgy & Role Theory

Attitude:
"Is established by the opinion of others based on a person's appearance, actions, and their conception of both." (Stone 1990: 154).

Character:
The public-roles players perform during in-game *Vampire* interactions.

Co-sociate:
A participating member of a community or society.

Encounter:
-"A locally realized world of roles and events cuts the participants off from many externally based matters that might have been given relevance, but allows a few of these external matters to enter the interaction world as an official part of it" (Goffman 1961: 31). Example: What you do in-game, will affect your life out-of-game.

Engrossment (intense involvement):
"Is a psychobiological process in which the subject becomes at least partly unaware of the direction of his feelings and his cognitive attention" (Goffman 1974: 346).

Experience:
-"... is at one and the same time, illustrative of what individuals do and of the conventional patterns of culturally learned and interpreted behaviour that makes them understandable to others... encourages us to see actions as units of behaviour that can be separated from the rest of the action and talked about later" (Abrahams 1986: 49).

Expression (in regard to Impression Management):
The communicative role impressions performed during social interaction. Articulations, formulations, and representations of experience.

Face-to-Face Interaction:
"... may be roughly defined as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1990: 137).

Impression (in regard to Impression Management):
A source of information about unapparent facts. The opinion of others.

Interactant:
A term designating a participant of social interaction.

Interaction:
-"... all the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence" (Goffman 1990: 138).

Participant:
Player, narrator, storyteller, or administrative person who is involved in a role-playing game such as *Vampire the Masquerade.*

Performance:
-"All of the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in anyway any of the other participants" (Goffman 1990: 138).
-"That arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter, in turn being an object that can be looked to for engaging behaviour, by persons in a 'audience' role" (Goffman 1974: 125).

Personality:
"Consisting of all those more or less stable internal factors that make one person's behaviour consistent from one time to another, and different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations (Child 1968: 82, 83 *In* Whiting 1980: 96).

"Personality is defined here as the total set of experiential derivatives of an individual. It includes those derivatives or constructs which are unique to him or held in common with various subsets of individuals; it includes the possibility of some experiential derivatives (or constructs) that may be held in common with all other members of the society. Further, no one culture defines all the commonality of human experience; the personality of the individual includes experiential residues of events and situations that may be extremely prevalent or common to members of certain types of societies. These may derive, for example, from recurrent biological or social relations. Thus, the personality of the individual takes part in a hierarchy of commonality, ranging from the unique to the universal. By defining the personality as the individual's total set of experiential derivatives conceived of as a set of representations or constructs that, as defined for the idioverse, represent the form and situation of behavioural events. The constructs have the behaviour-determining of motivation potential of the construct" (Schwartz 1978: 430-31).

Personhood:
"An inner world of stilled emotion and an outer world of shaped behaviour confront one another as sharply distinguished realms unto themselves, any particular person being but the momentary locus, so to speak, of that confrontation, a passing expression of their permanent existence, their permanent separation, and their permanent need to be kept in

their own order.... The masks they wear, the stage they occupy, the parts they play, and, most importantly, the spectacle they mount remain and comprise not the facade but the substance of things, not least the self" (Geertz 1981: 128-9 *cited in* D'Andrade 1981).

Prestige:

"Each position tends to be accorded some invidious social value, bringing a corresponding amount of prestige or contamination to the individual who fills it" (Goffman 1961: 87).

Role:

Expression of identity. "An activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position" (Goffman 1961: 85).

Role Distancing:

-Role distancing is the Actors control over the role - a way of playing the other.
-Tongue-in-check role-play; not being serious about your role.
-Example: "My character has no affect on me. It's just a character - I am me." People who say this, probably believe they are the same person in all circumstances. Talking about others people's inability to role-play. Or holding off from a scene.
-"Situated roles that place an individual in an occupational setting he feels is beneath him are bound to give rise to much role distancing" (Goffman 1961: 113).

Role-Others:

Relevant others. (Goffman 1961)

Role-Sectors:

Relationships of roles with particular audiences. Example: Doctor-Patient relationship (Goffman 1961). The coordination or concert of roles.

Role-Set:

-A group of role-performers. The cooperation of certain role-performers in view of common audience. Example: doctor-nurse-colleagues. This relationship is non-conflicting. Its structure supports itself (Goffman 1961).

Rotes:

Mechanical routines in learning; repetition without attention to meaning.

Schemata:

Situational or rehearsed public forms of interaction. Scripted social interactions that people use to negotiate social frames. Roles are composed of various schematas.

Social Role:

"The enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status" (Goffman 1990: 138).

Social System (the main concern):
-Everyone occupies certain roles, with their corresponding audiences - and participate as audience for other people's performances. This whole system taken together is the concern of role analysis. It is through role-training that we are socialized. "We do not take on terms of conduct one at a time but rather whole harness load of them [i.e., roles]" (Goffman 1961: 87, brackets are mine).

Status:
-"A position in some system or pattern of positions and is related to the other positions in the unit through reciprocal ties, through rights and duties binding the incumbents" (Goffman 1961: 85).

Style:
"A manner of doing things" (Goffman 1974: 290). "His performance of a standard social routine is a rendition of it..." (ibid, 288).

Culture & Society Definitions:

Constructs:
-"Behavioural fields, or frames of gradiated behaviour within particular types of social interactions" (Spindler 1978). Limits of behavioural fields.

Idioverse:
-Internalized personal definitions of behaviour and culture, learned through experiences.
-"Is a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and customs peculiar to an interacting group to which members refer and employ as the basis of further interaction. Members recognize that they share experiences and the expectation that they will be employed to construct a shared universe of discourse." (Hollingshead 1939: 816)

Meaning System:
"A very large diversified pool of knowledge, or partially shared cluster of norms, or as intersubjectively shared, symbolically created realities" (D"Andrade 1981: 116).

Vampire Character Record Definitions:

Character Name:
Name of vampire character

Nature:
A description of the character's True Personality or private-self concept. Represented with an archetype such as caregiver, bravo, hedonist, manipulator, etc.

Demeanor:
A description of the character's Facade Personality or public-self concept. Represented with an archetype such as caregiver, bravo, hedonist, manipulator, etc.

Concept:
The overall image (public/private-self identity) of the character; who he or she was before becoming a vampire.

Clan:
Vampiric lineage (e.g., Toreador, Tremere, Gangrel, Ventrue, Malkavian, Nosferatu, or Brujah)

Generation:
The number of sires removed from the original vampire, called Caine [e.g., when an 8th generation vampire embraces a human, that human becomes an 9th generation vampire. If this vampire were to make a vampire that vampire would be of the 10th generation]. The lower the generation, the more powerful the vampire.

Abilities:
Skills and aptitudes such as drive, investigation, brawl, subterfuge, computers, etc.

Disciplines:
Magical powers related to a vampire's bloodline/clan, such as auspex, celerity, dominate, presence, etc.

Status:
The respect warranted and shown to the character by other vampires. The Prince would have more status than any other vampire in his or her city.

Physical/Social/Mental Traits:
A character's innate physical, social and mental aptitude and potential.

Negative Traits:
A character innate physical, social and mental weakness and limitations.

Derangements:
Mental illness, also called insanities. Common to Malkavian vampires.

Influence:
Sway or control over human institutions, such as health, transportation, high society, finance, bureaucracy, etc.

Willpower:
A measure of the character's self-confidence, self-determination and self-control.

Blood:
A measure of how much blood is currently in the character's body, as well as how much the character can hold. Blood is used to activate disciplines and to heal character wounds [or restore health levels].

Health Levels:
The number of wounds a character can absorb before being incapacitated.

Experience:
Points awarded to the player-character for game role-play. Can be used to improve the character.

Background:
Personal history or biography of the character.

Appendix C1:
Focus Group Meeting Agendas:

MEETING NUMBER ONE: December 4, 1996
(1) Introduce research agenda/proposal.
(2) Establish research schedule.
(3) Flesh out important ideas for research or for the description of the game.
(4) Comment on Informal questions developed by the investigator for interviews.
(5) Record keeping. All members should keep a journal of meetings topics and ideas.

MEETING NUMBER TWO: December 18, 1996
(1) Assess annotated results from Informal Interviews (summarized by the Investigator to preserve some consultant confidentiality.
- What important information was found?
- What does the material suggest?
- Improvements on research technique.

(2) Comment on Formal Interview questions by the Investigator for interviews.
- What questions should be dropped/added?
- Should any questions be reworded?

(3) Test Personality Assessment tool to assess its validity and usefulness in describing personality. Is it accurate? Should I use it?
(4) Present materials (Journal/Drawings, etc. that members believe may add to painting a clear picture of the Vampire LARP community (Materials will be photocopied and promptly returned).
(5) Questions and answers

MEETING NUMBER THREE: January 15, 1996
(1) Present summary of findings from Informal and Formal interviews. Discuss results.
(2) Critique from analysis and categories. Is this type of Information important for this type of analysis?
(3) Raise news points/concerns that should be analyzed.
(4) Submit interpretations of findings from last focus group meeting. Members should turn in their journals to the Investigator.
(5) Group consensus and concluding comments.
(6) Consider use of social experiments, narrator directed scenes to invoke certain types of responses in players (i.e., Sabbat attack).

REVIEW:
Each member will review and edit my thesis, commenting on revisions needed, etc.

Appendix C2
Interview "Afterthoughts": Guy-P Informal Interview Monday, December 9, 1996 - 4-5:30pm

Character Name: Guy DeMontpassant

I don't know if I am drawing erroneous conclusions from the data, if it actually exists but it seemed to me that a lot of the motivation for playing Guy came out of a desire for working out issues in Guy-P's life. When questioned about his personality, he pointed out that he didn't agree with Jungian psychology or archetypes, and said immediately that he has a Low Self-Image problem. He said that he is too critical of himself, his craft (smithing), and how he perceives other people's perceptions of him (i.e., you are a great friend - may be I am just acting that way). Then to demonstrate his point he began talking about his father (mentioning that both his parents are dead - when I was speaking about personal fronts in regards to my parents). The conversation about his father was about how his dad supported all of his hobbies (e.g., including trapping in Winnipeg traplines).

In contrast, Guy is self-assured and is fair and is not overly critical. Guy can't accept his vampiric nature and thus strives to make himself human again, while Guy-P (and his wife Sara-P) will be adopting a child soon... and the image of the perfect parent will be formed - just like his father (although Guy-P said that Guy could change, whereas he could not). Note that Guy-P and Sara-P have workshops and a library and lots of craft things and costume for the kid to play with. He commented that it is a child's paradise, that he "wished he had parents like himself and Sara-P". This tells me that he is in need a family and the roles a family sets out for a person. In the game, Guy has recently adopted Jezebele as his daughter. He will compromise almost anything for her. He said that he was practicing to be a dad.

I believe Guy's quest for Golconda (and serving as big brother to Jez) and later humanity (and fatherhood) is directly related, if not a broadcast of Guy-P's search for family - the cure for his self-image problem. He gains his humanity back if he can be kinder and less critical of himself, his predicament, and others.

Leaving of a Legacy is very important to Guy-P and Guy. For Guy-P, its his craft as armorer and smith that allows him to leave something behind for his children and grand children, whereas as a lawyer or a doctor, sure you get money, but there is nothing noteworthy in your obituary. Guy-P and Guy are the gentlemen and noble (e.g., father's creed about being better than just a common man). His need to form self-image is idealized in Guy and alluded to in his goal for legacy. He wishes to create something of himself that will be remembered.

Appendix D1:
Informal Interview Questions:

(1) Tell me how you constructed your character in the Winnipeg LARP game. I am not referring to the rule-book procedure, but the way that you were introduced to the game, how you developed your background, what your background is, and how the character developed in your head and through role-play.

(2) Compare your character's personality to your own personality. How are you the same? How are you different?

(3) Do you play your character differently now as compared to when you first joined the game? Explain. How have you and your character each evolved during the course of the game (e.g., In-game and Out-of-Game relationships; personal evolution)? Explain.

(4) Based on all the people you have got to know in the Winnipeg Vampire LARP game, what are the qualities of a typical person that joins and stays involved in the game? Why do people leave the game? Please do not guess here. If you do not know, just say so. You should be able to explain it through personal experience, or through a conversation you had with another person who experienced it.

(5) What is the most important aspect of the game?

Appendix D2:
Formal Interview Questions:

Please keep your answers *as brief as possible* (approximately 1-5 lines per answer). Use point-form if necessary. Refrain from simply answering Yes or No with no explanation. Do not answer questions you find difficult to answer.

Section I (Character Play):

(1) What are the primary motivators of character development in the game?

(2) What role do you feel most comfortable playing? Character? Yourself as a person? How do your roles affect your behaviour? Your appreciation of the game?

(3) Is your character a stereotyped concept? Explain.

(4) What are the qualities of a great character in your clan? Who do you think would play or are playing this type of character?

(5) What are the qualities of a bad character?

(6) What do you believe are the qualities of a 3 dimensional character?

(7) Which characters in the game (provide a list) would you consider 3 dimensional? Explain.

(8) What is the most difficult aspect of game interaction? What is the easiest?

(9) Who are the best role-players in the game?

(10) What do you think of players who play themselves as their characters?

(11) What are some of the typical actions of your character? What affect do these actions have on other characters? How do characters usually respond to your actions? How do players handle it?

(12) What keeps the game or a scene exciting? How does game excitement affect your character-play?

(13) Have you ever been so engrossed in your character that the real world temporarily disappeared and you were left felling emotionally (positively and negatively) drained after the game? Explain.

(14) Do you feel uncomfortable playing your character? Explain.

(15) If you answered Yes to the above question, do other players notice that you are uncomfortable?

Section II (Personal Motivation and Game Influences):

(16) Is a lack of perceived personal power a motivation for playing vampire LARP? Does it drive player/characters to strive to achieve that power in the game? Explain.

(17) Have you learned anything from playing your character that you now use as a real person?

(18) How do you react In-character to a situation you have never personally experienced as a real person (e.g., rape, murder, stalking, mutilation, bleeding to death, torture, being a vampire)?

(19) Do you think that people are negatively affected by the game? How? Who?

(20) What emotion(s) do you most often experience in real life? As your character?

Section III (Game Mechanics, Organization, and Storytelling):

(21) What is job of the Storyteller? The Narrator?

(22) How is it possible for players to react appropriately to stimulus that is only described? How do all players in a scene comprehend what is described by narrators (recall the Sabbat raid November 96 when Diago announced the Sabbat raid, etc.)? Is there room for misinterpretation? If Yes, what type of misinterpretation usually affects players?

(23) What is more important, developing an excellent story with good scenes, role-playing, being social and meeting new people, or making your character powerful?

(24) As a gamer, why do you role-play?

(25) Where and when do you role-play your character?

(26.1) Is there any significance (is it useful - does it accomplish something) to staging public (but not in front of Non-vampire players) scenes (interactions between characters) between character? Explain.

(26.2) Scenes are either staged and rehearsed or improvised... What percentage of game play involves Staged scenes, and what percentage involves Improvised scenes?

(27) Do you have character plot(s)? If Yes, describe one of them and their affect on the game/story. How many actually are played out? How many fail to do anything at all? If you have not participated in any of your own plotlines, have you been a participant in another character's plots? Who? Explain the plots. What happened? Were they successful?

(28.1) Which player(s) tend to initiate character role-play (when the game officially begins and everyone falls into role-playing) during most game events? Which player/characters generally support the action/story of most game sessions? What do they do in the game that others do not?

(28.2) How do you get into character? Does this change in different social environments and situations (e.g., at the University, at the Bar, at a Cafe, privately, publicly etc.)?

(29.1) When and how are you forced Out-of-Character?

(29.2) How often does it occur, and how long does it last? What player-characters constantly drop Out-of-Character?

(30) Have you ever felt that a scene you where playing changed from game or dramatic-play to something else (e.g., very serious, comical, ritual-like)? Have you ever overreacted as a player to an In-game event? How did it affect the scene?

(31) Have you ever been part of a scene where you have "made light" of it and altered the tension (i.e., dropping Out-of-Character and commenting about what was happening by laughing or something similar)? Why? Did you have control over it? Did you apologize for "breaking character"?

Section IV (Player Prestige, Cliches, and Political Motivations):

(32) Do player personalities influence In-game character play? Explain.

(33) Do In-game actions affect players in the everyday world? How?

(34) Does the hierarchy of the game (e.g., popularity, status, etc.) reflect itself Out-of-Game in the way players associate with each other?

(35.1) According to the types of metagaming listed above, do you metagame? Explain. If your answer is Yes, answer (35.2).

(35.2) Describe an instance that stands out in your mind where a player or players metagamed? Explain the situation and how they did it.

(36) When talking about the game Out-of-Character what do you talk about?

(37) What types of conversation do you have with other players after the game has ended for the night (e.g., plot development, character development, metagaming, complaints or praises at Someplace or Perkins)? Which players are usually there?

(38) Do you or have you ever role-played during the after-game discussion? What are the reasons for these interactions/conversations?

(39) There are several groups of friends that play the game and hang out at Someplace or Die Maschine. What are these Out-of-Game groups/cliches, and who are the people? How do these groups affect the game?

(40) How are you respected as a person by the other players? How are you respected as your character in the game? Explain.

Section V (Telling the Story):

(41) In one page, tell me the story of the vampire game in Winnipeg as you perceive it as a player. This is a personal story, so tell it using your own experiences and information about the game. Use Point-Form please. Be brief.

Appendix E1:
Ethics and Consent Forms:
Explanation of Research for Interview Consultants

December 1996

Dear <Interview Consultant>.

You are being asked to participate in a study designed to provide information on the experiences and attitudes players have of their participation in Winnipeg's Live Action *Vampire Masquerade Roleplaying Game*. Largely, the Principal Investigator's concern for this topic stems from his ongoing involvement as a gamer. It is the primary goal of this study to learn about the roleplaying game experiences of other people, and to compose a study that reveals how character self-identities are developed, how the Vampire Society evolves and how this resembles self-identity development and social interaction in the real world.

You have been selected as a consultant for this study because of your knowledge and involvement in Live Action Vampire, and because you are willing to contribute that knowledge to this study.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to meet with the Principal Investigator for an interview. This interview will be approximately 1-2 hours in length, and will be held at a location and time of your convenience. You will be asked if this interview can be tape recorded. Questions asked during this first interview will be thought provoking, and will encourage you to freely discuss your ideas, feelings, and experiences of roleplaying in the Live Action game. Then at a later date you will meet once more with the Investigator for another interview that will ask more specific questions about your involvement in the game. This interview will take approximately 1-2 hours. Information from the interviews will be summarized for focus group analysis. The focus group consists of five players who will assist the Investigator. In-Game character information attained through interviews (i.e., Out-of-Game) is confidential, and will not be used by the investigator or focus group members within the game.

In addition to the interviews and the personality survey, I may concoct within the game (like a narrator) In-Game situations that will encourage character responses (e.g., Your character accidentally kills a human/kindred. How do you, the player, feel about it?). The Investigator hopes that you will not hesitate to comment on research procedures or findings.

The tapes and transcriptions of the interviews, as well as any notes kept during them, will not contain your name (character names will be used in their place), and will be kept for a period of five years and then will be destroyed. Your real name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from the research. You will be contacted if publication is considered. Regardless of these measures, however, it is impossible to fully maintain anonymity. Since the final report is public information, players reading the report will be able to identify, by character names, the players involved. This is unavoidable.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. Furthermore, you have the right to refuse to comment about experiences or events that you find uncomfortable in discussing, and without restriction, may withdraw from interview at any time you wish.

Sincerely,

Brian Myhre

Department of Anthropology
University of Manitoba
Principal Investigator, Graduate Student

Appendix E2
Ethics and Consent Forms:
Participant Consent & Anonymity Form

Working Research Title: Virtual Societies: A Journey of Powertrips and Personalities

Researcher: Brian Myhre
30 - 7 Roslyn Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
(204) 284-7477

Supervisors:

Dr. John Matthiasson
University of Manitoba
Dept. of Anthropology
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada
(204) 474-9330

Dr. Joan Townsend
University of Manitoba
Dept. of Anthropology
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada
(204) 474-6328

Dr. Kay Stone
University of Winnipeg
Dept. of English
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada
(204) 786-9316

Duration of Research: Interviews -November 1996 to January 1997
[Actual Study: September 1995 to January 1997]

Brief Description of Research:

A study of the experiences, conceptualizations, and attitudes of people who meet regularly to play Live Action Vampire Masquerade at the University of Manitoba and various other locales throughout the city. Much of the information gathered for this project will be based on participant interviews in combination with my own experiences of roleplaying Vampire LARP.

AGREEMENT:

I agree to participate in this research, and realize I may withdraw anytime.

PARTICIPANT: _____ DATE: _____

RESEARCHER: _____ DATE: _____

Appendix E3
Focus Group Consent & Agreement Form:

I _____ as a member of the research focus group for *Virtual Societies...* (Investigator: Brian Myhre), agree that I will NOT deliberately use information from focus group meetings, in any way, to change events in the game world of the Winnipeg Vampire the Masquerade LARP, or to discriminate against non-consultant players in and outside of the game. I realize that my participation in this group should not directly affect the affairs of game and relationships between players.

My signature below is proof that I fully understand and agree to uphold the letter of this agreement, and understand my participation in the focus group is strictly voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.

MEMBER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

WITNESS'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Appendix E4
List of Consultants Interviewed:

Rasputin-Player *(1st Malkavian Primogen)*	12/23/96 7pm
Mr. Nore-Player *(1st Tremere Primogen)*	12/09/96 8pm
Guy DeMontpassant-Player *(2nd Keeper of Elysium)*	12/09/96 4pm
Gabreel-Player *(1st Leader of Harpies)*	12/12/96 2pm
Jacob Crow-Player *(Gangrel Archon)*	12/12/96 7pm
Tiger-Player *(2nd Gangrel Primogen)*	12/13/96 7pm
Wolfram van Hopner-Player *(1st Prince)*	12/14/96 7pm
Istvan Kovats-Player *(2nd Brujah Primogen)*	12/15/96 2pm
Shadow-Player *(1st Sheriff)*	12/16/96 2pm
Mordechai-Player (1st *Nosferatu Primgoen)*	12/16/96 7pm
Zippy-Player *(Leader of Harpies)*	12/19/96 2pm
Kaylan-Player *(Gangrel Whip)*	12/19/96 7pm
Casper-Player *(Malkavian Brat)*	12/22/96 3pm
Bean-Player *(Malkavian Loonie)*	12/23/96 2pm
Damos-Player (2nd *Gangrel Primogen/Archon)*	12/27/96 7pm
Domingo-Player *(4th Toreador Primogen)*	01/21/97 3pm
Zoe Taylor-Player (Isaiah's Wife/Progeny/5th Tor.Prim.)	01/21/97 8pm

Appendix F:
A Crash-Course for those who know little about RPGs
WHAT IS ROLE-PLAYING?

By Jerry Stratton 1995 (email: jerry@teetot.acusd.edu)

Role-Playing is getting together with some friends to write a story. It's joining around a campfire or a dining room to spin some tall tales. Role-playing is being creative and having fun with friends.

In most role-playing games, one person plays the 'referee,' who can be thought of as the 'Editor' of the story. The Editor will, with input from you if you desire to give any, describe a world, or setting. You and your friends, as Players, will take a character and protagonist in this world, and guide your character through the story that you and your friends are creating.

Each player takes a different character, and each character interacts with each other character. Role-Playing, in this sense, is very much play-acting in the mind. You imagine what the Editor describes. Then, you imagine your character's response to this situation, and describe that to the Editor and the other Players. They, in turn, each do the same with their characters.

In most games -- board games, card games, and dice games -- there is a clearly defined way to win, and a clearly defined way to lose, and winning is the goal of the game. In Role-Playing games, the concepts of 'winning' and 'losing' do not exist. Your goal as a Player is to help create a story and to have fun. You may give your character other goals, but the success of your character does not determine any sense of 'winning' or 'losing.' Like life, it's not so much whether you win or
lose, but how you play the game.

That's all well and good, you say, but what actually goes on? What do these 'characters' do?

Most of the time, characters are involved in adventures, adventures of the type that are immortalized in adventure movies and serial novels. In one game, the characters might be a group of secret agents trying to save the world from nuclear destruction. In another, you might play a
rebel force, trying to overthrow an evil star-spanning empire. You might play a group of warriors in eleventh century Europe, or King Arthur's knights, or Superman, or Batman, or an original character you create, in any world you choose to create.

HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED WITH ROLE-PLAYING?
The same way you'd get involved with any other game. You either find some people who

are already playing, or you start a game yourself. The former is recommended, but either way is fun. The first thing is to figure out what you want to play. What kind of movies or books do you want to copy? That's what you want to play. There are games that deal with H.P. Lovecraft's novels, Michael Moorcock's novels, the middle-earth of J.R.R. Tolkien, among many others. There are also generic games that cover whole genres -- espionage, detective, super-hero, swords and sorcery, space opera, and the old west, for example.

Next, find a store that sells role-playing games. You can find them in the yellow pages under 'games.' Visit the store and tell them you don't know much about role-playing games, but you'd like a game that can play (insert your choice here -- detective, Tolkien, whatever). Ask if they know of any groups that are already playing that type of game. Many stores keep a list or bulletin board of gamers looking for new gamers. Chances are the store people will be able to help you find just what you're looking for.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR WHEN I'M PLAYING?

Cecil Adams (author of the newspaper column, 'The Straight Dope') said with regards to role-playing games: "a lifetime of Parcheesi does not adequately prepare you for this." He's right. Your biggest problem will be breaking out of the straightjacket that games like Parcheesi, Chess, and Poker have put you in. There are no 'moves' in role-playing games, nor are you confined to any specific actions. You make choices for your character as creatively as if you were writing a book. You don't need to be worried about whether or not you are 'allowed' to do something.

The only thing restricting what your character can do is the situation your character is in.

It is also sometimes easy to get into an adversarial relationship with your Editor. Why? Because you are playing the 'hero' and the Editor will be portraying all of the 'villains' that the hero

meets. It helps sometimes to stop and remember that this is not a competition between the Players and the Editor. The goal is to have fun, creatively, together. If you want an adversarial competition, you can always play hockey.

Once you realize that role-playing games have rules you might fall into one of two 'rules-lawyer' traps. Games have rules that explain what happens when, for example, your character is attacked by a dragon, or what happens when two space vessels race to the same destination. But these rules are almost always there as guidelines. They describe what normally *should* happen, not what always *must* happen. The first rules-lawyer trap is to always insist on following the rules, even when there's an obvious discrepancy between how all of the Players (including the Editor) want the game to proceed, and how a certain game rule says an event should turn out. The overall game should be more important than any specific rule. Many times, games will not have a specific rule to cover a rare or odd situation. The second rules-lawyer trap is to believe that there should always be a rule to cover every situation. In this case, you waste time and interrupt the flow of the story by searching through the rule-book for rules that aren't there.

A related trap is to consider the Editor to be some sort of omnipotent being in relation to the game, and to consider the game world to be the Editor's world alone. The game is for all the Players, not just the Editor. The Editor is, however, the final *arbiter* of game disputes and game questions. There's no need to waste time arguing when you could be playing!

A ROLE-PLAYING GLOSSARY

If you decide to find a role-playing group to create with, you'll probably run into some strange terminology. Every group has its own terminology, and 'gamers' are no exception. Here is a quick guide to the most common jargon in role-playing.

DICE: I'll bet you thought you knew what dice were, didn't you? Well, you'll never see so many different kinds of dice than when you meet up with role-playing gamers. The kind of dice that most people use (for Yahtzee or gambling) are 'six-sided' dice. They've got six sides. There are also four-sided dice, eight-sided dice, ten-sided dice, twelve-sided dice, and twenty-sided dice. Some companies are even making thirty-sided dice and hundred-sided dice. Don't worry at first, though. Most games use either six-sided dice (the normal, cube things) or ten-sided dice. You can borrow the latter from someone else while you're still new. Some veteran gamers do the same thing.

How do you use the dice? You'll hear lots of strange terminology, like 'roll a three-dee-six,' 'roll a percentile die,' or 'roll dee-one-hundred.' The best way to deal with this, if you don't understand, is to look confused and say 'huh? Show me.' Gamers (like any other group) sometimes forget that newcomers aren't privy to the jargon they use. However, if you want some idea of what's going on, here's the dope: 'three-dee-six:' This is written 3d6. This means take three 6-siders and roll them. Add them all up. If you roll 3 on one die, 4 on another, and 1 on the last, that's 3 plus 4 plus 1, or 8. In general, when someone says roll *a number dee another number*, they want you to take 'a number' dice with 'another number' sides, roll them, and add them together. 'Two-dee-ten' (or 2d10) means roll two ten-sided dice and add them, for example. 'Dee-one-hundred:' This is a special kind of roll, designed just to confuse people who think they understand the previous paragraph. When you are asked to roll dee-one-hundred (written d100), you'll need a ten-sided die. Roll it, and remember the number. This is the 'tens.' Then, roll it again. This is the 'ones.' If you rolled a 1 and a 5, the result is 15. If you rolled a 6 and a 3, the result is 63. If you rolled a 0 and a 2, the result is 2 (02), etc. If you rolled a 0 and a 0, the result is 100. Don't ask, it's tradition. You want a number from 1 to 100, not 0 to 99.

DUNGEON MASTER: In the first role-playing game, the characters usually had their adventures in deserted castles and the dungeons below them. The Editor in these games was called by the incredibly kinky name 'Dungeon Master.' From this came the equally pretentious 'Game Master,' used by other games to denote the Editor. I prefer the family of names that includes Referee, Supervisor, and, of course, Editor.

HACK AND SLASH: Hack and Slash is a form of role-playing where the character's goal is to fight. Often, 'hack and slash' characters will get in a fight with every non-player character (q.v.) that they meet. Hack and Slash involves very little character interaction.

HIT POINTS: Your character can interact with all sorts of things in a role-playing game. Sometimes, your character will interact with fists, broken bottles, guns, or swords. When *you* interact with a gun, you're likely to either die or be seriously injured. Not so with your character. In the serial adventures which role-playing games most commonly emulate, the heroes rarely have to hobble along with punctured lungs or gangrenous wounds. So, in most role-playing games, your character will have a certain number of 'hit points.' When your character is attacked with a weapon, the weapon will cause your character to lose some of these hit points. This is much easier to deal with than wounds, broken bones, cranial injuries, and infections. Hit points are called different things by different games (Body Pips, Wound Level, Energy Level, Damage Points, etc.), but they're still hit points. You lose them (or gain them) when you get hit.

MINIATURES: Some games use cute little miniature figurines, about an inch high, to show where the characters are in relation to each other.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER: All of the characters played by you and your friends (except the Editor) are Player Characters. That's because a Player is playing them. Characters created by the Editor for your character to meet are Non-Player Characters. Player Characters are the stars of the story, and Non-Player Characters are the supporting cast and the extras.

SAVING THROWS: 'Saving Throw' is an archaic term that basically refers to 'saving' your character with the 'throw' of the dice. In the beginning of role-playing games, 'saving throw' often meant just that. If your character was bitten by a snake, and you failed your 'saving throw,' your character died, and you started playing a new character. Nowadays, this sort of instant death is frowned on in games, but saving throws still exist to help your character avoid other dangers in the game. You might roll a saving throw to avoid your character falling off a cliff when pushed, or to realize that someone has picked your character's pocket. How do you 'make' or 'fail' a saving throw? You roll dice (q.v.). If the dice are above (or below, in some games) a certain number, you have succeeded, and whatever dire fate could have happened has been avoided. Otherwise, you have 'failed' the saving throw, and your character is subject to whatever was about to happen.

EPILOGUE

Well, that's the end of this introduction to role-playing. I hope it helped. If you'd like to talk to me, you can write me at the electronic mail address below. There are also electronic forums for gamers. On Usenet, there is rec.games.frp.misc. On bitnet, there is the GAMES-L listserv. Talk to your system administrator if you wish to participate in these forums. The forums are not for playing games, but for discussing games.

Appendix G:
Bad Press about Role-playing Games:

Tracts Unsuspecting People Read: The Rise and Fall of a Joint Religious Catholic/Anti-Catholic Anti-D&D Tract That Just Wasn't Kosher

by Pierre Savoie, Feb. 1995 (InterNet: drac@wbb.com)

I am offering the following testimonial as a focus on religious tracts which demean the Dungeons & Dragons fantasy role-playing game, made by TSR, Inc. The Catholic tract I cite is only a small part of many religious anti-D&D tracts, books and even videos which vilify the hobby, and in fact it is the only example from the Catholic sect that I could ever find. But all religious tracts cite from the same sources, even if in this case the result was disastrous for the religious integrity of the tract.

In 1984, the Daughters of St. Paul (50 St. Paul's Ave.; Jamaica Plain; Boston, MA; 02130; tel. (617)522-8911; and 25 other branches) published a tract entitled GAMES UNSUSPECTING PEOPLE PLAY: DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS, written by Louise Shanahan (who for a time was also a columnist for the [Canadian] Catholic Register). This pamphlet had a catalog number PM0798, had 22 internal pages and a green cover, 6"x4". It had no "imprimatur" (approval from a diocese that the material conformed to Catholic teachings). Here are some excerpts from this tract, which is now no longer sold:

> [beginning, masthead] When a student steps into the fantasy quicksands of *Dungeons and Dragons*[*], his life can be irreversibly altered--and the lives of his parents and other family members can be deeply affected.
>
> Would your son stop going to Mass on Sunday and drop out of Catholicism because of a game which has lured him into a snare with many gods? Would your son admit to you that his grades are plummeting at school because he has discovered a fantasy world in a game that is much more important to him than his grades? Is it possible that your mild-mannered, easy-going high-school or college-age son has gradually isolated himself from the rest of the family, and as his parents you are deeply concerned? It is not drugs nor is it alcohol; you are certain of that. In subtle ways your son has changed.
>
> Then, one day when you are straightening his room you find a *Monster Manual* carefully concealed under a stack of school books. You, as parents, are about to make a discovery which will dismay and frighten you. You have just discovered that your son has joined the legion of unsuspecting students who have become victimized by a master con-artist: Gary Gygax. [...]

A MALE PRESERVE

The bait used to lure the unsuspecting male deeper and deeper into the mazes of *Dungeons and Dragons* is as old as human nature: adventure, power, conquest; all is possible in this fantasy world where a player's imagination reigns supreme. It is important to understand that while some young women may become involved in *Dungeons and Dragons* (perhaps because of a boyfriend's interest), the game appears to be primarily a male preserve. And as improvisations on the theme of adventure, power and conquest are unfolded, *Dungeons and Dragons* becomes more distinctly masculine terrain. [...]

