The Racked System: A Historically Based Interactive Roleplaying Experience

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The Racked System
A Historically Based Interactive Roleplaying Experience

Will Truran

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

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Rochester, NY

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Committee Approval
The Racked System
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Abstract
“History repeats itself” is a saying we are all too familiar with, but why is that true? As we look at our modern society we can see that pain persists and hate crimes are on the rise, particularly those of antisemitism and those holding anti-Asian ideologies. The Racked System aims to address this by introducing a new method of learning about our past so that we can apply its lessons to our future. Classroom settings require students to memorize dates and data that often capture hard to comprehend facts, like that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. It is easy to disassociate with a figure that is so large we have no way of knowing what it actually looks like. This is where The Racked System comes in. Through roleplaying micro-moments of history, we can experience events rather than attempting to memorize their statistics. Through roleplaying, we can not only learn for a test but learn with an empathetic lens that will allow our past to impact how we view the modern world. The Racked System creates a communal learning environment that engages students, young adults, or those simply interested in expanding their understanding of the past through active participation. This method of learning builds upon typical education experiences, rather than trying to replace them.

Keywords
Empathy, History, Roleplaying, Education, Game, Game Design, Storytelling Tabletop Roleplaying Game, TTRPG, RPG
History-based education is often one many students struggle with. Though its topics can be very captivating, the endless dates, names, and events that are required to be memorized for papers and tests make it difficult to retain for long periods. Due to the act of memorizing and then inevitably forgetting to ‘make room’ for a new set of data, we never get to the point of making the connections needed to compare our past to our present. This keeps our past from aiding us in tackling modern problems with a view that encompasses the lessons we have learned from our ancestors’ mistakes. Furthermore, I believe with this memorization of large data sets, we never attempt to empathize with the individual victim. This question of “what did it feel like to live through these events?” is where the Racked System finds its strength. In focusing on micro-moments of the past, rather than entire events, we can personally experience history in a way that we will hope to never see it repeated. The preeminent goal is to awaken a personal responsibility in each of its participants to affect their local context by learning from past mistakes.

The concept of creating a historically based roleplaying game began around a table not unlike where The Racked System experience is designed to take place. Many years after playing a session of Dungeons & Dragons with my friends, each of us could recall the events in vivid detail. This sharing of stories was possible even though they never occurred outside of our imagination and took place in a single afternoon. With these stories also came a hard to quantify bond between the group. This bond came with having experienced something together, that no one else had. It made it special. What if history could be felt and bonded over like this game? What if we had reasons to recall stories about events that actually happened like those we imagined as a way to escape. This experience can increase the ability to recall past events, make history more personal to the participant, and illustrate how similar the emotions tied to current events can be to those of our past.

There is a movement in video games where emotionally charged stories are being experienced for reasons outside of entertainment. Games like ‘That Dragon Cancer’ where you play as a parent experiencing the pain of watching your young son die of cancer is in no way enjoyable. What this game lacks in typical entertainment it makes up for in offering an intimate method of experiencing someone else’s reality. When discussing this game there is always a tone shift where laughs turn serious, as if respecting what the developer went through and the piece of art he created. The hope with The Racked System is to build off the growing acceptance of this category of experiences and stretch it to respecting what the victims of genocide, war, and other atrocities have endured.

In the graphic novel ‘Maus’ we can see how modern storytelling tools can tackle historical moments in a way that makes hard topics more approachable. Within ‘Maus’ you see cartoon mice, representing European Jews, during the Holocaust as Nazi Cats perform horrible acts. This anthropomorphic storytelling of events that actually occurred allows the viewer to consume it and understand it differently than through photos and video. Artist Jeff Smith is quoted as saying, “By using talking animals, Spiegelman allows his readers just enough emotional-safety distance to be able to follow a story that takes place during the Holocaust.” This is an example of how history can be experienced outside of a classroom and differently than the ways a textbook typical offers.