There follows an attempt at "explaining" the game, a claim that it's as dangerous as drugs or the cults, a re-hash of the phoney James Dallas Egbert case of 1979, and many other examples, including Leon Wheeler, who dropped out of school, lost his job and home, but hung on to his D&D "paraphernalia" [a "D&D hobo"?].

The tract ends with:

To date no de-programmers have surfaced to aid worried parents whose children have become D&D cultists. While *Dungeons and Dragons* has been compared to the organized cults, there is no professional group in Canada or the United States which has acknowledged the game as an addiction. Mental health clinics generally are not concerned with it.[**] Thus more families must become informed of the hazards of *Dungeons and Dragons* in order to prevent its introduction into the home, neighborhood and school. An absolute prohibition of the game must be maintained.

Admittedly there is no easy solution or "quick fix" to *Dungeons and Dragons*. However, when parents and community organizations spread the word about its dangerous side effects, then the battle for our children's minds will, at least, be contained, and eventually more groups will join in the effort and convince families and schools of its hazards and harmful effects. <end>

[*] text flanked by underscores (_) is italicized in the original. Also, the correct trade-mark for Dungeons & Dragons does not spell out the word "and". This may be a clue that the critic has never directly read a copy, in any version. [**] Since this was written, the Hartgrove Hospital in Chicago set up a Center for the Treatment of Ritualistic Deviance, a psychiatric unit for teens supposed to be involved in Satanism or cults. "Cult cop" Jerry Simandl of Chicago provided training to the staff of this unit, organized by Dale Trahan. In the 80's there was a wave of Satanism seminars attracting law enforcement were organized by the Cult Crime Impact Network (based in a CHURCH in Boise, Idaho) and the religious affiliation was never made clear. The Center's brochure advises parents what to look for in susceptible teens, a check-list including "heavy involvement in fantasy and role-play games". [from IN PURSUIT OF SATAN by Robert Hicks (1991, Prometheus Press, p. 309 ff.; as I keep saying, an excellent book to debunk the "Satanic

panic" of the 1980's)]

I immediately knew something was wrong with this religious tract, because Louise Shanahan cited as her sources the Rev. John Torrell, of Christian Life Ministries (now called European-American Evangelistic Crusades; P.O. Box 41001; Sacramento, CA; 95841) and Albert James Dager, who published a newsletter called MEDIA SPOTLIGHT and published a MEDIA SPOTLIGHT Special Report [on D&D] in 1980.

Both of these are openly and notoriously anti-Catholic. The Rev. John Torrell, on D&D, has said "[These kids] just go nuts with it! They start to confuse fantasy with reality." This is ironic in view of the Rev. Torrell's own religious newsletter, THE DOVE, where he said that Ronald Reagan secretly surrendered his country to the Soviet Union at the Iceland Summit of Oct. 1986, and that the U.S. had only 5 years before the Soviets assumed open control (Fall 1987). He also opens his newsletter to articles and reprints from different authors, including R.A. Cotter, the actual author of some 1980 flyers against D&D, as well as articles from Ken Anderson about the evils of preservatives and food-chemicals. Torrell in subsequent editorials bemoaned the conspiratorial group which adds formaldehyde to fish, which homogenizes milk "so that when you drink this it will be like having your heart and arteries 'sand blasted'", and steals all the enzymes from canned food so that "the body cannot digest them. On top of this a drug has been added white sugar, plus other preservatives." He says this food-tampering is done to stupefy the American public so they can't think straight, and that the conspiracy has its own secret food markets where healthful food, NOT laced with toxins, are sold to members. This man Torrell is around the bend!

Even worse, Albert James Dager in his anti-D&D article compared the "evil" of D&D to the "evil" of what he calls the "Babylon Mystery Religion". This code-phrase is used by some Fundamentalist Christians, referring to their belief that Catholicism is a mix of true Christianity and pagan Babylonian rites such as pagan forms of communion and the confessional. When examined, about half the Fundamentalist Christian groups opposed to D&D are also anti-Catholic. And yet this totally escaped Ms. Shanahan when she wrote her own anti-D&D tract! In a direct way, two Catholic magazines and a Catholic publisher were religiously subverted, which constitutes the sin of "apostasy."

I confronted the Daughters of St. Paul with the original sources cited by Louise Shanahan, and suddenly the tracts changed, adding a disclaimer-sticker that the tract was a re-print of an article in THE FAMILY magazine of November 1984, originally published in OUR FAMILY MAGAZINE published by the Oblate Fathers, in Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada; Oct. 1983. Later, when I insisted, the Daughters of St. Paul wrote back (Oct. 3, 1987) and muttered something about a change in editorial board since then, that they "could not defend the tract," and that they would no longer accept any manuscripts from Ms. Shanahan. It was pulled off the bookstore shelves; it is no longer sold.

However, the Daughters of St. Paul had 25 bookstores of their own in North America, from addresses listed in the tract itself, and traded these anti-D&D tracts to many other Catholic bookstores over a four-year period.

The ideas were widely propagated and were cited by another Catholic author, Marc Gauthier in his small 100-page book WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING (Companions of the Lamb; P.O. Box 4070, Station "E"; Ottawa, ON; K1S 5B1; Canada. publ. 1986). This book has many small chapters about corrupting influence from non-Christian cults, and D&D is Chapter 5! He cites only the Shanahan tract as well as the anti-D&D book PLAYING WITH FIRE by John Weldon and James Bjornstad (Moody Press, 1984). When I confronted him over the phone, he appeared displeased at what I was saying about the Rev. Torrell, and identified himself as a "Pentecostal Charismatic Christian." When I said, "What, not a Catholic?" he replied, "Well, yes; a CHRISTIAN Catholic..." He appeared increasingly uneasy, and hung up on me. Far from being worried about the subversion of Catholics by ideas from non-Catholic groups, he seemed to be participating in the process himself...

I was no doubt the first to get at the roots of this particular tract. I did so because there was a spectacular ban on D&D in a school board, widely reported in local media. 1985 is a year that I consider the blackest, for anti-D&D media reports (including CBS' "60 Minutes" of Sept. 15, 1985, which faked the suicide of the Erwin brothers of Lafayette, CO as a "D&D double-suicide", despite the parents (who were never shown on camera) who angrily denied this a day later and presented the actual motivations, but that only in local media.) Of course, after NBC's "Cruel Doubt" mini-series (aired in 1992 *and* 1993) where a forged piece of artwork was presented as belonging in the pages of the AD&D Player's Handbook, 1st edition, visibly pasted in the pages, one can place no trust in any fairness of the media; there is too much temptation by these to lie about AD&D in form AND content to make it look horrific.

In that year, the Metropolitan Separate School Board of Toronto ["separate" means a Catholic school board, in the Canadian tradition], which is Canada's largest single school board by number of students (then 95,000), had a new D&D game club at Neil McNeil High School brought to its attention. This school has a good academic reputation and is where the late actor John Candy graduated, among others. The school board's trustees asked for an internal report on D&D to be written up. At a June 20th meeting this report was presented, and it had NOTHING to say against D&D.

However, the Board heard from 7 demonstrators against the games, who re-echoed media reports of D&D murders and suicides. Their names were: Tony Teresi, Father Fred Perna [now deceased; provided a media quote saying "There is no D&D-player who is not in need of some form of deliverance."], Doreen Hare, Ian Cruickshank, John Aldorasi, Dr. Joseph P. McKenna, and John McRae of "Global Beacon Community". This information was VERY difficult to obtain, since names of speakers and motions are filed separately in

the board's bureaucratic records, and two years of asking for the names were never responded to until I involved the Toronto Star newspaper's "Star Probe".

Whatever these people said in two hours of discussion convinced the trustees to vote for an amended motion changed from "further study" to a full ban, in the following wording: "[Resolved] That Dungeons and Dragons and any other games involving the occult not be permitted on the property of MSSB schools." This policy has never been amended since, leaving the impression that D&D games are bad and that some CATHOLIC authority said so. In fact, there is direct sedition through a widely scattered source of "information" on D&D that in fact derives from ANTI-Catholic groups.

One should not just laugh at how this proves some Catholic tendency to "follow the leader" without questioning who the leader is, or even if this leadership in an issue is really Catholic! This example applies to other religious denominations as well: the original flyers found in the Rev. Torrell's literature (anti-D&D circulars authored by R.A. Cotter) and the Albert James Dager article, are the roots of all other religious tracts, endlessly quoting each other in circles for their D&D "information". Mrs. Patricia Pulling of B.A.D.D. (Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons) was convinced that her son committed suicide because of the game, by a policeman on the scene who had been reading the wrong religious tracts and who TOLD her D&D was "Satanism". References to the Torrell/Cotter and Dager tracts appear again and again, in such sources as the book PLAYING WITH FIRE; or TURMOIL IN THE TOYBOX I and II (books by the Rev. Phil Phillips), or many others. Regardless of your denomination, it ALL goes back to them.

This information may amuse you, but I hope that it may also inspire D&D-players to fight back and confront sources of misrepresentation DIRECTLY, no matter how lofty the anti-D&D religious authority seems to be. Such people have no case, as it turns out, not even in vague theological arguments. There is a temptation to agree with generalisms about how D&D could be "obsessive" for some people, when one is religious, simply because this ties-in to theology against gambling or other "sins". But religious D&D fans should especially resist such specious arguments "by analogy". D&D and role-playing games are something TOTALLY ORIGINAL, not seen on this planet before the late 1960's. They defy facile classifications. Fans should skip through anti-D&D fluff, and point to the unpleasant and realistic facts about the origins of anti-D&D ideas, and not shirk from doing so, to make people understand what is going on.

Anti-DND'ers in College...The OTHER Side

Newsgroups: rec.games.frp,rec.games.frp.misc,rec.games.frp.advocacy, rec.games.frp.dnd
By Silk, June 1993 (unixwiz@mcl.ucsb.edu)

Kenneth Mencher - June 1, 1992
Fantasy Role Playing Games: Good for You

"Advanced Dungeons & Dragons is first and foremost a game for the fun and enjoyment of those who seek to use imagination and creativity." (Gygax, DMG p.9) Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D) is one of the earliest of the genre of games called Fantasy Role Playing Games (FRPG's). This genre of games was started back in the mid-1970s and quickly became a favorite of the college set. It spread to both younger and older groups, and according to the LA Times, "Adults are less likely to pick up Parcheesi than they are a role-playing game." FRPG's involve creating "characters" by randomly rolling dice to determine their attributes, (Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, etc.) then the player is encouraged to flesh out the character by creating a history, a full description, etc. A group of people then get together with their characters and a "Game Master," who leads the party of characters through an adventure. The Game Master usually has multiple books at his disposal, some of which contain supplementary rules, and others contain "monsters," a monster being, "any creature encountered -- hostile or otherwise, human, humanoid, or beast." (Gygax, MM1, p.5) and a few contain "deities." The Game Master has complete control of the adventure, and will often modify store-bought adventures to suit his taste. In the mid-1980s, AD&D in specific, and FRPG's in general came under attack by various groups as being responsible for teen suicides, satanism, and murders. These charges grew to such an intensity in the late 1980s that many schools, which, until that point had sponsored gaming groups, refused to allow these groups to meet on-campus. FRPG's also came under attack from various religious groups for "acting as doorways into the occult and satanism." (Assault on RPG's, p.1) However, contrary to these arguments, RPG's are not "evil," rather, they encourage creativity and cooperation.

A look at Role Playing Games shows a need for a tremendous amount of imagination. "...stretching your imagination is what role-playing is all about." (PHB2, p.9) RPG characters are usually nothing more than a group of numbers on a sheet of paper, occasionally adding a lead miniature. The player "becomes" the character, breathing life into it, "'We become our character,' said Jacqui Weathersby, 49, an Escondido homemaker, 'We don't become neurotic and strange. We always know who we really are. But the joy is to be someone or something else.'" (LA Times, 5-14-92) By becoming their character, the player escapes from the real world for a short time, submerging themself in a world of monsters, heroes, and magic. "The game is played in the imagination.

There's no playing board or moving pieces. Players assume the identity of a character and

enter a medieval world of goblins, ghouls and wizards." (Ottawa Citizen, 11-3-91) This playing in the imagination leads one to believe that FRPG's are escapism, but, many other things that we do are escapism in and of themselves:

> "Movies and TV are escape, too, but these games are much more participatory. This is not being a recipient of what's in front of you; it's being a participant in what's before you. It's a wonderful combination of the adult and child within us all. It taps into the imagination and characterization skills of the child while employing the thinking and problem-solving abilities of the adult." (Times, 5-14-92)

This interactive form of escaping works for the benefit of the people playing, as they have to use their imagination and creativity to play, "It's possible that games like the D&D game may provide a key to unlock the inhibitions that block creativity" (Brothers, p.3)

The second part of the argument in favor of FRPG's is that they encourage cooperation. "On the plus side, the game stresses cooperation...The Dungeons & Dragons game is a wonderful game because you are cooperating; it's a cooperative game, not a competitive one." (Brothers, p.1) Many games that young people play these days are competitive, for example, video games, sports, etc. On the other hand, the focus of any FRPG is the "party." A party is the group of adventurers, and must be well-balanced for the party to succeed. "Cooperation amongst party members is a major key to success." (Gygax, PHB, p.107) Infighting is likely to end up with the adventurers unable to complete the adventure. Also, it is a party, not an individual. If you look at your average movie, for example, very often, it is a single hero charging off and doing the whole work, possibly with one or two minor henchmen. However, your average FRPG will consist of four to twelve characters, each controlled by their own person, all interacting in a social environment. "By letting players belong to a group, the individuals get a feeling of being a part of something." (Brothers, p.1) This sense of belonging helps in development of self-confidence and self-esteem, two very important concepts for people, especially young people.

However, there are people who oppose FRPG's, mainly because they believe that FRPG's are responsible for teen suicides and satanism, and demonstrate excessive violence. In a 1985 release, the National Coalition on Television Violence printed nine suicides they claimed were linked to AD&D. However, in each case, other problems can be found in the victims' lives that introduce reasonable doubt about AD&D being the cause of their suicide. For example, Timothy Grice killed himself with a shotgun in 1983. NCTV quoted a detective as saying, "D&D became a reality..." In a letter to Dragon Magazine (the major FRPG magazine), his mother,

> Royce Grice writes:
> "There has been a great deal of publicity nation wide attributing the death

> of my son...to the influence of Dungeons and Dragons. Nothing could be further from the truth...Dungeons and Dragons gave him many hours of pleasure. It was a delight to watch he and his friends play..." (Game Hysteria, p. 26)

In each of the other eight cases cited by NCTV, other evidence shows that D&D had little, if anything to do with them. "Even if every alleged case cited by the NCTV was true, then the suicide rate of roleplaying gamers would still be 75 times lower than the average U.S. rate." (Game's Don't Kill, p.2) As for the charges that FRPG's are a "doorway into satanism," one must consider that FRPG's were inspired by J.R.R. Tolkein's works, The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings, which were primarily inspired by Christian ideas. Also, there are many easier ways to delve into the occult, as some encyclopedias contain such information, along with information on witchcraft, spells, and magic. A look into the claims of excessive violence could lead one to believe that all this "mindless violence" would warp people. However, D&D does not suggest that people actually commit these acts, "As important as fighting is to the AD&D game, it isn't the be-all and end-all of play. It's just one way for characters to deal with situations." (PHB2, p.89)

Compiling all this information together, and making sense of it is no easy task. FRPG's operate in a grey area between fantasy and reality called the imagination. This imagination drives people to look at themselves, to develop a creativity they didn't have before. FRPG's also force people to learn to work together. They debunk the myth that one man can conquer armies by himself. The objections to FRPG's are based on anecdotes and incomplete evidence. Looking at topics of this type require a sense of proportion. As Dr. Joyce Brothers puts it, "The Dungeons & Dragons game provides an especially safe way for young people to meet their needs for excitement and adventure."

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How to handle Anti-Gaming Attitudes

From: rg-frp-announce@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu
Newsgroups: rec.games.frp.announce
Edited by O'Sullivan (ed.), August 1993 (Email: sos@oz.plymouth.edu)

This is a slightly edited version of a very informative post by:

A report on Mike Stackpole's "Satanism & Gaming" seminar at Northeast Wars, Burlington, VT, March 20, 1993.

Mike Stackpole is the chair of GAMA's "Industry Watch" committee. (GAMA, for those who don't know, is the Game Manufacturer's Association, which exists to promote the hobby.) Mike is also the author of many gaming books from many companies, including Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes and Battletech novels. As such (and, in fact, long before he was head of the Industry Watch Committee), Mike has been very interested in anti-gaming attitudes
that exist in the media and what we, as gamers, can do about it.

Much of his talk was background: he told of Pat Pulling and the formation of BADD (Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons), Dr. Radecke, Cruel Doubt, etc., etc. He then went on to describe how he fought this anti-gaming media blitz: research. Yes, the answer is largely plain, simple, non-glamorous research.

Mike has researched every single case of so-called "gaming-related" suicides and murder. To this day he still carries on correspondance with two murderers in prison, whose cases BADD touted as having been gaming-influenced. He has written statements from both men that gaming had nothing to do with it: they were sick individuals long before they heard of roleplaying. Likewise, he has testimony concerning every single case the enemies of FRPs have ever touted - that he knows about, that is. He admits there are cases he

knows nothing of - more on that in a bit.

Mike feels the battle is going well. GAMA has only taken an active role in combatting anti-gaming attitudes since 1989, but great strides have been made. Pat Pulling has been discredited, as have some of the other big names who were lambasting gaming. The media is still attracted to the flash of fantasy gaming and a link to crime, but law enforcement has become aware that such links are illusory.

Mike says that GAMA has spoken to many gatherings of law enforcement people and come across as responsible businessmen who really don't want their customer base committing suicide, since it would hurt sales. (It's amazing how putting it that way can convince those in power! They understand such arguments.) GAMA has also told law enforcement that they don't want gaming being used as an insanity plea, and will give them facts to combat this defense in any case. This is how you win over your opponents: by joining them in ways they can understand. The talk ended with a "what can you do?" His suggestions, summarized, are as follows:

1) Don't try to "freak the mundanes." If someone says they've heard these games are evil, and they can they come watch one, don't put on devil's horns and have fog flowing out of a bowl on a candle-lit table. Just be yourselves and have a good game. If you ever do have a chance to call in to a radio or even TV station that is discussing a case of gaming & crime, please be polite and intelligent. In other words, be a responsible gamer.

2) Tell your local game store to order, from GAMA, some pamphlets they have produced as educational tools. Most game store owners would be glad to have something they can show worried parents. For members of GAMA, these are free. For others, they cost $2/dozen to cover shipping and handling. GAMA address is below.

3) If you hear of any cases where people are claiming gaming is related to a murder, suicide or other crime, let GAMA know right away so they can investigate it. Use the address below, or Mike said you can call him direct - he's listed in the Scottsdale, AZ, phone book. You can also contact Loren Wiseman, vice-chair of the Industry Watch Committee (Loren is at Games Design Workshop).

4) If you hear of an out-of-town "big name gaming expert" coming to condemn RPGs, contact GAMA as soon as possible! Mike says there is a small discretionary fund that will let him fly in to debate such people and discredit them. It's easy for him to discredit such folk because he's been researching these cases since 1985, and has all the facts on his portable computer. It would be harder for you, and you might end up losing a debate, which would not be good.

GAMA's address is:
GAMA- P.O. Box 570 - Grinnell, IA 50112 - or call (515) 236-6678 CST, 10 am to 2 pm.

F.B.I. Raids Small Michigan Rpg Company

Newsgroups: rec.games.frp.misc
From: tucholka@aol.com (Tucholka)
By Tucholka, September 1994

OK, there have been some wild rumours about the FBI raid on Tri Tac Games just after GENCON. Lets set them straight.

FBI RAIDS SMALL GAME COMPANY
PRESS RELEASE

At 10am Tuesday morning, August 23rd, a special tactical team from the FBI gained swift and overwhelming entry into the corporate offices of Tri Tac Games in Pontiac Michigan to the great surprise of the entire staff who were still sipping coffee.

Richard Tucholka, owner and president of Tri Tac, was duly informed of his rights as the squad of federal agents neatly and politely searched the offices of Tri Tac claiming to be looking for 'phony FBI Identification Badges' and 'Illicit government operation manuals.'

It is to be noted that Tri Tac Games publishes an award-winning Role-Playing Game called Bureau 13, detailing the adventures of a secret division of the FBI which uses magic and Harrier Jump Jets to defend America from supernatural criminals and monsters.

After painstakingly searching everything from the yet-to-be released CD ROM computer game version of Bureau 13, through the paperback copies of the Cult -hit novels from Ace Books in New York, absolutely nothing incriminating or illegal was discovered-- an incident close to the precedent setting invasion of Steve Jackson Games a few years ago by the US secret service which resulted in a major lawsuit rightfully won by the innocent game company.

In preparation for another government visit, Mr. Tucholka has informed his lawyer, alerted the media, and set an extra pot of coffee to brew for the agents if they return.

Yes, it happened. No kidding. Apparently some fool at GENCON thought a $1 double sized Plastic ID badge on flaming orange and pink paper was a threat to national security. These badges were given to players of Bureau 13 as promotional material.

The agents were professional and Tri Tac cooperated with them. Computers were not touched (It is a federal law that a writers 'Works in Progress' may not be taken.) They removed plastic Bureau 13/FBI ID badges from a display shelf and versions of a Department of Justice ID badge produced by Databank Press.

On Thursday the 25th Richard Tucholka was informed that the Federal Prosecutor would

not be pressing charges for the badges because there was no malice or intent in their production. There would be a file established at the FBI with these badge examples for future reference. He was instructed to send in all production copies and masters as well as destroy the ID Badge Computer Graphics file in question. Richard Tucholka shook his head and said "Only an idiot could think these badges were real. Wonderful to see my tax dollars at work."

And that's the story.

Appendix H1:
14 Live-Action Character Backgrounds for *Vampire the Masquerade*:

(1) Casper (a.k.a.: Jack Sprat) of Clan Malkavian:

It all began when a mental patient escaped from Bellevue Mental Hospital in New York. This psycho terrorized a lot of the northern U.S. raping women and was known as the giggling rapist. The reason for the name was that he was a circus clown and raped his victims in full clown gear. He eventually made his way up to Canada and into Winnipeg. There he stalked and assaulted a young woman by the name of Elizabeth Sprat. As a result, she became pregnant. The assault left her mind completely shattered. After 11 unsuccessful attempts at self-abortion, she gave birth to a healthy boy whom she named Jack. He spent his infancy in terror of his manic-depressive mother who one minute would be singing him a lullaby and the next brandishing a butcher knife. When Jack was four his mother killed herself by slitting her wrists in the bathtub. He was apprehended by Child and Family Services and carted from foster home to foster home. In one, he was kept in the basement and beaten. It was there that he met Jezebelle and earned his nickname, Casper. They became separated soon after. At the age of 12, Casper ran away and spent time on the streets with the likes of drug dealers, hookers and other unsavory characters. At the age of 14, he was lured to a Cafe Elysium event by Spider and was embraced as a Malkavian. His terrible childhood memories became locked in his mind and so he was doomed to remain a child for all time in his mind. Because his mother would terrorize him with stories of his clown-father, his fear of clowns became somewhat obsessive. To this date, Spider has murdered Casper's father and the Giovanni have his dad's spirit.

(2) Tiger (a.k.a.: Lillian Bradley) of Clan Gangrel:

Born: September 23, 1941
Embraced: June 25, 1963
Sire: Geoffrey Knight (Embraced 1892)
Concept: Cat Burglar
Haven: 2 rooms in the basement of a St. Vital home owned by a locksmith working for Noble Locksmith. Guarded by a state-of-the-art security system that alerts her through a pager when the security has been breached.
Known Haunts: St. Vital Park, Maple Grove Park, DMC.

Before the Embrace: Lillian was orphaned before she was one year old, her father dying in WWII and her mother suiciding shortly there after. She was given to her uncle and aunt who lived in Springfield, Illinois where she grew up and attended school, somewhat ignored by her guardians, who had four children of their own before she came she grew up on the wild side. By fourteen she was drinking, smoking and flunking out. At fifteen in the year 1956 she met Jimmy Bea, who at the time was a senior and easily the most

popular guy at the school. They started going out and Lillian was introduced for the first time to Johnny Bea (Shadow), Jimmy's quiet older brother. One summer night Jimmy was challenged to a drag race by a bunch of guys from the other side of town with a new car they thought could beat his. Johnny tried to talk his brother out of it but Lillian convinced him it was going to be no problem. Jimmy entered the race and drove into a concrete pillar, killing himself instantly. Johnny flipped out and blamed Lillian for it who denied that it was her fault. The next day Johnny had disappeared and the guy Jimmy was racing was found dead, crushed under the engine block of his car which had "slipped" out of the hoist. Jimmy's parents blamed Lillian for his death as well and the community echoed the feeling. Three months later, unable to handle her guilty conscience any more, or the neighborhoods feelings towards her, she ran away. Two months later she was in New York, cold, hungry and desperate. Unable to find a job, she began to call herself Tiger and started hooking, not only for money, but also for a place to stay. As time went on and she'd earned enough money for a place of her own, she started robbing the johns blind when they took her home. She only took jewelry and cash, they were the easiest to hide and she discovered people were very unimaginative in where they hid their valuables. Soon she gave up hooking all together and made her living breaking into peoples houses. Over nine years she became a well-known cat burglar, and was often hired to "acquire" pieces out of personal art collections. Occasionally she stole the same piece twice once from the original owner and once for the original owner. After one of these escapades, one of the two people she was working for figured out what was happening and called a hit on her with one of the local gangs. Six of it's members trapped her in a dead end alley.

The Embrace: Tiger managed to stab one of her assailants before the others got a hold of her. They roughed her up a little when suddenly they all heard a voice "Since you boys like five to one odds when they're in your favor, why don't you try me on for size?" He stood at the open end of the alley, with a lead pipe in one hand. Leaving two holding Tiger, three of the hoods rushed him, and he blurred into action. As he moved his features were seen for the first time. He looked sort of like a cleaner cut version of the wolf man. His mane was neatly slicked back, and he wore dark sunglasses above a short muzzle. As he moved his hands changed and with newly grown claws ripped the first to reach him from throat to crotch in one smooth movement. The second received the lead pipe with crushing force across the side of the head and the third briefly felt teeth on his throat before they tore his scream away. The two holding Tiger dropped her right there and the stranger finished them in short order as well. Tiger attempted to thank him for his help, but he swiped at her, his claws drawing blood on one arm. He chased her for the rest of the night, through New York, never quite catching her, but never giving her a chance to rest either. At one point she managed to hit him with a car she had stolen before he could get out of her way, but it did no appreciable damage. Just before dawn he finally caught her. The last thing she heard him say was "Good chase." and then she fainted. When Tiger woke up again, it was late evening, and the sun had already gone down. She woke up in a dumpster, under a pile of garbage. Crawling out, she went home and showered, wondering about the events of the night before. She felt different, but couldn't place how.

Everything was sharper, clearer, than before, and she felt a growing hunger in her, but she couldn't find food she wanted to eat. Every time she put something in her mouth it tasted of ashes and she couldn't keep it down. For two days she stayed in her apartment, not accepting calls or visitors, growing more and more hungry. She noticed another odd fact. Every morning just before sunrise she became so tired she couldn't hold her eyes open, and would not wake until after the sun had set the following evening. On the third morning she resolved to stay awake and watch the sun rise. She stood on the roof of her apartment building, facing east, and as the sun rose over the horizon she started to burn. Tiger barely made it back inside in time. She made it to her apartment and collapsed, just inside the door. When she woke, it was night again and the hunger was almost unbearable. But now she had an idea of what she was. Covering the burns as best she could, that night Tiger went out. She could not quite bring herself to take a human to test her theory, but she did find a stray cat in an alley after a little looking. She picked up the cat and pet it, but the Hunger surged and she felt a change in her mouth. She ran her tongue over her teeth and sure enough she had fangs. The cat was sweeter than anything she had ever tasted before. But it wasn't enough. Twelve cats and most of the night later she felt much better. The rest of the night she spent experimenting with her new state. Garlic didn't bother her anymore than other foods did now, she could still enter churches with no problems, although this was her first time in a church in ten years, running water presented no boundaries, in fact many of the myths seemed untrue or at least twisted. She had little power compared to any storybook vampire she found, and she read several books over those weeks, getting a friend to borrow them from the library for her since she could not get them herself. Tiger discovered powers of her own, although they seemed different from what she had ever heard of before. Finally Tiger made a decision. New York held nothing for her anymore. Her friendships had all become less important than what they once were, and those she had asked for favors from were suspicious. So one night she staged her suicide. While a friend was watching she took a flying leap off a bridge into the river, and never came up.

After The Embrace: The years after that went by quickly for her. She wandered from town to town, never staying long, but always long enough to burglarize a few houses before moving on. In her travels, she learned there were other vampires out there, and that there were two major factions called the Sabbat and the Camarilla, and a bunch of renegades called Anarchs. She never had any contact with the Sabbat and whenever she visited the Courts of the Camarilla they sneered and called her Caitiff, because she didn't know who her Sire was. So she generally avoided everyone when and where she could. At least that was in the first fifteen years. In 1978 she was in Washington D.C. and stopped in at a Kindred owned bar for a private party. One of the Gangrel clan spotted her and recognized her as Kindred and invited her along. With nothing else to do that night she agreed to stop by. As she walked through the door she saw somebody she hadn't seen since that night in New York. He looked a little hairier, but still pretty much the same as when she had seen him. Tiger stalked over to him, murder in her eyes. "Long time no see." she spat. He looked up and grinned. "Ah Tiger, it is time I made formal

introductions at last. My name is Geoffrey Knight, wanderer and minstrel, regaler of tales and warrior of great renown. I have defeated Sabbat, partied with the Garou and seen places no one has been in many hundreds of years. At your service." as he bowed, Tiger hit him. After he had finished beating the crap out of her, he introduced her as his Childer and to his Prince. She stayed briefly in Washington after that and learned a little about her clan, which she now knew as Gangrel, but then continued to wander. She corresponds semi-regularly with her Sire, for after the second fight they had become if not best of friends at least trusted friends. He had wanted a child, but without dealing with the childhood. So he had been delighted to learn that Tiger had survived and could indeed handle herself quite well.

She wandered for five more years, before coming back to Illinois. This time she went to Chicago, once again she visited one of the main Kindred owned bars in the city, and received her second largest shock since her embrace. Working the door was a face she remembered from Springfield. Johnny Bea, looking exactly as she remembered him from twenty years before. She approached him and started a conversation. He said he was called Shadow now and Johnny was dead. The conversation turned ugly as it rekindled the guilt of his brother's death, and they started to fight right there in the foyer of the nightclub. The other bouncers intervened and threw Tiger out onto the street. That was the last she saw of Shadow until they met again in Winnipeg. Those were the key points in Tiger's life up until she entered Winnipeg's Camarilla. It was the first attempt she had made to live with other Vampires on such close terms. She is still learning about proper etiquette in the Camarilla and knows next to nothing about some of the finer points concerning her clan (i.e the hatred between Ravnos and Gangrel she is not aware of. They are just another Camarilla clan to her). Her feelings towards Shadow have changed since their last meeting in Chicago. Her guilty conscience finally got the better of her over Jimmy's death. She will never openly take the blame for his death but she blames herself anyway and refuses to let anything similar happen to Shadow. Since Tiger has had little or no contact with other Camarilla's she believes the state of Winnipeg's is normal with all the stuff that happens on a regular basis.`

(3) Bean of Clan Malkavian:

Dear diary;
Hey, my first entry I guess I'll write out who I am for posterity, so here's my life . My parents aren't exactly model parents, if you know what I mean. They won't win any awards or anything. Anyway, I was born June 17, 1945. My name Rebecca Juniper Cassandra Blackwater, but my nickname is Bean, because I used to be really fat (I'm not anymore) and my favorite thing in the world to eat was and is jellybeans. I'm a twin. My sister's name is (was) Mary Jane Leigh. She died a little after our 17th birthday of a heroin overdose. I just didn't know what to do when she died. I still don't. I just kinda lost it a little. I guess there's nothing wrong with me, though. I'm fine. I still talk to her in my head sometimes, but I'm not crazy, I'm just a little messed up. But that's totally understandable, right? I mean, when your parents ignore you one day, but then totally

love, adore and shower you with attention when their fancy-ass rich friends are around so it looks good. I mean, you wouldn't want your friends to think you weren't good parents, right? Ha, yeah! Anyway, oh, my parents' names are Neil Wayne and Deanna Lynne Blackwater. My parents own a clothing store in downtown Seattle. They make a decent amount of money, but not like I ever see any of it.

"Becky..help me..it's so cold here..where am I?" Hey, where did that come from? Who wrote that? This is too creepy. I'm going to bed.

Dear Diary;
I couldn't take it anymore. I moved out! To la!! My new pad is soooo groovy! Oh, and you'd never believe who I met! Her name's Sunflower. She's a total hippie. She is just so far out. She's teaching me to meditate and do yoga and shit. It's so much fun. She lives across the hall from me and she helped me decorate my apartment, but I haven't gotten a lava lamp yet anyway. We're hanging out at all these groovy clubs like the whiskey-a-go-go. Last night I saw this far-out new band called "The Doors". The lead singer was super hot, but he spent most of his time with his back to the audience. Weird! Oh, well. Sunflower's calling. It's time for my yoga lesson. Hee hee. Maybe what happened last time we had a yoga lesson will happen again. Hee, hee. I'm such a bad girl. Write later. Bye!

Dear Diary;
My fucking parents are at it again. I've been going to "therapy" for them (which of course they only sent me to so I wouldn't freak out and embarrass them in front of their fancy-ass friends) and they're still blaming me for Mary Jane's death. The big fucking problem is that the fucking shrink believes it too. I hate fucking mind control. I can't fucking believe it. They think it's my fault, that I should have been taking care of her. My mom actually said "You never should have let her get into those evil drugs. If it weren't for you, she still might be alive." Bull fucking shit. She said the same thing to Mary Jane when I got caught shop-lifting. "Your sister wouldn't have done that if you had been watching her" What, are we supposed to be fucking raising each other? I thought that was a parent's job. Fucking stupid bitch. She hates my clothes, she hates my hair, she hates my friends, she hates my attitude, but dick her! I hate her and from now on I am having nothing to do with her, or that slave of a man who calls himself my father. He's not a whole person. He's an empty hollow shell that used to be a person until we came along and he just couldn't handle us. Sorry for being a mistake! Sorry for not being born when you wanted us to be! Well, fuck you!