With video games teaching empathy and graphic novels teaching history a path has been formed that pushes alternative learning methods further and in ways that utilize different
tools. Tools that can include roleplaying, tabletop games, and cooperative storytelling. The Racked System currently encompasses three documents that can be interacted with through a digital medium or as a printed zine. Within these documents, a user will obtain a rule set that explains how the system is to be used, a visual guideline to enable the reader to make their own source material if they already have the historical knowledge, and the last component is a sample setting to illustrate how the two initial documents are to be used together in creating new material to guide interactive experiences. This system was designed to be open source and built upon. It is also a new tool to create content to better humanity by learning about our past through new interactive methods.

**The Racked Rule Set**
The rule set is developed in a way that can be utilized within a classroom, but also with individual friend groups. It is flexible enough to break down major events into a series of smaller playable moments or can be used to enhance an in-class topic with a single scenario. At its core, it is a game that utilizes dice to depict events happening around the players. Those having experienced traditional tabletop roleplaying games, like Dungeons and Dragons, may find it easiest to grasp, but it has been reduced to its most essential parts so that anyone can understand it with minimal effort. The fact that those participating in the experience have objects like dice and character sheets helps in breaking down the walls that the participants may have built towards formal education. Like Maus, when we allow ourselves to be open to a new experience there are new influences it can have on us. The Racked System is the tool that allows historical events to get past any disdain for traditional teaching and pull in the attention of its players.

**The Reccan Guidelines**
The visual guidelines aid those with a deep understanding of a historical moment in sharing that information with others in a new and creative way. This tool illustrates how to use grids, type, colors, and imagery with the focus being to create new zines built on the framework of The Racked Rule Set. This is not a document that will be used to play a session but is a tool to make new setting documents that fit within the aesthetics of the other published materials.

**The Chosen People**
The final document in The Racked System is The Chosen People, a sample setting depicting how the Rule Set and the Reccan Guidelines can be used to create new experiences. The Chosen People contains a story following a group of Jewish youth as the Nazi Party gains power in the early 1930s. It introduces micro-events like shopping during the Boycott of Jewish businesses and losing a job due to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. More importantly, it shows how to handle hard topics in this interactive medium. It introduces all of this by hyper-focusing on how it all influences the individual, rather than focusing on why these events occurred or how they fit in the great expanse of time.

With these three tools, historians and teachers have a system that enables them to create interactive experiences based on the events they have dedicated their time to understanding. I hope that The Racked System can usher in a heightened interest in our past and more importantly in what is going on in the lives around us. By roleplaying as victims I want the players to leave the table with the urge to help those less fortunate. As in the sample setting, the neighbors in Berlin watched as the Jewish community were being mistreated and
eventually sent to concentration camps and death camps. Graphic design can support content through multiple methods, visually through visual themes, communication design, interactive design and this increases the benefits of alternative teaching methods, learning to empathize with others’ trauma, and ultimately understanding our surroundings in a more holistic way. By feeling the pain of becoming invisible to those around us, may we see who has become invisible to us?
Bibliography


Appendix A: Defense Presentation
THE RACKED SYSTEM
A HISTORICALLY BASED INTERACTIVE ROLEPLAYING EXPERIENCE
Thesis Statement

It is important to instill empathy and understanding for the powerless. This process can begin by learning from historical events where people were victimized and how they were effected not only their enemies, but by those around them who lacked empathy and understanding.

Abstract

Modern media, that has been created to depict history, such as films and games, are often crafted from the perspective of the winners and losers, but rarely communicate empathy for the victims. As an example games like ‘Call of Duty’ or films like ‘Saving Private Ryan’ depict World War 2 in a way that focuses on the Allies winning or Axis losing and either ignore the jewish people or treat them as a prize to be won or a way to demonize the enemy. With this the victim’s lives are not considered, their names are not said, and rather than learning about the individual victims we see them as a singular group. Even with films focusing on the victims, the atrocities appear to play a larger roll than the people. This is due to the fact, no matter the context, entertainment is often seen as a medium that should help the viewer escape their own problems, rather than permanently impact them.

In contrast to hero driven media, there is a growing trend of content being created with the intent to deeply impact the player in a way that could encourage empathy. There are video games like ‘That Dragon Cancer’ which places you in the roll of a parent whose child is dying of cancer and no matter what you do, your child will be lost. There are films like ‘A Ghost Story’ that is based on a girl whose dead boyfriend is forced to watch as she deals with the depression of losing her loved one and captures the depth of loneliness. There are even games without visuals like ‘Ten Candles’ that allow the players to live the last moments of an impending death that they can’t stop and tackles the idea of what do you do with your last breath.