Becky? What's going on? What's happening? This is so gard...Rebecca, help me! I'm so

Lost...
What the fuck is that? Where did that come from? I don't get it! This is really freaky! Maybe my apartment is haunted, but by who? Oh, fuck .. Is it, no Mary Jane? Oh, shit I can't deal with... Becky, it's me, Mary Jane. You have to help me. I don't know where I am ... I can't handle this, I've gotta go see Sunflower.

Dear Diary; (August 19, 1966)
You will not believe the guy I met! He is sooo beautiful. His name's Raven. Well, he's real name's Trevor Lee Rosenbaum, but everybody calls him raven. He's a little weird, but that's what makes him groovy, you know? He has this weird thing about wearing all black all the time but it gives him character. He looked kinda funny when he got high with us though, cause we were all colorful in our tye-dye clothes and he was so dark and mysterious, but that's what made me fall for him. Sunflower hasn't met him yet, but she will tomorrow. She'll love him! I can't
wait!

Dear Diary; (August 20, 1966)
Sunflower's gone, kidnaped, they think last night, right out of her window -- gone without a trace. Raven's been here all day letting me cry on his shoulder. He's so wonderful, but I can't shake the feeling that I've traded one true friend in for another. Please Sunflower, come home!

Dear Diary; (October 1, 1966)
Just more to add to the poetic tragedy that is my life. Sunflower hasn't come back yet and something's happened to Raven. I don't know what. He just came home one night and he didn't say a word. We had incredible sex, then I passed out and woke up the next afternoon to find him sleeping curled up in the bathtub. I just left him there. I figured maybe he'd gotten heavily stoned the night before and was just sleeping it off. I think he got some bad shit and it seriously fucked up his mind. Oh, I didn't tell you, I moved. I just couldn't stay in that place after Sunflower left, too many painful memories. Me and Raven moved to San Francisco. I just don't know what's going on. Raven's been terrified of really weird things lately, and he's been raving about something in his head, trying to eat its way out. It's really weird. He's scared of sunlight, of most light actually, and he blacked up all the windows so light won't get in. At least he's sleeping in our bed instead of in the bathtub. He hates crosses, he says "that guy" was wearing a big huge one and he scared him so much that he doesn't want anything to remind him of it. I don't know who this guy is, but I want to know. I want to know what happened to my Rave, my Trevor. I love him, and it's killing me to see him falling so deep into this black pit. He keeps saying something about "Malkavian". I think maybe it's this guy's name. I want to find him, but I don't know where to look. I asked all my friends but nobody knows him. I've been getting high a lot lately. I can't deal with this. Oh, shit, not again.

Dear Diary; (October 10, 1966)
You won't believe the shit that happened. I don't believe it and I was there. That Malkavian guy showed up. I don't know how he found us. He's a fucking VAMPIRE!! I never really believed in that shit, y'know? But I guess anything's possible. When I was a kid, I believed in faeries and little green men, but vampires just never crossed my mind, y'know? Anyway, this guy just comes barging in our door screaming about how he's the son of Caine (whoever the fuck that is) and how he has come to teach us the ways of

Caine so we can be saved or some shit like that. He started waiving this big-ass cross around yelling about all this shit and then Raven just absolutely FREAKS! He ran into the bathroom and locked the door. I could hear him in there crying and sobbing and begging this guy not to hurt me. The guy was standing at the door of the bathroom and he was gonna start yelling again when the stupidest thing I could imagine popped out of my mouth. I said, "will you be quiet? My neighbors will kill us!" I couldn't believe it. After I said it, I felt like such a fucking square so he looks at me with these weird pale eyes and he says, "freeze" and suddenly I can't move. I don't know why. I just couldn't. The guy starts laughing maniacally. He looked at my neck and my wrists and he laughed some more. He called be a "blood doll" or something and Raven starts screaming and he comes out of the bathroom and grabs me. I'm really high at this point, so I can't tell you in detail about what happened next. I dropped some wicked acid, about four hits. We had smoked like three joints and I had three grams of shrooms, so I was right fucked. I just remember them fighting and the guy was saying something about "embrace" and "masquerade" and Raven was saying something about the fact that the guy never taught him any of this. He left him in the alley. The guy stopped and looked at the floor, then he looked kind of upset. He said "I'm sorry. I am the preacher man. I am of clan Malkavian and I will teach you all you need to know." (I remember this part very clearly) He asked Raven if I knew about them and he said no. I still couldn't move. Preacher man said that I had to be either "embraced", or I had to die. Raven started crying. I have never seen him look so sad. I wanted more than anything to hold him then, but I just couldn't move. Then I found that the more I wanted to go over there, the more I felt I could. I guess preacher man saw me, and he got this real interested look on his face. I kept trying to move, and then I saw Raven on the ground sobbing and I HAD to go to him. Suddenly, I could move and I went to him. He put his arms around me and cried on me. Preacher man said I was worthy or some shit but I didn't really hear him because at that point Raven looked at me and his eyes were streaming blood. I screamed and backed away. Raven just looked at me and I saw eyes that didn't belong to him.. He looked so lost, so confused, but there was this desperate hunger under it. I was so terrified. I asked Trevor who he was and he said, "I'm sorry, hone, Trevor has to die. It'll be just Raven now but don't worry, you can be with me if you want forever" and as he said this, his teeth grew into these long pointy fangs and he got this wicked smile. He said "you see, dear, I'm a vampire, and so's preacher man. Here he embraced me, and I can do the same to you. I can make you like me, baby. We can always be together. "I kinda stammered something and ran into the bathroom. I could hear them on the other side of the door. Preacher man said they should give me time to think, and that's what I'm doing right now. They're outside my door right now and I'm thinking. They've told me all about it, that you have to drink blood, no sunlight, no fire, but you have these groovy powers. I guess that's what preacher man used to make me freeze. I don't know. I'm still thinking. I'm so fucking confused. I wish Sunflower was here. She'd make it all better. What should I do? I think I'm gonna do it. What the fuck is left in life for me anyway? Sunflower's gone and I'll never speak to my parents again. Mary Jane's been gone for so long. I can hardly remember him anymore. Trevor's the only thing I have left. I'm not going to let him

leave me too. That's it. I'm fucking doing it. Say good-bye to Rebecca. She's gonna go be a vampire.

Dear Diary; October 15, L966
It's very hard to write the words jump and swirl and change color. Well I guess I should tell you what happened after my last entry. I went through with it. I'm a Kindred now (that's what they call vampires. I guess it sounds more posh or something.) I'm a Malkavian. You see there are these "clans" of vampires and they're all different. I don't remember all of them, but I'll learn. Preacher man's been teaching us stuff about Kindred society. Yeah, there's a whole lot of Kindred everywhere. Oh-oh. My headache's coming back. Ow!

Becky? What happened to you? You look so different.

What happened to me? I can't do things like I used to. This body feels so alien. Doesn't feel like mine. Where are you? You were here a second ago. Please, Becky, help me. I've never seen this room before. What happened to my room? Fuck, I need a fix. Oh, fuck, Becky, where are you? If you find this, I guess you'll know I've been here. I'm gonna go and look for you, but I'll come back soon. Mary Jane

What the fuck? Mary Jane is dead. How can she write to me? Who's becky," I'm Bean? Oh yeah, Rebecca is my real name. I forget these things. There's so much shit in my head swirling around and tightening into a big knot. I can tie knots, knots, nots, not. Not me. I didn't do it. I was behind the screen in the t.v. then. My brain is trying to crawl out of my head. Raven came and put it back in so I can write again. I love him. He drank away all my blood and misery and put his blood and misery in me, but I don't mind. It hurt a lot but pain goes away. I don't need to feel it if I don't want to. Raven can see the world a bit like me, more than Preacher man. He won't shut up about God and Caine except when he's teaching us about Kindred stuff.

Ooh, that was fun. I just had a talk with John Lennon. He came out of my Beatles poster to say hullo to me. That's how he said it, hullo.

It's hard to be dead. I haven't drank anybody's blood yet except the blood dolly. She's a girl who Preacher man found that likes when vampires drink her blood. Preacher man found her. She's nice but she sure likes sex a lot. Her name's Jezebel. She's from the south. She talks funny and she makes me laff. Preacher man made one of the neighbors who complained about our noise all night come inside and Raven drank her blood - not all of it though. She didn't die. Preacher man told her to forget and she did and she went home. Yesterday the landlord came up and asked for our rent and Preacher man just told him that we'd paid the rent and the landlord believed him and he left. Preacher man is teaching us how to do that - how to make people do what you say or believe what you want them to believe. Maybe when I learn how to do it I'll go see that doctor that I went

to, and tell him what I think and he'll believe me. Raven is sooooo mooooody. One minute he's happy and smiling, the next he's yelling and then he's sad. Sometimes I go with his moods. Maybe it's because I love him, I don't know. I'm sill tripping on that shit I took before my embrace, but it's kinda fun. I'm learning a lot and I feel a lot smarter than before except that my thoughts go crooked instead of straight. Raven said he met some lady named Crazy Jane and she said it's normal. You're supposed to be in knots but that's Malkavian for you. She said the other clans call us crazy but we know the truth. Preacher man says that being a Malkavian made him see the light and he could see the fundamental truths of the universe. I haven't seen any fun-de-mental truths yet but maybe I will. Preacher man is kind of a looney but I'm not. Raven's a little funny in the head but hey, it's kinda traumatic being made into a vampire so I forgive him. I've been a little weird but that's just cause of the drugs and the vampire thing. I'm not crazy. I'm a Malkavian.

Dear Diary; November 26, 1966
Preacher man had to leave us for a while cuz he says he has Matters Of Great Importance to deal with so me and Raven are all alone. Whee! Why haven't I come down yet. I think the drugs should have worn off by now. I don't get it but it's fun. I've been talking to faaaaaries and they tell me it's okay to be a Malke Melka (Malykavian) on drugs because I have no banality and they say that's good. I guess it wuz goods that I believed in faeries when I wuz a kidd so now I can see them and they will talk to me. Yayyyyy! I like the faerees. They are here when I'm lonely which is a lot because Raven goes out and leaves me here all alone, so I talk to faeries and my poster-friends. Sumtimes, Raven runs around in circles yelling - my hair is on fire. Right now I don't unnerstand what he is talking about. He's babbling on about aliens and dragons and fish and how the other Kindrred are gonna come and get us. Tonight we're going to Court to meet the Prince but we have to go alone and meet somebody named Fishead and he will introduce us to the Prince. See the Prince is a Very Important Person, and apparantly we have to listen to him. I don't really understand, but maybe I will once I go to Court.

Deer Die-ary; November 27, 1966
Ooooh, court is fun. They get all the stuffy-ass clans together in a big building called the alecs aleks (alexandreea) club but in the bottom, that's where the vampires are cause that's what we are - bottom feeders. So we met Feeshhead. That's how he says it, Feeeesh-hed. He's funny. He's savvy and sad and angry and wants to kill people. He's entertaining so me and Raven went there and we got to play with the other Malykaviens. Some of them were little kids but they were older people, and some were very distant and some were just loony but they were all fun and we had a Clan meeting and Hat Boy was the primogen. His name is Hat Boy cause I don't remember his name and he was wearing a big tall black top hat. The primogen is the one that tells the Prince what's happening with the clans and Fishead told be that the Court was a prank made up by us Malykevs and it's the best one yet. I met a Toreador today. His name was Alfonso. He's a painter and he let me paint with his paints. He didn't like my painting. He said it didn't look like anything, but I said

it didn't have to. He didn't seem to understand, but his girlfriend, who wasn't really a girl, but I played along. He (she) like it. She said it looked like a bunch or birds of parrydise in flight or something. Nobody but me could really see what is was. I don't know why it was a painting of a bunch a faerys that I saw, with me in the middle. I don't know what's wrong with everybody. They just don't see the world right. Oh well, I'll keep trying to get them to see it the rite way. Raven understands, I think.

Dear Diary, February 6, 1967
Why am I crying. What's wrong with me. Am I crazee like they say or is it me? That's the only one who knows what's going on. Preacher man hasn't come back yet. I wish he could come back and help us. Raven keeps freezing up and staying there. He sat in front of the tv for 2 weeks. I had to feed him from me and I can't make him stay in one mood when he's moving. Anyway were gonna move. We think were gonna go to Boston maybe, or Chicago or Miami, but I don't know. I wonder if Raven luvs me anymore. He's taking to the wall rite now. I can't see whos in the wall. Maybe its one of the faeries come to say hullo to us? I cant think straight and I miss my sister. I'm starting to forget everything from before I was dead. I guess it doesn't matter cause that life wasn't so good, but who says this life or this unlife is any better?

Dear Diary, November 18, 1968
We moved to Boston. I was mad at leaving everyone behind, but Raven couldn't stay and I can't live without him so I had to go for the last 6 months or so. Jezebel was teaching me how to make guys think you had sex with them so they give you money. I never thought I'd sink so low, but I really didn't have a lot of choice cause we got kicked out of the apartment and we have no jobs an we can't get them so I have to be a hooker. Its not as bad as the other girls cause I don't really have sex. I make them think I did. Jezebel said to act like her when I went out to make it easier so I do, but I tried to embrase her, Jezebel I mean, but she died. The Prince was upset cause she was Preacher man's blood dolly and hell awful pissed when he comes back and finds out she's dead. Raven took the blame for it. I was really upset. Jezebel was my friend and now she's dead. Im beginning to think I should have any more friends, because they all dye. So now we have to go. Bye-bye San Francisco!!!

Dear Diary, July 17, 1969
We've been ok here in Boston but we've been happier. I've been hooking for money so we can live. I thought Jezebel was dead but she came back a little beat up, but she came back. I almost died myself, cause I tried to go out in the sun - it was so pretty, so bright and I looked so hard into it. I hardly felt the pain at all. I would have died, but Raven saved me so I guess he must luv me. Anyway Jezebel came back and she's helping me. She's really good at showing me stuff. She's kinda stuffy. She says she's a Ventrue. Isn't she lucky. Oh well unlife is hard and sometimes I hate it. I have to go and get some money now. Bye.

Police Report 7465084
July 17,1969
At approximately 10:50 pm on the night in question, myself and my partner Joe Stuart, encountered the suspect on the corner of 5th St. and Harvard Ave. We found the suspect lying on the sidewalk talking to herself. She later told us she was talking to "the fairies". We considered her a harmless hippie and sent her on her way. On our next round in that area approximately an hour later, we found the same suspect standing on the corner propositioning another man. She spoke and acted differently than before, but we knew it to be the same young woman. We watched the suspect and when she had successfully propositioned the man, we made our arrests. The young woman, whose name she claimed was Jezebel, acted very strangely while we had her in custody, and we then called the Arkham Asylum in the hopes they may know of her. They sent a doctor down to see the suspect, who have been arrested for prostitution and drunkenness. When the doctor examined the suspect, she reacted very violently, changing her manner and speech again and attacking the doctor. We restrained her and let the doctor finish his exam. He concluded this young woman was too volatile to exist in society and we released her to his custody. We attempted to contact the family of the suspect but as she could not give us a last name and her fingerprints were not on record she was declared a ward of the state. The suspect exhibited some strange actions when dawn approached. She was convinced the sun would burn her and kill her. The doctor suggested we succumb to her desires to be kept in the dark so as to avoid her becoming violent. We escorted her to the basement where we put her in one of the old cells. She fell asleep in there, and the following night the suspect was taken to Arkham by the doctor.

Log Entry 0004 --
July 30, 1969
Our new test subject has proven to be rather fascinating. Her test results have indeed shown our suspicions were correct, she indeed is a "vampire". We performed a vivisection on the subject and discovered her physiology vastly differs from human physiology. Evidence of this is shown by the shrinkage and atrophy of her organs. None of these organs can function, except the stomach. The stomach is indeed capable of containing fluid and the body of the vampire seems to act as a sponge. The blood can be ingested through any part of the body, although we assume the mouth is used most commonly as it is the easiest. We have noticed incredible healing capabilities. We found it difficult to keep the subject's torso open. We plan to amputate the subject's left arm to observe what will occur. We are speculating her arm will grow back but we wish to observe how long it will take.

(4) Dr. Jacob Crowe of Clan Gangrel.:

So, ye wants t'know me life story, do ye? Normally, yer pryin'd earn ye a slap in yer mouth, but ye've caught me in a talkin' mood, so sit an' listen, if ye wants.

D'ye get that? LISTEN. An none o'yer bothersome questions, alright?

Let's get started, then. I was born in April, 1892 to Finbarr and Maeve Connelly 'n Dublin, Ireland. Me father was a merchant in dry goods, an' a damned successful one, a' that. Growin' up, none of me sibblings wanted fer anythin', an' life was good. Meself, I was the youngest of eight children, so I didn't have any need to worry about inheritin' the business, an' I was left to me schoolin', which me parents liked, an' which I excelled at.

When I turned sixteen, 'twas time fer me t'go t' University. Me dad insisted I go somewhere in Ireland. Me mum thought it would be a good idea fer me t'go t'school abroad, somewhere like Oxford or Cambridge, an' both thought it'd be good fer me t'be a lawyer. Me, well, me head was full o'poems and stories an' romantic ideas about the new world. So me own mind was already made up; it was me off t'Canada t'live with the Frenchies an' shoot moose between me classes a' school.

Me ol' Da didn't like that idea overmuch. Me mum loved it. So that was me, wi'me feet itchin' t'travel, on the next boat westward. I had acceptance t'MeGill University in Montreal, full access t'me Da's accounts, an'a new rigle wi'a box o'shells.

Well, there weren't many moose in Montreal. Lots o'Franchies, though. But what a country! So --- new! An' vibrant! I knew instantly that I'd do well here.

As usual, I shot along in me studies an' was frocked a full professor of English Literature on me twenty-third birthday. By that time, Canada was at war in Europe. An' I was married to an Angel incarnate' Sarah Hurley, a Canadian by birth. Things couldn't have gone better. I was hired as a Professor at the newly-built University of Western Ontario, an' enjoyed every minute of me work, an' every minute a' home.

Things that good never last, though. A year into me tenure as Professor, a letter came from the King's Army ..... Submit t'conscription or go home t'Ireland. I couldn't go home, so I enlisted, bracing for a life I was positive I'd hate.

Well, I was right about one thing; I did hate it. But I discovered one very surprising thing: I was very, very good at it.

Me last night with Sarah was tearful. An' then, I went away t'the war.

A year later, an' I was a sergeant, at the second battle of the Somme. We'd had our arses kicked good and me an' O'Leary were returnin' across No Man's Land after a failed trench raid. All of a sudden, a huge explosion goes off in front of up, an' there's this guy thrashin about on fire in the aftermath. So, me an O'Leary goes up an' puts him out wi' our trenchcoats an' drags him back to our trench.

When we got back, he was dead, so we pushed him into the water at the bottom and fought on.

That night, we caught a shell square on our trench. Woulda killed us outright if we hadn't jumped a' the last minute. As it was, it just cut us t'ribbons an there was us, bleedin' t'death, slow as the sunset, with no help in sight.

It was then the dead guy got up an' said "Well. A life for a life. I repay by debts." An' so it was that I was reborn into the night; stealing others' birthright t'live like me namesake - stole his brother's inheritance, taking life from death like a bloody crow.

The irony appealed to me. An that was how Jacob Connelly died and Jacob Crowe was reborn.

(5) Kaylin Silverfur of Clan Gangrel:

Kaylin was born in 1971 under the name Kaylin Silverfur. When she graduated high school, she went to France to study medicine and linguistics. She was 19. After 3 years of study, she came home to find that her family had been murdered. She immediately joined the police force and started to track the murderer down. In 1995, she was chasing him down an alley when she lost him. One night she was out at the bar, she was embraced when she took a guy home. On March of '96 she was introduced to the court.

(6) Zippy of Clan Malkavian:

My name long ago was .... no, that's not part of this at all. But my life was at that time included the day and the food of the light and that is important. The loss I mean. Anyways.....

I was born into a New York family of considerable standing in the mid thirties. Throughout my life there was the usual lavishing of wealth and status and playmates in Rome on holidays while I secretly stole into the Vatican in hopes of asking the Pope a few questions. A private tutor who amused me only so far as I let her and then oh yes, there was my ambition. I was to inherit the empire, neither Roman, holy or lasting of my father ..... I believe it has most things to do with papers. I laugh that I can right on electrons now no know. But back to the point.

The journey of Odysseus on the wine red seas began on the way to college by chance. A little place by the name of Berkeley in the 1950's where I, as a self mutilation of character bombastically endeavored to illuminate the world of journalism to truth and the open mind. Little did I know that those experiments at the chem lab I volunteered for where doing things on electrons I couldn't even begin to put on paper. And the pumphouse gang.....oooh those were the days and nights. The beginning of those long nights. A warm-up for eternity as I see it.
That was one of the first recreations of myself, strangely it may have been the most profound, even without the laureate of Malkav gracing my mind. I went from a New York Roman Catholic adolescent fully schooled mannered docile inquisitive running into the camp of madmen running from 'Cisco to York and over the edge of the world never

trying but doing and all the while staying right there all the time straight A's man and all that crap and then suddenly the integrity of the article itself presented itself to me and the school paper had stopped publishing the truth so I had to move on to the desert where truth is cut and dried. That is when I discovered Bach. Bach or BackUs or Bachus was a divine creature to say the least. An old soul if you will. He had risen in the desert around Las Fegas, a mad prophet to which the few chosen had found themselves drawn. A cult of ecstasy and shattering was the title for my article until I found that shattered as well. I became one.....with the cult.....with myself. Bachus plugged the following as their eyes failed in the darkness but god I think that carrot garden I grew really saved me because at those darkest moments my vision stayed and I was spared and I saw all that occurred and kept the play going and finally, I was the only one left. It was fortuitous, the article was shattered because there was no longer a cult to write about. Just BackUs and I. That was the night I first learned it all. Learned his power and saw the sheen of light and dark in all things and he told me secret histories until my head cracked open and everything flowed and sunk into the earth as the sun rose one last time.

And after a week he was simply not there, just his voice was left rambling over the sands And SO ON TO VEGAS I WENT, A HIGH HOLY ROLLER OF DICE AND BROKE THE BANK AND BROKE MYSELF AND BROKE THEIR MINDS FOR A TIME AND WHEN THEY FINALLY DECIDED TO BREAK BY LEGS I BROKE OUT. Back to Frisco. The boys weren't there anymore, so I knew the knowledge lay somewhere else. THE BOAT WAS SOMETHING OF A PREDICAMENT BUT YOU DO NOT NEED TO KNOW THAT.
Ratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsratsr
atsrats
So
Where was I?
Feet in Jersey with dreams of 'Frisco?
No
A short stint in Japan where the childhood dream of being a person who could pronounce fens shui and practice it as a career came true. They loved the buildings I flowed and channeled through the cosmos. Until that little incident with the square black of haunting demons and somewhat of an internal region. I was just curious. So sue me. THEY did. And those cats are fast man. And big too. I think I still have one of their claws perhaps in my back .. So....
India was furthest away and still the people seemed the same and the kindred were scarce and hiding from something other than the light if you know what I mean. They thought they knew the way to find the ends of the circle or at least they had mapped the perimeter soundly but the fact that it formed a zero still eluded them so I felt a moral need to enlighten them further. A group of artists formerly known as the children of Vanaressa all engaged to try and break a little bit on monotony with those old ????? and it just seemed that sure. Oh well, we will bring spiritual uprising but somebody had to tell the higher-ups just what was going on so they could see the beauty of the moment. In the end, it ends up

it was just my plan, it seemed, and so they had seen a few new things happen and so had I, but strangely I felt compelled to leave India and since Europe was just around the roller coster....
THE ?????! THE ?????! THE ????? OF MADNESS! THE ?????!
One of the most menmorable moments of Europe occurred just after reading the 15th century bathroom walls of a rather hospitable chap named Melinos. A seeming mishmash or text, when read backwards, ??? of a group of Malkavs of the 12th century who had found a peaceable existence with the ?????. Prank not what not and all that crap. They also had a variation of the gift of Malkav, now there was something with ?????. Unfortunately there was only one left. A woman named ??? ????? . gotta get me out of those. So I did.

It took a bit, oh it took a lot but it was fun and never the same twice, and finally I found ???. Seemed a bit like two unlike minds liking each other and the world wasn't as old for the most part, with the exception of the island or mars on which we dwelt, and dear Malkav would have been proud at the visions we invoked in ourselves and the way she could just reach out and fire and sooth the madness and the mundane in each and others, and it felt better and the pranks soothed and smoothed the mountains into valleys and all was well, but ??? all good things come to an end when you travel to Tibet.
Right!
It was the ????? eve and I found and looked into kept us there so long and fried to be. ??? with a bag of books on my back and the money from Vegas in the coffers and her as always, and I tried to find that ???? named Londa someone mentioned so long ago in a desert and she helped me, but never tread her own path and I tried and tried and finally I almost had it! I did I did I did. The old man with his white hat and red hat and oh he almost had me there with me and a beast in the left hand and a man in the other and the juggling act was gonna be a big hit, but it went wrong. Terribly.
Terribly
Wrong
AND AT THE END OF THE FAST....

...At the temple there were no monks and I awoke from my new self to find the man on the floor without that beautiful sheen about him, his legs crossed perfectly, eyes open, preparing for his last meal, while his bowl of rice filled with the last of his own life. Red rice .... I never wished I saw the whiteness so bloodied. And the shattering commenced and I left the beauty of Eve and the monks cum ashses and off.

The last years have been the most hectic, the building of the worlds, raves in London, South Africa greying with ash and pressing inward to make diamonds way more glittering and shiny and the colors blended worse than I though BUT THEY DID. Democracy in Russia was especially difficult for a number of us. Malcontent was the biggest help and that wall was so big and we thought it was a nice punchline but the chaos that afterward seemed like a deafening echo so off I went to America and if those kids wouldn't have

been so formatted I wouldn't have had to teach them a lesson and Kurt would still be alive today but Malcontent had found that John Lennon was very much the same and Jim too and everything got better, didn't it?

And so here I am retreating to nowhere to make something of nothing and build it up and make it shine and we four guide the many and it is all taken shape, and now I will teach them all and the burn will be slow this time and the end WILL be better this time, and Eve has come to me and the monks are reminding me and this will be a bit all by own.

(7) Mr. Nore of Clan Tremere:

Mr. Nore was born in the year of our Lord 1455, Carlito Giuseppe Rayoun Medicci, in the city-state of Florence, Italy. As the fourth-born son in the powerful banking family, Carlito was not looked upon to fulfill any major role or responsibility within the family, and as such, had quite a lot of free time on his hands. The combination of prestige, money and general contempt that only the so-called highborn seem to possess, led to the inevitable life of wenching and of delving into matters frowned upon by Church and State.

In time, as it must, his life of debauchery began to pale; and, around the age of twenty-five, he developed an inclination to the arcane. Ten years passed, during which he built up a fair reputation as a scientist with an aptitude for getting results, and word of this got to the Tremere.

After the usual testing, Carlito was found worthy and indoctrinated into the clan. To symbolize his break with his previous life, he took a new anme, Mr. Nore. He spent fifty years as an apprentice (a remarkablly short time), and was the posted in a Tremere Chantry in the middle of what is now the Black Forest. His role there was primarily as scout and go-between, between the various Gangrel, Nosferatu and Brujah clans.

Roughly fifty years into his posting, and with minor successes to his credit, the keep was over-run in the Great Gargoyle Uprising of ????????????. Put into torpor, he was left for dead, and lay buried among the ruins until 1944 when he was unearthed by a roaming pack of Gangrels who took him for one of their own. He later broke away, and promptly reported to the Tremere Chantry head at Berlin. And after a forty-eight year period of re-acclamation, spent in Beantown, he was given a new beginning as Chantry head, in the freshly opened city of Winnipeg.

(8) Shadow of Clan Brujah:

> QUOTE; "Man is but a breath and a shadow. Remove the breath, and all that's left is Shadow."

The year was 1957. Johnny Bea was a typical student in a typical high school in the typical American town of Springfield, Illinois. He had average friends, average grades, and an average girlfriend. His younger brother, however, was anything but. Jimmy was the obvious favorite. Class president, Captain of the backetball team and the most popular

guy in school, Johnny had always lived in Jimmy's shadow with brotherly love and good humor. Truth be told, Johnny admired his younger brother. Jimmy, however, was the rebel. He had always gone for the fast cars and fast women and was constantly being warned that his lifestyle would kill him. Eventually, it did.

Kyle Parker, the local tough, had been harassing Johnny and Jimmy since elementary school. When he finally challenged Jimmy to a race for pink slips, Jimmy barely hesitated. Johnny knew Jimmy's reckless attitude would make the race more dangerous than Jimmy could handle, and pleaded with him not to go through with it. Jimmy was almost convinced to call it off until his girlfriend, Lillian Bradley, talked him back into it. Just as Johnny had predicted, Jimmy's fierce competitiveness and reckless nature got the better of him and he smashed into a concrete pillar. Jimmy was killed instantly and Johnny descended into a deep depression. Eventually his temper got the better of him and Johnny murdered Kyle.

Late one night while Kyle was working on his car, Johnny slipped into his garage. As Kyle was under the hood, with the engine out, Johnny released the ratchet on the block & tackle. The 500 lb. engine cut him almost completely in half. The county sheriff proclaimed it to be an accident, and the case was closed.

This callous act of vengence had set the pace for Johnny's life, and yet, it had not eliminated his feelings of depression and regret. He finally fled town after hearing his parents discuss Jimmy's death. "How could this have happened?" "I don't know. Jimmy was such a great kid." "He got good grades, he had lots of friends." "How could he throw his life away like that?" "Why did it have to be Jimmy? Why couldn't it have been Johnny?"

Johnny couldn't believe what he had heard. He was used to always coming in second, but this? Could his father really prefer him to die in Jimmy's place. Johnny almost wished he could die, just to see the look on his father's face. Of course if he died he wouldn't get that chance....

That night, Johnny packed his bags and headed for California. After moving to the glitter and glamour of Hollywood, Johnny tried desperately to make it in show business, occasionally landing a bit part here and there. Eventually he broke into the movie business, by landing a small part in a small, underfunded western film. He worked 18 hour days regularly and eventually got to be close friends with one of the other actors. Bret Rivers was another bit actor from New Jersey. He got into the film by offering to work for less money than anyone could survive on, and lived out of his car. Over the next few months Johnny and Bret were almost inseparable. Then one day fate frowned on Johnny once again. During a gunfight scene, one of the guns had fallen into the dirt. A small pebble had gotten jammed into the barrel, and when the gun was pointed at Bret and fired, Bret took a fatal shot to the heart. Johnny couldn't take any more. He cracked right there

and then and beat the gunman to death with his bare hands. Ever since that day, Johnny would flip out on anyone yielding a pistol like that silver, pearl handled colt.

Wanted for second degree murder, Johnny successfully managed to evade the state troopers and make his way back to his home state. He arrived in Chicago in the winter of 1959 and became a hopeless drifter, moving from one low-paying job to another, never staying in one place long enough to make any good friends. People who knew him said that he was little more than a shadow of his previous self.

Finally, during one particularly self-destructive night of drinking and fighting, he encountered someone who would change his life forever. A dark, ominous stranger approached him in the alley with an offer.

"How would you like the chance to really kick some ass," the stranger inquired.

Johnny replied with his fists, "I already can, motherf-" He was cut off by getting thrown into a brick wall. By the time he turned around, the stranger was at the other end of the alley. Johnny saw him duck around the corner and in a heartbeat he was whispering in Johnny's ear.

"You can move like this too, with my help. But then you have to do me a favor."

Johnny tried to spin around and take another swing at him, but the stranger beat him to the draw, twisting his arm behind his back and pinning him to the wall.

"Now about this favor...."

"So you want to be my trainer. What do you want from me?"

"Not your trainer, I just have a gift for you. But we can discuss that later. What I want from you is this. There's a bar in town called Gilbralter's. Go there. You'll see a man in a suit with four guys around him like bodyguards. The guy's name is Lodin. One of his bodyguards, the blonde one, caused some trouble for me an' my friends. All I want you to do is teach him a lesson. When he leaves Lodin's side, go get'im. Tell 'im Calico sent ya"

"That's it. After you rough up Blondie, you're on your own. You'll never see me again."

"Ok, fine. You've convinced me. But what's this gift you've got for me?"

"Just this....", and the stranger sank his sharp teeth deep into Johnny's neck and embraced him into everlasting night. Johnny died that night, in that dark, dank alley under Chicago's night sky.

When I came to, I knew something was different. I felt a new power in me that I never felt before. I also felt ravenously hungry. The stranger who called himself Calico was gone, and I didn't miss him in the least. All I could think about was eating, so I headed for the nearest steak house. I had a powerful craving for red meat. I ordered a huge New York sirloin, rare. I couldn't wait to sink my teeth into that juicy morsel, but when I started into my feast, it tasted like ashes in my mouth. It was just cooked way too much. I finished the meal out of sheer hunger, but it just didn't sate my hunger. I went to the store and brought a pound of ground beef, gulping it down raw as soon as I got home. It helped a little, but not enough. My stomach turned from the meal I had earlier, and I retched into the kitchen sink. Normal food just couldn't satisfy the burning hunger inside me.

I figured that the stranger had hit me up with something, so I set out to find him. Since I had no idea where to look I decided to head for Gibralter's. I figures even if he said he wouldn't go in there, he'd probably be around to see if I followed up on my end of the "deal." Of course I never really intended to do any such thing, if he didn't show up again to make me.

On my way to the bar, I cut through the alley where I had met Calico. Lying in the alley, behind some garbage cans, was a figure. As I got closer, I noticed the dark pool around it. It looked like another mugging victim had taken a turn for the worse. I normally would have kept walking but somehow the sight of the bleeding body had a hold on me. The hunger that had welled up inside my body was now screaming at me and I could no longer control it. I pounced on the lifeless body, and drank deeply of its cooling lifeblood. When I finished, I was more confused than before, though I was finally sated. What was I doing, drinking the blood of a dead man? Was I a vampire or something? (I thought this flippantly at the time, scarcely realising how exactly I had hit the truth). Or had that stranger done some really weird shit with my head?

I decided to continue on to Gibralter's, even more determined to find the man who was unbeknownst to me, was watching me from a fourth story window while I feasted on the dead. I never knew that it was he who had killed that man and placed him there for me to find. His only act of conscience in this whole bloody affair.

I arrived at Gibralter's and almost instantly found the man call Lodin. He was prominently situated in a dark out of the way corner, exuding power by his nonchalant attitude. Standing behind him, facing away from him, was Blondie. As I stood thinking how best to deal with him, I realised that Calico hadn't shown me any of those moves he promised, and that I had no reason to do him any favors. Just then, Blondie looked my way. He had a look or curiosity on his face and came towards me. I was starting to worry, thinking he had linked me to Calico and I was really in for it.

"Hey, you OK? You're bleeding." He pointed to my mouth, and I realized that I still had

blood smeared on my chin from my little blood feast that evening. I panicked and started to bolt but he caught me by the shoulder. With a lightning speed I never knew I had, I spun around, grabbed his arm, and broke it full off.

Something deep inside made me say, "That's for Calico. And this is for me!" And with that, I plunged the broken bone of his forearm through his chest before he had a chance to recover. I tried to turn and run after that, but two bouncers had stepped in my way, and the rest of Lodin's gang were on their way. Still moving with the speed of a demigod, I sank a fist deep into the face of one bouncer and smashed my elbow into the other one. But they took the blows without so much as a blink and then they were on me. I flew into a flurry of fists, snapping bones and necks like toothpicks until I was finally brought down, being pummeled by five toughs.

I regained consciousness once again, this time to find an elderly gentleman standing over me. I tried to get up, only to find that I was completely unable to move. My eyes raged with the fury I could not otherwise express. The man spoke.

"Calm yourself child, I could not have you leaving before you heard me out. You should thank me. Had I not stepped in on your behalf, Lodin surely would have had you destroyed for you actions last night. But you are Brujah, and I suspect, newly so. How do you know Calico?"

Suddenly, I found myself able to move, and I found I no longer wanted to leave. This seemed to be a guy with answers. Answers I couldn't get from Calico. Answers to questions I didn't dare ask just anyone.

I replied, "I met him yesterday, and he made me an offer he wouldn't let me refuse."

"So. And do you...."

"Wait a minute," I interrupted, "before I answer anymore of your questions, you're gonna answer some of mine. Just who is this Lodin guy? Who are you? And what is a Brujah? And what the fuck is happening to me?

"You desire to understand, that is good. Now if you would listen, that would be better. First of all, do you know what you are?"

His question kept me disoriented, and I wasn't quite sure what he was asking. I took a guess. "I'm ... a Brujah?"

"That is true, but do you know what that means?"

"Not a clue. Does this have anything to do with..." I choked the words off. I almost told

him about the guy in the alley, the hunger, the strange things I'd been feeling. But I didn't trust him that much. At least, not yet.

"With the changes you've been feeling? Yes. More changes than perhaps you realize. You are a vampire. To be more precise, you are a Brujah. We are one of many clans in our society. Our numbers are greater than anyone imagines. This is because we live by a Masquerade. Our survival depends upon us hiding our existence from the mortals. Lodin is our Prince. He keeps order in this city and takes care of problems like you. He was not pleased with you for killing his ghoul last night. Nor for your indescresion of breaching the Masquerade. I am Critias, Primogen of clan Brujah. I speak to the council of elders on behalf of our clan."

The news hits me like the proverbial ton of bricks. I was a vampire. Critias and I talked for many hours after that, and he explained the ways of the Camarilla to me; the Traditions, our system of status, the clans and so much more. He taught me the ways of the Brujah and told me the story of Carthage. Later, Critias introduced me to the manager of Gibralter's, a female Ventrue named Katana Nym Zet. She had been impressed by my brawling skill and offered me a job as a bouncer at Gibralter's. Eventually, I was presented to Prince Lodin and became a successful member of the Chicago Camarilla. I made many friends, even among the Ventrue and Tremere.

Years later, I once again encountered Lily Bradley. She showed up at Gibralter's looking not much different than she had when I last saw her. The result of our scuffle led me to believe she had been embraced. She disappeared again after that.

I worked at Gibralter's for 35 years, periodically assuming different disguises to uphold the masquerade. I was provided accomodations in the basement of the bar, and so my wages were simply placed in savings. (Hmm, I wonder how much I have in savings now?)

After the Garou massacre and Lodin's downfall, I stuck around for a while. After two years, things still hadn't calmed down, and there still was no Prince, so when I heard about a new Camarilla expansion up in Canada, I took the opportunity to get the hell out of the anarchy and start a new life. Some of my fiends had the same idea. The Tremere Adam Knight joined me in the journey and Katana joined us later, after she wrapped up her business dealings in Chicago.

After arriving in Winnipeg, I decided to take advantage of my position as an original settler to make sure things went better here than they did in Chicago. When I was nominated as sherrif, I accepted and decided to use my position to keep order in this new city. This time I wouldn't be a blind follower of the Camarilla but a strong leader. I was determinded to take a more active roll in Camarilla politics, and since have stuck my fingers in as many pies as I've heard about.

It took me a while to get the hang of my new powers and responsibilities, and truth be told, I made my share of mistakes. But as time went on, I became an effective leader and commander. One of the first things I did, at the suggestion of one of the Nosferatu, was to set up the Camarilla Intelligence Agency. I did by best to keep the members unaware of who else served in the Agency, so if any one was discovered, the identity of the others would be secure. The CIA first proved its usefulness when three Sabbat arrived at our Elysium one night and made a general nuisance of themselves. One even had the gall to masquerade as our Prince. I had two agents follow them, leading us directly back to their headquarters.

The next major step I took was to be initiated in Knighthood. I was subsequently assimilated into the Order of the Sith, of which I was made Captain of the Guard. One knight of each clan was chosen and we banded together as a peace keeping force.

Not everything has been going smoothly, however. A few weeks ago, something big and ugly arose in the city. The Senechal was taken, and Prince Wolfram disappeared. As it turned out, the Prince had gone to get an Archon to help regain order in this fucked-up Camarilla. No one was informed of his whereabouts and so I stepped in and suggested that the Primogen elect an acting Prince. Damien McAllister, primogen of clan Ventrue was elected (as I suggested), and took over as Prince until Wolfram returned.

Shortly thereafter, one of the Toreador decided to hold a public gathering at Cafe Elysium. Both kindred and kine were invited, which was an idea I was not the least bit pleased with. I probably wouldn't have even gone had I not felt it my duty to keep a close eye on the kindred of the Camarilla and protect them and the masquerade. Our gathering did not go altogether unnoticed. A number of hunters made an appearance, and one of them managed to get me outside and put a stake through me. Right then and there I decided to improve my personal protection. Later that night, our Prince also got staked and would have met with final death were it not for the actions of myself and two others. I managed to take out the hunter who was dragging him off, while Domingo the Caitiff kept the other hunter busy. Just before I struck the final blow on the hunter who attacked Prince Damien, he pulled out a grenade. Ignoring the deadly threat, I cut the bastard in two, started at the groin and working my way up. I probably wouldn't be here today if Demitri the Toreador hadn't pounced on the grenade and smothered it.

(9) Gabreel of Clan Malkavian:

Born in 1921 to a missionary and his wife while they were doing work on the island that today is Haiti?Dominican Republic or something like that. Not really that important. When I was 23, my parents decided that Haiti, with its indigenous religion was too spooky for their version of holy worship. Therefore they took off for their well deserve rest. (Their ship sank! Too bad.) I stayed in Haiti and continued working at the local bar/bistro in Port Au Prince. All was going well. I was unfortunately at this time dealing with the beginnings of my mild manic depression phase. At this time, I began feeling as if

I was being observed by something or someone. The next evening (talk about fast, fast, fast) an older yet still completely functional gentleman approached me. We started a conversation and by the end of the evening we seemed (at least to others) to be old friends. Grandau, as his name was, invited me to come to his country estate to help him with the "business". So pack me up and off we go.

Soon after my arrival, he embraced me. 1945. Turns out he was Malkav. He let me learn from him. Taught me about voodoo. That's were the occult influences came from. He then gave me a section of his state to look over near the Haitian/D.R. border in the mountainour region. My manic depression became more pronounced but still controllable. Once working, I rarely left my area. On one such even in Port Au Prince, I did encounter a vampire, also a Malkav. 1975. Zip. Also encountered a Ventrue. But another story at another time. Recently, however, my sire disappeared. Anarchy seemed to reign on the estate. Large parts were taken over by others. This loss on my part caused me to be overcome by vast amounts of misjudgement. This resulted in tension between me and my herd. They attacked and killed by bodyguards and then delivered to me the ultimation. Leave or be destroyed.

Needless to say, the invitation came at the best of times.

(10) Guy De Montpassant of Clan Tremere:

Born - April 7, 1876 - La-Chapelle, France.
Wife - Gabrielle
Children - Christoph, Jacinthe

EMBRACE - Sept. 30, 1915 on a battlefield near Mons. A Tremere named Helmut Gotterman was hiding from the sun's rays in a crypt. That night a German shell burst near the crypt and opened the door. Helmut knew that if he was captured on the French side, he would be taken prisoner and would face the wrath of the allied forces. He made his way cautiously across the battlefield when he happened upon a French "poilu" soldier dying of a bayonette wound. He quickly healed the man and embraced him. They then made their way off the battlefield posing as prisoner and guard. They eventually made there way to Vienna where Guy was finally explained his now role in the scheme of things. Helmut was punished for embracing someone without permission but as it was wartime and the circumstances dire, the punishment was light. Guy found that his schooling (he was taught by his Jesuit uncle) came in handy. He always had a talent for finding books, and the researchers in the clan kept him very busy. He considered himself fortunate because he saw the other neonates mopping floors, cleaning and doing other menial tasks.

He discovered that his family believed him dead. Whenever he is in France, he visits the grave of his beloved Gabrielle and his son Christoph. He never places flowers on his own grave, however, he believes it may bring him bad luck.

Guy remained in Vienna until the mid 1930's when he was assigned to the Paris chantry. This was a bad time for supernatural creatures as the Nazis would destroy any that they found, saving their experiment for human subjects. Hundreds were destroyed. It may have been the only time in recent history that Kindred and Garou joined together for mutual protection. Guy gained some notoriety as a French resistance fighter known only as "Le Phontome" who only worked at night and had an uncanny ability to make German tank crews surrender without firing a shot. A medal of honor sits in the Musee de la Patrie with the story. It has never been claimed.

After WWII, he left Europe because of the devastation and the death of his wife and son. His daughter was well taken care of by his cousin. He travelled a great deal between chantries, doing research and inventing new rituals, several of which he had the honor of presenting at the annual Thaumaturgical Conventicle in Vienna. In 1960, he was assigned a position in the Montreal chantry. It was here that he met a kindred, was not well looked upon by the clan. The unnamed kindred told Guy how he had gained the blissful state- drink from animals only - "regain what you have lost." Guy made his decision on January 1,1962. He has added a twist however, Golconda is not enough. He is working on his "project" that is, the rehumanisation of vampiric entities. He has heard that there are powerful mages that are able to accomplish this, so Guy is studying powerful magical tomes and sources to aid him. He has not the time to go out and find these mages' for his "project" takes up a good deal of his time. He hopes that his requests for esoteric and hermetic materials from universities and other collections around the world will alert one to his cause. So far, not much success, on either point. As for the others, it has been 34 years since he has fed from a human or tasted human vitae. Once at a party, a ghoul gave him a glass and he sipped at it without thinking. When he realized that it was the ghoul's blood, he ran to the alley and emptied the contents of him stomach. It took a great deal of will to do this.

As for regaining what was lost, he has adopted Jezebel as his daughter and will defend her with his life if need be.

Most in the clan think that he is somewhat of a hermit. Preferring study and research to plotting. Many, including members of his own clan underestimate him. This does not bother him. Now that he is Primogen he realizes that he will be spending less time on his "project" (not too much less he hopes and more time in Kindred arrairs. -Which he finds brutal and savage for the most part). He will try to dispell the spector of mistrust left by the infamous Mr. Nore.
CHANTRY INFORMATION - Guy De Montpassant

(11) Istvan Kovacs of Clan Brujah:

The memories I have.
(Stored in my notebook, encrypted with 15 different algorithms, and ciphers)

Born October 13, 1970 to Andras and Magda Kovacs. My folks were immigrants from Hungary. Dad was a computer engineer, and Mom was a housewife. I grew up closer to downtown Toronto than any normal kid would want to. I've never acknowledged anyone's self-declared authority, which kept me in detention throughout elementary school. Not much changed when I hit Junior high school. Dad thought he was a psychology buff and gave me all the free reign I wanted, thinking that I'd settle down and follow in his footsteps. I played with drugs for a while, and even hung out with some of the small gangs. I never really got too badly beat up for lipping off to any leaders and after a short gig, I gave up trying to be accepted by doing the norman deal. That's about the time that my school went computerized. Dad had always left his computers open to me, and I'd gotten heavey into hacking on the 'net beck before it was the "Internet" - AARPANET. Talk about lame security. All this computer work at home made Dad really happy - I guess he thought I was doing "real" computer work. Anyways, my school had gone computer and I'd quickly hacked into their student databases and upped the masrks on anyone who'd done me good, or at least given me more of a fair shake than I deserved. (I know I didn't deserve it, but moxy'll get you far) After Spring term in grade 8 (when all this started happening to me), all by friends (for lack of a better word) looked at me like I was some kinda god. I really got off on the status I'd been given. After that, I found my niche. I could be cool and smart and still tell everyone off and get away with it. Life was good.

Not much changed when I hit high school. But, they had better security. I could fly through it faster I'd moved up to working cop shops after doing some research into the transmit protocols on the car terminals, and their database structure (it was kinda "handy" that a museum field trip was changed to a cop shop field trip). This got me in fairly well with the bigger boys. The gang life got boring by the time I was going into grade 12, and I decided that I could make a real mark in the world being a serious hacker. I walked away from the scenes and busted my ass getting into U or T, where I quickly got my masters in cumputer science. I fudged some of the records and got into a Ph.D. program in computer engineering, finished that off in 16 months thanks to some of Dad's work he left lying around the house. Dad saw my thesis, freaked out, kicked me out of the house (fuck him anyways). I grabbed a ton of gear from the house a week later when the folks were out at some event they'd "won" tickets for, grabbed his ID for the lab he was working at, and grabbed the rest of my prototype gear. I gave myself a job at DEC computers, as a - what did I call myself again? 0 oh yeah, emergency services. Any nethacking they needed done at night I could do.

Fuck me if I didn't get caught. Fuck me, I did get caught. Some older computer guy walks into the lab I'd broken into, and calmly asked what I was doing. I jumped the guy, thinkinng I'd have no problem with this 60 -ish looking guy. After I flinched, I found myself face first on the floor. He spun me around and stared into my eyes for what seemed forever. When I woke up, I was lying down in a black room, lit by hundreds of candles, on a bed of what felt like rock. As I found my way back to reality, I saw a

shitload of graffiti on the walls, and what looked like dried blood on the ground. This old guy walks in again, pulls up a chair, and explains to me what I'd become.

Nice guy.

(12) Damos James Sebastian of Clan Gangrel:

I was not always Damos James Sebastian. A long time ago I went by a name placed upon me by others, now long dead. They were family and friends. People who had once cared about me, and who never knew of my journey into darkness and beyond. As it is, I am glad they did not know for they would have feared and shunned my passing instead of reliving the quiet happy memories I know they used to share.

In 1838, I was born Falen Jameth MacGregor in the small town of Stronmelochan near the great lake Loch Awe, in central Scotland. My childhood was normal, and I grew happy and free under the watchful eyes of my parents Manda and Stenin. My teenage years began to decline as our family grew poor under the ever worsening conditions of the town and countryside, so in my 14th year I left Stronmelochan to seek my fortune elsewhere in the land. Though I never said good-bye to my mother for fear of breaking her heart, I spent the last few hours at home with my father. He had known for some time that I needed to leave, but he never pressed me on it. Our parting was quiet and difficult. I was three miles down the road before I noticed that my bag was full of bread and cheese and my pocket, full of bright coins. I never saw my parents again.

Over the next few months, my travels led me to the sea where I enlisted on a ship travelling to the Americas. The journey took three and a half weeks. (Two of them I spent throwing up, and the rest I spent avoiding the captain who was especially hard on anyone "weak" enough to be suffering from sea sickness...) When we arrived, I jumped ship and blended into the crowd. A new and interesting land beckoned. Over the next few years I wandered America from one coast to another. I learned about the people and the land, and in time even began to lose my accent, the last tie to my Scottish heritage.

Then in 1864, the Civil War expanded and the North and South collided. At the time I was penniless and nearly possesionless, so being young and foolish, I joined the army. Over the next few weeks I was taught how to kill, maim, burn, destroy and hate the Union, and a few weeks after that I was given the opportunity to prove what I had learned. It was the first and only battle I was participated in that war. We were engaging the Union alond the southern edge of what today is Washington state. It was just after dark and we were marching towards our night camp 3 miles down the road when we were ambushed by the Union soldiers. It was a pitched battle that lasted maybe ten minutes. When the skirmish had ended, the Confederate Captain assigned myself and five others to pursue the fleeing Union soldiers and attempt to find their camp.

How stupid we are when we are young. I followed of course, after all, I was a "good

soldier". I wasn't running through the forest for more than fifteen minutes before I heard a rifle go off in the distance. "What the hell is going on" I thought, and looking down. I saw blood flowing from a hole in my chest. For the first time since I had left my mother and father, I was scared. I must have laid there for four or fice hours before the footsteps came. By then, the pain had set in and I was waiting to die. The wound in my chest had muddy water in it and infection would be unavoidable. I tried to open my eyes, but I couldn't see the face looking down at me. It was large and hairy and the eyes seemed to glow in the moonlight.

"Had a rough night eh soldier boy?" The voice was inhumanly low...almost guttural. "You gonna die wit dat wound inna ya, you know dat don you soldier boy?" I struggled to sit up, but the pain beat me back down. I managed a whisper..."yes". My visitor seemed amused with my pain. "What wrong wit ya soldier boy? Don ya like livin?" The voice was louder now, and I could feel the breath on my cheek...like a dog's. "Life is a gift" I said softly..."Sometimes gifts are lost or broken...mine was taken away by a man with a gun..." There was a silence so long that at first I thought the stranger had gone. Then I felt his hands grab onto my coat and pull me to my feet. I groaned with the sudden movement and blacked out. When I opened my eyes again I was sitting up against a tree. "I'm gonna make you an offer soldier boy, one that you will never be offered again." His voice was all around me, louder...stronger than before. "I will grant you life again, power again. All you must do then is cherish it and grow strong. Times are commin soon mon, when a great storm will ride across da earth and strike it clean. But it can be stopped...if there are men like us strong enough to stand against it. There are many of us out there already, wit power aplenty, but it won't be enough. So the question is, soldier boy...do you wanna live now...or die in da night like so many others...watcha goona say?" Silence...

The whole thing sounded bizzarre. A stranger promising to heal me to fight another war I knew nothing about? Who was he? What would he do if I didn't fight for him? Why me..?

"Time's up soldier boy. You tell me now or I leave you here wit you thoughts...Do you wanna live boy?" Tears slid down my cheeks, dirt giving way beneath them. "Yesssss" I sighed. There was movement from my right, then something hard slammed into my side, knocking me over. Hard blades slid into my neck and I felt the life leaving me. I tried to speak but nothing came out. The pressure stopped and I rolled onto my back. The stars blurred and everything began to fade out in a way I know would never come back. Liquid splashed on my face, and ran into my mouth. It was hot...hot and enervating. More slashes came, each one giving me more strength. Something flesh-like was placed over my mouth and I felt the pulsing of veins and arteries against my tongue. My head swam and darkness finally embraced me, not the cold finality of death, but the warm embrace of life.

My sire who later revealed his name to be Ratta, explained to me the kindred need of blood. He told me bits and pieces of his clan known as Gangrel and powers that I could tap into once I had become used to the new life. He showed me where the best places to sleep are, and which blood provided the best buzz. In total, Ratta stayed with me for four days. When I awoke on the fifth night, he was gone.

I made it through the Civil War, feeding on the bodies of Union soldiers. Over time I travelled across the country again, and then through south America. In preparation for the coming of the Storm that Ratta talked about, I learned about weapons and guns, martial arts and hand to hand combat. My life since then was spent in one war after another. Korea, Viet Nam, the Gulf, anywhere I could learn from people, and get my hands on weapons. To this day I have caches of weapons all over the world. I have seen great leaders come and go, and I have seen the dawn of technology through the eyes of Hiroshima. In keeping with this birth into a new life, I chose a new name for myself. I was no longer Falen Jameth MacGregor...Now I would be Damos. Damos James Sebastian. I still don't know exactly what Ratta was talking about, but I will be ready.

Four months ago while I was relaxing in Honduras, I awoke one night to find a letter beside me. It was in invitation from Vienna requesting my presence in Winnipeg to aid in the construction of a Camarilla. Hmmmmm. I've never been to Canada.

(13) Mordechai Ben Joachin Abromovicz of Clan Nosferatu:

Mordechai Ben Joachim Abromovicz grew up in the ghettos of Krakow (such as they were. There were Jewish quarters in the city. The true Ghettos came later) He wasn't a rebellious boy. He went to school and studied diligently with his father and grandfather and caught the BUG of their love for knowledge. He developed a deep faith in his religion and it was thought that he may be the son to become a Rabbi. So he did. His studies brought him to the mere occult aspects of faith, the Kabbalah and the mid????? (folk stories) were particular interests of his.

He married (as is required to be a Rabbi. Hard to minister to his community if he doesn't share their experiences) A lovely and intelligent woman named Anna Ruth ?????. They had three children, ????, Gabriel & Sarah. They eventually grew to become parents themselves.

In short, his life, for the most part, was uneventful. The only unusual thing in his existence was ???????????????? whom he'd befriended sometime before. Odd things would happen around this man. After Mordechai witnessed and helped ???? with some of his magical work, his friend revealed himself as a Mage of the celestial chorus. Mordechai himself had no magical ability (unless you count true faith - he's lost this, by the way.) But, helped ???? with a number of his projects.

A full life slowly descended into comfortable old age. He was a grandfather. His

grandfather and father had both died and left him with their occult libraries (nothing major???, mostly info on obscure histories and stuff on the Kabbalah and a few tantalizing tidbits on "other" things and creatures.)

Then the Nazis came. Mordechai, Anna and ??? set up "undergrounds" to help people flee Krakow and a fate in the camps.

A year passed. Two years. The escape route remained hidden and hundreds of families escaped due to their efforts. Then, someone tipped off the Gestapo to their activities and revealed their whereabouts. ???? teleported into the synagogue in front of the congregation to warn Mordechai to flee, then, he disappeared again (presumably to deal with the paradox thus incurred).

So, he and his family (and Ivor's family) fled and went into hiding. After three days, Mordechai decided he would try a last ditch effort to save his family and friends. He'd heard of a "Dybbuk" who lived in the city. It was rumoured that this creature would help people to get out of Krakow, and so he went to this being.

They found the creature's home and knocked on the door. The "Dybbuk of Krakow" was not happy to see them. Especially not with the Nazis so close behind. The creature demanded payment. Mordechai offered some of the more esoteric books from his library as he had heard that the Dybbuk was thirsty for knowledge. The Dybbuk accepted, but still seethed with rage at the possible invasion of his lair.

The Dybbuk threatened the old man's family and the children. This terrified and angered Mordechai, who in turn, offered himself in payment for his family's safety. The monster accepted. The Dybbuk introduced himself as Raphael Ben Abraham. He asked, though, that he be called Azeel (the name of a demon). He offered Mordechai's family food and shelter and access to an underground escape route. Mordechai was allowed to bid his wife farewell, (possibly for the last time) and was asked to remain.

As the Gestapo were definitely on their way to Azeel's abode, Azeel "prepared" Mordechai for battle by giving him a cup to drink from. The old man wasn't told what was in the cup... (it was blood). When the Rabbi asked what it was (after drinking it) and was finally told, he almost collapsed in shock and disgust. His anger surfaced as he realized the penances he'd have to do to become clean again. Azeel calmed Mordechai down and told him about the strength and power he'd get from the blood (he didn't tell Mordechai that he was now a ghoul).

They fought off the Gestapo soldiers (6 of them) actually, it was just Azeel who fought them. Mordechai could only stand there in terror unable to act while Azeel ripped up the Germans with claws, speed and sheer power. Mordechai finally ran in fear when he saw Azeel feeding on two of the soldiers in his frenzy.

Two of the six soldiers survived to capture the fleeing old man. He was brought to the Auschwitz camp and questioned, tortured, beaten and questioned some more. The commandant of the camp was a vicious cruel man with a nasty sense of humor. He'd, for example, set a meal before Mordechai of non-kosher food (pork!). The old man ate it anyway, there being no reason now to keep the dietary laws. He'd gone without a good meal (just scraps) for almost a week, and the last two days with nothing at all to eat. There were provisions in the laws to allow a starving man to eat non-kosher foods and then do the penances when his life was no longer threatened by starvation. Besides, he'd drunk blood.

Mordechai was afraid of his growing rage. When a young soldier came to shave and tattoo him, he'd beaten him within an inch of his life. Another soldier had come into the room and had to club Mordechai almost unconscious to get him off of the other soldier. Mordechai was an old man, he shouldn't have been able to even hurt the boy, and he'd almost killed him.

Mordechai also scared the piss out of them, but he didn't know it. Too bad, he might've been able to use it somehow.

The commandant, trying to cow the old Rabbi into revealing his contacts, claimed that he had his Mordechai's family and would torture them in front of the old man. Mordechai despaired. He had no idea for sure if this... person had his relatives, but, he feared it was true. After all, they captured him easily enough. If they had captured his family, and they did as they promised, he'd crack and spill all he knew. If they were lying, Mordechai would do anything to prevent their actual capture, including dying.

He resolved to anger the commandant into killing him. Mordechai could see the rage that just hovered behind his eyes. He figured he could anger the camp commander before he could be made to reveal his information. If his family were freed, they'd remain so. If his family were captured, they were doomed anyway and it wouldn't matter if he died.

At every chance, he was insolent, rude, disrespectful and contrary. The beatings hurt, but he seemed to heal quickly enough. The patience of the commandant was dwindling fast. But, not fast enough for Mordechai. He could feel his will dwindling as the patience of the other. Frustration, resentment and furry were beginning to build in the old man's heart. Finally, he struck out in his rage.

The commandant was secretly afraid of this crusty old man's power to resist him. There was something creepy about the aged jew. When Mordechai broke his bonds and attacked him, his only reaction was to draw his Luger and pump the old man full of bullets.

Azeel, meanwhile, had been beating himself up over his servant's flight and capture. He felt terrible for failing to protect the old man. He'd worked these last few nights searching

for his ghoul. His search had finally led him to the camp and he'd been watching there last two nights. He hadn't rushed in immediately to rescue Mordechai because he'd wanted to find out if his family were captured or free first. They'd escaped and were on their way to North America at the moment. He saw that Mordechai was willing to die before spilling his "guts".

Azeel almost waited too long. Mordechai lay bleeding on the flood as Azeel invisibly entered the room as the commandant left. He knelt by the old jew and gently cradled his dying body to his breast, weeping.

"I was a fool, Mordechai, forgive me, but I still need you..."

"Let me die... I can do nothing, I hurt too much..." The old man's eyes started to close. Azeel swiftly bent to Mordechai's neck, bit and drank what remained. He then bit his own wrist and gave blood to the dying man. Mordechai tried to resist, but, having had some of Azeel's vitae before, couldn't hold back for long and drank greedily at his wrist.

When Azeel pulled back, Mordechai opened his eyes. "What...what have you done to me?" though he feared he knew...

Azeel pulled him to his feet as he explained what he was and what he must do to survive. "You have anger, you have rage. Take it to the ones you hate." Azeel watched as Mordechai's wounds healed a little, then sent him after the commandant. Mordechai didn't see the evil smile that crossed the old vampire's hideous face as Azeel contemplating the fate of that lost soul.

The Rabbi stumbled to the commandant's building, the hunger growing in his belly. In his mind, he wailed his fear and grief at what he had become. He knew his doom; to be a monster, like the thing that made him.

The hunger and rage grew and roared in his thought until thought was extinguished. Hatred came swiftly after and egged him on to the destruction of his captor. He managed to enter the building unseen and waited in the office where the humiliating meal had been served to him. He didn't have to wait very long (he wouldn't have been able to). He waited as the commandant sat at his desk.

"You should've made sure I was dead, German..." as he came out of his hiding. The man's eyes went wide and he fumbled for his gun... again. "I wouldn't bother, son. It's unlikely that you could harm me now..." as I am already dammed, he thought to himself. He grabbed the shivering man's gun hand and pulled the weapon free. The other hand got hold of the commandant's coat, and lifting him to his feet, smiled to show his new fangs.

The guilt was blown away by the thirst and Mordechai knew what he had to do. He did it

and promptly puked it all back up. The German wasn't dead yet. He was still trying to crawl away. Mordechai tried to do the same, the fear and disgust coming back at him, hard.

He didn't quite have enough time to turn when he heard the click of the hammer being pulled back on the German's gun.

"Filthy monster..." and Mordechai's world went white with pain. The rage! He turned with a roar and fell upon the now terrified man. He seized the German by his coat collar and threw him against a wall. The man whimpered as Mordechai finally lifted him and bit into his throat again. Nothing impinged upon his hunger this time, not even the explosion of the gun again (it missed). He didn't come to his senses until the body began to cool in his hands. This time, he kept his meal down.

"Well done Mordechai..." Azeel was at the door, "we must go. The shots were heard."

Mordechai was weeping great wracking sobs over the corpse. Azeel urged him to come away, then faded from view. The Rabbi's remorse was inconsolable. The guilt and terror came up once more as his gaze focused on the Luger on the floor by the body. He ran screaming from the room.

He would have been destroyed if Azeel hadn't come from the shadows and used some power to calm him from his terror and hide him from the searchers. They fled the camp, back to Krakow.

Mordechai stayed with Azeel a number of years, and even grew to care for him deeply. His sire's wisdom, kindness (in its own weird way) and strange humor affected him strongly. He grew to respect the strange creature after a short time.

The years passed and Mordechai slowly grew accustomed to his own bestial appearance. At one point, not too long before the end of WWII, he met and befriended a Malkav called Spyder, who told him about Golconda and encouraged him to follow that path. Mordechai thought about it, and renewed his former adherence to his original faith, realized that he'd never entirely last his faith in God, it had just been that he'd felt he was unworthy of God's forgiveness. After all, he was a monster and how could he obey the Kosher laws? He exposure to the Malkav and their quirky sense of humor helped much to bring self-acceptance to his hurting soul. Now any opportunity to get closer to the state of grace known as Golconda is seized with eager heart and mind. He'll do almost anything to achieve this state.

He eventually followed his family to Toronto, to watch over and protect them whenever possible. His wife, Anna, died in 1950, a sad and broken woman who had missed her mate terribly. The old man's grief was deep. He couldn't actually attend the funeral , but he

goes to her grave on the anniversary of her death and leaves a bouquet of flowers for her (she liked lilies...).

His daughter, before she died, was sure that Mordechai had survived the war and tirelessly searched for him. The old man was frightened a few times by how close she'd gotten to actually finding him. See, she'd noticed that someone was leaving flowers on her mother's grave. Several times she was sure she'd seen what looked like an old man (from behind, anyway) kneeling at prayer. She'd occasionally tried to approach him, but he'd swiftly leave and disappear behind a tombstone or other monument and not come out the other side. Sarah wasn't sure what was happening. Was it Rabbi Abromovicz's ghost, or was her father alive? She died, finally in 1976, never finding the answer to these questions. Mordechai's family still talk about his now-legendary "Dybbuk". Another piece of irony for his immortal existence.

And so it went. Searching out knowledge, keeping himself hidden from the Sabbat (Toronto is Sabbat-controlled), keeping up his ties with his sire and on and on. He'd had many friends over the years; Walec, a Toreador (!) who'd told him a tale of love between a Nosferatu and one of his clan (Mordechai now knows who the tale was about, of course. He hadn't when Walec originally told it to him) --Linda Morrisette, a Nosferatu who'd helped him get through his grief over the death of his wife. He's since lost contact with her (she's in New York, another Sabbat city...) Mordechai has sent his childer, Bill, to search for her. She may be in hiding...he hopes.

So, the old man's been in this frigid hell (Winnipeg) since August and he's already beginning to hate it. He was lonely at first, but he soon won friends with his kindly way and genial manner. It helped that other's of his clan slowly started to make themselves known to him and that makes his loneliness easier to bear.

He now makes his home in Winnipeg's steam tunnels and is in the process of setting up the hidden levels of the sewer system as a "comfortable kingdom." These tunnels were already inhabited by ghouled animals, though the Nosferatu were gone (?) Maybe a few are in hiding and might reveal themselves soon. Hope. The old man is refreshing the ghoul-spawning pools and is exploring his new home.

"If the ultimate fear is to know thyself, then the ultimate grace is to thine own self be true."

(14) Isaiah Asper of Clan Toreador:

Let me tell you a story. This is a story about myself... Isaiah of Arikel of clan Toreador. My past is short, but my present is long. It all started after the embrace, I guess one could say. It was in Toronto... after winning the Cafe (it was calledCafe Elysium and was located in Winnipeg) that I thought to seduce (as was my way during my human years) the

strange, but terribly alluring women who approached me. Well shall I say, that I approached her, yet I recall it as if she willed me to chase after her... to try to claim her as my prize for the night. Well... what I did get was far more than I would ever have expected. Not only did she turn the tide and seduce me, but she stole my life away. Some call the embrace pleasurable... I just remember dying that night... dying and never waking again.

Sorry... I have started before the beginning. I was born and raised in Boston to wealthy parents that want nothing more then for me to either take over the family business or to become a lawyer. They thought that my art was great, but not worth the time that I could be spending working towards a profession that would make me wealthy. I rebelled against their dictatorship and fled to Europe for a time to "find myself". I eventually followed a few fellow art enthusiasts back to Toronto, Ontario (Canada). There I established myself as an artist in the Ontario Art Gallery, and began to sell my paintings at auctions. After several years, my addiction for gambling actually won me a Cafe. The cafe was located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Yes, I know what you are thinking... why Winnipeg, well that was the prize. So I went to the Peg and opened the Cafe. I named it Cafe Elysium. I did not know that Elysium had anything to do with Vampires or secret societies. I just was into mythology and knew that elysium was the Greek word for the "place that the dead go to rest." Since I was inspired by the Goth scene and loved Anne Rice, I decided to run the cafe as a vampire theme cafe.