I believe that a Role Playing Game could be used to put a player in the shoes of a European Jew during the events surrounding the Holocaust. With a Role Playing Game (RPG) there is a person who runs the game, who can adapt and on the fly react to the players. This makes RPGs a medium in which an in depth story can be told completely controlled by the players. RPGs also are known for being played over many, multi hour sessions. This allows the players to get attached to the story they are telling and take breaks for when moments get to intense. The time in between sessions is often filled with the players thinking about what happened and what could happen, allowing the experience to live past the table. Role Playing Games are not only unique, but I believe the perfect tool for teaching not only historical events but also empathy. These events happen to you, the player, not through a panning lens and this doesn’t allow the player to focus on the Axis or Allies, but only what is in front of them.
Prompt

When looking at historical events we tend to focus on the heroes and villains.

Problem

Doing this causes the victim to be used as a product of justification for killing the villain or worse a prize for the heroes to earn through victory.

Solution

A tabletop RPG that puts you in the shoes of a European Jew during WWII. A Tabletop game that you wouldn't enjoy and might make you depressed, but is an experience you leave happy to have gone through.

Thesis

I believe by having people experience the smallest glimpse of what it was like to not be in control as the Nazis took over Europe, we can better understand how those around us could be suffering from also being in a situation which they have no control.

I believe that History could be taught in way that doesn't focus on winners and losers, by experiencing it from a view where winners and losers has little effect on outlook.

People are starting to Accept games that include death

To say that Ten Candles is a hard game to play is an understatement. It's not the rules. Those are simple and accommodating. It's the subject matter. It's in knowing that no matter how hard you try it's all for naught. You can't win. You can't fight back the monsters hiding in the dark and bring light back to the world.

Review of Ten Candles by Rob Kalajian
I believe now, more than ever, it is important to judge our current political situations and compare them appropriately to history. Antisemitism can still be felt and as the last holocaust survivors die and can no longer tell their stories, it is even more important to spend time heeding their warnings.

After attempting to write a game where you played the role of the Americans, in an abstract fantasy world, and then again when creating an Inglorious Bastards style game where you played as a near comedic version of the Jews, I have come to the conclusion we need a more straightforward game that focuses on realistic portrayal of events, to leave the greatest impact as possible.

**Context**

**Scope**

In this moment I see my project consisting of the follow:

- Designing a new rule set for the “game” part of the experience
- Researching and laying out many major situations that can create a cohesive story and properly represent and educate about what so many went through
- Layout and illustrate the book and assets that will be used to play the game
- Create a website where people can download a pdf of the rules

**Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged in 2019, Report Says**

The Anti-Defamation League reported more than 2,100 anti-Semitic incidents in the United States, a 12 percent jump and the most in any year since it began tracking them four decades ago.
THE RACKED SYSTEM

THE RACKED RULE SET

RECCAN GUIDELINES

The Chosen People
1. WHY
   Why did I develop The Racked System

2. WHAT
   What is The Racked System

3. ART
   The art behind The Racked System

4. FUTURE
   The future of The Racked System

5. QUESTIONS
   What are your thoughts?
WHY
8,552 victims
to hate crimes in 2019
According to the FBI
HISTORY REPEATS

66 percent of millennials could not come up with a correct response identifying it as a concentration camp or extermination camp

“Holocaust study: Two-thirds of millennials don't know what Auschwitz is”
- Washington Post
Role-Playing as a Therapeutic Strategy
The use of role-playing within the counseling/helping field is near infinite... and with elementary children as a way of influencing behavioral change and self-esteem

Benefits of Role Playing
Role playing can be effectively used in the classroom to:

- Motivate and engage students
- Enhance current teaching strategies
- Provide real-world scenarios to help students learn
- Learn skills used in real-world situations (negotiation, debate, teamwork, cooperation, persuasion)
- Provide opportunities for critical observation of peers

Miller, Mark J. "Role-Playing as a Therapeutic Strategy: A Research Review."

Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning.
BUILD
an experience about understanding how others live

TEACH
history in a new way that encourages applying its lessons to daily life

ENGAGE
students who often can not retain the way history is currently taught
WHAT
The guide to experiencing The Racked System
THE RACKED SYSTEM

1

THE SYSTEM

Rules-Light, Prep-Heavy

The Racked System is built on hardships, the loss of power, and exploring how far humanity can be pushed when survival is on the line.
THE RACKED SYSTEM

2

THE PREP

Research & Planning

Before examining how this system works and how it differs from other games, it is essential to prepare for the experience of running a session with the Racked System.
3
THE ROLES

Narrator, Journal Keeper & Cast

RACKED is a system about education and learning, not combat and triumph. With that, the roles of the people around the table are as unique as the experience.
4
MAKING A CHARACTER

Background, Personality & Property

These playing as the Cast or the Journal Keeper need to create characters. This can often be an emotional component to the experience where the players begin to realize that the victims that so often go nameless are as human as the players themselves.
Encounters, Reactions & Outcomes

As a sample experience of the Racked System, this chapter will explore The Chosen People, a sample setting created using the Racked System in which the players experience life in Germany during the Holocaust.
ROLLING DICE & EVENT ENCOUNTERS

Difficulty, Rolling & Results
Any event encounter that does not have an obvious outcome requires a roll of the dice to simulate the aspects out of the player's control. The table should have at least six 6-sided dice the players can shake. When an encounter begins, a difficulty rating assigned by the Narrator will determine how many dice can be rolled.
A tool to aid in building experiences
The fonts chosen to be used across all Racked System materials are Rakkas and Work Sans. These typefaces were chosen because they provide a dramatic header, while allowing the copy to be legible and reflect the almost academic nature of the content. These typefaces are available through Google Fonts, which is free to everyone. It was important for the tools used to create these materials be as available as this guideline.

In addition to constraining the material to only two typefaces, there are specific font sizes and families suggested for the various applications that will come up when laying out a setting document. In this zine, readers will see how this type system is implemented.
THE GRID

The grid is the table to which all of the content is strapped. It is strict in what it allows, but thoughtfully considered to provide a structure that will aid in displaying materials. The following pages will provide examples of how this grid can be used, primarily how type and images are placed within its structure.

The dimensions are designed for documents utilizing folded letter sized paper, creating 5.5x8.5 pages. This paper’s availability and affordable cost makes it popular in zine production. Keeping to this grid and page dimensions will allow the chapter to sit with this document, the rule set, and any other settings the owner may have on their shelf.
THREE - FOUR COLUMN TEXT

Three- and four-column text will carry the majority of the copy. It can stretch the entire height of the page, be split into groups, move on the page, and be intersected with large imagery. Its increased width, in comparison to the one- and two-column text, allows for easy reading. Text should not span past four columns and should be kept within three where possible.
ILLUSTRATION SUGGESTIONS

If the setting document will rely on custom illustrations, like the majority of this zine, they should be treated in one of two ways.

The first way is to fill rows and columns with a single block of color with the subjects breaking out of the frame and potentially interfering with the edges of the text. This style is illustrated in the top two images.

The second way is placing the subject directly onto the page without a background element. This method of injecting imagery allows the text to build around it and breaks away from the rigid edge formed by blocks of text.

Public Domain Many organizations that educate about historical events offer public domain photography that can be utilized to help tell your setting’s story.
An example setting document
THE BACKGROUND

The Year 1933

By January 30, 1933, The National Socialist German Workers, better known as the Nazi Party, had become the largest elected party in the Reichstag. With this transformation, pressures built within the government.
Boycott & Law For The Restoration

The Nazis quickly made sure everything they did was not only in favor of many citizens, but also according to the law. These are the first days of the Holocaust.
APRIL 1ST

Events

The events of this day will include the players experiencing one of the first major events that made the Nazi Party’s agenda clear: the Boycott of Jewish businesses. They will also become familiar with their family and each other’s characters. Begin by introducing the parents, list what they do for work, and perhaps introduce a neighbor or two if the moment allows.

One of the parents should have a government job or possibly be a professor, read the next event to understand why. This first section is fairly linear and should be a soft start to the coming atrocities. This is a great moment to make them feel like this is their home. There should be people who care about them and happy interactions mixed in amongst the bad.

The following scenes have a suggested location, but are meant for you to pull from and use as needed. Choose which of the following scenes fit within your Journal Keeper’s setup and begin there. If none of them fit perfectly take a moment and adapt one. Perhaps they aren’t at home with their parents, but their parents can still take them to a shop from wherever they are.

Read Aloud

Since The Reichstag Fire, there are rumors that it was caused by the Communist Party. Based on these false claims the government has been arresting Socialists, Communists, and other political enemies. There has been a growing amount of propaganda appearing in public spaces promoting a strong and unified German country. A boycott of all Jewish businesses has even been planned by the Nazi Party. Reichsmarster Joseph Goebbels gave a speech defending it.

It is Saturday April 1st, 1933.

At Home

The parents know that the boycott is going on, but feel as though they need to support their friends who own a store nearby (Choose a type of store, perhaps a grocery store). The parents try to get the children excited to go out and if they don’t want to leave they ensure them that there will be no issues.

On The Streets

Walking down the street people can be heard yelling slurs and they can see Jewish Stars painted on the windows of stores often accompanied with slogans like “This Jew is no longer true”. Some stores even have posters plastered against the walls saying “Germans defend yourselves against Jewish atrocity propaganda”!

Others have SA officers, in their brown uniforms, standing with signs that say “Don’t Buy From Jews!”

Entering The Store

When entering the store people yell slurs at them and try to make them turn back. A neighbor seeing this runs to their side and joins them as they enter. Consoling them and telling them “This will pass and things will go back to normal, I’m sure of it!” Inside the store there is a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish people. The player(s) should see that not everyone is taking this boycott seriously, in fact many aren’t.

Leaving The Store

Down the street the players can see a group smashing windows of stores. The group is mostly made up of stormtroopers, similar to the officers seen earlier. The streets breaking out into a riot the parents will try and hurry their kids home.

Information, including an interview about the boycott can be found at:

encyclopedia.ushmm.org/articles/boycott-of-

Jewish-businesses

Finish the day at home with the parents going over what they saw and comforting the children.
The Journal Keeper takes in what the Narrator has shared and begins to draw a scene. The Journal Keeper may choose to include details such as the location of the players, the time of day, or the smells wafting through the air.

The Journal Keeper takes in what the Narrator has shared and begins to draw a scene. The Journal Keeper may choose to include details such as the location of the players, the time of day, or the smells wafting through the air.

The Narrator builds upon the scene with additional details. Everyone else acts based on the scene setting and details. This can include what they do, how they are feeling, and how this alters their environment.

The Narrator builds upon the scene with additional details. Everyone else acts based on the scene setting and details. This can include what they do, how they are feeling, and how this alters their environment.

The Narrator explains what is occurring and introduces the setting, including how it has affected the players and bringing the entire experience into focus. Through this initial establishment, enough tools will be provided that all of the players can visualize the atmosphere.
3

ART
Otto Dix, Shock Troops Advance under Gas
Käthe Kollwitz, The Volunteers from War
Miodrag Živković & Ranko Radović, Memorial complex to the Battle of Sutjeska
Georgi Stoilov, Buzludzha Monument
Reference Materials
It’s Value to my thesis

Otto Dix, and German expressionist print making in general, is just so sick. The way the figures are often just rendered enough to be distinguishable and the line work is more about emotion than being realistic are things I want to try and achieve with my vector illustrations. Also the colors of the aged paper and warm grey tones are aspects I’ve found in old photos from the Holocaust and are things I am exploring using.

Strengths: The game needs art to draw the user in and help the GM tell a strong story. Not using photos allows a wider age range to be exposed to the material without being overly gruesome.

I recently purchased Ten Candles because out of everything I have seen online this relates the most to my thesis. Mostly in the ways it’s not Dungeons & Dragons and how it makes the game more approachable, and transportative.

Unlike Dungeons & Dragons the game setup feels much more organic. There is no unfamiliar character sheet and rather than figuring out your dexterity or tracking your health points you are focused more on what makes us human. Things like our vices, our strength, what are the things we want to do before we die.