On a visit to Toronto in 1978 (I was born in 1952) I met the vampire that I mentioned in the first paragraph. I don't know why she left me. She had a strange look in her eyes. as if my painting impressed her to the point of depression. She said something to the effect that she could never paint as I did and fled in tears. I think she said something like she was like a poseur, compared to myself. Confused I fled back to Winnipeg and hid in my Cafe for several years. It remained closed until I could deal with my new condition as a vampire. I did finally open the cafe.

Eventually in 1986 I met the vampire who would show me the way of the kindred. He told me that I was not safe in Winnipeg. That the Sabbat would find and destroy me. He said that I lived in a dangerous city and that the Camarilla had no control over it. He explained the whole society to me, yet I refused to leave. I must have met some of those Sabbat kindred that he mentioned at the Cafe... yet none revealed themselves to me, nor was I threatened. Hmm..

In 1993 I met my next kindred. Her name was Morrigan. She said that she was from England or somewhere. She actually began working for me... before I realized that she was a vampire. A Brujah to be exact. We eventually worked it out that she would own a portion of the cafe. She told me that she had been summoned to Winnipeg, and that others would come.

Soon enough the city was crawling with them... Camarilla vampires... not that you could see them... but a few made their appearances at the cafe and there I got acquainted with other kindred. My respect for the laws of the traditions began there. There were too many very ancient beings around to risk breaking their rules... so I played by them.

Appendix H2:
In-Game History & Player-Character Journals

(1) Damos-P/Damos's Version of In-game Events:

For me, the game began at the end of November when Seraph-P introduced me to the idea. The first game was cool, and I sat in the corner trying to grasp the entirety of it all. As the game progressed, I slowly became more aware of who my character was and how to play him. I remember my first threaten feeling as a character when I had something implanted in my neck. That was the moment I felt part of the game.

Time passed and we stopped playing at Die Maschine Cabaret. Other games were held here and there and I enjoyed every chance to play. In the following fall, Casper-P and I began to talk about our characters together, after I discovered Damos's dark side at the park one night. From that point on, the game started to take on a more serious edge. Up to that point, it was pretty well ... game-like. But as the entity of the Vampire game grew, so did the seriousness of it all.

When I was appointed Archon, I was subjected to players who wanted to kill me simply because I was powerful. That detracted largely from the fun of it all.. Then Domingo and Istvan staked Damos and left him like that for a month and a half (something I resent still. I didn't appreciate the action or the joking reasons they did it. It detracted from my game). After that, things went downhill. The Anarch's revolted, story-tellers came and went, plot after plot started and went nowhere. I killed off Damos because I grew tired with dealing with all the bull-shit. Since then I have played NPC'S, happy in the knowledge that other people and their stupidities, plotlines, etc, do not affect me. Unknown to me at the time was the fact that the game degenerated into a chore of props, costumes, scenes, NPC"s and time delays, etc. So I have returned to playing a regular character again. For how long? -- only time will tell.

"Quote of the day"
The game for us all is a means of escaping the real world to a place of make-believe and magic. Unfortunately, when the mundane ludicrousies intrude upon this place, the magic fades away and the illusion dies. Unhappy Damos-P

CAFE ELYSIUM, JANUARY 7, 1996
I am quickly becoming concerned and annoyed with the current Prince....I find his lack of resolve in the internal conflicts of the Camarilla to be both disturbing and ultimately destructive. This is a rowdy and undisciplined mob, and without a strong leader it will destroy itself. Concerning me most is the Prince's dealings with Mr. Nore of Clan Tremere. Even though Mr. Nore has continually broken the Masquerade, we of the Camarilla have seen not to punishment him. It is my belief that the lack of fear of the

Prince's wrath has made way for anarchy.

I arrived at the Elysium around 9:00 pm. Again the Sheriff searched me for weapons, but that matters very little. It has become a thing of mere formality. I am confident that like every other night, I shall have my weapons back on me within the hour. In truth, I think it is foolish to disarm the kindred. Have not many been killed so far by hunters and the like? Is it smart to disarm them so as to not fight off an attack? Even as they confiscate weapons at the door, there were many kindred who managed to retain some form of weaponry.

Looking about the bar, I eventually spotted my clan. Our usual table had been occupied by a gaggle of Brujah ... I greeted my friends and was introduced to two strangers who were and was introduced to two strangers who were apparently "Guests of Tiger". (Lately there have been too many "strangers" showing up at our gatherings...and I didn't like the smell of these two either. Luckily I have seen no trace of them since that time.) I fear that as time passes, my trust and faith in the kindred grows weaker. How many hunters now know of us? How many mages have knowledge of havens? Who will be next?

Now I am not one to turn down the opportunity to have some fun, and tonight was no exception. After I had been sitting for awhile, Isaiah comes up to me. From what I understand, Wednesday he walked up to Casper and shot her point blank in the chest. Boom. Right in the middle of a crowded bar. What a dink, like we don't have enough problems as it is, he has to go do something like that ... Anyways, he's feeling really bad about this, so of course he comes to me. "Damos, I want you to shoot me in the chest ...please? Oh my ... like I could turn that down. Seriously, he wanted to have me publicly shoot him for having done the same thing to the Malkavian. -Like shooting them is actually a BAD thing). I agree, as long as everyone else agreed. Wouldn't you know it, someone had to spoil the fun? Everyone says yes, except for Spyder and Casper ... it figures.

Pretty much as soon as this was finished, the Prince called assembly. Everyone had been waiting for this because apparently tonight was to be a sentencing of Clan Tremere for breaking the Masquerade. Mr. Nore was finally going to get what was coming to him. Or not. Being the great leader that he was, he threw another of his clan before the Prince to take the punishment he had worked so hard for. (I don't understand this clan ... how can they put up with such a poor primogen and then take the fall for him all the time?) With obvious enjoyment, we a watched as the Prince brought out a set of mystical toe-cuffs. (Toe-cuffs of this sort prevent any form of thaumaturgy to be performed while they are in place.) Mara, who would take the punishment for her clan stood silently as they were put on and everyone seemed happy, until a voice from the back piped up and told us that, hey, Mara doesn't possess Thaumaturgy! Do you think the Prince cared? No. He sat there and listened to the hisses and cries of injustice, then brushed it off. Sure, he said he would

"look into it" but everyone knows that will never happen. Once again Tremere slips through the cracks...

Well surprise, surprise, Isaiah got up then and asked to speak to the Camarilla. Speak ... he did that all right. For a full fifteen minutes he read off a list of his crimes ... shooting Casper, loving a human, breaking the traditions ... on and on, blahblahblah. Trust a Toreador to drag out a straight forward statement of guilt. In the end, the Prince in his infinite wisdom forbade Isaiah from all and any contact with humans. Now he is kept under surveillance and fed blood from a baggie. Wow ... too bad he wasn't Tremere ... they always seem to get off with nothing more than a slap on the wrist (a point that did not go unnoticed by myself and many other of the Camarilla was the fact that Mr. Nore had given Isaiah a vessel of transference...something that just processing is a breach of the Masquerade ... did Mr. Nore see any punishment for that? Nooo.)

Earlier in the evening, I was chatting with Domingo the caitiff who owns the bar. Apparently he had the pleasure of ripping one of Isaiah's ghouls to pieces earlier that night for carrying a weapon into the bar. As I heard the story, the ghoul slipped through security under a cover of smoke. Domingo spotted him and the huge sword he was carrying, and killed him on the spot. About time someone other that myself started getting aggressive ...

After the Prince finished chewing everyone out for past violations of the Masquerade, we all settled down into a funky little party. My mind was on the ceremony I knew was to take place that night. For some time now, there has existed the rumour that there would be organized a feudal system within the Camarilla in which each clan would choose a Knight. The Knight's duties were unclear to me in full, however, I do know that they will be allowed to carry weapons. As this has always been a priority to me, I had to argue with Tiger for almost two weeks over the position. Finally tonight, I went over her head. Taking Luv aside I told her flat out that I would take the post of Knight any way I could, and if anyone got in my way, I would fight for it. Luv understood my resolve and agreed to back me.

I must admit, I was feeling pretty good after that, until I saw a large gathering of kindred on the dance floor. Apparently they were in a "Knights only" meeting, called by invitation only ... and I hadn't been told. When I got there I saw Tiger. (My first impression was "that sneaky little bitch..." but in the end she was not to blame. Man did it piss me off though.) After a large number of heated words we figured out that in fact, this was a meeting for the formation and implementation of the ancient Order of the Sith. It was then that Tiger backed down and cleared the way for me to take the Knighthood of Clan Gangrel. The Sith, she said, was good enough for her ... I agree.

After the meeting, Tiger and I were talking when I was suddenly overcome by a wave of nausea ... I felt a terrible weight on my chest, and my ears rang with words that seemed to

come from everywhere at once ..HAVE YOU USED OR GIVEN AWAY ANY OF THE DRUGS YOU ACQUIRED FROM GERGINA? The question was impossible to ignore...my vision became cloudy as I tried to resist, and even as my brain released the answer "NO", I was looking up into the eyes of Mara from across the bar. FUCKING TREMERE!! I am a little unclear on the events that followed...but I remember pushing through a crowd of people. She was right in front of me, and as I popped my claws, Mr. Nore materialized between us. I felt all the energy leave my body and a few seconds later my strength returned. I lunged at Mara again. She dodged my blow so I struck at her a second time, but before I could touch her, arms grabbed me and held me back. Whoever it was that tried to stop me got thrown across the bar, and I turned back to finish off Mara...almost. While all this was going on, Yeshua had been trapped by the fight. Having a rather fanatical dislike of being confronted by violence, he finally lost it and charged all of us. Picking me up by the throat, he threw me into the corner...when I looked up, I saw Tiger standing over me speaking soft words to quiet my soul. It took a long while...(Now I have a new problem...the Tremere know how to make me frenzy. If they wanted me to, they could now make me go berserk, almost on command. Perhaps I should find some kind of truce with them...if they believe me to be on their wide, they will be less likely to try and use me in this manner.)

The night went on thereafter without much incident. Gabreel, the leader of the Harpies got twisted up somewhere along the line and went into a frenzy on the dance floor (and I don't mean dancing either) Actually, it was the Prince who managed to talk him down. Oh wow. Finally he involves himself ...Near the end of the night, the ceremony began and the Clan Knights were presented to the Camarilla. Perhaps now there will be some measure of order in Winnipeg. We have enough problem with the Sabbat that we don't have time to worry about our own clans killing one another...

By the end of the night, I had talked to two other people of note. The first was Seraph of Clan Tremere. She had been giving me dirty looks all night after the fight with Mara. Her question to me had been typically close minded. Why had I attacked Mara for no reason. No reason...having someone shuffle through your head and rip answers from your mind without so much as a "by your leave" is hardly "no reason". No wonder their clan is such a mess if they can't even discern what constitutes an attack.

The second person I talked with was Dimitri of the Toreador. Following Isaiah's sentencing, Dimitri became the primogen for that clan. After a few pleasantries and an undisclosed bargain, he agreed to teach the disciple of Celerity. Now I have both speed and strength. It's going to be a great year....

DIE MASCHINE CABARET, JANUARY 8, 1996
During my usual rounds, I encountered Seraph of Clan Tremere sitting by herself in the corner of the bar. She was visibly nervous at my approach, and with good reason. There has been pretty much nothing but bad blood between Tremere and Gangrel in the city

since the formation of the crumbling Camarilla. But negative actions were not my prerogative at the time. It is my hope that in the near future our clans can come to some kind of truce. Our fighting and suspicion of one another had contributed to the overall decline of control the Camarilla and I would see an end to it.

It took some time, but I eventually convinced Seraph to let her guard down enough for her to talk. At the Elysium, I had noticed the amounts of blood jewelry the Tremere all posses. (:Blood jewelry is a ring or pendant that is magically infused with a blood. On verbal command, the piece of jewelry will turn into blood, allowing it to be consumed. It is totally of great value to me. It would allow me to heal a large number of wounds and burn celerity more often...) I am no fool, and I was not about to propose a truce without a price. I suggested that if Seraph and her clan were to make a "peace" offering to my clan, of say, two pieces of jewelry each, then that gesture of good will could lead to an understanding between us.

Seraph agreed that something like that might be possible, but she would have to propose it to her primogen. That's ok. I know that Mr. Nore and the rest of her clan have weakened themselves physically in order to focus their thaumaturlogical powers. In their quest for this, they neglected to remember that they would then be vulnerable to an attack. I am certain that some of them are knowledgeable in weapons and may even posses offensive spells, but it is a definite point against them. To be at odds with a clan known for it's ferocity in battle must play upon their minds every now and then....

In truth, I have no love or hate towards the Tremere. Mr. Nore pisses me off merely because he goes around acting like a jackass. The Tremere have played their fair share of jokes on us, and in return we have burned them once or twice. If they make a peace with us, I will use it to my profit and advantage. If they do not, then there will be blood to spill and I will enjoy that to an equal degree.

PERIMETER HIGHWAY, JANUARY 10, 1996
I received an urgent phone call from Shadow, the Sheriff of the Camarilla. There was some kind of emergency meeting being called and he was of need of some heavy backup. It appears my reputation is spreading, hehehe. Unfortunately the night before, I had been attacked by two Sabbat. They were not armed, but it was a vicious battle. In the end, they both took off. My wounds were not very deep, but the blood loss had been prodigious. I still had enough blood to take on a good fight, but I'm not in the habit of entering an unknown situation at anything other than by best.

I didn't mention the Sabbat to the Sheriff,. He probably had more important things to worry about anyway. I hung up the phone. Cold tonight. Cold and clear.

SUBWAY ON ST. JAMES, JANUARY 11, 1996
In my wanderings, I happened upon Yeshua outside of a small restaurant. Greeting him,

he told me of the altercations that Shadow had tried to involve me in the previous night. We went inside and sat down. Apparently the Camarilla had gathered a large group of Kindred. Sometime between the phone call and dawn, the Prince, his bodyguard, and most of the psychic populace of Winnipeg had disappeared. Here is what I was told.

Shortly after the meeting began, the Prince's bodyguard answered the phone. Accounts of those who saw him say that he turned pale and then began to swear badly. Hanging up the phone, he left the assembly with all his ghouls. Armed to the teeth, he arrived at The Forks. Someone had apparently tipped him off that there was an Antediluvian who had awaken. Seconds later, a magical fog descended making vision impossible. In less than a minute, all the ghouls were dead, and the bodyguard and himself barely escaped with his skin.

For the past couple of weeks, the Tremere have been taunting one of the Malkavians into believing that the Apocalypse was nearly upon us. Apparently they falsified the signs and were having a grand old time in convincing the stupid girl the end was near. Now they may have prevented the rest of us from seeing the TRUE signs that were making themselves known. (Perhaps Yeshua knows of the Apocalypse, or even a way to stop or prevent it. As far as I know, he is one of the oldest Kindred in the city ... he would know.)

When he finally returned to the meeting, reports of psychic backlash were coming in from all over the city. Both Mr. Nore and Mara of Clan Tremere had their minds fried when they attempted to use their abilities. (Awwwww...how terrible, hehehe.) Several circles of mages had been completely destroyed while performing rituals, and even the psychics and card readers were being affected.

Not many were dull enough to stick around. I am led to understand that the assembly dispersed and the threat was left for the next meeting of Elysium sometime in the near future. As it stands now, the Prince has vanished without, a trace and nobody knows of his whereabouts, although a rumour is out that he has returned to Vienna to meet with the Elder Council and bring back some help. (:It would be a real shame if he had actually been recalled...Those who are, rarely are seen again.)

Spyder, the true leader of the Malkavians (They all claim Yrtle to be their Primogen, but not even the Malkavians can convince me that they are THAT crazy. Their belief is merely an act to put those around them off guard. They are more than they seem...), has also left the city. He is truly one to watch out for. Our clan has had plentiful dealings with him in the past. I have come to enjoy his antics. (They are almost always directed at the Tremeres.) And I find him an informative Kindred. His facade of insanity is dropped every now and then and the man beneath is one to keep an eye on ...

I thanked Yeshua for his information and we parted. Things are transpiring quickly now,

and it appears that they are not for the best. Again I stress the importance of unity within the Camarilla. Now that the Prince has left us, I will have to do my dealings with the Ventrue through the new Prince Regent. He seems personable enough, but as yet I am unsure of what to make of him. He has many supporters, mostly of his clan, yet there are those outside the Ventrue who believe him to be of better material than the last leader. If he honors the dealings of Ventrue and Gangrel as the last Prince did, then I shall have no worries. Luv may find it rather frustrating that she no longer had her hooks in the head of the Camarilla. Her behaviour, I find degrading for someone of such noble rebirth as Gangrel. Perhaps her time as Primogen of our clan is coming to an end. Her representation of us is beginning to sour, and if she cannot be taken seriously then she will be replaced.

BIRDS HILL PARK, JANUARY 15, 1996
I just got off the phone with Tiger. I can't fucking believe it. I called her to discuss the plan I practically had finished with the Tremere about a beautiful supply of blood jewelry for our clan in return for peaceful dealings with them. It was a good deal that would have given every Gangrel more power than half the other Kindred in the entire Camarilla! "Oh, didn't you know Damos? Luv just made a treaty with them a little while ago..." OH! Well I'm very sorry to have assumed I would be notified of what was going in I my own FUCKING CLAN !!!

Jesus, Mary and a pile o' saints! What is wrong with her? This is the only clan we have had at our Goddamn throats since we formed the Camarilla, and the second she looses her hooks in the Prince, she goes and makes a piece of crap deal with them for nothing. The last thing I want, is to have a personal favor to owe their clan, but so help me, I will get that jewelry. Is everyone blind? Don't they see that the only way to survive right now is to get power? Ok, the truce IS a good idea! No argument! But that woman is a shit negotiator. The Tremere were ready to do it ... two pieces each. That's 10 blood points...

It has become time for Luv to step down as Primogen. I have better skills and status with which to hold the title. It's time to figure out a way to do it that won't shatter our clans unity. Damn that crappy timing ... three more days and it would have been a done deal.

DIE MASCHINE CABARET, JANUARY 17, 1996
Wednesdays are always popular here... The music is hard and heavy, the women soft and slender. Near the end of the night Seraph approached me. The hostilities between our two clans has petered out. The only one still sour on the Tremere is Tiger, but I can't really blame her. Mara said, "Mr. Nore will see you now." she chirped. What was she, his personal Goddamn secretary? When I'd finished my beer, I got up and walked over to him. To my surprise, I stood alone with him. Ever since the drugging of Tiger, the Tremere have never allowed one of their kind to be alone with anyone else. Partly because they didn't trust the abilities of the Sabbat, but I think it was more a knowledge that every clan had a nasty hankern for some spankerin on them...

We greeted, and Mr. Nore began to speak about the blood jewelry I had proposed to Seraph. At this point, I had no hope of it ever happening. To my surprise, it was actually being considered. The Tremere are a physically weak clan, and having the aid of a person with my abilities would be a good asset should they need protection or muscle. Although he did not take me up on that offer, he did try to cut a deal. I, and myself alone would be supplied with five pieces of blood jewelry (Warning lights went off ... My original request was two pieces ... what kind of work did he want me to do?), in return for a Major Boon of an undisclosed nature. This deal seemed like a good one, but I refused to give an answer at first ...

Ok, I wanted a truce with the Tremere, but that doesn't mean I trust them ... They have a nasty record in the past of taking blood from people without consent. (This obviously is a reference to the Vessel of Transference scandal.) Here I would be giving them free use of five traits of my blood. If they do it right, then my trust would increase and our clans would get along a little more smoothly. If they screwed up, there would be bloodshed ... What a price for peace? The other question is what would be stopping Mr. Nore from having me walk into the middle of a crowded room, then activating all the jewelry. I would be instantly drenched in blood. A sure breach of the Masquerade, and a really bad scene if anyone around me had a blood frenzy.

I will hold off for now, and perhaps make a counter offer. Perhaps less jewelry for a lesser boon. Mr. Nore already knows I will perform no boon that would conflict with my nature or current loyalties, but the boundaries would easily be stretched by him. Time will tell, I suppose. For now I am in no rush, and the ritual doesn't take a great deal of time. We shall see ...

CAFE ELYSIUM, JANUARY 21, 1996

It was a nice cold evening when I arrived at the Elysium. Even though it was only about 8:30 pm, the place was already packed. After I dropped my bag and jacket off at the bar, I took up my position at the door. A few weeks ago I had been approached by Isaiah who asked if I would provide security for this little event. Hey, no problem there. It just makes for one more favor owed to me. Working with me that night was a very large caitiff, also hired by Isaiah. If you were just to see this guy in passing though, you would swear that he was a Toreador. Everything about him says so, but when asked about his background, I got no response. No surprise really. All the Kindred have their little secrets.

The day before the Elysium, I received a hastily delivered letter from Spyder. That explains where the little fellow went. It seems that after the Antediluvian emerged, Spyder shuffled off to London of all places. Apparently he had hooked up with a Tremere in the city who is showing him the ropes. The postcard was written in the macabre poetry the Malkavians always end up using when they have something important to say. I have no doubt that there is importance in this letter but I have yet to decipher it.

I'm not 100% sure what Isaiah was thinking when he put together this little party, but it appears that safety was not on his mind. With all the problems we have been having in keeping the Masquerade, why would he put together a gathering of both humans and Kindred? This wouldn't be so bad if the humans knew of us, or were under our control, but they aren't. These mortals do not know of our true nature, which makes the need for enforcing the traditions very high ... I would talk to Isaiah in the future about his motives in this venture.

At about 9:30 pm, during my rounds, I was called to the front door where we had been checking people for weapons all night. I saw my Caitiff partner helping the Sheriff inside, and for an instant, I saw blood from beneath his jacket. Earlier that evening, I had seen an old man walking about. He had been polite and quiet, but very definitely out of place. Apparently, my suspicions were not without reason. He was to be the first of many hunters discovered that night. Hey, why bother having a nice quiet evening right?

By the Sheriff's account, the old man had asked to have a word with him outside. After the door closed, the old man had staked Shadow and then jumped in a car and disappeared. It was therefore quite a surprise to us all when the gentleman appeared not an hour later. Luckily, he didn't know that we were onto him. After quickly consulting with the Prince Regent, I approached the old man and told him that there was a young lady who wished to speak with him in the back. Smiling, he thanked me and walked across the room, and through the door. The Prince Regent and I followed him, and when he turned around, he realized the mistake he had made. ("Oh shit...", I believe the term was ...) We flanked him, but before we could do anything, the old bastard pulled out a cross.

Now I have to be honest here, crosses have never particularly had any ill effect on me. I like them in fact. However, there was something different about this one. As soon as my eyes fell upon it, my mind was flooded with the most horrifying images of pain and suffering. Crucifixion and holy water ... prayers and baptisms ... Even as I attempted to resist the power that was forcing me to give in, I saw Damien bolt out the door. In the end, I couldn't resist the waves of fear, and I to flee to the front of the building.

When I looked up again, I saw the old man fall out the back door, only to be picked up by Mr. Nore and taken back in. Why wasn't Mr. Nore effected by the bloody cross? Several minutes later, Mr. Nore emerged with a number of other Kindred. I learned that Mr. Nore had come in the same time as the Prince Regent and I had left. He was able to resist the cross and drug the old man, but before they could ask him any questions, he had bitten his tongue off and died. He had died because he was Kindred ... great. Now we have one of our own to worry about as well.

When all the excitement had petered off, everything settled back down to normal with few incidents ... for awhile. Over the course of the next hour or so, I had several more attacks

of cross-horror. The most frustrating was remembering the cross on the top of my sword. Very reluctantly I agreed to leave it with the Caitiff I had been working with all night. Damn ... nobody has any idea how infuriating that was ... Then I find the Sheriff of all people is wearing a cross as an earring ... just dandy. I cannot take the way people look at me. This weakness they see in me is like poison to my soul ...

After awhile, Mr. Nore approached me and asked for a few questions. To my surprise, he offered to enchant my sword for me. Of course, I was quite surprised by his generous offer out the blue. For the cost of some major Boon, he would put a spell on the weapon that would cause it to deal three aggravated wounds to anyone other than myself touching it. In addition, the sword would also do aggravated damage in combat. An interesting offer, but a weapon of that sort could get me a lot of hot water. Even tonight, I was constantly telling people not to touch and pick up the sword. If the enchantments had been in place, it would have killed half of those that laid hands on it ...

As I returned to the front of the door, Isaiah caught up with me and mentioned Seraph was looking for me. When I found her, she directed me to a photographer who was taking pictures. Apparently, one of the Nosferatu was having seizures every time the flash from the cameras went off. After consulting with the Prince Regent, I went over to the photographer and asked if he would take some photos of me and some friends. He happily agreed and went to them. When he was halfway there, I "accidentally" bumped into him, making him drop his equipment. The camera fell to the floor and landed with little grace. Boy ... was he pissed. Happily though, his flash was destroyed, so that was the end of the seizures.

((An interesting note to the camarilla story. When I actually went over to the camera guy, and explained that we were trying to solve a situation inside the game that involved him, he was happy to oblige. Basically all I needed to know is would he or wouldn't he, if asked, come and take photos of some people. When he said yes, I explained that in the game, as he walked across the room, his camera would be knocked to the ground and destroyed in-game, he wouldn't be taking any more pictures of course, he didn't understand. He thought that I was telling him he couldn't take any more pictures, period. It took fifteen minutes to explain the concept of the game to him and his friends. Only after a perilous amount of simplification did they understand that they were part of the game even if they didn't play. They had been dragged into it for that one situation. They were quite pleased with how well they had played their part and were still complimenting themselves when I left.))

Well good. Everything had been running very well for the past while. Then, at about 12:00 a.m., a group of strangers arrived. I didn't really notice them at first, but when I did, I saw Dimitri of Clan Toreador chatting it up with them. In fact, he seemed to be getting along quite chummy with them. When one broke off from the rest, I went over and politely told him that he was being checked for weapons. Smiling politely as well, he

stuck a cross in my face. Cursing, I fled. They were hunters for sure, but the question was how to get rid of them. I gathered some Kindred and spread the news of our new "guests". A plan was quickly made to take them into the back room for a quiet disposal. Unfortunately everyone rushed into the back all at once and they were apparently not dumb enough to fall for it.

For the next half hour or so, a number of us managed to subtly slip into the back and we waited. Someone was going to send them back for us. Or at least that had been the plan. I was in a little side room with Miles of Tremere when our "friends" finally arrived.

They burst through the back door, I think it was all three of them. There was the crackle of machine gun fire and I dove to the ground as the wall in front of me disintegrated in hail of bullets. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Miles take a slug as he was thrown against the wall by the fury of the attack. Rolling to my feet, I saw a hunter not far away from us, smiling. Looking down, I saw a grenade skitter past my feet, and I jumped out of the room, firing my pistol as I flew. The hunter sprayed the machine gun at me, but missed, and I saw one of my rounds hit him in the shoulder just as the room exploded. The force of the explosion threw me right across the room into the corner, throwing me hard into the concrete wall. Miles landed beside me.

The room was a battlefield. Up on the steps, I saw the Prince Regent fighting off the hunter who had crossed me earlier, and there was another one firing a machine gun in all directions behind him. Turning my attention to the hunter in front of me, I had just enough time to see him level the barrel of his gun at my chest before he started firing. Using my celerity, I rushed him. Popping my claws, I slashed at his head but missed. Somewhere in the background I heard something heavy explode and suddenly the room was filled with smoke. I heard the Prince Regent scream something, and then the hairs on the back of my neck stood up on end as Miles threw a forcebolt at the hunter beneath me. Leaning down, I ripped the hunters throat out as he lay momentarily paralyzed, then caught a glimpse of another hunter as he ran past us towards the back door.

Getting up, I raced after him, barely avoiding a set of hands trying to catch me and hold be back. When I arrived at the door, I found Seraph guarding it. She had gotten there just after the hunter had left and was guarding the only exit. There was another explosion from the stairwell where the Damian had been. I started towards it but stopped when I saw Dhalgrin charging at us with frenzy on the brain. Behind him, the Prince Regent was being carried by Shadow. Seraph and Miles rushed over, and I side-stepped Dhalgrin as he ripped open the back door and disappeared into the night. Walking over, I checked on the Prince Regent. He had been staked, but was Ok. In the end, the only dead were the two hunters left over, and Dimitri of Toreador. Oh well. What did he expect from jumping on a grenade...

The Kindred had already rifled the body of the hunter I had killed, there was nothing to be

found. The last thing I heard before I went up front, was Mordechai of Nosferatu organizing his ghouls and other volunteers to help clean up the mess before the police showed up. When I got up front, got my sword and other gear from the Caitiff, everyone was more or less gone, and a few seconds later, so was I.

PAPA GEORGES, JANUARY 29, 1996
I met and talked with Mr. Nore of clan Tremere. The deal for blood jewelry for myself has been finalized. After much thought, I provided him with five traits of blood. On February the 4th, he gave me five pieces of blood jewelry in return for a major boon. Let's hope I know what the hell I'm doing.

THE FORKS, JANUARY 31, 1996
I had just come from a movie (:Dusk Till Dawn .. What a crock of shit ...) and was walking around for a bit to eat when I heard something howling. I tracked it down to the Forks, and to my surprise, I found myself face to face with a rather large human -looking being. Things were a little tense at first because the first thing I saw when the guy turned around were wolf claws. I, of course, popped mine as well and we exchanged some tense words.

Apparently this fella was a new Gangrel, just arrived in the city. He called himself Jonathan Smith (Oh yeah ... good name buddy. Nobody should get suspicious with that one.) And the first thing he started to tell me about is how he was a very honorable guy and how he was now living in the city, etc., etc. Well...aren't we a little presumptuous. So, I set him straight. He had no station, no hunting grounds and he had no residence here until he was introduced to the Prince Regent and then to the rest of the clan. I didn't like his tone. He thinks himself a little too important for my tastes. Perhaps he will have to be taken down a notch or two.

In any case, I offered to introduce him on Sunday. We shall have to see how he fares. (While talking, he showed me a Garou claw he claims to have gotten by killing a Lupine. If this is actually true, then he may have important knowledge and mayhaps even some fledgling ties that could prove useful to us. I should find a way to use this to my advantage.)

(2) Tiger/Tiger-p's Version of In-game Events:

Court convened for the first time in September of 1995.
-----Elections were fairly new to the game, so it started out slowly, with more roleplaying than is usual.
-----At one of the first Cafe Elysiums, Tiger helped to set up Mr. Nore for attempting to hire her to assassinate Spyder (with the help of the Sheriff)
-----The Order of the Sith came about.
-----The Order of the Sith fell flat on its face.
-----We had the nexus crawler park over Winnipeg briefly before moving on to Brandon.

-----By this point Tiger had been Primogen once and given it up.
-----The Archons were created.
-----Damos ended up in a basement thanks to Istvan and Domingo.
-----Tiger became Primogen again.
-----Wolfram was "killed" and we elected a new Prince.
-----Damien stormed off to lead the Anarch's.
-----The archons got turned into hamburger by the Sabbat.
-----Tiger went and told Damien that Crowe was dog-meat.
-----The Shaitan fiasco.
-----The Sabbat attack.
-----The Anarch's leaving.
-----The Anarch's returned and reported their failed attack on the Sabbat.
-----Tiger's's capture.
-----Tiger's torture.
-----Tiger's rescue and Tiger leaving the city.

(3) Istvan/Istvan-P's Version of In-game Events:

1. Some guy named Tier-P (storyteller) brought the LARP to Winnipeg, announced it at Die Maschine Cabaret, to recruit the "Goths". Tier-P-storyteller is some gamer-goth-poser wanna-be who figures he can score macho points with the in-crowd at Die Maschine Cabaret)

2. They played a few games at the bar where I was working, and I refused to play because of what I saw. All I saw was people with no real life experience talking about manipulation, power, and control over others. This made me laugh.

3. Brian asks me to bounce a for a Cafe, so I did, made a character, had a great time, and stayed in the game. The Cafe was a great experience, and the "regular" games always paled in comparison to Cafes.

4. Game trudged along. Those in the power-cliques got all the action - I and others couldn't get involved because we were either being ignored by the admin (not in the right cliques), or the players/characters had no desire to risk wasting time on newbies. (Dissention begins)

5. Months pass, and the game gets better/worse. (Dissention grows)
6. My character is tough and fearsome.
7. And I'm known out-of-game. I encouraged players to fix up the admin problems.
8. Game overhaul.
9. Repeat 4,5,7,8.

(4) Mordechai/Mordechai-P's Version of In-game Events:

August 11, 1995: House Rathgar, Fort Rouge, Winnipeg:
Meeting of the Alliance: We gather to decide upon who is to be Primogen and Prince. I led this cell. Isaiah was only mildly catty at having a Nosferatu in the home of his ghouls. We had some small problems with the Gangrel called Garrick. We had trouble convincing him to join us. Some minor grumblings at the oath to be taken, and the ritual... "Smells like a Sabbat thing." We tell the group that we are Inconnu. "If anyone asks, 'are you Inconnu,' answer with your name, or you reveal yourself to not be one of us. We are strong. We are not alone and others watch..."

August 11, 1995: Toad in the Hole Pub:
Alliance meeting: Isaiah led this cell. I attended under unseen Presence to escape detection. Much of what was discussed was the same as above, but with different people (mostly, some were the same) attending. Isaiah seemed to have lost his mind temporarily, talking to thin air at the end of the table. Much time was wasted getting him back on track. (I'm not moving, so you can't hear or see me, dolt!") The things agreed upon were told to the ones attending: Vote for those candidates for Primogen and Prince. Told they were Inconnu too.

August 12, 1995: The St. Boniface Basilica:
Alliance meeting: Yeshua led this meeting. I attended, late; "I apologize, I had to get a bite to drink..." Visible this time. We had a possible 'party crasher' (and thus, a threat to our security). He refused to leave, grudgingly accepting our oath, but didn't actually drink from the chalice, (he may of feared a possible step toward blood bond). Folks were warned not to do anything stupid, or the lupine in the graveyard would have a late-night snack. These were told that they were Ancient as well. All in all, it was a good time.

August 13, 1995: 5th Floor, University of Manitoba Student Centre:
Primogen Elections: Boring!! And slow. I was made Primogen for ack of any other nosferatu being in the city. A Sabbat decided to be a pest and threatened us all. (Ooh! we're scared! We didn't take him too seriously, I think. He was alone) The Tremere had a spat over who was to be elected Primogen (slamming doors, and raising voices, oh boy! I tried to get in there under unseen presence, but missed the door. Drat! Wasn't fast enough.) A visiting Ventrue Justicar presided over the elections.

Prince Election and first court: Status was then awarded to the new Primogen. Election was held to determine Prince. Our original choice failed to show, so we (the alliance) defaulted to Wolfram Hopner of the Venture (it was supposed to be the Tremere Dhalgrin, or the Venture Damien McAllister but...?) As well, choices to be made on the positions of Sheriff, the Keeper of Elysium and Harpy. Isaiah (Toreador) was chosen as Keeper (I tried for this spot and lost..) Shadow of the Brujah was chosen Sheriff, and Gabreel of the Malkavians as Harpy. Each were given status in accordance with these new positions, I heard rumours of a fairy being visiting the Malkavs. A Gangrel was sorry and

insulting to me. (He has since disappeared ... hmm.) Many people came to me, (to say hello mostly) seeking alliances, (huh.. That was quick). We mingled and got to know each other a little. Morrigan (the Brujah Primogen) takes a shine to me, calling me "Gramps." "Ha!", I reply, "I'm not your grandfather, we're not even related!" "Well you love it anyway don't you? Gramps!" We started a friendship.

August 25, 1995: House Rathgar, Fort Rouge:
Alliance meeting: My Cell. The Primogen positions are confirmed. The question is asked, what do we do now? We seem undecided as to what goals to pursue now. Explanations as to why certain changes in the expected roster occurred: the Malkavs couldn't decide on a solid choice for Primogen and agreed to elect Yrtle the Puppet to the spot (a bit of a snark at our Prince, this...) The Tremere we wanted (our original Puppet Prince..) Didn't show. We got Mr. Nore, instead and because the other Tremere was missing. We got Wolfram Hopner as Prince and Damien McAllister as Primogen. Both are Ventrue. There was some trouble over Morrigan bringing a ghoul with her.

Alliance meeting: Isaiah's cell. Same ground covered, but I only remember the mad scramble for vehicles to get there on time. Shrug. Tainted blood, I guess.

August 26, 1995: St Boniface Basilica:
Alliance meeting: Yeshua's cell. This one was fun! The same as before. Explanations. I attended using Unseen Presence, at first, to listen in and see if anything juicy transpired. (Nope, oh well) Spyder the Malkav was suddenly able to see me, and insisted on telling everyone I was there. "The old man is here, can't you see him!! He's right there! You guys are blind!" We had some fun chasing each other around the grounds. Mr. Nore tries real hard to see me, but can't. Since nothing is really going on, I wander off to a corner out of sight, drop my invisibility and walk back into the meeting, "late." I hear through my contacts about a squelched story regarding four brutal murders...

October 29, 1995: Die Maschine Cabaret:
Primogen Meeting: I wanted to know, what are we going to do about the Sabbat? Nobody dealt with it really. Hunting grounds and domains are discussed, briefly. They declare the bar known as the Die Maschine Cabaret Elysium. The Primogen are officially introduced to the rest of the assembled Kindred; the Ventrue Justicar (nobody can remember his name for some reason...) claims that the ONE we met before (his clone?...) was an imposter using Mask of a Thousand Faces, and he claimed he was the REAL Justicar. The guy makes us confirm again those chosen for Primogen and Prince. Court: Newcomers present themselves to the Prince and Primogen council. (Too many kindred in this city! Oy!) One fellow named Sepp Deitrich, offends me. By using his old Nazi German war title: Oppenfuhrer (he's former SS.) He says, "the blood washed away all politics...."

"Maybe," I reply, "but does it wash away memory?" As I show him my tattooed arm....I

spent much of this night pacing, feeling lonely, snubbed and angry, that was here. Several came to me to ask why I seemed so somber and why was I tearing apart a rose when THAT one had presented himself? I had to fight not to attack him. Also: Wilhelm Von Kurtz (what's with all these Germans? I drives me to distraction! He's Ventrue. Sepp is Brijah) was being a putz, calling me female, arg, schmuck. An odd individual talks with several people, calling himself "Prophet" and getting into an altercation with a certain Tremere (our "party-crasher") who wants some of his blood to test (?) (Party-crasher suspects something weird about Prophet and wants to know what it is.) Prophet wants nothing of this and bursts into flame to keep us leeches at by and leaves. Von Kurtz has a strange habit of approaching people, flicking alight a zippo and asking, "Are you afraid of fire?" and associating with what I consider to be unsavory people. Spyder and Nore's rivalry and general annoyance with each other becomes apparent. Each accuses the other of trying to kill him. "Mr." Nore pesters me to ally with him, supposedly to join two Primogen's forces . He just wants me for my supposed contacts and probably thinks that because I am solitary here, that I must feel weak, without support and thus likely to be desperate for an alliance. I shrug him off with assurances of; "I'll think about it." Ha! Unlikely, you treacherous boy. He is weak and seeking a power-base. I try to listen in on a hastily called Tremere meeting in the stairwell (called by Party-crasher) to decide what to do about Prophet and other ?????. Party-crasher supposedly has high Auspex powers and claims to be able to see me. Drat, so, I pretend to leave and hang around just out of sight, but I don't learn anything vital, though it seems like Party-crasher had more command of his clan than his Primogen, Nore. ????? Ventrue (oh what was his name?) Pisses off the Prince and is punished by being blood-bonded to him (well, a drink, one step toward it. He'll be made to do it again if he is stupid once more.) I meet a nice Malkav called Cristobel, who says her voices tell her I'm nice. We enjoy each other's company for awhile and than I sic her on Sepp Deitrich, just to be a putz. Oy! I love it. A Brijah call Rasputin has a problem with certain types of light. I try help him out, so, I ?????? in with the Brijah clan and the Malkavs.

November 3, 1995, Die Maschine Cabaret:
Brijah rant: Fun! We "hung out" (I'm still getting used to the slang these youngsters use today. Gotta keep up-dated!) Scared the Ravers off of the dance floor and generally made a ruckus. Little of serious note was done, this was merely to cut loose and have some fun. I attended disguised as "Shank," a Brujah from Boston (a Camarilla/Sabbat contested city, by the way.) The Brujah later discovered my true identity and they've liked me ever since. Shadow was the one who figured me out. (Morrigan the Brujah Primogen already knew, but went along with it for the "giggle-factor") They thought it was "cool" that an "old man" could enjoy rough-housing with them, even if it was through a deception, they seemed not to mind my tricking them, instead, it gave me a sort of status in their eyes. We started the "tradition" of "toss the Toreador" in Isaiah that fop, worms his way into the rant-dance and of course gets bounced from one kindred to another, roughly. The dip loved it. Later, we followed a group of "fashion-victims" outside, stalk'em and drain 'em dry. I wonder if they'll find the bodies? It was exhilarating! The

guilt hit me later like a hammer though.

November 15, 1995, Various places:
Meeting with Dimitri: I was called out of the blue for this one, ostensibly as an "outside witness" by the sheriff. Dimitri (Toreador) was going to meet with Nore at the Common Ground, a cafe run by a sect of Christian Fundamentalists (this is a real place and these are nice folks if a bit strange. We've been told to be extra rigid in maintaining the Masquerade around these folk if we were ever to go here. Also, they are strictly off-limits! No telling what exposure to us could do to their minds. DO NOT REVEAL YOURSELVES TO THESE PEOPLE!). They were meeting to discuss the Book of Nod. Dimitri has it and Nore wants it. It was thought that Nore would try to dominate Dimitri into giving it to him and that Dimitri would resist and possibly try to kill Nore. We were there for a variety of reasons, some conflicting (I still haven't sorted it all out) to kill Nore, to prevent his death. It was a trap set to catch Nore doing a no-no, protect Dimitri, just watch and see what happens... Nore never showed. (He was warned off.) We all meet later and the Die Maschine Cabaret and because it is Elysium, we can't do anything to each other. Nore receives a fragment of parchment in Greek that might have been a piece of the Book of Nod, but he dismissed it as a trick by the Toreador to make him look like a fool.

November 19, 1995; Cafe Elysium", 126 ½ Osborne St:
An informal gathering, but amusing. It was originally going to take place at Zippy-P'appartment, but, was canceled almost at the last minute. I bailed the event out by myself. I called all over the place looking for a suitable site the day before and finally found one. Phew! It's wonderfully ironic that Isaiah (the host of this gathering) despises Nosferatu and I'm the one who saved his social butt! Revenge for his putting me at the head of the list of entertainments! Of course, I nail him again with my tale, "A tale of Nosferatu" where" beauty is more than the superficial prettiness that so many lust after!" Glared at him while I said it with an evil grin. Watching him flinch was worth the stage-fright. Imagine, being so cruel as to put a shy Nosferatu on stage just to see if he'll fuck up so you could laugh at his clumsy attempts at art, which, of course, he couldn't possibly understand, being to hideous and all) of course I got no credit or recognition for baiting out the cafe. Isaiah thanked me. Grudgingly. The other entertainments were interesting! The Brujah rant-dance was canceled since the CD player wouldn't stop skipping. Yeshua (Brujah) read an intriguing work, odd too. Unfortunately, very few got the message and most simply treated it as "art" and didn't look for a deeper meaning. I, with all my occult knowledge, only figured out bits and pieces, and some of that was way off base. Oh, well, I can't know everything. Spyder's tale of the "Ancient Vampire" was amusing, David Simons (Ventrue) "to feed or not to feed" was forgettable as was Mara "Toreador Dream," the gaggle of Malkavians' "Yrtles' revenge" was short and funny, Dimitri's's reading from the Book of Nod was monotonous, (put some life into it Boy!) ... snore ... Someone did something rude to Spyder (he passed out, briefly.) Yeshua staked a guy with an icicle outside for feeding off of a drunk. The guy staggers in with this thing

sticking out of his chest ... Yeshua had missed. A mortal was publicly embraced into the Brujah clan by their Primogen. My childer came to the cafe for his first exposure to Kindred society and silliness .... "Ya mean all this crap is actually important? Me, I'm jus' waitin' fer my big 'ol head in" at one point. I get to disturb Isaiah some more. I'd noticed my childer, Bill sitting on one side and an empty chair was on the other. I couldn't resist sitting next to Isaiah, completing the "Toreador sandwich". His patience ran out in less that five minutes. We chuckled over our joke. I love watching that bigot squirm. The rest of the evening is spent socializing, learning everyone's names, laughing at Rasputin's joke about pretentious little Nore's velcro shoes, hanging out and watching everybody kiss butt. I receive a warning about a bomb. A second Nosferatu shows up, by the name of Jharum. Joy. Someone I can identify with. Nore bugs me some more to ally with him. I make a friend of Damos the Gangrel, and agree to trade disciplines with him. Lot's of major amusement.

November 20, 1995; Die Maschine Cabaret:
Court at Elysium: This night was sheer chaos. The phrase, "they're dropping like flies" comes to mind. The warning I'd received the night before ... "If all the Ventrue leave the building, go with them; there's a bomb in the pinball machine." Never happens. But, then, it DID come from a Malkavian. A primogen from each clan passes out briefly, then awakens with a strange nodule in the back of their necks that left a black spot in their auras. Every attempt to remove it causes extreme pain and I fear it'll kill them if we persist. Rumours around as to what they are; "it's a bug" (listening device or virus, you decide.) "It's a demon" "Aah! It's Vicissitude!" A vessel of transference, somebody wants to blood-bond 'em". I amused the Malkavian childe Casper to no end by snarling nasty things at the back of his neck. "To those who watch, you'll be found and dealt with! This is a promise!" (I'm a dope. I bought the "bug story," at first. A couple of people missed out on some fun 'cause they believed me too, oops.) Tiger the gangrel Primogen (Garrick has disappeared) passes out for a longish time. Nothing awakens her. I try to give her some blood -- didn't work. She's also involved with the Spyder/ Nore????. Supposedly she was asked to kill one of them. We tried to put it on trial and settle it, but too much other stuff was going on and it got shelved when she passed out. Spyder and Nore were separated and watched. Dhalgrin (Tremere) spreads rumours of various nasty sorts. He speaks to one group: "It's Spyder's' doing" To another, "It's Nore's" or some other. He's keeping up the miscommunications and so the mistrust between the clans. We had visitors from Brandon. Who were curious about the number of kindred in Winnipeg. Their prince and some of his primogen showed up to say hi. Pledius, an anarch (caitiff?) is dragged before us by Yeshua who accuses him of hunting in his territory. The prisoner claims to recognize no territory or leadership by our newly arrived group. We offer him sanctuary if he recognizes our authority over the area. He refuses. We give him warnings and let him go. He is attacked just outside the bar and his body disappears. (Does Mordecai really know this?) (He is apparently had been staked. Where he now is, is unknown) One of the visitors from Brandon, a Brujah (?not sure.) called "Sack Nimble" (awe, c'mon) frenzies because some idiot injected him with morphine. He kept calling for

someone called Tuesday. (Seraph tries to dominate him into calming down, fails and is slugged for her trouble. Sack is now pissed - he goes shouting off demanding re-dress. Seraph is apparently the culprit who'd injected him. She was supposedly dominated herself into doing it. Other Tremere news: one fellow named Adam Knight, and the silliness continues: For his part in the Dimitri/Nore fiasco is "sent to Vienna". I suspect he is dead.) Much silliness occurs. Spyder passes out, apparently after being injected with heroin just like the night before at the Cafe Elysium. Somebody likes this game. Rumours of Lupines in the city, horrible murders (with corpses in nasty ways mutilated with sigils carved into them. Possible Sabbat connection) Nore keeps bugging me to ally with him. "Go away, man!" Why isn't anyone doing anything about the damned Sabbat? Damos and I seal our bargain and set times to teach each other the disciplines we're trading. People asked me for favors left and right. -Silly people, that gives me power, wake up! Spyder asks me to watch his butt. He thinks someone is going to try to kill him. Nore asks the same favor. We are told that two Lupine delegates are coming to talk peace. I see an interesting letter in the Prince's possession (during the trial, he searched through his pockets for a statement written by Tiger and placed his other letter on the table) With a Pentex address (oy! If he's dealing with THEM! Fool! You'll destroy us all!) Prince Wolfram finally can't take it anymore; the multiple breaches of the Elysium traditions, the fights, that weirdo with the hypodermic, Isaiah embracing his mortal lover on the stage after having almost killed her in the stairwell (his clan is royally cheesed over that.) He declares this night's court closed and orders everyone to go home.

November 25, 1995 Die Maschine Cabaret:
Toreador Boy: An informal gathering. We "hang out", the Sabbat make an appearance. (3 Sabbat) Several people are injured as a result of the fighting that follows. I try to save Spyder from harm, as I'd promised. He's down when I get there. I stop the Sabbat from ripping him up even more and nearly get killed myself. Luckily, I had a flak vest on, courtesy of ??? (Crap, I don't remember. I think it was Damien who gave it to me). One Sabbat is destroyed (to my knowledge) and the other two escape. (I want celerity!) Isaiah proves his cowardice by using one of his own clan members as a shield. Naughty, naughty. It was really difficult to maintain the Masquerade with all the fighting between some fairly powerful Kindred. I crawled off to one of my havens to lick my wounds. Ouch, Ouch, Ouch! (Incidentally, 3 people offered me vitae to heal myself with; Nore, the Prince and Damos... interesting. I refused them of course. No blood bonds for this old man!) Spyder owes me BIG ... A life boon for keeping him alive. Nore too, sort of.(not a life-boon), a miNore boon, I'd say. He'd recruited my aid to stake one of those Sabbat before they caused any trouble. (Why else were they here?) The attempt failed. Nore put me in danger. I think the putz was possibly trying to get me "bumped off" by sending me at a Sabbat "combat hog". Nah...on second thought, too subtle for him...

November 20-December 7, 1995; Common Ground:
Primogen Meeting: Nore's trial. Sigh..... keeping up the bloody masquerade especially amongst these very "fragile" folk. Arg, why here? Oh yeah. Moved it here. Ok, look as

human as possible.... Nore is put on trial for his actions concerning Spyder. Isaiah wants to railroad the guy. I demanded a fair trial for Nore. "I may not like you, Nore. But, until there is proof I will not automatically assume you're guilty!" It takes a lot of wrangling but he is finally punished for neglecting to protect a fellow kindred and failing to uphold the laws of Elysium. He loses status, temporarily until he can prove his worthiness and loyalty. I suggested that he be assigned a task by the prince to prove that loyalty. (A slap on the wrist, losing status, sheesh!) Isaiah proves himself, once again, to be a schmuch, loudly arguing for nastier punishments, for none to be found guilty of the other changes, etc. Sure, I don't like Nore, but we need proof that he's done even half of what he's accused of. And I said so. He thanked me. Huh, don't thank me yet, Boy. Adam's disappearance and possible demise are dismissed as an "in-clan matter." It's been taken care of. He's been sent to Vienna to be disciplined by the Council of Seven. Uh-huh, sure. All through this, Morrigan was pretty quiet. Her attention being taken up by Rasputin, who seemed equally taken with her. Aww, cute. Trial ends.

December 7, 1995; Mara's (supposed Toreador, later revealed as Tremere) Primogen meeting:
This one was called by Nore.... It seems a Lupine has been in contact with him and has given him blood (for what purpose? I wonder.) Mara tries to spirit read it (a vial of the stuff). It comes off as tainted and won't let her read further...Isaiah is really snotty tonight, carping at me on a constant basis. I just calmly and with dignity, ignore his abuse. Sniping about the messiness of the apartment we're in and generally being a jerk, up to and including entrancing Morrigan. Grrr. Seeing my friend used in such a way makes my blood boil. I know something is up, 'cause she hates him and all he did was look at her and say some schnaltzy things at her and suddenly she's melting for him? No way! My anger almost gets the better of me. When I tell him to leave her alone, he just grins eerily at me....Isaiah continues to snark... (his aid, a non-descript toreador is recording the minutes. I read them later... They're hilarious! Complete with cartoons!) Nore snipes at me too, a bit. I get fed up and demand some civilized behaviour. Ach! Children! Things settle down into a fairly serious discussion about what to do about the coming lupines, that vial of lupine blood that Nore had (It's mine! I'll decide what to do with it!") and plans to deal with the Sabbat presence in this city. Finally! A raid is planned once we find out where they are...Having taken all I could take of Isaiah's vicious tongue: "I notice you get hit once and you crumbled old man..." "That creature had to actually hit me four times with wolf claws before I fell! Celerity is an amazing ability, I should learn it. And what of you, oh warrior Toreador! So bravely using Ghergyna as a shield to protect your precious hide! You are a coward Isaiah! I protect my friends, however physically inadequate my protection is, at least I am willing to risk myself for a good old friend. Your only friend is your mirror!" (I was referring to that Sabbat episode) I angered him by winning the challenge. Now folks know what a yellow-bellied little conning skunk he is. Snipe at me will you? Damien McAllister takes me aside and asks my help in finding out about Wolfram's involvement with Pentex....Is it dangerous? I tell him I'll do what I can. He promises to get me some body armor in case I get into any more fights. Good!

December 11, 1995; Die Maschine Cabaret:
Court: Amusing night. I get involved in a Malkavian prank; a "death threat" to the paranoid Caitiff, Domingo, who runs the bar and almost get Casper staked as the culprit. Actually, it was another Malkavian's first prank and he'd wanted my assistance. Casper wrote the note, I delivered it invisibly. Domingo and I have some words. Loud, angry, obnoxious ones and paranoid. It got settled in "stop expecting dirt to land on you because you are Caitiff. Prejudice can cut both ways" Isaiah's Toreador lackey was murdered right by the back door, apparently by a vampire-hunter (shit!). Yeshua freaks and scares the crap out of people (who were crowding in) with Majesty. They back off, fast. In chatting with us, an enigmatic kindred named "Asic" learns about the death threat, places a big sword (it appeared out of nowhere) on the bar counter and asks, "do you hold a grudge?" Domingo hastily said "no." Asic. (I suspect is an assamite, yikes) then takes the sword off the bar top. The sword then disappears again. Both Yeshua and myself had told Shadow earlier to leave the Malkav child alone. He was important to a Malkavian Prophecy of some kind. Once things were explained, he complies. The Lupine delegates arrive. We're told by the prince to keep our distance while he deals with them. They're antsy at being around so many "wyrm-tainted" beings and to make things easier for them, space is maintained. There are three lupines instead of the expected two. Two of 'em get into an argument, something about one insulting the other's cairn. They agree to take it to the dance floor cage (no obstacles and we can stay out) and proceed rip each other to shit. Temper, temper. "Waits-with-wolves" (a silver fang, shrug, I don't know what it is either, a rank title, family?) Looks on as they battle.

A party gathers for that planned Sabbat raid at St. Mary's cemetery and nearby house.) No Sabbat, just a lot of humans and ghosts, armed to the teeth and ready for us. It was a trap and a misdirection. (I don't find out about this battle fast enough so I don't get to participate. Rats! Folks can watch the fun through closed circuit T.V. They have a cameraman? Weird!) Well, the trap doesn't kill them. Nore breaks the masquerade by throwing a fire ball (!) Morrigan and Rasputin save each other occasionally crispy backsides by giving each other vitae to heal wounds. The ghouls and kine and a few cops are straightened. Some might've escaped, I'm not sure. We've got a leak, I think. We have a traitor in our midst who tipped off the Sabbat (a theory only, no proof.) The warriors return, happy. Helena had a freak session (a loud-mouthed Toreador). Big deal girl. I try to help, but there wasn't anything I can do. Someone gave her an overdose of heroin. (What is with this inject-a-drug-into-em-and-watch-em-freak thing anyway?) Spyder does something nasty: he puts Isaiah to sleep and rifles his pockets looking for something that he wants to use to frame Isaiah with. (Something about Nore, I'm not sure what.) Earlier, Mara had revealed herself to be Tremere and not Toreador as she'd claimed. She is also Nore's childer and I find out Isaiah is blood-bound to her. Yeshua and I are both offended by her lies. Things don't look good for friend Isaiah. Back to Spyder, so I ask if Isaiah is guilty of whatever Spyder wants to get him in trouble for. No. I tell him "not a good idea my old friends" He threatens to use forgetful mind on me. I dare him to try. He decides not to and I eventually talk him into letting this one go. A

friend from Prague arrives to visit me. Boris (a Nosferatu) is going to be staying for awhile (he's not officially joined us yet...) The Lupine "Waits-with-Wolves" and I chat, very briefly. "Not all of us would harm you friend, or even try. We don't "serve the wyrm." He shows mild surprise at this. He leaves soon after with his two companions.

December 27th at Die Maschine Cabaret: Brijah Rant and impromptu Primogen Meeting: The Brijah scare the Ravers again. Boris is officially introduced. I let the other Nosferatu know of a possible upcoming clan meeting. I hear rumours that Isaiah is going to be killed and/or deposed as Primogen of the Toreador. An information boycott is called against Dimitri for a few months as punishment for his arrogant boasting that he knows all that goes on. Prove it now, Boy! Ha! A core of knight-protectors is put forward as an idea, they'll be able to carry weapons into areas of Elysium. Could be good or bad depending on your point of view. Yeshua hates the idea. "Oh great! More legionaries I don't need. After all the trouble it was to get rid of them the first time!" Two Brujah children are chastised for hanging around Malkavs too much. As shadow roared, "if ya wanna be Malkavians, get adopted by 'em! Otherwise, enough! You're Brujah, act like it! No more running around like overgrown kids! Time to do some me damage!" I send my children (Bill) off to New York to find a friend: Lynda Morrisette (nosferatu) she'd fled Montreal to escape the Sabbat (she'd pissed em off somehow) and went to New York. (Unfortunately, another Sabbat-controlled territory. She's in hiding and Bill will have to be very careful about how he searches for her. If he finds her, he is to learn whatever he can from her, arrange for her escape from the city and come here. He's to tell her that I had sent him with a password, "la chain." He'd wanted to be released, so he is. He could die there. Come home safe, Boy. God speed!

January 3, 1996 at Die Maschine Cabaret: Informal gathering:
(as of this writing, this event hasn't happened yet, a rumoured second attack by the Sabbat, apparently Dimitri is the target.... I'm definitely going to be there as the old man.) O.K. Things go really strange... (By the way, first, Dimitri was not attacked, second, Dimitri wasn't there...) I meet several new people, Mathen (?), a Brijah, Dr. Noodlemann, a Malkavian, and some fellow with weird blue hair who's's name I didn't catch. The Prince was acting strange, and he did something to me and I felt a shivering sensation. Why would the prince attack me? (mentally). Isaiah was very bad, he shot Casper. Yeshua attacked him, while I held him still with potence and Wolf Claws (I wasn't trying to hurt him thought I wanted to. He'd hurt a young friend ... and a Malkav; I'm rather partial to them) Yeshua tried to drain him! Oy! Earlier, more nasty stuff. I noticed a large clot of people heading downstairs... and followed. I saw a battle....But heard nothing. Mr. Nore was down with a stake in his heart, the blue-haired fellow was draining him. Mara was down too, being drained as well by one of the newcomers. (I suspect they are Sabbat, but I've no way to tell for sure. I'll assume they're Anarchs, altthough they acted meaner than any anarchs I've over met.) Just when things were starting to look really bad (I couldn't help, I got there too late to help Nore...though, I actually tried. I wasn't fast enough) An odd ripple wavered through the air and all five antagonists

disappeared. Gone, all of them, without a trace. At the beginning of the night, Nore had come to me with an offer....impersonate him for a short while and he'll arrange some ritual or other that will lower my generation by two, permanently. I don't believe him (I think he's offering me for chance of diablerie??? Does such a ritual exist? (Yes... but, the effects are temporary) I also think that he fears for his unlife, expects to be attacked and wants me to draw fire away from him so he can escape while I take the flak. Why else give such a high-powered "favor" in return? And why, then if this ritual exists, hasn't he used it on himself? So, I figure the danger factor is so high for this "favor" he wants me to do, that I can only be furious that he would have me killed in such a way, and offer me diablerie as payment for my risk. Some favor. I didn't think he expected me to collect on the "payment." Well, now that he has disappeared (we have no idea where he is. Mara and Radu (her childer) may return, if a little worse for wear.) The blue-haired one and the Brujah did not return. I don't think I'll have to worry about Nore trying to get me to commit diabolerie. Brother! I'm trying for Golconda man! And you want me to do WHAT!? We had cops coming in and asking their questions and they left after finding nothing. Casper's all right, Yeshua gave him some of his blood. (That's why he attacked Isaiah by the way, to replace the blood Isaiah "took" by shooting Casper.) The prince turns out not to be the prince. This one is apparently a Tzinisce with Vicissitude, flesh shaped to look like Wolfram. (How long has be been watching and following Wolfram around to be able to impersonate him so convincingly?) He'd revealed himself by injuring Isaiah by turning all of his blood to hot lead (!) And telling him (smiling eerily) "there are some amongst my people who could make you look like that Picasso you've always wanted" And then somehow, fades from our vision and escaped. I only saw part of this, others told me the rest (as did Isaiah, before he'd fled in agony) The sheriff had no idea what to do. He kept trying to do his job (I'll commend him on that.) And getting nowhere. Somebody dominated Tiger (the Gangrel primogen) into thinking she was reading a book. She'd attack anyone who came near. A Malkavian also was messed with into believing that his glass of water would "cause the demons to come out" if anyone tried to take it from him or sip from it. (Casper, again.) I apparently was also accosted by this person though, I have no memory of it. Shadow had seen me talking to Dr. Noodleman, and then became confused afterwards when the sheriff asked me who I'd been taking to. My childer, Bill was there as well, his last night before going to New York to seek my missing friend. He saw the battle too, but, like me, couldn't do anything to help save him....Oh, yes, I forgot Yeshua used some kind of discipline I didn't recognize, suddenly, no one could entertain thoughts or action of harm against him. I told him, "I had no idea that you could be so impressive..." He'd replied, "it's something I noticed came with age..." Oh my, I'd had no idea he was that old. Quite a night....I wonder if we'll see Nore again. He's a putz, but things'll be more dull without him and his strange "offers" and trouble-making. When will we do something about those damned Sabbat!? They're out there and they want this city for their own. The way they keep kickin' out butts, they will have what they want...THEY MUST BE STOPPED! I sill attempt finding things but so far, no luck. Rumours of Assiniboine Park but, I also hear that is Lupine territory. I don't know which is true. Some info-hound I turn out to be.

January 7, 1996 at Die Maschine Cabaret: Court:
One phrase to describe this night: utter chaos! The first things to occur, was that the Prince became mightily miffed at his failing efforts to get our fractured attentions. Feh! You'd think we were of the MTV generation for all the attention-span kindred seemed to have. While Wolfram was foundering in our lack of decorum, I met two members of my clan, new to this city! The rumours had been true then. Wonderful! They named themselves as Dimple and Damius, the latter apparently once having been scribe to Nostredamus and at one point, having his tongue torn out and thus unable to communicate any way other than be written word, poor boy. It was while "speaking" with these two, that an individual calling himself Yago Miyoshi, (heavy-set fellow, eye patch, Japanese from the name, so, I greeted him in his language, surprised him I think). He had heard that my clan were the ones to seek information of (note: find out what happened to Pledius, Miyoshin's target). He seemed to find the names of clans and different kinds of kindred confusing. I suggested that he consider them as he would consider families, as they have similarities. He nodded understanding at last, though he called himself clanless and thus puts himself as caitiff at the bottom of our social order. I told him of the importance of rank in our society, again, similar to his own in some ways, though without the street codes of hoNore attached. He found the idea of each clan being specialists in some skills and powers interesting. It took some time to gather this information, the indirect approach so favored by Asians is difficult to keep up and work with. I think I did well for an old man with little knowledge of his culture other than a smattering of his tongue. I will give the bow of one greater to a possible respected lesser, I think, a slight inclination of the body, eyes up. He was giving me the martial arts bow of "student to teacher". Politeness above everything with this one. He's something new and intriguing. I hope to gather much information from watching him react to people. I introduced him around to other clan members and folks of other clans. I was sure to introduce him to friends first, as they may learn something and get back to me, and presented him to the Prince later.

So, the night went on with slowness and strangeness in the air. The Malkavians were playing at being Panzer-??? commanders (bringing up old and annoyingly painful memory) in hope of offending Sepp Deitrich, I learned later. The Prince was finally successful in getting our attention and proceeded to give us all a royal chewing-out over our in-fighting, our fractious squabbling for power, with the threat of Sabbat and Lupines at our every door. He actually yelled at us for a straight five minutes! And to show that his wrath was genuine and to show that our actions have consequences, called up several of the worst offenders and punished them for their breaches of the Masquerade and Elysium.

The first to be called was clan Tremere. They were accused of various breaches of Elysium and attacks on clan Malkav. The Prince then asked who would step forward and take the punishment. Mara came forward and allowed toe-cuffs of iron to be placed on her feet to prevent her from using her thaumaturgy. (Later it was discovered that she had no such power, and thus, the toe-cuffs were useless as a punishment.)

Then Spyder of clan Malkav was called forward. He was accused of breaching the rules of Elysium, attacks on clan Tremere and of not keeping his childe, Casper under control. He was punished with the task of finding the Sabbat stronghold, bringing said information back and organizing a strike-force to destroy the, all on his own, with no help from the other clans. There were sounds of astonishment and sympathy for this harsh punishment as it was thought by many that this just might be him certain final death. I thought so.

The next to be called, was Isaiah, Primogen of clan Toreador. (Rank doesn't always have its privileges...) He was accused of some serious breaches...attacks on Casper of clan Malkav, breaking the Elysium (killing a mortal within its confines.), And breaking the masquerade (revealing his true nature to "one not of the blood") and making progeny without his elder's permission. O Boy, are you in trouble! He was punished by being stripped of all status but acknowledged, stripped of his primogenship (he'd voluntarily gave up that post, earlier, in private. This was just the official dis-commendation) He was ordered to stay away from Mortals, period. All of his future feedings would come from the Red-Cross until such time as he can prove that he has control over his lusts. To partially explain his actions, he cited the power of love and the love that he'd discovered after his embrace, and then read off an abominably bad poem by some obscure (rightly so) poet. He insulted the prince by accusing him of having no understanding of love or life, calling him an unliving shell with pretenses at being an alive man. Isaiah, you do Wolfram a great wrong. He is unliving, yes, as are we all, but, he cares as deeply as any of us. You do yourself no favors, son. Isaiah's primogenship was given to Dimitri, the barer of the Book of Nod -another tedious scratcher after power..... On a lighter note, Sebastian of clan Ventrue, was recognized for his efforts in gathering material for the fight against the Sabbat, and for his skill in garnering resources, and hide-outs via his contacts in the underground. He was given the status of "infamous". There was polite applause, if not any real interest, then the Prince left the stage.

I saw Isaiah speaking with the Malkavs looking contrite. I assumed he was personally apologizing to them. But, then, I saw Spyder who appeared to be arguing with Casper, who then pulled out a gun and pointing it at Isaiah, who stepped back, looking pleased (!), he shot him twice! Pandemonium. Then, it was discovered that Isaiah was willing to let Casper shoot him in retaliation for his shooting Casper, Isaiah collapsed to the dance floor spraying blood. More on the consequences of this later. This occurred a night or two before Nore came to me (yes, he and his two progeny managed to return from wherever they'd been whisked off to.) And I expressed my relief that he and his childer were safe and sound. I asked him if he was telling the truth about that ritual that could lower my generation by two. He still claims, yes, and that it is permanent. I still don't believe him. Anyway, he wanted me to spy on a Ventrue clan meeting (oh, this should be fascinating, not.) To possibly spirit out a friend should they be in danger at this gathering (!). I agree, what the heck. So I go with Unseen Presence and listen in. Not much of any real information is revealed except for Melisande who claims to be Ventrue (and is not). Here's the dope, Damien McAllister (Ventrue Primogen) fears a spy in his ranks, is miffed

about it and so says that all will be tested somehow to prove their true clan (!) He says for the mole to step forward now and their punishment will be less than if they're discovered later (final death in the instance). Melisande nervously reveals her true identity as a Toreador with a diabolic sire who "liked" children. I shivered as I listened to her tale of captivity under this deviant. McAllister seems sympathetic. Also, Daniel is wanting to open a book-shop with a sideline in rare and obscure occult tones. (Ooh! I'll patronize that place for certain!) I find out about an old Ventrue tradition of death-nights (something like a birthday apparently.) This Melisande is obviously the one Nore wanted me to protect. No danger to her seems forthcoming. I (and Melisande) get out alive.

Back to January 7th....Anyway, Isaiah heals himself, Casper walks away, smiling, with Spyder chewing him out as they go, leaving a curiously intent Gabreel staring at the floor. Folks start to turn away and go back to their own affairs.... Then Gabreel is slithering on the floor, looking crazed, lapping up the blood! Shock waves thru those still looking in that direction. The Prince had already been moving in that direction, rushed the remaining distance and tries to calm Gabreel out of his frenzy. The Malkav resists, the Prince persists and Gabreel, beast now fully aroused, attacks Wolfram. They then tussle across the dance floor, back and forth and back again, tossing each other as they go. Gabreel is a snarling, beast-driven terror who nearly kills our Prince. Wolfram manages to calm him down and get him away from the blood [it was the trigger for his frenzy]. Someone moped up the mess.

The sequence of events is confusing, I'm not sure what happened first..anyway, Damien approaches me, asking me if I wish to join the order of the Sith he's starting up (or reviving? Not sure... and I know, I know, the steward reference...blah, blah, blah. This has nothing to do with it, the word is apparently old Celtic (Gaelic?) meaning peace...) I say sure, why not? Damian spends a good amount of time trying to arrange to get us up on stage to announce us and the knights. I'm starting to have second thoughts after hearing the grumbles of folks who find the whole thing a ludicrous grab for status. (Silly leeches, we and the Knights don't get any status for this. It's just one attempt to get the clans to work together to solidify our defense against the Sabbat....) Somewhere in all of this, the Sith has a meeting to discuss our purpose and goals. Something weird goes down. McAllister tries to get the microphone operational, when a 20 foot circle of silence suddenly blanks out sound in the middle of the bar (!) People start freaking that an assamite (a clan of Assassins, eek) is in the area. Some try to leave, others try to discover the location of this assassin, eventually, the sphere of silence ends and we can hear each other once more. End of panic. I figure our "assamite" was busting a gut, laughing at the ineffectual stupidity of Winnipeg kindred. I was ashamed at us. We act like children!

In my anger, I go off to be alone a bit. I notice an odd-looking individual standing at the top of the stairs, clutching a clip-board (and writing on it) and wearing a lab coat. Curiosier and curiosier, I watch him for a while. Almost no one else seems to notice him at first. C'mon People! He sticks out like a sore thumb! So, I watch to see what

transpires... Ye Gods! And so-on! The lab-coated one points at someone in the crown and says, "there she is boys. Get her and we'll bring her back to the lab..." Oh BAD news. A female voice screams at them and two burly fellows go into the crowd to grab her. I start moving towards them and come across..... Bean! (Clan Malkav) She screams once... I reach out and immobilize one of the men who were struggling with her. (She's now staked. Ouch) I have to use potence on him to keep him still, I call up my wolf's claws. DON"T move, Boy" One hand's claws are sunk into the meat of his shoulder, the other hand is in front of him face. He gets to watch as they appear millimeters from his nose.... "Aw, c'mon, I'm only doing my job! She's ours." He starts to look afraid. Another kindred, D'Arby (Ventrue) takes a swipe at him and they proceed to smack each other around. The stranger tears out of my grip, the fight seems out of my hands, literally, so I go see about Bean. The other fellow is trying to drag her away. (Lab coat seems to be doing nothing, just standing there, then he disappears as someone jumps him, bearing him to the floor.) Another fellow, I don't see who, (I hate being short..!) Takes care of the second intruder. So, I get to Bean's side unmolested.

I pull the stake from her chest and get her to her feet and out of the action. The three intruders are be-headed! Spyder jumps one body, trying to get at the blood. Someone barely manages to pull him off. The area clears out a bit. Domingo tries to get Spyder away from the area until the bodies can be dealt with. Spyder makes Domingo have a little snooze with Dominate, then he goes back to his "meal" only to find the bodies gone. (I sneaked Domingo's keys and had the bodies placed on the roof until Sebastian's people in their un-marked black Vans come to take them away.... Phew! Another crisis deflected, sort of: Spyder calms down and comes back to himself.

Domingo awakens and has a miNore heart attack when he finds his keys missing. I give them back to him with an explanation. He calms quickly when he finds out what Yago and I did about the corpses and thanks me for aiding his friend.

Domingo had also come to me earlier, and in passing conversation, revealed that he felt he should be keeper of Elysium and not Melpomine (Toreador) since the Die Maschine Cabaret is his bar and his home. He was hunting support in the matter. I agreed with him as his reasons were very sound and I told him that his being Caitiff should not prejudice anyone against him. But, he smirked at me, as he already knew my views on that subject. He came back later (during the Sith meeting) and told me he'd gotten Wolfram's support. Good for you, Boy! I congratulate him warmly, saying that I'm sure he'll get some status out of it. I personally believed he deserves it.

Damien finally gets on stage. Calls everyone to attention, describes what the Sith is for (we have some fun with the microphone, makes him sound like a monster. It's great!) what our goals are etc. He introduces us all by name and clan. Then, he calls up the ones who've been granted Knighthood. (I'm not too keen on some of the choices. Not all of these deserve the post, some are quite the trouble-makers).

Later, while horsing around, I heard a squawk from across the room and I looked up to see this prissy stuck-up of the ??? Tremere bitching at Spyder's childe Casper. Then, the creep starts whining about status and then the Malkavs seem to ignore it. Blah, blah, blah. (This guy's called Carstairs, I think some high mucky-muck of the visiting Tremere) He's loud-mouthed putz. He's even so rude as to keep referring to Casper as female.

So, I roar over the microphone (monster mode audio effect, hee hee!) "The childe is MALE!" Watching everyone get whiplash was so much fun.. (I have been hanging around the Malkavs too much.) Carstairs continues his whiny tirade, sneering at the Sith and generally being a jerk. He finally winds down (no-one's really listening to him much.) When he sees people making faces at him and turns away, said his peace and went away.

Samhain was bad tonight. He staked one of the Malkavs for being a little too rambunctious with their cardboard "tank" What a weenie. There seems to be a lot of these. He's going to get chewed out, I think. He has been over-stepping his bounds too often.

The Prince was prowling around, really annoyed for most of the night. He calmed down sometime after the fight with Gabreel.

Oh, something amusing..... I'd told Dimple and Damuis about Isaiah's "problem" with Nosferatu.. And they stuck to him like glue for a good while. Take that! You mincing popinjay!

The three intruders were from Pentex, and were also ghouls... Pentex, Bad! Oh, yeah, almost forget, I saw Seraph speaking to hidden men in black robes. I heard little of their conversation, but, soon, the hidden one removed his and so it finally ends .... Arg! Black robes, bundled them up and handed them to a deferential Seraph. He stepped out, and I saw who it was....Damien McAllister!!!

January 13, 1996 at Radu Florescu's: "Unity" Meeting:
Mr. Nore calls this gathering to attempt to bring the clans together. I was amused many when he invited only the Brijah, Nosferatu and Ventrue clans.

What about the Toreador, Gangrel and Malkavs, Boy? Unity my scaly tail. No matter, the three slighted clans crashed our little party. HA! I like it.

So, it was like this...What are we to do about the disappearance of our Prince and his "advisor" (they'd been taken by some black tentacled thing at the Forks a day or so before...) It was suggested that we were unlikely to be able to deal with such a large thing. It eats Sabbat! So Gabreel so forcefully claims. I don't know...maybe. I hear "wyrm" used more than once. Damien McAllister is Regent Prince until Wolfram returns or is discovered to be dead. There was much flinging about of status privileges by one of the

'crashers', that pompous putz, Dimitri's. Oy! Whining and complaining about people, over nothing. Why do I bother? To keep my neutrality, I agree sometimes and disagree sometimes showing no favoritism.

Yeshua comes to me asking for a tissue. He's crying, red tears pouring down his face. "Why do you weep, my boy?" "I always do when one of us dies." "Eh?" "Samhain..." "Feh! That one. No loss and weep for him...?" (Shrug) So off he goes asking for a tissue and I have not one. "Anyone got a Kleenex? Yeshua is crying." A Brujah crying? I don't understand.

Isaiah brings out a bag filled with pieces of a broken mask and a sheaf of papers.... They have names on them of people who have been killed in the last little while. The disgraced former Primogen begs (well, not quite) people to help him in an investigation regarding the mask and the names on the paper. He claims that the mask had an aura of evil about. Something feels weird about the thing. He wants someone to spirit-touch it. No-one present has this ability. There are entreaties to all the clans to pool their knowledge and skills together to solve this mystery. No one seemed to think that this was earth-shattering stuff, but, some agreed to help dig up info.

Zippy got up at one point and miming, pulling out a chant saying, "Ok, in the interests of sharing our knowledge with other clans, her's what we know..." XXXXXX "chant," "We know Jack shit! And Jack shit's knowledge is extensive....on nothing!" We all cracked up as he went on in that vein. Malkavs are wonderful for breaking up tension...

Little else occurred, except for a hash-out session regarding our hunting practices. Many homeless have turned up dead, people reporting into hospital with mysterious blood loss, and hunters are on our trail. We make plans to make our feeding more circumspect. We must maintain the masquerade! (SNoret!) Rasputin suggest that we feed on animals, like he does. (Witnessing earlier his pulling a puppy out of his ubiquitous back-pack and draining it right there. Yuck, puppies are cute. I can't feed on the cute. I'd rather have a nice mugger or rapist, thanks. At least, they deserve a good scare, if not death.) Isaiah suggested that we not feed on humans or animals at all but to do some "blood-banking" instead. Groans at this and then he proceeds to describe techniques on how to drain them with less mess, fuss and embarrassment. Unable to resist a cheap shot lying so obviously open, I said, "And you would certainly know about that, wouldn't you Boy?! (snicker) He grinned, gave me the dirtiest look imaginable and actually hissed at me! Wonderful! (Maybe I should stop picking on the poor schmuck, it's not like he lacks for antagonists...) After that, the "meeting" pretty much broke up into little groups and discussions on the night's topics. I don't remember much else.

Cafe Elysium... Have to put on my prettiest face, mortals'll be there tonight. A passing young lady with an interesting "funky" look, serves as inspiration for this night's disguise. My own kind will recognize me though, by my usual garb.A night or two before, I found a

strange kindred in my tunnels...burnt by the sun! Poor Boy. I try to nurse him back to health but he heals so slow! He must have been a high generation kindred as he healed as slow as a human. He looks sufficiently disgusting to be a Nosferatu, so I adopt him and take him in. He didn't know his name. Poor creature, we barely even knew what he was. Must be very new not to know enough to stay out of the sun. I called him Seth. He's very ???. He takes on my manner of ???, some manner ???? Strange boy. He doesn't even know the basic disciplines of his clan! So I set about teaching Seth obfuscate. He comes to the Cafe wrapped in gauze bandage.

I meet all my new friends in this city. Amazing how quickly some of these warm to me! I know that I am far more sociable than most of my clan in general, but it seems that Nosferatu are well received in Winnipeg at least, by some... Even that fop, Isaiah, occasionally reaches out to me with flattery and the odd kind comment. (Though, rapidly following it up with a loudly expressed "ugh!" when I touch him or something. It's become almost a friendly game between us.)

July 6, 1996:
Sound out the area the Giovanni have taken, are the bugs working? What's been going on? Why hasn't Rafaello contacted me?
---Why are my people leaving? Is the creature in our tunnels frightening them away? Rasputin has decided to stay resident, even though he is not of my clan. The changes he's been going through worry and disturb me. Talk to him, keep him sane. He's been odd since his return from Toronto. What happened to him? He refused to speak to me in person. We've been communicating by notes passed by rats.
---Talk to Isaiah and reinforce my deal with him, and reminded him of the price of failure.
---Find out Wilt's abilities, with Damius and Hoffa gone, my information network is becoming too small.
---Randall stirs up trouble wherever he goes. His clan should deal with him.
---Skruface verses Miles, touchy, one accuses the other of plotting against him, and the other accuses the first of treachery against our Prince.
---Wolfram is teaching me presence. It goes slowly. Vice-versa on his learning obfuscate.
---The archons Jacob and Mephistopheles are continuing to be reckless, thoughtless and violent. What should be done with them? The Justicar was a fool for choosing them. (They have since left the city, apparently.)
---Spyder has returned. No joy there. Strife should be his name. He owes me a life boon, remind him, lent with subtlety.
---Istvan and Domingo, the trouble making pair that they are, have not been adequately punished for imprisoning my friend, Archon Damos. A month they held him prisoner! When we got him back, he no longer looked human.
---Rafaello still has my Anna!!! I need more information! If he hurts her, the beast, I'll kill him, I SWEAR!
---My rage rises and falls with each night. I worry about this hunger for the destruction of the Giovanni. My quest for Golconda may be jeopardized.

---I've been hearing rumours of plots against Prince Wolfram. Find the source of these. Istvan is one source to watch. Wolfram may be of a clan I don't often respect, but, he is my friend and in my coterie. Would I see a Brijah or Caitiff in the Prince's place?
---Isaiah fucked up, I think. Domingo brought a complaint to the primogen meeting of Isaiah "blowing the whistle" as it were, by telling Domingo of the plan to remove certain primogen.
---"Isaiah's mouth must be dealt with," I told him subtly. And what does he do? Fool.
---Three chemical plant explosions. Find out about these.
---The fifteen buildings on Corydon that burned were Giovanni! Ventrue Inc. Has bought the property.
---Meet any Garou. Be very polite! Keep the peace.
---Give Tyr's holdings to Domingo? Assure his loyalty. Divide these holding amongst the rest of the Toreador as "shareholders".
---Ghoul some of the street-gang leaders and settle some rivalries...
---Have a little discussion with Damien about his little "new world order" ruse...
---A noted hunter is headed our way from San Francisco. Fourteen known deaths of kindred, black silk roses as a calling card. He's quite the safe cracker...
---Don't use Diana/Seraph! Doping her with sodium pentothal, she might reveal who she really is! Would sodium pentothal affect kindred? She might drop her "mask"...Much has happened this night, the web grows larger and more tangled. Let's try and sort this out:
---Damien and myself discussed the possibility of removing certain primogen and replacing them with hand-picked people. Specifically Toreador and Brijah. Isaiah came into our conversation as a possible pawn. So, we tell him of "the new world order," and send him off to "encourage" youngers to back new candidates for the leadership of these clans. We promised him the backing in turn to gain his ambition.
---One problem; the Boons he owes are more than his current status. Negate them or pay them off. Back to this in a moment.
---Second problem; Isaiah "mouthed-off" to the very people we thought he might. Istvan and Dhalgrin: Domingo. He did, later.) These reported Isaiah's actions. Damien smiled and "revealed" his ruse. (To my great offense, I was a dupe in some of this. Damien is my friend and he did not trust ME! He manipulated me! Very smart, but it hurt. I'll have to watch him now. He may become a threat. I hope not, I care for few. He is one of the few.)
---Solutions: Isaiah will hunt down and stake Tyr and bring him to his primogen. In return, the boons he owes to Domingo and Istvan are paid. One down, Tyr will likely hate Domingo and want revenge for the blood-hunt called on him. Isaiah is to try and get them together. Tyr will be summoned, Domingo will be managed into the area. It's hoped that Tyr will attack Domingo in favor of Isaiah. (Oh, did I mention that Tyr is rumoured to be Sabbat? A feather in Isaiah's cap if he pulls this off.) Isaiah will fade from the picture to call up Damos the archon, to witness the event. Domingo could be discredited, for allowing a Sabbat agent into his clan. Two birds are killed with one stone. Boons paid, Domingo removed: dead or disgraced and witnessed by Archon Damos, who gets his revenge for his imprisonment. Isaiah's stock goes up.

---Another wrinkle: there are rumours of Gabreel still being alive. I hear this through Rasputin, living in my tunnels as he is. Gabreel is Sabbat. Rasputin has proof, he says. What don't I know? Possible humiliation of Isaiah once again here, if this is handled wrong. Discredit Gabreel. Reveal what he is. I give the information to Isaiah, who in turn uses it to his advantage. I.e. he reveals the "Malkav-Sabbat" ties, thus, gaining more respect for himself, removing a spy, possibly permanently, and negating the boon he owes to Gabreel. He'll then be free of all boons. Result, Archon Damos gets some retribution, Isaiah is exonerated, Domingo is removed, and two Sabbat agents are destroyed. All because I give advise to a member of a clan that my clan usually despises. We get Isaiah's loyalty: to the coterie, the prince and myself. Which means we can utilize him in our plans and Zippy can't mess with him anymore. I want peace. I've said this before. We have enemies from outside the camarilla; Sabbat, Giovanni, possibly Lupines, and now this super-hunter. We can't afford to be so fractious. Already, our work is shaking out the weak, and revealing the ones with forethought and power. We will need them to unite us all.

I've been asked to take sides. I will not, except on the side of peace. I remain as neutral as I can, helping, with advice, material, skills and friendship. I give assistance to most who ask, if it is in the best interests of peace. Although they may think they serve their self-interest, I know better... THEY serve MINE.

Already, in some cases through no manipulations of my own, clans, Noremally at odds with each other, (or at least, wary allies) are banding together. Strong leaders are beginning to emerge. Gangrel and Tremere have signed a peace treaty. Brijah, Toreador and Nosferatu are forging alliances. Ventrue seems to be swinging my way, if only to protect our prince, who is Ventrue and my friend. He leads, he stays that way if I can help it. I'm loyal, as far as that goes, and in any case, I feel more comfortable as an advisor, behind the scenes, despite the temptation to assume the princeship. I don't think I'd be a very good prince. I don't think I could be like Prince Source, my fellow Nosferatu and Prince of Brandon.

Malkavians as usual, stands alone. I've no way of predicting which way they'll do. Maybe if the 'Spyder and Casper' problem was dealt with, we could sway them. Watch out for Zippy. He's tricky as a Ravnos. The factions forming are Gangrel and Tremere, and Ventrue, Nosferatu, Brijah and Toreador. If we can at least get the clans to meet eye-to-eye in peace, using each's special talents to bolster each other where we are vulnerable, we could never be endangered again. So, in interest of peace, I break many established rules. Possibly, I will even commit treason. So, a king maker I become, until we no longer need kings.

I don't care for the petty ???, I just want peace. We can return to our personal wars after we have vanquished our other foes.

This obsession of mine with the Giovanni clan is worrying me. Such rage! What is happening to me? My everlasting goal has been Golconda, I'm not making much progress lately. I may even have lost ground. I may have to start all over again. But, Anna [Mordechai's dead wife's soul] is a prisoner! I never wanted her to go through what I did in Auschwitz. Yet, the Giovanni somehow have captived her. How does one capture a ghost? For ghost she is, and with little material substance. I am so protective of her, I love her still with a sweet ache that I'd almost forgotten. I weep more often now. I'm breaking the Giovanni's influence here, I think. The "invasion" I've been sensing, the destruction of the buildings on Corydon (Tyr's doing apparently.) The financial "monkey-wrenching" all are taking their toll. But, now, they've gone underground and I can't find any sign of them. This worries me. I am also worried about my desire to utterly destroy one Rafaello Giovanni, even to diablerize him. That would very well wreck whatever progress I've made.

Another thing that worries me is that supposed "protection from thaumaturgy" pin. I've been receiving images from it. It doesn't do what I'd originally thought. I speak a command-word and it extends into a two-foot stake, which, when implanted into a Kindred, is very hard to remove. It's been telling me about it's other abilities, but, I haven't deciphered the images yet. Something about the thing bothers me, other than the damn dreams it's giving me. I don't know what else to do except wait for more, I guess.

July 7, 1996:
Isaiah and Zoe are getting married! They think Nov. 10 and they ask me to officiate and marry them. I'm too flattered by the request. I can't imagine any negative connotations to this. It surprises me. Maybe I'll weep tears of joy for once.

Randall St. Peters of Tremere (Brandon) borrows Prince Source's Bone of Lies to find out if all of his Tremere are Tremere!

July 10, 1996: Brandon Court:
Skruface came to me with a question! Have I heard about him being connected with or being a Giovanni!! Huh! He "warns" me about accepting an invitation from a certain Ventrue, something about a meeting, a lot of lawyer-types and even more heroin. If I go, go in disguise or be invisible. And, I may be approached by this ??? certain Ventrue, to lure Skruface into a trap. I knew of this already, but, find out more. Watch D'arby, and maybe counsel him on more subtle measures.
---Mara could be a serious impediment to my plans. Find a way to send her on or keep her from Isaiah somehow.
---What's up with Elmo? (a little boy claims to be Gangrel) He drew a nasty picture showing Zoe dead and showed it to her. Zoe freaked and ran off. Later Elmo is found staked. When revived, he claims Zoe did it. Some questioning (and a Bone of Lies) later, it's revealed that Zoe is innocent. Isaiah staked Elmo. Isaiah panicked and retreated. He's hunted down and damaged, and brought back before Prince Source. He frenzies and

attacks Zoe! I have to pull him off of her with my not- inconsiderable strength. (I needed it to hold down a frenzying kindred.) Isaiah clamps his fangs into my wrist and starts to drain me. Urg... Oh well, it feels good and it kept him down long enough to get some vitae into him to bring him out of it. Oy! Is Isaiah in trouble!
---So Prince Source passes judgement on this. Zoe is blameless and nothing happens to her. Elmo is banished for being a pest, (I think, check this, I don't remember too well) Isaiah is stripped of all status in Brandon, And further, he must serve Clan Nosferatu while in Brandon and not to bitch about it.

July 16, 1996:
A little idea to bring folks in line.....Use the fear generated by the rumours of the "super-hunter" to our advantage, deposit black silk roses using a dominated ghoul. (He'll believe he is the hunter temporarily) Each of the primogen got away including me - then call them out for a meeting to "deal with it".
---Keep up the invasions of roaches and rats into Giovanni holdings on Corydon (the ones that are left.). Arrange spot inspectors by health and fire inspectors.
---Request Anna to do a little spying for me. She despises Rafaello as much as I do. It seems that she must obey when commanded but otherwise, her time is her own.
---Damien has made me temporary Seneschal during Wolfram's absence. I guess that makes Wilt acting Primogen. Not that there are clan members to watch over. I want more Nosferatu! Oog: Supposedly I get the status of cherished and esteemed (people treat me this way already) oh well, the position's temporary and so's the status.
---Got childer-right! Now to find a suitable candidate (one who'll stay with me.)
---Ghoul some of the street-gang leaders to bring them under control. Ooog: (I'm working on a street influence trait) This one's long, some are hard to get a hold of.
---The Darby dilemma: this one feels snubbed and slighted by his own clan (Ventrue) and so betrays them out of revenge and by blood-bonding himself to Mr. Nore of clan Tremere! Fool. Well, Nore is dead, so no more blood-bond. So he hooks up with two more Tremere and starts to plot with them. So to deal with this, he is "invited" to dinner by McAllister. A report of his limo being "stolen" will be received by police computers dated some months back. The car will be stopped and search, twenty-three kgs of heroin will be found in the trunk and Darby will be arrested. McAllister will bail him out and the take him under his wing. Darby'll owe a major boon. Having two powerful kindred behind him should silence further complaints that he is being ignored. Teach this boy tact and subtlety! He wants his talents noticed and used? Very well, they will be.
---What info am I getting from the bugs in the stolen section of tunnels? What are they doing in there? I grew tired of not getting any answers. Have the bugs been found?
---Build a listening post under one of Ventrue Boy holdings on Corydon. Get a boon for this? The services of the Nosferatu do not come without a price. This was a request from Sebastian. A miNore boon at least... Remind him.
---I'd like to sneak a bug onto Istvan. He needs to be watched, too ambitious by far is that one. Skruface and Miles, and Dhalgrin as well, I don't know enough about them.
---Rasputin is pretty messed -up. What happened to him in Toronto? Is the adoption of

this Brujah as a "Nos" official? Yes. He looks worse than some of us.
---What's the noisy "thing" in my tunnels? Is it eating my Nos? Damius and Hoffa are missing, so are Djarum, Dimple and another young one I didn't even get to know. Bill didn't come back from New York and I have no idea what happened to Boris. What's happening to them? I'm scared that Wilt and I are next. It's lonely down here .... Did they leave because of my "war" with the Giovanni? Maybe. If so, I'm sorry and I hope they forgive me. Where'd Cyranose go?
---Oh yeah, what's with that pin of mine? I'm researching it and so far, it's giving me weird dreams, nightmares and a command word to operate one of the powers (the stake). It apparently has an aura of evil about it and it leaves a black spot on my aura wherever it's located. The dreams are making me nervous too. I think I'll ask Seraph/Diana if she knows anything about it.

July 21, 1996: Cafe Elysium:
---Damien says that he won't allow Isaiah's and Zoe's marriage to occur. The Toreador seems upset. Then Damien's face falls out of its serious lines into a big grin "unless I'm best man! Scared the shit outta ye didn't I? HA!"
---The Kindred band, Ballroom Zombies, out of New York is very loud. I can't say if I like their music.
---Spoke to Seraph/Diana, she confirms some of what I've been getting on that pin. It strengthens my mental faculties, restores my willpower and strengthens my resolve. In addition, it can remove a discipline from a person for a week! (It takes that long for it to come back) It can do this once a night! I already know about the command word that activates the stake. Quite the item. An now, people know I have it. Yet another thing to make me a target.
---Prince Source came to me at this party tonight and asked to speak with me in private. (As private as one can get with a body guard standing nearby.) He explains that he is in some serious trouble. It seems that he was in another city recently, Indianapolis, I think. Source presented himself to that city's prince or elders, and hunted down and killed a Brujah and a Toreador. It was covered up. But, it's now come back to haunt my new friend. These two he'd killed for killing his sire. Why didn't he bring this up with that city's Prince? - Something about the status of those involved? I don't know. Source wants me to stand by him as a friend (high status) during his trial. What I'd like is evidence to sift through. Conclave [a trial of kindred, led by Justicars and Archons] has been called for the end of August to decide his fate. -Ventrue called and controlled, Ventrue justice! How fair will this be to one of our kind? Oh, Source, you are in it deep my friend.... and I'm not sure how to get you out, since you've admitted that you destroyed those two. What evidence do you have that they killed your sire? Hope that justice will be served and yourself exonerated. But I don't have high hopes.
---George Brown introduced himself some weeks back. Everyone just sort of backed up when he mentioned his clan.... the followers of Set! So far, he's behaving himself.
---A blood doll hit Isaiah with a vessel of transference. (When will they leave him alone?) ??? is in trouble with her Primogen. Dhalgrin seems to be a real putz - got something up

his butt, I think, stiff, that one. Anyway, ??? got chewed out, Isaiah didn't get much out of it except a formal apology. (Feh) And my contacts tell me that the blood doll packed up all his money, some clothes, and left town. Probably a good idea.
---Randall St. Peters seems to be doing quite well with security. The vessel thing was the only incident. His assistant seemed surly and generally unfriendly. Rumours exist that he was a hunter have so far not been proven.
---Someone (my guess is Mara) cast an illusion on Isaiah to make him look like a Nosferatu to frighten Zoe. It got settled.
---Met a Toreador names Park who seemed to be depressed and generally gloomy. He's wondering if he should continue his existence as a vampire. He seems to feel that he is an unredeemable monster, that he isn't going to learn anything from this experience and that he's of no worth in general. It seems Domingo found him bleeding to death and embraced him to prevent his death because he liked the boy's music. I told him of Golconda, tried to listen to him, maybe check him up a little, which I don't think worked too well.
---Wilt, my new Nosferatu, had a great time grossing people out. It was disgusting, but a chuckle nonetheless, she's seemed to have made friends with a new Malkavian names Chris, (Jezebel's childer!)

Sometime after July 21, 1996:
---Wolfram is still in Germany, which means that I'm still Seneschal and McAllister is still Prince Regent. Joy. Being a target is such fun!
---Domingo's and Damos' dislike of each other has finally pissed off McAllister too often. He ordered them both to a trial by combat. Both agreed and proceeded to fight it out. Damos won the battle by killing Domingo. (Though he apparently hadn't wanted to. I don't know, I wasn't there.) Isaiah and Dimitri now are in the running for the spot of Primogen.
---Casper and Jezebel disappeared for over a week. They'd been captured by Diago the Tzimisce and held prisoner in a basement room. Without feedings. Casper and Jezebel refuse to talk about the experience.
---More hunters! I'm beginning to despise members of the Society of Leopold.
---I was wandering through my tunnels looking things over when a seven foot hairy scary thing stepped out of the shadows and grabbed me by the arm and proceeded to pull me away. I panicked. I thought it was the thing in the tunnels! The creature was growling in what sounded almost like speech, but, I couldn't understand him. I pulled out of his grip and ran, trying to put something between he and I so I could disappear. He was faster by far. Every time I ran any place, He was in front of me. Finally, he'd backed me up against a wall and growled, "Don't you recognize me?" I shook my head, no. "It's me, Rasputin!" Oh my God.

Now I know why he's remained hidden since returning from Toronto. He explained what he'd discovered there; my wife was dead (though I'd known this already) Sabbat are returning to Winnipeg, Gabreel was a Sabbat spy. Bad for Isaiah, to associate with such a one, even unknowing.

Rasputin seemed agitated, restless and his gaze darted about as he growled his answers to my questions. I asked him what had happened to him that he looked like this. He didn't know. His agitation grew worse and he began to move away from me down the tunnel. The stares he gave me were more than making me nervous. He finally snarled that he had to go. He was going to remain in the tunnels and wouldn't likely be seeing me again. Then he turned, started to run and then, disappeared. I had almost forgotten how fast he was.
---Seraph/Diana has disappeared, McAllister is very worried about her and subsequently, his temper worsened. His punishments, particularly to Isaiah, grow harsher.
---A hunter tried to kill Damien, I stopped him though not without taking a number of bullets. Ow! I ended up staking him. It was the only weapon I had, Casper and Jezebel gave me vitae to heal. XXXxxx a miNore boon. I think it's fair. The hunter was carrying pictures and notes about Damien. He's been undead for how long?

August 24, 1996: Winnipeg Exchange District:
---Put watchers on Sebastian. The fellow in corner is called Gideon. He asks too many questions.
---A Justicar has entered the city, Archon trailing behind him. Rude little ??? (the Archon, not the Justicar, that one didn't even speak to me.) Tried to cool me out and move me off. I wouldn't allow it, status or no. I fear that I've made a poor impression. (Later, I find out he was no archon, but a low-ranking servant, possibly even a ghoul!)
---An odd occurrence, I have my name spoken in my mind and a quiet request to speak with me. I look up to see a man I didn't recognize. Out of curiosity, I got up and went over to him to find out what he wanted. He said he "knows" me as I was, as I truly am. (!) I ask him to clarify. He says he sees through my disguise to the truth beneath me, before I was embraced. He then asked me a bunch of questions about Sebastian of all people. Because I mysteriously felt safe and trusting of this person, I toldl him some info. As I get up to leave, I tell him "you say you see me as I am underneath?" He nods "yes, as you were before this". He waves at my face "happened you, I see a kindly old men." I shake my head in bitterness. "No, I am that no longer," and I leave.

I go back to the table where Wolfram and the Justicar are playing chess. My seat is gone. Grrr. That little Archon's slights. First, he demands to know why I'm there. He relents. Then, he demands my name and position, then, he proceeds to question me about those in power, their names and clans. This is annoying. I look at Wolfram, he nods for me to go ahead. I answer his questions. Now, my chair has been moved. The Archon suggests that I sit elsewhere. Ok, fine. I have a plate with me. (Masquerade!) I go to place it on the table. The putz says no, put it on my lap. I'm starting to steam.... (the Justicar hasn't even looked up.) I notice McAllister's chair is empty. So I sneer at the Archon, "I could put it on my lap, but, I don't have to," and stump over to McAllister's empty seat. The Archon objects. I shrug and say that McAllister isn't here, there's a convenient space on the table and that I'll relinquish the seat when McAllister returns. He shrugs and finally lets it go, having "put me in my place" I guess. (He likes doing this. When I first arrived,

I had placed by book on the table, gotten a chair and went for a cup of coffee. When I got back, by chair was gone. I told him that there was a reason I'd placed the chair there. "Oh?" "I sit by my Prince. Although I can sit between you and your Justicar, if you prefer?" Upon which he then demanded my name and position, etc. He couldn't shift me, and this annoyed him. To discomfort this fool further, I spoke softly, so that he had to ask me to repeat myself almost every time I spoke. It took him a while but he finally caught onto the game and started speak softer in turn, where upon I chose to speak in a louder voice. One should learn to listen, especially to the Nosferatu!

He recognized my position, grudgingly, and proceeded to ask me questions about the people in Winnipeg. Who was who? What clan? What positions? I answered, quietly and politely.

Then he asked questions about the situation in the city. I looked at Wolfram, who continued to play chess with the silent Justicar. No help there. Still miffed, I gave as generalized answers as I could. Narishkieten Nebbish. He wrote everything down.

Later, after I'd spoken to the odd fellow in the back, (Gideon) and I'd returned to the table, the thing with the chair and the little archons went on, dealt with and sneered at thank you.

McAllister returned from whatever errand he'd gone on. He seemed a little tense as he sat down. The prince and the Justicar had finished their chess game and left to discuss something in private. I was about to follow, but couldn't find an opportunity to disappear, and anyway the archon had his beady little eyes on me, which kept me from leaving. So I stayed and brooded over my worries of Wolfram's safely. He's mentioned that thirty Sabbat may have entered the city. If that many are known, how many more are there? The group of thirty could be a distraction, so what's really going on?

McAllister and I discussed our worries in front of the archon (no, we didn't include him in the conversation...) We were at a loss for ideas. How were we to protect our Prince if we weren't allowed to act on his behalf? I mentioned the rumours I'd been hearing. The atmosphere in the room was beginning to grow more nervous and frightening. McAllister's face registered his worry and he told me of a dream Zippy claimed to have had. (Even though neither of us trusted Zippy, we accepted the validity of this dream. Curios.). Supposedly, a very powerful eight-headed dragon was attacked by many enemies. The main, largest head was cut off and the creature thrashed in chaotic agony. I got, at the same time as Damien, a horrible conviction. We stared in open mouthed shock at each other and whispered "Wolfram! He's above with the Justicar!" And both of us charged out of the room as fast as we could without breaking the masquerade.

We found them in an alley, closed over the top and open at the ends and guarded by Wolfram's people. I reached the alley first, and rushed up to Wolfram. The Justicar was

miffed at this and demanded to know my reason for barging in like this. I ignored him. I could hear Damien issuing orders to the guards in the background.

Wolfram also ignoring the Justicar, asked me what was going on. I told him of the dream and the connections I'd made (Damien too) and how I feared for his safety. "We must get you under cover, my Prince. The Sabbat may be here for YOU!" I started to move off to the side. I wanted to get him to a sewer-grate to spirit him off to a safer place.

The Justicar protested. I was trying to be polite and smooth his ruffled feathers and Damien was trying to arrange safer transport for the prince. I gave up on my take-him-to-the-sewer idea in favor of a Ventrue safehouse.

But, the Justicar vitoed this. I had the horrible feeling that we had no time to lose. I could hear others talking behind and around me as I tried to communicate my worry and my certainty that something was wrong. Then Wolfram's eyes bugged as he clutched at his chest, staggered sideways with a moan and started to topple.

"No!" I grabbed at him to keep him from falling too hard. My heart broke as I watched him grit his teeth and writhe on the ground. I knew I could do nothing. No powers, no disciplines, no knowledge of what was happening. I never felt so helpless in all my time.

The damned Justicar told me to get away from Wolfram. I glared and waved him away. I leaned over Wolfram, tried to talk to him, tried to elicit any kind of information from him. "Who touched him last? Who?! Who's hurting my Prince!?" Wolfram's struggles were hard to watch. His eyes leaked red tears, his teeth, fangs extended grit together as he growled his hurt. He didn't scream. Just thrashed and clawed at his chest over his heart, and growled. Finally, his struggles grew fiercer, his mouth was open in an almost soundless howl. The Justicar once again commanded me to back away.

"But, he's my friend! I can't leave him!" I wailed in my grief as Wolfram's compulsions finally stopped. "No, Wolfram! Speak to me man! WOLFRAM' The Justicar touched me gently on the shoulder and said in a gentler voice that there wasn't anything I could do for him.

"I should've come with him! I promised to protect him! I could do nothing!" McAllister came and moved me away as Zippy came up to examine him. I felt completely useless. Questions were asked and Zipper answered. Wolfram might be in torpor [unconscious, death-like sleep of vampires], but, he didn't think so. I leaned my head on Damien's shoulder and shock as I cried, my anger beginning to rise. It was arranged that a van would be used to transport Wolfram's body. He would be taken to Vienna to see if he could be revived.

Meanwhile, some other things were going on at this edge of the alley as Zippy was

examining Wolfram and consulting with the Justicar. A pair of people had gotten into some kind of confrontation with Jacob and another of the Archons. Arg! Two people faced them, dark, short, folk. One of them was yelling, "you can't treat the Giovanni this way. We will have our revenge!" Rage rising, (I have to deal with this problem somehow....) My rage needed an outlet, and they looked good. I started to move towards them, growling. McAllister tried to hold me back, but failed as I pulled away. He shouted after me as I paced toward the Giovanni pair. My anger blinded me to frenzy in their presence. My wolf-claws were out and I could hear, in the seeming distance, McAllister's faint shouts for me to return. I started to stomp faster, muttering "Giovanni! Face me, Rafaello! Don't ya dare run!" He merely laughed as he walked out of the alley.

McAllister caught me by the shoulder. 'Mordechai! Mordechai! The masquerade! Your claws! Your face...." That caught my attention at last. I looked at my hands, felt that my concentration had slipped. I wore no "mask." "My friend, this will not help Wolfram. Restore yourself." Nodding my defeat and sighing, I complied. I finally, shamed, looked up into Damien's eyes. The sympathy there hurt almost more than possibly losing Wolfram. Something told me I would lose another friend soon.

My eyes leaking red tears, I started to walk away. McAllister followed. We walked back to the opposite end of the alley. Then the world went blinding white and something invisible threw me aside as if I were paper. My vision cleared to finally see....nothing. Panic started to set in as I scrambled to my feed, hugging what felt like a wall. I heard shouting, one person creaming, I heard my name. I groped blindly and recognized the scent of Damien. "There seems to be no end to this nonsense, eh McAllister," I said in a tired voice.

"Mordechai, are you all right? You're hurt."

"My eyes....the flash...I...can't see." My face felt wet. I wiped at it, straining to see....anything. The white, fuzzy glare hurt, but was starting to grown dark. I could make out a shape standing over me. The wetness on my fingers turned out to be blood from cuts in my forehead and cheeks.

"Something coming back. Uh, had me, my friend...." The shape nodded and took my arm. We walked through the growing crowd of kindred. Where had they all come from? We moved past questioning faces, past frightened prostitutes. My vision was clearing rapidly. ASH, Vampire healing! My blood turned the golden night streets to red tinted hell. Rage, Rage. I stomped my fury through the ???. Work it off. Randall St. Peters, that Tremere idiot, asked me what happened. I snapped. I snapped, "my friend is possibly dead. And you no longer have a Prince!" I left him there, flabbergasted, mouth opening and shutting like a ground-bound fish. Ach, fool. I stomped back to the Cafe Mondragon to let Diana and that putz of an Archon know what happened.

They were where I'd left them. I wearily recited the night's events and sat in a chair left empty by another. I tried to control my grief, telling myself that an old man's weeping would be noticed, not to mention red tears.

Damien came back after he arranged matters with Sebastian and the Justicar. His face was red with his fury. He collected Diana and myself and we left. On the way out, to the kindred we passed, he said, "Primogen meeting at Cafe Elysium. This will be discussed." He gave a time, snarled at someone's ill-timed questions and we were gone.

We drove to the Corydon [location of Cafe Elysium] area in hopes of gathering the Primogen together. Damien was talking on his cell phone, checking up on people. He turned to me and growled, "Wolfram was right, the Sabbat have attacked. Corydon's in chaos at the moment. They're telling me," he said on the phone, "that something woke up and killed most of the Sabbat."

"Something?"

"Yeah, they're saying Methuselah."

Oh joy. What is going on? We arrived quickly enough. There was nothing to see. Kindred and Kine were wandering aimlessly, looking dazed. We gathered a few of our people and spread the word that we were looking for the primogen. In the course of our gathering, we picked up Skruface and a very odd-looking kindred calling himself a Kiasyd (?). Tall, over 7 ft., blue-white skin, thin body and limbs, narrow skull with huge eyes, like black pools (no pupils, no whites.) Weird.

"Who is this?! Damien asked.

"One of the Sabbat. We're going to question her..." Good, something to work out my rage on. We took her to a quiet place (and private, so the Kiasyd could "drop" Boy face). Once there, she immediately began to resist and struggle." Hold her! Someone roared as she yanked herself free of our grasp and tried to flee. I managed to get a claw (wolf claws and potence, clarity too) on her just long enough to keep her back briefly.

Wincing at her clawed-up shoulder, she sneered at our questions. "Where is your pack, Sabbat?"

"Dead," she barked.

"How many of you are there in this city?" Laughing, she growled.

"Thousands, hundreds, millions, none! Too many and too few to find! Drop dead, ya camarilla shithead!"

"A Malkav, huh?"

"Toreador! Jerk." She yanked back on the ones holding her, managed to get free and stood up. She thumped her chest with her fist as she Spoke. "I am of clan Toreador! And of the Sabbat! You children are so worried about losing your humanity, you're not human, you brainless holes! The embrace took your humanity! You fools are too chicken-shit to accept it. We're VAMPIRES! We regard humans the way you regarded a roast turkey! They're little more than pets at best and food or toys the rest of the time!"

I was growing fed up with her blaspheme. So were others.

"Oh, just kill her. She's not going to tell us anything..."

"Ha! Cowards! That's your answer to everything! If it disagrees with you, kill it! If it frightens you, kill it! If it tries to show you a better way, kill it! Cowards, all of you! I'm not afraid to die! I've been there, done that. She paused, studied our silent, grim faces.

"C'mon, your city is in shambles...."

"Because of you....."

"Join us. We have a better way. You can be true to your nature. Stop suppressing your beast! It's unnatural!

(5) Isaiah/Brian's Version of In-game events:

In August of 1995 a group of us kindred arranged an alliance of sorts. This alliance would be
able to enforce a certain Primogen council and Prince to be elected during the October elections. The alliance was large and powerful and was successful. I was Primogen of the Toreador, Morrigan was Primogen of the Brujah and a Ventrue called Wolfram Hopner became Prince of the city. Mordechai who I met later, was elected Primogen of the Nosferatu and others of course filled the positions for their clans.

I remained Primogen for a time... until the trouble began. It started with my meeting Zoe. She was a Sax player. She played most of her concerts at a place called Cafe Rouge. I hired her for Cafe Elysium... and soon fell desperately in love with her. In October of last year just before the Primogen Elections I told her that I was a vampire. She wanted it. I resisted. I would not take her life as my sire had taken mine. Then three months later, she asked again to convert her, and she came on to me.... very strongly. I lost my control and in a frenzy, took all of her blood. Ah! When I came to my senses I had two choices, let her die or curse her forever. Selfish and selfless as I was in love.... I embraced her. The main problem, was that I did it in Elysium, at the Prince's court... When it came time to win the trust of my clan, I confessed my crime. I thought that it would make me more

approachable... more fallible.. more human. Silly me. Dimitri was the first to turn on me. He didn't do it immediately...but it happened. He forced me to resign.

Mara (we had thought to be a Toreador) revealed herself as a Tremere, explaining she had masqueraded as a Toreador to gain knowledge of our clan for Mr. Nore. Dimitri took this opportunity, along with Helena (a Toreador I had got along with splendidly before) to usurp me. I resigned and granted Dimitri my post. (He had the support of the clan.) At that time I was also punished for breaking the masquerade (Dimitri and Helena had told the Prince of my crime) by telling Zoe of my condition. My punishment was that I would be restricted from associating with mortals. Ah!.

From this point on I am going to save time and let you read a few letters I sent a few allies of mine. These letters explain what has happened to me since that night of Princely Punishment:

JANUARY 21, 1996:
So I was summoned to the Sebastian's House (the bodyguard of the Prince). There was a Primogen meeting. I was to be judged and sentenced for all of my crimes against the Traditions. It was cold in there. No, not cold as in outside cold... but emotionally.. it seemed as if someone was to be hung. After sitting down the two bottles of MORTALITY (a Cafe Elysium speciality), the Regent Prince (oh ya, if I never told you the Prince has disappeared and a Regent Prince called Damien McAllister (Ventrue) has been elected in his sted), asked if everyone had a pleasant time at Cafe Elysium the previous night. The answers were cordial, yet I knew that something was up.

The night previous had begun quite pleasantly. Everyone was quite polite and gracious to each other. No interclan fighting, etc.. No obvious uses of Disciplines... no frenzying.. This was partially due to the fact that I made this Cafe Elysium a Human/Kindred event. Both were invited so all had to be on their best behaviour. The trouble began when it was determined that three Vampire Hunters had gained access to the cafe. My silly Ventrue Inc. weapons detector didn't register the shotguns, flechette pistols and grenades that they concealed on their bodies. Damn Ventrue hardware... I knew I should have went with the Brujah equipment! It was arranged for the hunters to be brought into the back room, and quietly disposed of. Well things didn't exactly go as we had planned. First a grenade went off and several glass windows shattered out into the main room. This was accompanied by the sounds of gun fire etc. and more explosions. Gawd!!! I try to hold a peaceful evening between kindred and kind and this is what happens. [Incidently the Storytellers have gotten together to discuss the frequency of the use of violence and fighting in the game. It seems that our Storyteller, when short on ideas just throws in a fight scene, regardless of their consequence on the rest of the story.] Well, the bodies were disposed of, however, the blood remained. When 7 cruiser cars pulled up to the Cafe to investigate. Police discovered the blood and the broken glass and pieces of Cafe Elysium remaining from the fight. The Cafe was then closed down. The following day the Winnipeg Health

Department visited and my restaurant licence and business licence were revoked. Cafe Elysium would be closed permanently. (Or until I could straiten out the mess). Oh, and the Police wanted to question me and my employees. Oh boy!

So back at the Primogen meeting, I was accused of continually breaking the masquerade and having no respect for the Traditions. Because of this the Regent Prince was inclined to put me to Death. Sebastian took out his gun. Security doors slammed down at all exits, and all turned their attention to me. "What do you have to say for yourself Isaiah", questioned the Regent Prince. I paused before speaking... looked around the room at my accusers, and said "Oops!"

This brought laughter from the Primogen and rage from the Prince. I think that I may have gained a friend of the Malkavian Leader of the Harpies - for after that time Gabreel began looking out for my well being. Before passing punishment, I asked for all the charges to be laid out. :

First: Telling a mortal named Zoe that I was a vampire three months prior to her embrace.

Second: Appearing at a Toreador Clan meeting that took place at a cafe among mortals, even though I was forbidden to be around mortals, as part of my punishment for telling Zoe of my condition.

Third: Appearing at Cafe Elysium (which had mortals).

Forth: Drinking the Blood of a mortal at Cafe Elysium and walking around the Cafe after the fact,
blood dripping from my extended fangs and fingers.

Fifth: Holding Cafe Elysium with Mortals, and endangering Kindred (Kindred were also killed and I was held responsible for this).

For the first charge I told the council that the Prince had already passed judgement on me, and a punishment that been selected. I should not be punished for the same crime twice. My punishment had been to restrict my socializing to Kindred alone. This is difficult for me as I do love mortal company. Well since I had been punished already, this charge was dropped.

But "you have not respected the Prince's punishment", said Tremere Mr. Nore, "you have appeared at Cafe Elysium in front of mortals." "He also was at the Toreador meeting", said the Gangrel Primogen. "Yes", said Mordechai (Nosferatu Primogen), "he was not supposed to be at Cafe Elysium!" In response to the charge of attending the Toreador meeting, I confessed that I had been ordered by the new Toreador Primogen Dimitri to attend the meeting. Since Dimitri had been killed by the hunters, this could not be checked

and therefore the Second charge was
dropped.

As for the Third charge, it was dropped as the Regent Prince had been told by the real Prince that I was allowed to attend the Cafe, since it was planned before the crime. This silenced the council. No further words were stated against me here.

As far as the Forth charge, I told the group that I drank from the blood a Tremere vampire named Mr. Sub, and that it was consensual. As far as the blood and the teeth. I used the excuse that I was pretending to be vampire for the Cafe, since it was advertized that there would be vampires performing at the Cafe. Since mortals were looking for a vampire, I showed them one. Of course it was said that any vampire was simple an actor. Because of these two things, the forth charge was dropped.

The fifth charge: To get this one dropped I asked each Primogen to tell the group whether they knew of a hunter threat, whether they were afraid for there lives, and whether they knew there would be mortals there. Everyone expected some sort of threat, all knew that mortals would be their, etc. Because of this, the firth charge was dropped.

After all of this, the Regent Prince decided that although I was innocent of all of the charges, I was walking a thin line. So he was going to exile me from Winnipeg. Then Gabreel stepped forward and commented that I may just go to another city, get accepted by the Prince there and commit more crimes against the traditions. So Gabreel suggested that Isaiah owe a Life Boon to Gabreel and Gabreel will act as my probation officer. If I commit anymore crimes, he will be punishe, and then, he will kill me for it.

What the rest of the Camarilla doesn't know (and Isaiah will discover) is that Gabreel, Leader of the Harpies is Sabbat (Serpent of Light). This is Isaiah's ticket into the Sabbat. Yippy! My status has been stripped and my positions ruined within the Camarilla... so now on to darker...things. Boy what fun! [Isaiah was later talked out of joining the Sabbat by his Gangrel friend, Scarlett]

So that is it for now. Oh... and by the way, the real Prince is back in town and he has an Archon with him.

Feb 1, 1996: Letter to Scarlett, Kentucky Gangrel:
Greetings Scarlett. I hope that you are well, for I am not. A kind word of your benefice would bring color to my rather morbid world. I went to another Primogen meeting. I don't know why I stick my nose deeper into the fire. But hey, Helena, the new Toreador Primogen (Dimitri - the last Primogen was killed by hunters at the Cafe) was supposed to be there, and I wished to prove to her that even with low status I could still influence the city's Primogen (I had the support, I thought, of Morrigan (Brujah), Mordechai (Nosf) and Mr. Nore (Tremere) primogens). I just wanted to see the look on her face. She never

showed, and elected to have the Malkavian named Spyder speak in her stead. Geez! Anyway, I was again made scapegoat and the focus of the Primogen meeting. Mr. Nore brought up charges against me, saying that I had used a vessel of transference during the last Elysium. Well, this is true... but it was supposed to get Nore kacked, not me. It had been formerly decided by the Primogen that any Vessel of Transference found in Elysium would result in charges being brought against the Tremere clan. A Tremere would be selected and punished for the crime. By the way, the Prince made Vessels of Transference illegal in Elysium. With one fell swoop Carstairs the High on his ass, pompous megalomaniac, upper echelon Tremere stated that he had talked earlier with the Prince, and the law regarding Vessels of Transference in elysium was revoked. Gawd! So, for while I had revealed the fact that I possessed the ring (and stopped in front of the whole court before using it on Dimitri - who Nore had intended for me to use it on), instead of Nore being punished, all eyes turned to Isaiah. -Again he was on the stand.

It was decided that I would be put to death! "No," said Lov (the Gangrel Primogen) "let's Blood Hunt him. It would be more fun." "Ok," said the Regent Prince. Then, the real Prince walked in. You should have seen the expressions on those Kindred faces. "Your not dead!" they commented alarmingly. "No I am not. But please, continue with your meeting. I would not want to interrupt it.

The Prince then reclaimed his throne and proceeded to show the kindred evidence that Hunters had indeed identified kindred in the city and were planning to do much worse.

The Prince explained that I would not be blood hunted. Only that I was to report to Gabreel to be punished for my actions, and of course to seek his sanctuary, because I had no status to even walk the streets anymore.

Note: When it seemed apparent that I was to be blood hunted, Mordechai quietly offered me sanctuary. Bless his putrid soul! Another boon!

The meeting was then ended.

Love your wicker basket-case,
Isaiah, formerly of Clan Toreador

So I sent a letter to Prince Wolfram Hopner (the original Prince) explaining what I did to Mara of the Tremere. [Out of Character: The narrators decided that it was an excellent idea to place Mara into Torpor and to embed her into cement in my Cafe - so it was done]. In the letter it was explained that I had tried desperately to talk Mara out of her frenzy and had failed - so to prevent her from breaching the masquerade further, I had to shoot her until she fell into Torpor (I of course didn't tell him that I drained her of all of her blood in order to prevent her from healing. Yum!) I explained that Mara was placed in

cement as the new foundation for my bar-counter in Cafe Elysium. I told him that I would be her guardian until a time when we were able to bring her out of her permanent frenzy. He thought that it was a very hoNoreable thing to do and said that he would restore my status during court if I could produce evidence to show the court that Mara would no longer be a threat. So I wrote a letter to explain just that.

Just after sunset on February 4th, 1996 Gabreel Leader of the Harpies summoned me to meet with him. There he explained that since I no longer held any status, he would have to represent me during court. Thus I would have to go to court with him. As punishment for what the kangaroo court of the Regent Prince had decided, Gabreel used a leather strap that had been blessed and soaked in holy water to bind my lip together. This of course was very painful and prevented me from speaking altogether. Then I was lead to the Prince's Court as a hunger vampire.

After gaining entrance I left Gabreel's side for a time in order to hang a few posters for two up and coming events that I have sponsored. One event is an Opera called Nosferatu's Daughter. [OoC: This is a real Opera that has made its premiere in Winnipeg. Using his High Society] influence, Isaiah was able to convince the Winnipeg Arts Council to hold the Opera in Winnipeg). The second poster advertised the presence of two galleries of his paintings, displayed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. [OoC: This is in fact someone else's art - actual displays at the Art Gallery that Isaiah was able to claim as his own to demonstrate his skill as an artiste.]

From my walk about the room I recount the expressions and reactions of horror and sympathy that kindred expressed of my condition. Where I had thought that I would be socially humiliated in front of the entire court for being restricted, nearly the opposite occurred as people were very sympathetic. Some kindred even offered their assistance to rid myself of my bounds. One was Brujah, who seldom showed me his concern during previous courts. He offered to build a war party and stamp out the person that was responsible for binding me. I, of course refused his service on fear of getting the wrath of the Harpies on my back, and explained to him that I had been consensually blood bound. He had looked at me with confusion and walked away. Another Brujah had expressed her concern and offered to simply remove the bindings. She was horrified by the way that my skin near my binding bled [OoC: Fake blood]. I explained to her that it was part of a performance and that I was in no pain. Again, a little confusion. A fellow Toreador also showed concern and she told me that I was the only kindred that Noremally paid her any attention -and was sad that I would not be able to talk with her. Then Helena herself (the new Toreador Primogen) asked me to sit with the Toreadors. I sat. Then she asked me if the binding hurt. She asked me if I was hungry -even going so far as to ask if I could slip a straw between the bindings in order to (I think she was suggesting) drink her blood. I told her that although the binding gave me great pain, and were bound too tight for me to drink, I would endure. Her sympathy for my condition, however, could almost be interpreted as sarcastic. But for the time that the binding remained, I felt a kinship with my

clan, something I had not felt for quite sometime.

Several other kindred also showed their concern and horror for my condition. I was truly touched. Here I had thought to be ridiculed and condemned as a failed Toreador and a poor git.... It just goes to show you that you can't trust kindred on anything, including their generosity. But I felt touched anyway, almost proud. I was the Christ on the cross. I had been punished for crimes that were truly not all of my doing. This was Because the Regent Prince wanted to "set an example." Oh... I was the actor on stage - and it was a grand performance. But wait... there is more to come....

The Prince called a meeting to order. Aside from explaining his absence of late... etc, he told of Mara. He then ordered that Mara be hunted down and killed. Then he scolded the crowd for their faults against the masquerade (a routine), and asked if there were any new arrivals to the city to be presented. Of all that were presented only two were noteworthy, both were female Toreadors. I forget their names for I had been to busy at the time hiding from the Archon that the Prince had escorted back to Winnipeg from Toronto, Ontario. Gabreel was a good shield from him. I assume that Gabreel thought that I was simply acting as "the slave", but I was truly using him to block the watching eyes of the Archon. I didn't need him re-examining my "crimes". Oh no, that would perhaps compromise the rule and station of the Regent Prince (belittle the title of Prince in Winnipeg). So I kept silent and hidden. Remind me to introduce myself to those lovely new Toreador. The Prince then ended the meeting.

I waited all of 45 minutes before re-approaching Gabreel and presented him the letter I wished for the Prince to read. He read it, and then delivered it. Here is the letter:

Prince Wolfram Hopner
Ventrue Incorporated
Winnipeg Camarilla
10 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

February 4, 1996

Isaiah of Arikel
Clan Toreador
Cafe Elysium
666 Corydon Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Most Gracious and Noble Prince,

Know that on this night after the naming of the Blood Hunt on kindred spirit Mara of Clan Tremere, I, Isaiah of Arikel of Clan Toreador have extinguished said party. Know that she no longer remains a threat to our masquerade and is separated from the Society we call Camarilla from now until the time when her spirit protector takes her to the new world beyond. As evidence of her condition I present to you a ringed ashen finger of her right hand. Know this to be the truth.

I request of you only one boon, that I be able to retain possession of Mara's ring. I desire this ring for it is what remains of my love and affection for her. The ring is a symbol of the eternal bond that is between us forever.

I thank you my Liege, for this opportunity to serve your rule and your will.

Your humble servant,
Isaiah of Arikel
Clan Toreador Isaiah of Arikel

About 15 minutes later the Prince called the court's attention and Gabreel escorted myself and my smoking evidence up on to the stage to join the Prince. The Prince explained that Gabreel was to read aloud the letter he had received. He did. And some of the Tremere were outraged (at first) that I had allegedly killed Mara (but it doesn't say anywhere in the letter that I had specifically killed her. Hee hee hee!). The Prince asked me for the evidence.I presented it to him.. directly beneath his nose. Now let me explain to you that the smoking finger he saw and smelled there was Mara's finger. The ash and smoke suggesting that Mara was indeed truly dead. What the court did not know (what I had told

the Prince) was that I had simply burned the finger myself and placed her ring on it. The crowd reacted with excitement and... again horror (forgive me if I have used that word to often - explains most of the evening). I was re-acknowledged and granted the status of honorable for dealing with Mara. Gabreel then made me into a Harpy. Helena who had been standing behind me the whole time raised me up from the ground which I had lowered myself to in the Prince's presence (since I had no Status to even look at the Prince before) and said stand. She then formally denounced me as a member of the Toreador Clan. She explained that since I was Harpy, I could not be Toreador. Pwef! I accepted this for the time, and no one else (including the Prince for God's sake) challenged her on it. But allow me to say that I have been the one to hold Cafe Elysium (a renown Toreador Party), to bring Opera's to the City and to invite kindred, two galleries of my art. Helena will be very sorry for denouncing me when the
Toreador Archon that I called to the city arrives to see who is behaving well as Toreador. Also, just because I am Harpy does not restrict me from being Toreador.

For the rest of the evening I had conversations with various kindred who had previously condemned me as a criminal. I spoke with Luv (former Gangrel Primogen) for she had wished that I be Blood Hunted. I convinced her that I had been wronged and she apologized for her words and her actions. I made her see my point by explaining that the Regent Prince had unjustly condemned me. The former regent prince (now advisor to the Prince) had been sitting right beside us (I planned it this way so as to convince him that he had wronged me. I succeeded on both counts. Of course I now know that any kindred with few or no status is usually made the scapegoat in our society, and since I had reclaimed my status, I could no longer be blamed.

I also spoke with Helena labelling her a artistic poseur, in front of her fellow Toreador clan members. [OoC: Another Social Challenge]. I succeeded. Then I asked her to prove her self. This I failed to do. She explained that I could not order her around. However, she did loose face in front of her clan, and as a harpy I will let this be known that when challenged to prove herself, she refused. This tells me that she was doubtful of her ability and she didn't want to expose herself as a poseur. Ha!

I failed to convince Spyder (Primogen of the Malkav) that I was the overseer of Fudgicals and that he and his friends should worship me as their god in order to attain a chocolate frosty treat. [OoC: I was actually going to reward them with Fudgicals if they complied]. I did This to Spyder for he had continually told me to shut-up when I held no status at the Primogen meetings.

There were several other kindred who I challenged successfully - but I will not bore you with the details.

The last thing that I did that night, was to help Casper. He is a 14 year old boy who Spyder embraced in November of last year. Casper tells me that Spyder often ignores him

to do "politics" while he is in need of attention. I told Spyder who was simply making the situation more difficult that I would handle his problem with his child, and I went off to talk with Casper. Casper told me several stories about how Spyder mistreated him. How he had been embraced against his will. How he wanted to die... Because he was forever going to be a little boy. [OoC: A little touch of Rice], Isaiah befriended him, and explained to Casper that he would act as his father dring the times that Spyder was not available. [OoC: Ha ha ha, This is my way of get at Spyder...]. Casper is a very innocent vampire. And I am starting to feel a kinship towards him... I don't know where this will lead. But I know that I will try to find his long lost friend from his last foster home and re-unite them. This will give Casper a renewed interest in life and a new perspective on (im)mortality.

I left the court as a free vampire. As a harpy. As one with status. As a co-parent. And with Casper. I returned to Casper's haven with him that night to be sure that he did not try to walk into the light of day. Have you ever stayed awake all day? Gawd! Boy was I mortally tired. I looked after that kid and as soon as he awoke at dusk, he wanted to play, play, play. But hey, I guess that I can say that I felt something deep inside of me that night - was it love.. or caring... probably they are one in the same.

Tell me what is happening to me. Am I human or beast, lover or destroyer, criminal or hero.

Your friend,
Isaiah of Arikel of the Harpies.

I must apologize if these letters cause you more confusion than clarity... for although they follow a sequence of ascending dates, they do leave out much of the dynamics whichencompass our gatherings. Please accept my deepest apologies. If you have any questions regarding my recent past, please don't hesitate to ask.

Well, I think that I have been just as "long-winded" as you, my dear Mierra [a Toreador from the US]. So I leave off with one final statement. Let not the Malkavs in your life drive you to insanity, Nore the Brujah to violence, Nore the Ventrue to world domination, Nore the Tremere to corruption of your soul, Nore the Gangrel to the loss of your humanity, and especially do not let a Nosferatu make you sneeze... the next thing you know you will be one of them... grotesque with debris hanging from your face. We are Toreador. The true and only real vampires. We are what the others masquerade as. Remember your identity - and know that you have made a friend of an immortal named Isaiah in the wild Noreth of Canada.

Lovingly your friend,
Isaiah of Arikel of Toreador ---PS. I trust that you will not share the incriminating parts of my history with your enemies or mine. Thank you. I know you as a true artiste!

Appendix I:
Sketchings of a few Vampire Game Characters

Drawings by
Terrakian Wintermoon, 1998
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada




A-HUNTING WE WILL GO, A-HUNTING WE WILL GO...
HEY!
POW!
I'LL BITE YOU
MALKAVIAN STORY-TIME


AWW SHIT.
OW OW OW OW OW OW PAIN OW OW BUT IT DID HURT! OW
Mordecai's "STAKE" in the Matter...
Too BAD He WAS HUMAN!



Clan Nosferatu 1995



People's Reactions to George Brown's Introduction
Were ... Interesting...


Guy of Tremere
Rasputin of Brujah
Mr. Nore of Tremere
Shadow of Brujah
Voltram of Ventrue
Istvan of Brujah
Domingo of Toreador
Isaish of Toreador
Zoe of Toreador
Kaylin of Gangrel
Mordechai of Nosferatu
Zippy of Malkav
Jacob of Gangrel
Bean of Malkav
Gabreel of Malkav
Damos of Gangrel
Casper of Malkav
Tiger of Gangrel

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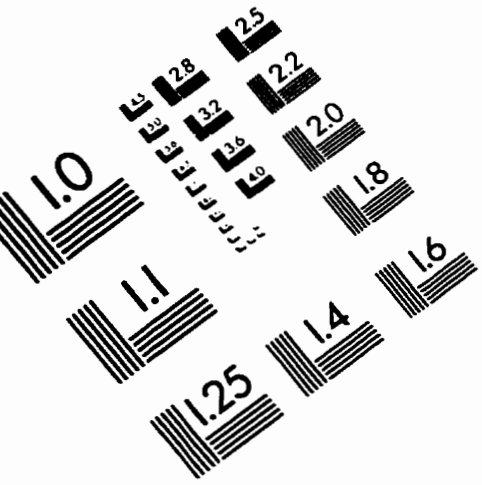
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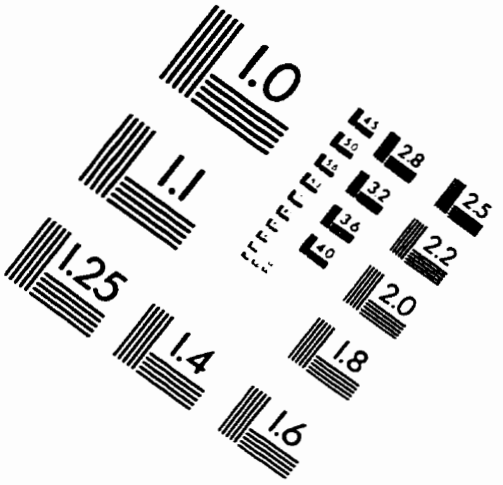
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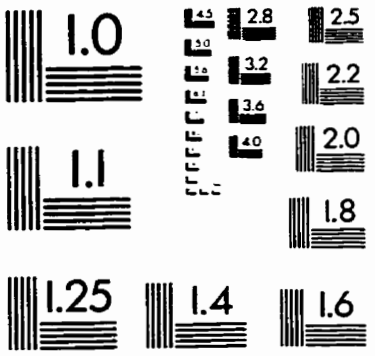
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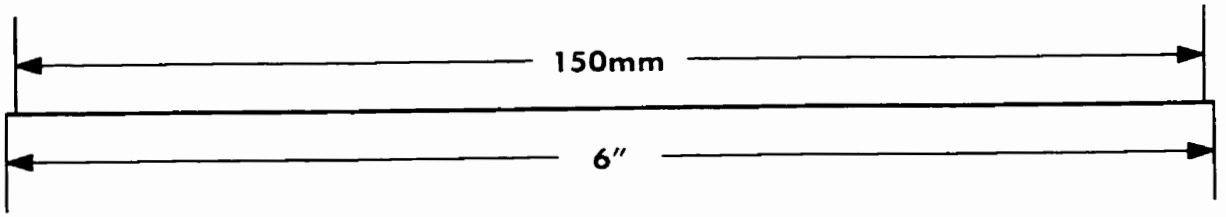
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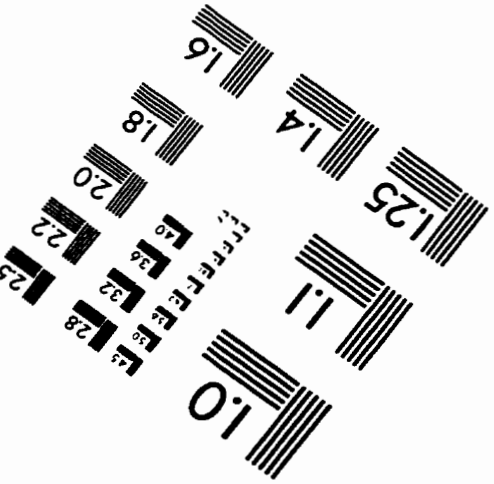
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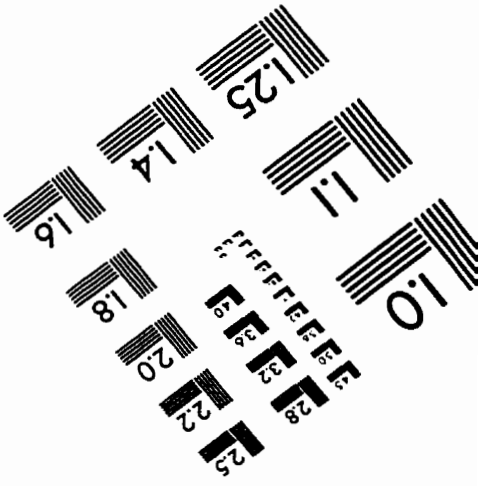












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