Also unlike Dungeons & Dragons where the GM often is the only one setting the scene, Ten Candles gives the players ample opportunity to describe things they see and get more involved.

Strengths: Large focus on who the characters are and how their surroundings effect them. It feels more like a collaborative story to experience than a game to win.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Relates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>That Dragon Cancer</em></td>
<td>Ryan Green, That Dragon Cancer</td>
<td>With how you know the ending, and it was created for you to experience someone else's pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wizards of the Coast, Dungeons &amp; Dragons</em></td>
<td>Wizards of the Coast, Dungeons &amp; Dragons</td>
<td>Only in the fact for many when the format is explained this will be their touch stone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Faithful Spy</em></td>
<td>John Hendrix, The Faithful Spy</td>
<td>Shows that a designer can respectively handle issues surrounding the holocaust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tales from the Loop</em></td>
<td>Simon Stålenhag and Fria Ligan, Tales from the Loop</td>
<td>With the format and the idea you play as kids and the fact it's an RPG where combat isn't really considered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Echoes & Reflections Partnership, Echoes & Reflections**

**Relates**

Does a great job breaking up subjects into understandable lessons. Could be a good source of information.

---

**The Orr Group, LLC, Burn Bryte**

**Relates**

Could relate if digital play becomes more of a focus point, but at this point the project isn’t there.

---

**Burning Wheel, The Burning Wheel**

**Relates**

My thesis will have no combat and the way they show that a game can contain rolling dice for encounters outside fighting is important.
It's Value

Maus and its impact on me when reading it was what inspired this concept. Originally I wanted to make a game that was set in a fantasy world (orcs, goblins, etc) Where you came from a country representing America and got to fight Nazis. After some tests over the summer I realized I wanted a more impactful and in your face experience so there was no wiggle room of understanding what your actions represented. That is why I returned to a story more similar to what Maus achieved, but instead of abstracting it by using placeholders like rats I want to push into the recorded stories and make it a tool where you can feel empathy and maybe even further understanding of what occurred.

Strengths: Great art, great story telling, and has a lasting impact

Relates

With the subject being ww2, but from the point of view I was looking at originally pursuing

Mark Hunt,
The Front World War II RPG

Relates

It's focused on the victims, but in a way that empowers them and focuses on them as the heroes

Edward Zwick,
Defiance
Mood Boards / Art References
Typfaces
Typfaces
A Diary can hold up to four of your vampire's Memories. Unlike Memories themselves, Diaries are physical objects that are added to your Resource list. You may freely create a Diary whenever you need to raise a Memory. Like any other Resource, a Diary can be lost. When this happens, raise the Memories it held. Your vampire can have one Diary at a time, and it must contain at least one Memory.

A Memory placed in the Diary is no longer in the vampire's head—it exists only in the Diary and the vampire acquires whatever it whims as needed. Once a Memory has been transferred into a Diary, you may not add any further experiences to that Memory.

To raise a Memory to your Diary, simply indicate that the Memory is now written in the Diary. For example, you might write 'Diary' next to the Memory or connect it to the Diary icon on the character sheet with a drawn arrow.

When you raise a Diary, give it a short description and add it to the Resources list. It might be something like Diary—a tidy, leather bound book or Diary—a collection of postage-stamped photos.
Layout

singing
Black Phillip,
Black Phillip
A crown
grows out of
his head
Black Phillip,
Black Phillip
To nanny
queen is wed

THE BURNING WHEEL
by
ALDOUS HUXLEY

THE BATTLEBABE
Print pages 7-8
Even in a place as dangerous as Apocalypse World, battlebabs are, well: They're the ones you should walk away from, eyes down, but you can't. They're the ones like the seductive blue cracking light, y'know? You mistake looking at them for falling in love, and you get too close and it's a million volts and your wings burn off like paper.

DANGEROUS.
Battlebabes are good in battle, of course, but they're wicked sneaky too. If you want to play somebody dangerous and provocative, play a battlebabie. Warning: you might find that you're better at making trouble than getting out of it. If you want to play the hodden east, play a grelabels instead.

THE BRAINER
Print pages 9-10
Brainers are the weird psychic mindtricks of Apocalypse World. They have brain control, puppet strings, empty hearts, dead souls, and eyes like broken things. They stand in your peripheral vision and whisper into your head, staring. They clamp tongues over your eyes and read your secrets.

They're just the sort of hateful acquaintance that no well-appointed household can do without.

Brainers are spooky, weird, and really fun to play. Their moves are powerful but strange. If you want everybody else to be a little bit afraid of you, a brainer is a good choice. Warning: you'll be happy anyway, but you'll be happier if somebody wants to have sex with you even though you're a brainer. Angle for that if you can.
The Final Art
Read Aloud

It is just under one week since the boycott. Many stores were closed due to damages and even though it was only one day, the effects can still be felt in the streets. Your friends assure you that it was a one-off thing and that “life will go back to normal”.

Reichsmiinner Joseph Goebbels gave a speech defending the boycott in Berlin, April 1st.

On The Streets / At School

If the players are unaccompanied by an adult, a small group of Hitler Youth will make remarks against them, calling them names like pig-dog or calling them weak. Some say the Hitler Youth grew almost 20x in 1933, perhaps the kids mocking the players are new recruits.

At Home

When the players arrive at home from school have the mother greet them and offer them a snack. She can ask about their day, especially if a scene of harassment has already occurred. At some point introduce the father, who is home earlier than normal. He will barely address the children and pulls the mother into an adjacent room, closing the door. If the players get close enough they can hear whispers about their father losing his job. If they do not approach the door, have the parents emerge looking distraught and attempt to explain what is going on, with the job and the law.

Bedtime

If your players feel comfortable with role-playing you can bring them from the home scene to a more private scene as they lay in bed unable to sleep. Here the players can break down everything that has occurred. There should be a sense that the parents are also up discussing their future.
We touched on what is needed for success but here is the complete breakdown to roll results for encounters.

**SUCCESS**
More successful dice than failures.

**SOFT FAILURE**
The same amount of successes and failures.

**FAILURE**
More failed dice than successes.

A soft failure should not result in major setbacks. If one occurs, the Narrator should provide alternate outcomes that can allow the players to continue their journey, but perhaps down a different, harder path.

A hard failure should result in major setbacks. This can often result in gruesome moments that either involve the players or perhaps those around the players. Make sure you are aware of the emotions at the table when deciding the outcome and describing the events.

With this encounter mechanic it is up to the Narrator to determine the difficulty. The Racked System is not meant to simulate a single person taking on a dungeon of goblins, but your players may want to try and fight back a soldier, sneak through a fence, or stay hidden during a search. Do not be overly cruel, but also do not let them think that the impossible is plausible.
You are not simply playing a person you wish to be, but one that could have been.
4

MAKING A CHARACTER

Background, Personality & Property

Those playing as the Cast or the Journal Keeper need to make characters. This can often be an emotional component to the experience where the players begin to realize that the victims that so often go nameless are as human as the players themselves.
FUTURE
BUILD EMPATHY

TEACH UNDERSTANDING

ENGAGE THE NEXT GENERATION
Photos Of The Project
Events

At Home

On The Streets

Entering The Store

Leaving The Store

Read Aloud

The Rusted Mare. There are rumors that it was caused by the Communist Party, but these claims are not substantiated. There have been several incidents of violence and destruction of property, and the situation is likely to deteriorate further. The Jewish community is deeply concerned about the situation and is calling for peace and understanding.

Dwight is at home with his family, and he is hearing the sirens in the distance. He is hoping that the situation will improve soon.

The streets are empty, and there are no signs of life. The Jewish community is trying to keep calm and maintain order. The police are doing their best to maintain peace, but the situation is delicate.

The Jewish community is determined to resist any form of violence. They are依靠ing on the support of the international community to help them.

The situation is dire, and the Jewish community is calling for help. They are determined to protect their homes and their families.

The Rusted Mare is a powerful symbol of the struggles faced by the Jewish community. It is a reminder that the situation is serious and that we must all work together to find a solution.

It is Saturday April 1st, 1933.
5
THE GAMEPLAY

Encounters, Reactions & Outcomes

To explain how The Racked System could be experienced we are taking a snapshot of what could occur in The Chosen People setting, a sample setting created using the Racked System. A setting where the players experience life in Germany during the Holocaust.
5 QUESTIONS
5 QUESTIONS

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Appendix B: Bibliography and References


Käthe Kollwitz, “The Volunteers from War.” 1923, Portfolio of seven woodcuts and one woodcut cover, composition: see child records; sheet (each approx.): 18 3/4 x 25 15/16” (47.6 x 65.9 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, https://www.moma.org/s/ge/collection_ge/object/object_objid-69682.html.
Bibliography


Appendix C: Screen Capture Case Study Page
THE RACKED SYSTEM

A HISTORICALLY BASED INTERACTIVE ROLEPLAYING EXPERIENCE

The Racked System handles the times where humans have been the most evil. This website includes heinous acts of violence and symbols of hatred. By continuing you will see images that may make you uncomfortable.

I UNDERSTAND

BY WILL TRURAN
THE RACKED SYSTEM
A HISTORICALLY BASED INTERACTIVE ROLEPLAYING EXPERIENCE

CREATE A JOURNAL FOUND IN THE ASHES REMAINING FROM OUR PAST

THE SYSTEM

THE GAMEPLAY

PLAYER ROLES

NARRATOR
A central figure of the story who describes events, creates atmosphere, and directs the flow of the storytelling.

JOURNAL PROPER
A record of the player's journey, written in the form of a personal journal.

GUEST
A more passive participant who is often introduced to the story through conversations or other interactions.

THE STAGES OF PLAY

1. INTRODUCTORY EXPLORATION
   - Introduce the setting and characters.
   - Establish the player's role and goals.

2. IMMERSIVE NARRATION
   - Enhance the storytelling with immersive scenarios.
   - Integrate player decisions into the story development.

3. CONTRIBUTORY EXPERIENCE
   - Engage players in active narrative creation.
   - Reinforce the impact of player choices.

4. CONCLUDING EXPERIMENT
   - Conclude the story with a significant event.
   - Reflect on the player's role and the broader narrative.

THE ZINES
ONE STORY AT A TIME

THE EXPLORER ZINE
RECEIVE EXPLORER
THE CHRONICLER ZINE
RECEIVE CHRONICLER

THE ALL-HUNGER ZINE
RECEIVE ALL-HUNGER

THE PUSSYFLINGER ZINE
RECEIVE PUSSYFLINGER

OF WOES TELLUS
ABOUT

The Racked System is the product of years of exploring, testing, and developing what at first seemed a nearly fruitless experiment. From first sketches, our team embarked on a project of intertwining composition and nature into the understanding of value.

-WILL THURAN

ORIGIN

We all know the classic "tricky trap" - how a trap is like the one in a story, that you've learned from a fairy tale. It's a idea of something that can come to life and set a trap, and that idea of something that can come to life and set a trap is a powerful one. It's a powerful one because it's a powerful one.

-Link

WHAT IS IT?

The Racked System is a fully interactive experience. It is designed to help you discover the origins and evolution of the Racked System, from its original concept to its current form. It's a powerful one, because it's a powerful one.

-WHO IS IT FOR?

It would be an absolute shame if The Racked System's true purpose were to be missed. The system is designed to help you discover the origins and evolution of the Racked System, from its original concept to its current form. It's a powerful one, because it's a powerful one.

-WHERE TO START?

I would like to encourage you to start by reading The Racked Rule Book. That will give you an in-depth look at what it's all about, and

LEARN MORE

BY WILL THURAN
What's your name?

Type your answer here...

OK
CONTENTS

THE DYE

THE TRIPTYCH

THE RULES

PLAYING A CHARACTER

THE NERVE

THE RACKED ROLL & EVENT BOOKLET

THE RACKED RULE SET

INTERESTED IN MAKING YOUR OWN SETTING?

Download the Racked rule set to start your own adventure! You can even make alternate settings and share them! Contact me if you have any questions or if you need help.
RECCAN GUIDELINES

COLORS

AVARA

WORK SANS

TYPGRAPHY

GRID SYSTEM

TRICKERY

RECCAN GUIDELINES

LOVE THE SYSTEM BUT NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT?