The Rank Game: A Journey Into Some Serious Play

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Abstract

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by

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This a contextual essay describing the formation of a game based on Processwork rank theory. Both Processwork theory on rank and explanations of its relevance are included as well as selected game theory. The evolution and journey of the Rank Game including theoretical underpinnings of the main elements of the game and their contribution to players in paradigms of awareness are presented. Although the game itself is not included in this essay, inquiries can be sent to briannajonak@gmail.com.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This paper was written in order to partially fulfill the requirements of the Master of Arts in Processwork program and the Final Project course. This is the contextual essay to accompany my creative project. It was written for my study committee and other Processwork students who might find it useful. The focus of this creative project was to create a game to explore rank awareness. From August 2014 to November 2015, it involved more than a year of contemplation, creation, collaboration, and experimentation in the Processwork community. This paper elaborating on the concepts and development of what I named "The Rank Game" then emerged.

I would like to introduce you to the Rank Game. Although the game itself is not part of this document, elements of it and its evolution are included in chapters 3 and 4. This game is a fun journey that embraces awareness techniques in order to give the player or practitioner practice in embodying roles and identifying rank. The prompt, cards, and way the game is played invite diversity. It asks players to watch, learn, listen, brainstorm, and role-play. It is a simple and collaborative model inspired by my desire to create fun avenues for awareness in the Processwork paradigm.

The main theory used in the creation of this game comes from Processwork, and it is based on my own experimentation with Processwork and game concepts. This included researching game theory, looking at different games as possible models, and playing with how utilizing different methods in a game produced different results. My own motivation for the creation of this game was due to my own struggle around understanding rank and how it operates in my life. Even after producing this game I cannot say I understand it fully. Yet, small steps may sometimes produce profound

results. If those who play this game take it as an invitation to fully dive into their own and others' experiences of rank, then it will have achieved what I was aiming for.

According to Arnold Mindell (1995), the founder of Processwork, rank is:

A conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power. Whether you earned or inherited your rank, it organizes much of your communication behavior, especially at edges and in hot spots. (p. 41)

Identifying rank can be a difficult process because it can be as close to you as the inside of your eyelids. I have a high dream that we can equalize the playing field of rank through awareness, intention, and realizing the power that we all have to cocreate this world. In this dream, everyone has a place and purpose that are equally valuable for their unique part in this creation. I believe this last statement is actually true. It is just not a mainstream belief. The more we can each individually see this about others and ourselves, the more it will become a mainstream belief.

One of my main orientations in life is through spiritual exploration and discovery, and this influences how I relate to rank and this project. My main spiritual tradition has been a yogic model based in an understanding of consciousness as well as expansion of consciousness through altered states and in everyday life. The study of consciousness and awareness go hand in hand for me. One of my ways of expanding this into the world was through creation of this project, which is why it focused on the development of awareness. Arnold Mindell and Processwork also focus on the development of awareness through unfolding experience. Simply, awareness and experience are at the

roots of both Processwork and spirituality, in my understanding. The Rank Game is an experiential awareness model utilizing role-play, witnessing, and collaborative learning.

Key Concepts in Processwork and Awareness

There are several key Processwork and awareness concepts relevant to this project. They are: rank, deep democracy, the levels of reality, the dreaming, role theory, metaposition, the field, and processmind.

Rank. In the Processwork paradigm there are three types of rank commonly written about, and another that is commonly mentioned in teaching, according to Tom Esch's (2009) MACF thesis entitled, *It Takes a Village*. They are social, psychological, spiritual, and contextual (Esch, 2009, p. 30). Arnold Mindell (1995) originally wrote in detail about these ranks in *Sitting in the Fire.*

Social rank comes from the culture and society in which we live in. It embraces the value system as well as the biases and prejudices of the mainstream society, and bestows more privileges to some people and less to others. This is the case with all rank regardless of its source. In many societies certain attributes are favored and have more rank. These include skin color, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, education, religion, age, health, profession, expertise, and so forth.

Psychological rank comes from an inner awareness of one's capacity to deal with the outer world—experiential self-knowledge. It corresponds to developed or undeveloped internal resources and abilities when addressing life situations. This rank might develop after repeated observation or exposure in certain challenging situations like repeatedly finding one's self in situations of low social rank. It might be underdeveloped due to traumatic early life events or lack in early life of adult figures that

demonstrated these skills. High psychological rank pertains to more self-knowledge or qualities that make it easier to deal with life situations and low psychological rank corresponds to a lack thereof. Some examples might be self-esteem, courage, neutrality, awareness, mindfulness, acceptance, positivity, perseverance, purposeful, or lack in each of these categories.

Spiritual rank comes from a relationship or lack of relationship to something larger than us—be it a God/Goddess principle, gods/goddesses, spirits, different realms, nature, collective fields, or large beliefs that are bigger than one individual. It points to a larger belief, experience, or state that reaches beyond that of the individual, creating a feeling of freedom from the limitedness of an ordinary or suffering individual life. It can arise also from low social or psychological rank. It can create detachment, devotion, extremism, enlightenment, and so forth. The higher the spiritual rank one has, the larger is the connection to something bigger than yourself. The less connection/ identification/ belief in something larger than you, then the less spiritual rank is present.

Contextual rank is rank that depends on context. You might have high social rank in one situation and low in another. For example, if you are a teacher then you have rank in relation to those you teach, but if you go into Starbucks and order a drink, you are just another customer.

According to "Where Roles, Rank, and Relationship Meet," a paper by Julie Diamond (2007),

> [Arnold] Mindell developed a multileveled theory of rank that incorporated
> nonlocal or dreaming dimensions to power. He identified different types of rank,
> not only material, or social rank. Along with social rank, Mindell recognized

other forms of power, such as psychological, spiritual, and democratic or justice

rank. (p. 15)

This statement is also reinforced by Jan Dworkin (personal communication, Dec.

5, 2014) when she told me about the beginnings of rank theory from a Processwork

perspective. She spoke about this multileveled theory of rank and how a balance can be

seen between the power and influence that social rank has in the cultural and material

world and the more invisible to the eye powers of psychological and spiritual rank. Julie

Diamond (2007) writes that

> Social rank may seem overwhelmingly powerful, but its power is limited to the
>
> material worldview. It doesn't have the power to help someone confront death,
>
> pain, or adversity. Spiritual and psychological rank, on the other hand, with their
>
> transcendent values, can make people more robust, more able to cope with
>
> whatever life delivers. The greatest weakness of social rank is that it is
>
> nontransferable. It is the power "you can't take with you." The self-esteem boost
>
> one gets from social rank is limited to the context in which the rank has currency.
>
> The professor might be God in the classroom, but not in the grocery store. Her
>
> social rank makes her dependent on the existence of students to feel good about
>
> herself. Psychological and spiritual ranks, however, are flexible and powerful:
>
> they can be transferred across all situations and contexts. If someone has
>
> psychological rank, she feels that in the classroom, in the grocery store, and
>
> walking along a city street. (p. 16)

Rank is discussed further in chapter 2, including why awareness of rank is important, and

the important issues that come up within the context of rank.

Deep democracy. One of the key concepts of Processwork, deep democracy means that we aim to include and listen to all voices. This implies there is a diversity of voices to listen to, which we can easily experience if we ask five people the same question. Each human has an experience or expression that may be a little or a lot different than the next. In most humans there are also collections of voices on the inside. Mindell (2002) writes in *Deep Democracy of Open Forums* about

> the attitude of deep democracy, that special feeling of belief in the inherent importance of all parts of ourselves and all viewpoints in the world around us . . . deep democracy is a timeless feeling. It is found in all perennial spiritual traditions. . . . It is our sense of responsibility to follow the flow of nature, respect fate, energy, or in the Far East, Tao or Ki, and of our role in co creating history. Deep democracy is our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole. (p. 13)

I hope that the Rank Game can help others to widen their capacity to hold and to exercise the attitude of deep democracy in the world. In the quote above Mindell speaks of the importance of inner diversity, which is a concept that points to all the different voices and points of view that live inside of us. Honoring this inner diversity is one way that we learn about our own experience of rank and how that experience informs how we use rank in interpersonal dynamics.

Levels of reality, the dreaming, and role-play. The three levels of reality that Processwork and other traditions speak about are consensus reality (CR), dreaming, and essence. Consensus reality is the everyday reality that a majority of people consents, consciously or unconsciously, to participate in, which creates culture and the systems that

run everyday life. Dreaming is the diversity of deep feelings, truths, roles, dream figures, and the unseen parts underneath consensus reality. Essence is the level from which dreaming and consensus realities emerge, a nondual unifying field. These three levels are outlined in this paper in order to provide a framework of the multidimensional reality that we all inhabit. We do not just live in CR, although it may seem that way. We live in consensus reality, dreaming, and essence. To collapse any of these levels would be to limit your ability of understanding in any one moment. I believe that we inherently have access to all these levels. Processwork methods attempt to help people gain conscious access to these different levels. However, it is rare that a person consciously traverses these levels to their fullness.

Processwork is keenly interested in the dreaming, considered as a continuous stream of undercurrents beneath consensus reality. It is happening all the time during the daytime and nighttime, however, it is at nighttime that we see it the most consciously because of dreams. Dreams at night are a helpful entrance into both dreaming awareness and our inner diversity. When you dream at night you usually take one of three different positions: you are in the dream experiencing everything, you are watching the dream happen, or you are another character in the dream itself. This third position is interesting because even though in real life you would not identify yourself as this character, in the dream this character is you. Such fluidity and freedom of identity in the dream world is one reason why Processwork uses dreams, as they are a way to enter into the larger pool of potential identities in daytime life that are usually only experienced at night. The sense of freedom and wholeness that this exploration of dreams gives provides a more satisfying feeling within the human experience.

Many times you are not in control of the dream but the dream is just happening and you are along for the ride. Being in control of your actions, decisions, reactions, and so forth in a dream is called lucid dreaming. Shamans invoke this kind of dreaming in everyday life, an experience called journeying, which I have personally experienced and first learned from David McNamara in the Findhorn Community in Scotland. In lucid dreams you are aware and present in your dream and can choose where to go and what to do. However, it is not only in dreams that we are unaware and along for the ride but also in everyday life.

The different roles that we can occupy in a dream as the participant, witness, or another character point to the different awareness positions available not only in dreams but also in everyday life. We can witness our life, play the main character, and / or play another. Sometimes playing another role or witnessing inspires even more productive ways of learning about ourselves than being enmeshed in our own habitual identity. The Rank Game's main platform is role-play for this reason. When we role-play, not only do we increase our ability to be fluid in identity and empathy, but we also learn more about our own biases, reactions, and unexpressed potential. Role-playing is a technique that takes us out of our habitual identity and into the realms of the potential identities that we can inhabit and understand. As we increase our ability to enter the potentialities of identity we widen our ability to understanding the diversity of the human race. "Your most honest identity, if you have one, would be that you are all roles and the interactional processes between them" (Mindell, 2012, p. 579).

Metaposition. In *Metaskills: The Spiritual Art of Therapy*, Amy Mindell (1995) defines metaskills as the ability to notice the underlying feelings that underscore the

deepest beliefs of a therapist. The noticing of these soft skills, as some people call them,

allows a therapist to use these skills in service of the client. She also outlines several

metaskills in her book such as humor, playfulness, detachment, and so forth.

Metacommunication is a phrase meaning communicating what is happening underneath

an action, mood, explanation, feeling, and so forth. For example, if I am in an altered

state, the part of me that can put words to what I am going through is called a

metacommunicator. In both these situations the prefix of "meta" means an outside

observer, role, or position. This outside observer is actually inside of you but outside of

the experience that is occurring.

The metaposition has no content of its own, it does not think or feel, but is able to

witness inner experiences or outer events. From my own experience, the metaposition is

the blank slate on which we can view the content that arises. The state of the

metaposition is also known as beginner's mind. A beginner's mind occurs when you

have very little content or information about what is going on in any level. In the

beginner's mind state you are primarily connected to the metaposition instead of to the

content that arises within you.

The field and processmind. Fields are invisible organizational structures

encompassing events, bodies, towns, groups, peoples, and so forth. We can speak about

the field of a relationship, a group of people, a town, and so forth, or just the field of

everything like the Tao. This is like circles within circles, never ending and interwoven.

Your individual processmind is that which knows how to follow the flows of the

wholeness of the field. It is an essence experience that leads you through dreaming and

consensus reality. "The processmind, or the intelligence behind the ancient dancer is omniscient and it is omnipresent, it is everywhere" (Mindell, 2013, p. 137).

Overview

Chapter 1 includes an introduction of this paper, its purpose, and key concepts in both Processwork and awareness. Chapter 2 is completely devoted to rank. Chapter 3 is about the process of creating the game. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the elements of the game and their potential for creating awareness of rank. Chapter 5 is an exploration of contributions to the field, limitations, further inquiries, and a summary.

Chapter 2: Rank

Rank-conscious people know that much of their power was inherited and is not

shared. They do not look down on less powerful individuals who don't have

many things or abilities. They are humble and yet can feel good about

themselves, for rank can be a medicine as well as a disease. (Mindell, 1995, p. 37)

Rank Frames: Diversity and Purpose

Creating multiple angles for theories broadens our perspective of reality and our

ability to understand rank more clearly. In this section I reflect on the motivation and

purpose for different rank theories, including my own. According to the often cited

Double-Slit Experiment, which Mindell (2012) writes about in *Quantum Mind: The Edge*

Between Psychics and Psychology (pp. 177-190), if a researcher was looking for light as

a particle it showed up that way, and if the researcher was looking for light to show up as

a wave, it instead showed up that way. This experiment shows that whatever biases,

preconceptions, or assumptions of reality one has, they can affect its nature, even

physically. From that standpoint then, it is helpful to inquire into the assumptions of one

who created the theory and what part of reality they are attempting to highlight in order

for others to see.

So then, why did Processwork frame rank in the ways stated in chapter 1? Every

frame is here to highlight or bring out certain aspects of a picture. The way one uses

language is a large part of how someone conceptualizes the world. Processwork rank

theory aims to show the imbalance inherent in mainstream society's emphasis of social

rank by highlighting the natures of psychological and spiritual ranks, which also have

strong impacts on people, relationships, and the world. It was also part of the observation

of power struggles, and a way to explain and categorize those imbalances and point out the potential for balance. In bringing this theory into the world, part of the aim was to also demonstrate our unconsciousness around the use of rank and power dynamics dependent on these different categories of usage—social, psychological, and spiritual.

> Mindell describes the "finite game" of life as the game in which winning depends on quantity: how much one has, does, owns, or earns. Social rank belongs to the finite game of life. Spiritual and psychological ranks, on the other hand, belong to the "infinite game." In the infinite game of life, winning does not depend on quantity but on the quality of one's life, whether one's life is full of love, compassion, joy, and meaning. (Diamond, 2007, pp. 16-17)

It is not my aim to reconceptualize rank in Processwork theory in this paper. It is only my aim to add diversity to ways of viewing concepts. In the spirit of diversity, what follows are my current ways of viewing rank. In my own theorizing, I categorized rank into physical, social, psychological, spiritual, psychic, and existential. I did this to highlight certain things that I did not see as clearly distinct within Processwork theory. I split social into physical and social because I wanted to highlight the origins of where the rank in these categories originated. For example, in the physical rank category I put wealth, sex, age, and physical health. The social category I envisioned as highlighting rank that originates in cultural and social understandings and based in relationship. In this category I put gender, sexual orientation, expertise, religion, education, and profession. The theory I came up with is a work in progress, highlights some factors that Processwork does not, and is also limited. The split between the physical and social categories is not yet totally thought out. The Processwork category of social rank makes

sense because all physical ranks have strong social and cultural implications of status. I am caught between wanting to keep the social category like Processwork theory and wanting to somehow highlight physical origins as being slightly different than just social ones. Another option would be to reframe the language of the category and call it physical-social. The split between physical and social is also interesting to me because, from my own observation, physically based ranks are more universal between humans, and social rank has more cultural specificity. Wealth, sex, age, and physical health are indicators of status in many cultures. Gender, expertise, religion, education, and profession are more culturally specific. Both physical and social ranks, however, rely on particular sociocultural understanding.

It is difficult to categorize mental health. If I were to be true to my own conceptualization of it, I would stretch it and put it in all categories—physical, social, psychological, and spiritual. Some mental health issues are due to brain damage, all mental health issues are looked down upon in western society, except maybe geniuses who can use their genius really well in only one area. Some mental health issues are due to spiritual connections that happened too early, or without guidance or context for understanding and integration into a primary identity. People sometimes become stuck in certain psychic or spiritual states and are not understood or able to communicate with others, which then gets labeled as a mental illness. There is an over emphasis on the mental in the western world as a way of being, when the mental is not a way of being but a way of figuring out how to do. The mental classifies, categorizes, and memorizes. It does math and plans trips and finds the words to write papers. This obsession with the mental limits our capacity to be and have balance with all the other components of the

human system and creates unbalance, which turns into actual mental illness in a physical and psychological sense, and limits our ability to integrate the dreaming and spiritual dimensions of life. The above idea in Processwork framework would look like this— because favoring the brain or mental capacities is an overarching primary process in western society, particularly in America where most of my experience lies, the secondary then is a more emotional or feeling side. Some people relate to emotions as a primary process, which is in conflict with the larger societal primary process. This can create a deep conflict, that without a metaposition can turn into an extreme state and/or be classified as a mental illness, "an illness without known chemical causes which does not conform to the norm of a given community" (Mindell, 2009, p. 263).

The psychological category in my framework is basically the same as Processwork's theory. However, I felt a need to create more distinctions within it than I have seen prior. For example, I put self-esteem/self-worth, perseverance, humility, generosity, and so forth in that category.

I felt that Processwork theory lumped a lot of spiritual ideas together and I wanted to emphasize certain aspects. Processwork highlights a connection or belief in something larger as the basis of spiritual rank. I included two other categories—psychic and existential. The psychic category describes when you actively use your spiritual rank to access other levels of reality. This category ranges from intuition to omnipotence. The last category of existential rank is the most important to me. The focus of the existential rank category is to equalize rank without taking away the beauty of diversity. Everything in existence has this rank, and nothing has it more than any other. The more you experience the power of just existing, the more you can sit comfortably in your own

power without needing to take or receive any from someone else. This is similar to what Joe Goodbread (2010) calls inalienable power in his book, *Befriending Conflict.* His concept is, like mine, associated with the source of power and we both describe it as something you cannot take away. Existential rank or inalienable power are both forms of spiritual rank and relate to the concept of processmind. Existential rank is a feeling expression or beingness expressed through an individual just existing; whereas the individual processmind, referenced in chapter 1, has a quality of knowing how to follow the flow of nature. Existential rank is the feeling of following the flow of nature and connection with all things, in a down to earth way, not an elated way, because one who has realized existential rank also respects all things as existing equally. Inalienable power is unique to each individual and how they reference or connect to the source of their power.

There are so many ways to categorize or explain theories in ways that show off its different facets. Processwork's categories of rank are pretty simple and highlight some of the power dynamics implicit in them. It also deepens the mainstream lens by including psychological and spiritual rank. My categories are more specific about origins and delineations within the categories. Overall, I perceive rank as both your gifts and your limitations in each category. In this way rank can be a way to gather self-knowledge about the unique characteristics that create your personality and way of operating in the world.

Another rank frame is from Robert W. Fuller (2010), also a physicist and educator, who coined the term "rankism" in his book *Somebodies and Nobodies*. "Rankism is an assertion of superiority. It typically takes the form of putting others

down. It's what 'Somebodies' do to 'nobodies.' Or, more precisely, it is what people who think they're Somebodies do to people they take for nobodies" (Fuller, 2010, para. 1). This frame of rank is very specific. It highlights abuse around those who have rank and those who do not. It draws on the popular usage of ending a word with "ism" so as to be more understandable in the current context of how we use "isms," for example, sexism, racism, ageism, and so forth. The antidote for this Fuller (2015) says is dignity or being a dignitarian. He writes, "While people are equal not in their endowments or attainments, they are equal in dignity and must be treated so" (Fuller, 2015, para. 2). Dignity is an innate quality that means we are all equal in worth, which is more of the psychological aspect of my category of existential rank.

Language is a powerful framing tool in and of itself and can be used differently according to the situation and needs of the moment. All three examples of different rank frames above have used language in differing ways to make distinctions and highlight certain things. In this section I use the levels of reality within Processwork to frame a few different perspectives of rank. These levels are essence or sentience, dreaming, and consensus reality. If I were a purely sentient being, I might have no idea or perception of rank at all because there would be no sense of inequality in the way I see or experience reality. Everything would be a different but equal sensation, light, color, energy, and so forth, and nothing would be impossible. This is just my imagining because I am not this, similar to if I dream into an imaginary role. If I lived in dreaming, then rank would not be limited by my form or psychological or spiritual process, but only by my imagination and the powers I can find within dreaming. In CR, rank would be limited to cultural

belief systems, physical manifestation, societal infrastructures, and so forth including psychological patterns, habits, and access to spirituality.

Rank Awareness: Issues and Opportunities

The main issue I see with rank is either the over or underuse of it due to an inability to fully realize and have integrity with the power and rank you have. The power or ability to influence others, the field, or your own inner landscape, can be used consciously or unconsciously. Becoming conscious of rank gives you a choice on how to use it or feel it or be aware of it in different instances. The conscious choice does not change the issue that some people would choose to use their rank for more power or to overpower others, and likewise the unconscious use of rank also does not change whether people are under using their power or over using it. Consciousness creates choice and the potential for change, but how that choice is made relies on the inner landscape, outer circumstances, historical patterns, and intention of the person making the choice.

Fully realizing or integrating one's rank means that you really sit back in your rank and feel the weight of it, feel all its textures and how it works in different situations, notice all the thoughts, feelings, and signals associated with it in yourself and others and the situations that invoke those different dynamics. Fully realizing or integrating means you engage with the knowledge of rank on all levels—consensus reality, dreaming, essence—and in all channels—verbal, proprioceptive, audio, kinesthetic, relationship, and world. This creates a deep knowledge and embodied experience of the way rank and power show up for you internally and externally.

As described above, I see the main issue and opportunity with rank is the way it is used. You can overuse it by exerting it over others—a power over model where a rank is

used to create a sense of control and power over others, over animals, the environment, space, and so forth. This power over model is currently running rampant on the planet today and you can easily see it in the destruction of the environment, wars, or violence. Some individual examples might be: when you have a child and you exert your force, physically, verbally, and/or emotionally to make the child do something. You are angry with your friend so you say something vengeful and hit them in the weak part of their psychology. You derive a sense of power from being a teacher so your ideas, your solutions, your structures and rules all become more important than the student's because you are high on your power.

The other issue is if you under-use it. Mostly this is done because you are not aware you have access to rank or power. Its under-use might also happen to control a situation or ensure a certain outcome. Being a victim or a tyrant can become a habit and a way to derive a sense of identity. Some examples of under-using rank are: you are smart but you pretend you are not in a situation to manipulate the other, or you just do not believe you are smart when you are and it causes low self-esteem. Another large example of under-using your rank is that you do not want to exercise it for the betterment of those who do not have it because you feel that you will lose power if you do, or you do not want to go against the grain of the other people who also have power. In this instance, there is a lack of taking responsibility for the use of your power and/or your group's power. The power of the group field here is a huge factor because you are deriving your sense of power from the group so going against that will put you outside of it and your sense of power. Your power is entangled with the group's power.

These tendencies to over or under use rank correspond to some extent with where you identify yourself on the rank scale as well as where systematically your "place" is in society. If you have less rank in a system then you might internalize a sense of having less power in many different areas of your life. For example, those who have been sexually abused by another could internalize the role of the victim and then orient themselves to life as this role. The systemic reality of this, at least in America, is that spaces socially and legally designed to support those abused and create opportunities for healing are sadly lacking. In cases of sexual abuse in this country, historically speaking, there is a pronounced tendency of blaming the victim instead of the abuser. In both internal and external worlds, the more powerful roles of the protector or abuser are often missing in this situation. So there is an opportunity to find out more and integrate these roles that were split off from the person in this event. When discovering these different roles, consciously or unconsciously, the person has the ability to use them in a variety of ways, which might include becoming the abuser and abusing self and/or others or becoming the protector and protecting self and/or others. If the intention of the victim is to heal and do that through consciously exploring all these roles with a model that used the roles in a way in which they did not become abusive or to overcompensate, then they would have a good shot at healing and consciously learning to use those roles in their life with integrity. However, if the intention of the victim was vengeance, and the model for the way to deal with the role of victimhood was using the different roles in this scenario in an abusive way, then they that would most likely be the outcome. They might be conscious in some way that they are using those roles abusively. The intention behind the reason to become conscious and also the model from which they learned about using

those different roles was very important in the outcome of the situation and what

occurred later.

There are many opportunities for the role of the victim to process and learn to find

the gifts in the journey of that role such as survival. In some cases there are unrecognized

powers that lay dormant in the dreaming level (e.g., if a victim of trauma dissociated, this

may also be a spiritual power). When you dissociate, according to shamans and in my

own experience, that part of you still lives, it just goes into hiding somewhere else, and

where that someplace else is in the dreaming and spiritual realms. Or if they were trying

to fight then they were showing strength in consciousness in identifying the danger,

strength in physical response, and courage. There is also opportunity for those in the

mainstream to learn to identify with all these roles as well: victim, abuser, and protector.

Legally and socially people tend to want to identify with the protector role because it is

often seen as the most heroic or positive role. This creates unawareness in the field

around the roles of the abuser and victim, resulting in misunderstanding, and perpetuating

cycles of abuse.

Those with higher rank tend not to notice their influence because they have high

rank and

rank is a drug that makes us feel good. We forget we are on it. Like heroin, we

need more and more of it to feel well. We steal from the wellbeing of others and

the environment to support our habit. (Mindell, 1995, p. 53)

People might not be aware of their high rank but they might experience a feeling of

power, and thus may not be inspired to change their behavior or even become aware of it.

Realizing one's rank is not just realizing one's power but also the realization of power in

relation to others in the moment and historically. If a person realizes their higher rank then there is a realization of power, and also the potential to see what abuse or misuse of rank might have occurred in the past.

In *Talking Back to Dr. Phil,* David Bedrick (2013) writes,

The wounds caused by unconscious rank dynamics are often less obvious and require greater awareness to be revealed. Rank dynamics often pit victims against each other, turn the focus away from perpetrators of injurious behavior, and promote evaluation of people with lower rank by people with higher rank. In addition, as we saw on the *Dr. Phil* show, rank dynamics can even be unconsciously reenacted and encouraged in others by those whose intention is to heal and not harm. (p. 79)

What Bedrick writes about here is more in the sphere of identifying dynamics between high and low rank groups. He points out that those with rank and those without it are both hypnotized to stay in their own group. For example, pitting victims again victims is making sure that those in the low rank category stay there and fight among each other. To "turn the focus away from perpetrators of injurious behavior" (Bedrick, 2013, p. 79) points to the higher rank people evaluating those in the lower rank to ensure they stay on top. In both of these instances the opportunity is for more awareness through noticing the interplay of the dynamics, becoming more fluid between the groups, and really feeling the power that is present in the moment, both for those with and without rank.

The boundaries of rank can be another roadblock to becoming aware of rank, and realizing the fluidity and wholeness of each person. You may have a rank or you do not, or you are in the process of developing it. Either you have the money to buy a house or a

credit rating to get a loan or you do not. You are the President of the United States or

you are not. You have had a mystical experienced that allowed you to experience the

mind of god or you have not. You have suffered extensively in life or you have not. The

opportunity is to fully acknowledge these boundaries in yourself, in society, and the

effects that occur as a result. If you can own what you do or do not have and invite

yourself to fully feel it, then something different will arise, either an acceptance of life

the way it has presented itself or the desire to change it. An acceptance would increase

psychological rank. The desire for change could either lead to frustration or seeing the

potential ways that change can occur through expanding into the different levels of reality

and / or following the dreaming. The desire to change leads in a certain direction that is

determined by the path and process of the individual. Potentially, it could create

humbleness and then openness to the suffering and situations of others that would also be

an increase in psychological and spiritual rank.

Developing Rank Awareness

There are many difficulties on the path to self, relationship, and world awareness

of rank. I certainly do not know them all. However, I offer a few examples of the

potential for cultivation of rank awareness. I also am proposing the hypothesis that rank

awareness is developed through having a metaposition from which you can observe rank

dynamics in yourself, in relationship, and in the world, as well as a willingness to take

ownership of those dynamics, a commitment to fully feeling and integrating those

experiences, and dream or otherwise model a different way of being and acting.

Let us talk about some signals of rank that can be observed in you or in

relationship. Signals of high social rank might be: you are able to do things easily in the

material world that others can not, you are recognized as someone of importance or someone who knows and understands things others do not, people have to ask you for permission to do things or have things, you can make decisions that affect other people's lives, and so forth. Conscious use might look like a caring metaskill or just an acknowledgement of the rank when it is used in relationship to others. Sharing social rank might look like generosity of time, money, status, resources, contacts, and/or standing up for the abuse of people who have lower social rank. Abuse or misuse might be using the rank to feel powerful by putting others down or taking more than you actually need. These outcomes might also be in relation to the use of psychological or spiritual rank as well.

In terms of psychological rank, signals of high rank might be: an inner sense of freedom to express authenticity, self-esteem, calmness, and perseverance in difficult situations, ability to respond instead of reacting, having a connection to life purpose, consistency and presence with states of mind and emotions in self and others, an ability to read other people's emotions, and so forth. Abuse or misuse of one's psychological rank might be using your knowledge of others in a way that is manipulative to get what you want. Mindell (1995) wrote about the misuse of psychological rank.

> Psychological rank is a drug that suppresses our awareness of other people's pain and encourages us to look down on others as nothing more than "victims." It enables us to imagine that we transcend other people's problems: we are above it all, aloof from the problems of the disadvantaged. Our egos insulate us. Even if we suffered oppression in the past, we don't demonstrate any willingness to help

relieve oppression now. We insist that others be where we are instead of extending ourselves to understand where they are. (p. 36)

Spiritual high rank inner signals that can be known or sensed from others might be: a sense of detachment, an openness to the energetic environment, strong awareness and experience of God or strong beliefs, ease in altered states, omniscient, psychic abilities, feelings of unity or oneness. In relationship, high spiritual rank signals might be: unconsciousness of consensus reality, an inability to see or participate in conflict, difficulties conceptualizing past or future, inability to relate to people who identify mainly with consensus reality, spontaneity and nonlinear reactions, speaking from the heart, and an ability to process the suffering of others through their own bodies without losing awareness or getting sick. Potentially good uses of these ranks might result in healings, spontaneous awakenings, magic, meditation, altered states, deep feeling of love and connection, and so forth. Unconscious use of these ranks in relation with others might be forgetting the impact that you have on the field and on others, telling people things they don't want to know that you see, and not sharing or being affected by emotions or physicality with others in the way they are expecting or needing. Abuse and misuse of this rank might be using people in an experiment for the sake of fulfilling your own belief structure, using your beliefs to feel more powerful and more right than others, negating the importance of other people's inner and outer diversity including your own (which could also be in the psychological category), magic used on others without their permission, and so forth. Spiritual rank used in conjunction with social rank exponentially increases the power of it, which can be used for good or ill. For example, religious rank falls under the social category but the strong belief underneath it is also in

the spiritual category in Processwork theory (Esch, 2009, p. 31). Using these two together has led to many physical wars and belief wars that impacted people on all levels and still goes on today; probably some of the most contentious issues in the world are those based on belief.

Let us look at some opportunities and difficulties of becoming conscious and taking ownership of rank. Below are two examples.

If a person has consciously cultivated rank, then they most likely know they have that rank or are in the process of learning to identify with it. For example, gratitude is a good example of what I would label both a psychological and spiritual rank. It can be used as a psychological way to balance a feeling of scarcity and it can also be used in connection to a larger field of spirit, as with a gratitude prayer. People are usually conscious of having gratitude. They are conscious because they have ownership of the process of creating that rank in themselves. They also have a metaposition that could observe this cultivation over time. Ownership of a process and having a metaposition creates awareness and ability to reproduce the results.

The more difficult version of ownership of rank is if it happened to you. If you were born and grew up as a healthy, wealthy, white male in the United States, then you automatically without any real fault of your own have more rank socially than any other category of person in the United States. You inherited this rank by birth. With this inheritance comes more than just rank in the world but also the history of how that rank was acquired by other white men. This has an impact on those around you, and this impact might have nothing to do with anything you did, but mostly to do with the way of your ancestors. Now, that is hard to identify with because it just happened to you and it

is even harder if you are growing up in a culture that mostly reinforces this power. If there is no example of a different way of being, outside of the norm around you, then it is hard to know a different way to be. Without a metaposition it is hard to see how this power affects you internally, and how it affects others outside of you.

It might be hard to take ownership of this white male rank completely because the historic way in which that rank was acquired is layered with an abuse of power. So then from the perspective of the white male in this example, a split could occur internally between the part of them that sees the power and how that was acquired over time and the part of them that says "well, I had nothing to do with that abuse because that was way back then." So, a conflict occurs internally as well as resistance to identify with the power and its history.

There are many edges in this scenario. There is an edge to identifying with the power. There is an edge to identifying with the ancestors who took this power and passed on the rank or the role as abuser of others. There is an edge to identifying or empathizing with the abused. There is an edge to the past history and the future potential of a different reality or dream. There could be an edge to using that power with awareness. In this case, we need the overarching principle of the elder or the one who can hold all sides: the power, the abuse, the abused, the history, the present, and the future.

Eldership grows in part from having experienced the issues yourself, having known yourself as both victim and oppressor. It comes from seeing the weakness of the oppressor. What remains when the fire of your own desire for revenge has burned low is a sort of soothing cool that relieves everyone. It doesn't patronize.

It expects only those who can to make the shift in consciousness from conflict to insight. Elders themselves have made the leap from one-sidedness to compassion. (Mindell, 1995, p. 35)

There are many opportunities in the above rank scenario. I believe that some of the greatest potential for changing the scenario would be if the edges to using the power consciously and with integrity were worked with and integrated. Another potential change in the situation would be the realization and integration of the elder position. The incorporation of a dreaming and essence stance on this power would most likely help the individual and the field. However, none of these opportunities can be realized without a metaposition, ownership of the rank in some way, and a model, dream, or deep feeling for a different way of being and acting in the world.

Expansion of Rank Through the Levels

Rank itself spans the three different levels of reality—consensus reality, dreaming, and essence—and the ability to incorporate these levels while experiencing any rank can lead to a fuller and more whole sense of life. Social rank has its basis in the consensus beliefs about material reality. The reason social rank exists is because of the value system adopted and enforced by a group of people, consciously or unconsciously. For example, mainstream views and actions are many times perpetuated through generations unconsciously due to the conditioning of children by their parents and grandparents, which can be valuable or not valuable depending on what those views and actions are. Psychological rank is an inner state that is in response to the consensus reality. It can be increased through paying attention to the dreaming. For example, if your car gets broken into then you might feel shock and a sense of violation as a response

to that experience in consensus reality. However, if you look at the dreaming level then you can see there are many roles, the one who breaks in, the person whose car got broken into, and the role of the car. In CR you might just assume the role of the victim of the event but if you look to the dreaming and play all the different roles in this experience, then you may absorb the power that in CR seemed to only belong to one role. Spiritual rank gets its basis from an experience of unity with a larger field. However, many kinds of spiritual rank exist in the dreaming level, just as an ability to be in different roles in a dream implies a unity in the field of consciousness. One could say that rank is a theory recognizing the differences between roles in the field. The roles that are given more emphasis, influence, or power, both in society and inside an individual, create differences in rank.

Let us say you are not born with a certain rank but are in the process of cultivating it. For example, if someone is actively working on advancing in their career, they most likely do not identify as being in the top of their field or as being an expert, and they are working towards that. They are in the process of becoming an advanced practitioner. In this scenario, their metaposition observed where they were on the social rank spectrum and then a desire arose in them for more mastery or social status or more learning. An ownership of where they were, and a dream for where they could be, sparked a movement towards this dream. If they move down this path and have the opportunity and confidence to do so, then their psychological capacities have kicked in. An inner experience of advancing in one's career can create a sense of fulfillment and purpose because they are moving towards a certain goal. Feeling like you have a purpose is a psychological rank. If this rank is taken one level further it can also be a spiritual rank.

If you feel you have a purpose through advancing in your career and you expand this to feel the universal current of the being connected to the collective human purpose through that advancement, then you have widened your psychological rank to a spiritual rank also. This process is a small example of how life can be deepened and then lived from a feeling and experience of all levels of reality.

I also offer my own self-reflections in exploring rank through the levels. It is important that we explore ourselves in terms of our rank and power, which was one of my aims for creating this project. Rank also needs to be taken in context of culture. I was born in America and have lived here most of my life. I have enjoyed quite a bit of high rank being a middle class white female with pretty good parents, a moderately stable and loving environment to grow in, always enough food and opportunities for growth and learning in the world. For most of my adult life, I have been poor and that has presented challenges, but due to my mother's teachings of frugality and my belief in living a simple, environmentally friendly life, being poor also has had its gifts.

One of my aims in facing poverty was to increase my sense of abundance in the world. I did this in both psychological and spiritual ways. I looked at the way my mind and thoughts related to poverty. What associations did I have to poverty, which would be an inquiry into the dreaming level? I associated it with being of lower worth, less important to the world, limited in ability to make change happen in my life, and so forth. There are some consensus reality truths to this, but this picture and these associations start to show me the whole picture of how some aspects of my psychological rank are being formed. For example, I can disassociate the association of self-worth from the concept of poverty but it takes time and effort. In order to do this I need to be vigilant

about finding all the associations and situations in which I feel low self-worth due to poverty. So when do I associate and feel the sense of worthlessness due to being poor? Do I do it in the grocery store when I have to limit what I buy or when I cannot contribute financially to causes I would like to promote? Part of the journey is finding these places of association and noticing them in the moments they arise. I do this with the help of my metaposition, one of the necessities for being conscious. The other thing that would be helpful is to do is unfold the feeling of low self-worth. I do this by feeling the physical qualities of it in my body and then follow them. This would be more of an essence entry technique, that could turn into a Processwork unfolding if I followed the signals of it and looked for the secondary which might turn up as body signals that had a feeling strength or defiance, or rebellion, and so forth. I can also begin an inquiry every time the feeling or association arises by asking, "what is self-worth really and where does it come from?" What is the feeling of self-worth? Is my worthiness really based on outside factors? What does being worthy feel like without any external influences?"

For me personally, this journey came to a strong internal knowing that I am worthy just because I exist and am a part of the field of all existence and creation. I got there through all of these ways—mindfulness, Processwork, mental inquiries, noticing feelings, and also largely through meditation. This is an example of how social rank can expand into psychological rank and spiritual rank. It required the power of my metaposition and the willingness to travel through the levels of reality to uncover the depth of the power that lies within each of us.

Chapter 3: Creating a Rank Game

Processwork and Games

Game creation is a minisimulation of the process of creation itself. Game design is the art of creating a context for people to experience a focused and intentional aspect of real or imagined life (Salen & Zimmermon, 2004, p. 87). My own formulation, from reading texts and studying different games, is that this is done through a weaving together of different materials, techniques, situations, stories, and frameworks to create a platform for experience. You become the Dreammaker (Mindell, 2001). You dream a story or context for play, place certain materials and techniques together to create a structure, and this creates a miniworld where a focused dreaming process can emerge. This game aims to create a context for players to experience and become aware of the dreaming of rank, and the consensus reality signals and dynamics that occur due to this dreaming.

Rank and games seemed like two opposing ideas, as the term rank refers to real world power dynamics as well as innate, culturally constructed, and/or evolved human qualities or phenomena. Games are created for fun, inspirations, and challenges. Play, in games and life, can be found in many different ways. Stress and tension can be key elements in games that stimulate a deeper engagement and learning from the players. If we look at why animals or small children play, we see them learning to use their bodies and minds in space. Play is a way to become more skilled at existing in whatever context we live within. Play teaches survival, ways to adapt and move, and also can transform in life into enjoyable experience. Learning to use rank is trickier because it calls for not just learning how to use the qualities you have been given or developed but also becoming

aware of the culturally and historically created implications around those qualities and how they affect those around you.

Being still in my 20s and without trauma and dejection around the impossibilities of rank and power, I chose to work on them in a light way in this project, utilizing the metaskill of playfulness. Playfulness is an amazing metaskill. It is fun and it provides a way to grease the wheels of difficult challenges that allow some detachment from those difficulties that can otherwise easily be overwhelming. Overwhelmed in an issue, awareness can sometimes be lost. Thus, the idea of a game arose because it combined a way to have some detachment and play while also diving into an issue.

Games and Processwork have the potential to produce deep, enriching, and more awareness provoking experiences that occur in fun and engaging ways. Both provide contexts for focusing on specific aspects of life that might not normally be focused on. They do this through an intentionality that structures the session or game, and in regulated time frames. This creates easier ways to have meaningful experiences.

One example in which Processwork creates these stages for meaningful play and experience is through working on dreams. Dreams present scenarios that can be easily entered into through the different characters, story lines, experiences, and so forth. Role-playing characters in the story of the dream create a liminal space in which to explore. By using the metaskills of playfulness and inviting role-play, a Processworker creates an atmosphere of fun and detachment. A client then might find the lesser-known or more attractive parts of the dream easier to engage with and unfold. The dream is the stage for the client to rediscover meaning and experience unclaimed parts of herself.

A game creates a similar space for discovery. It sets up a scenario outside of consensus reality, focusing the player on certain tasks in a particular story or context. Players need to draw on internal and external skills in order to complete these tasks. This stretches and increases a player's capacity for learning through action. The game context is a specific time frame with intentionality and immediately perceivable results. This emphasis on intentionality and outcomes gives players a sense of satisfaction that is either not achievable in consensus reality or unlikely to be achieved in the same easily understandable context (Salen & Zimmermon, 2004, p. 86). This gives meaning to moments that in regular life can seem disjointed, distracted, and less meaningful. Players have the opportunity to witness and participate at the same time.

There are similar reasons why we might go to a Processwork session with a facilitator. It helps to set up a perceivable, focused context to work on issues with a witness, who might intervene with us and set up "mock" situations—simulating realities that create more meaning in our lives. Processwork and game design use some similar techniques to create condensed contexts for people to engage with aspects of themselves that are less known. This is one of the intentions and implemented designs of the Rank Game—to create a space to experience the potentially lesser-known diversity of rank and rank dynamics.

The purpose of this project was to discover if a game utilizing Processwork theory could be crafted that increased awareness around the concept and experience of rank. The objectives identified as needed in order to complete this discovery were: to understand rank and Processwork more thoroughly, to simplify the concepts in order to create a game with them, and eventually develop a training tool for others to develop

greater understanding and inquiry into rank dynamics. The Rank Game's evolution

described below tells the story of how these objectives were met to develop a fun space

for people to discover more about rank.

Iterative Design

In this section, I talk about the approaches that drove the evolution of this game.

Looking back on the approach, it is what game designers Eric Zimmermon and Katie

Salen (2004) called *iterative design*.

Iterative design is a play-based design process. Emphasizing play testing and

prototyping, iterative design is a method in which design decisions are made

based on the experience of playing a game while it is in development. In an

iterative methodology, a rough version of the game is rapidly prototyped as early

in the design process as possible. This prototype has none of the aesthetic

trappings of the final game, but begins to define its fundamental rules and core

mechanics. It is not a visual prototype, but an interactive one. This prototype is

played, evaluated, adjusted, and played again, allowing the designer or design

team to base decisions on the successive iterations or versions of the game. (p. 31)

In this iterative design process I used a variety of Processwork and game design

methods to discover more about rank and how it might be encapsulated in a game form. I

began with my own experience of Processwork and rank. My initial exploration was my

own awareness journey of power differences in rank, and in honesty, this discovery is

ongoing. In this beginning stage I explored different definitions of power and

Processwork exercises focused on rank. What arose out of this first contemplation was

essentially a workshop about rank that I called a game. I combined the metaskill of

playfulness with some experiential exercises that were contemplative, intrapsychic, and interpersonal. In this process I also reframed the theory of rank mentioned earlier. However, this had yet to fulfill the criteria of actually being a game.

The second stage was the development of a semi-formulated game, caught between the paradigm of a Processwork awareness workshop and an actual game. It was on my original timeline to trial run the game so that is what I did and it received mixed feedback (described below). About 8 people from the Processwork community came to play the game as it was then. This game was confusing. The game had two teams; one team was labeled high rank and the other low. There was a point system that awarded players on each team after completing Processwork tasks. These tasks were on cards that were drawn by the players alternating between the two teams. The game also had a wheel with different ranks sectioned on it. Players spun the wheel that would land on age or religion (for example) and would then draw a card with tasks which they completed using the rank they spun to as the context for the task. The tasks were done either as inner work, in relation to another, or as a group. For example, one task might be to make up a story about this rank and tell it to the group, or the task might be steps to an inner work that the participant had to unfold in front of the group about the rank they spun on, or the task might be a group process around a rank.

The theme of competition was very present in this trial run. The high rank team automatically got more points just because they were the high rank team, and the low rank team automatically received negative points. This was an experiment to induce the implicit imbalance that rank can create in many situations. However, it mainly induced more feelings of competition demonstrated by yells between the teams about winning.

Some people made comments on the low rank team that psychologically increased their rank like "it's okay, we can still win" or "it doesn't make them better than us." The other side said things: "like yeah, we're the best" and "sweet, we're already winning." This dynamic clearly shows part of the psychological component of social rank. I am equating the point giving as social rank because it was created by a culturally construed association and was inherited, you could say, through the automatic award system. A point is an imaginary thing. However, it symbolizes something of value, like money, that leads to an outcome of winning or losing. The comments pointed to some of the psychological aspects of social rank—a desire to be in the high rank category and an association of high rank being better. This would be an interesting area for further research and observation.

While this game concept was interesting, participants found it somewhat confusing, and not yet engaging enough. The directions were not specific enough, and the concepts were muddled. People enjoyed it because it was creative and it involved thinking on their feet, but it was not formulated enough to give a focused engagement with rank. After this I stepped back from the project timeline and asked myself if I really knew enough about the concepts of rank, and what other people in the Processwork community actually knew about the concept of rank, and how it plays out. I needed some time for inquiry to learn how to create more simplicity and focus on rank in a game platform. This version also did not have enough focus on awareness.

The third stage was more about gathering information. I held a group process with a cofacilitator called "Self-Worth and Rank." About 10 people showed up, from Processwork diplomates to those who had limited experience with Processwork. I chose

this topic because it was hard for me to grasp at the time in terms of rank and spoke to my own personal process. Self-worth is synonymous with self-esteem. When people think of rank they often first think of social rank, so I thought it interesting to start out from the psychological side, a more unseen side. During this group process there were a lot of questions about what was self-worth, what did it mean to have self-worth, and the dichotomy between those who had social rank but lower psychological rank. However, many of the participants, even those more seasoned in Processwork, did not know that self-worth was part of psychological rank, so this pointed to the lack of understanding around the concept of rank in the Processwork community. This gives more relevance to this project and others like it. It also propelled me on the next stage of the journey wherein I came up with my own rank theory categories, and lists of examples under each of them, that would later turn into the basis for the cards in the next iteration of the game.

This intermediary stage of information gathering consisted of brainstorming in pairs, my own personal contemplation, and game research. I would come up with some ideas and then brainstorm with others. This occurred with Jan Dworkin, Dennis Palazzolo, Nadine Portillo, Josh Talbert, and others. I started making vast lists under each rank category so that I could get a better idea of the diversity in each rank category.

I did more research about games, including buying a few games and researching game descriptions online. The big question for me was surrounding structure, which is how designers implement meaningful play. The main text I used in order to learn about game design was *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (2003). In this book the authors defined the conceptual frameworks that create games. They lay out all the different structural components and how they interact

to create meaningful play. I also researched game models with similar conceptual

frameworks, and studied the structure for greater clarity. Cards, timers, and working in

teams were common for the types of learning games that had similar theoretical

intentions as the Rank Game. Now with more concrete direction about game design and

rank understanding, a new version of the game came into existence. Simplification was a

large part of the design process.

Relationship was the key to the framework for this game. Processwork has the

perfect technique for creating meaningful play in relationship—role-play. The structural

framework for the role-play was cards and teams. There were two teams and each team

took turns playing the rank listed on a card they drew. The cards had rank categories on

them with one or two word descriptions. For example, social rank might have the words

transgender or fourth grade student or homeless under it. The psychological rank cards

have words like self-confident, courageous, neutral, generous, or the opposites of those.

The spiritual cards have statements like strong connection to nature, atheist, psychic,

experiential connection to "God," and so forth. The players did a role-play, without

showing the others their cards, as the roles on the cards and then everyone brainstormed

together about the different rank categories and dynamics they noticed. The feedback

was good to this game. Players reported that it was fun, challenging, made them think

and remember the different ranks that are present, and learn more about what it felt like

or how to convey the experience of those different ranks.

There were a few structural kinks to work out with this version, like not having

the name of the rank—social, psychological, and spiritual—on the side of the card that

faced the other players. They also reported that it was difficult to get into the character

and play the rank as high or low because their performance really varied based on their own inner experience of those ranks. I took this as positive feedback for one of the aims, which is to create awareness around one's own interpretation of rank, and not just to play a role in the right way. However, I needed to create some clearer instructions around embodying a character, and also frame this aim to cultivate inner rank awareness with more clarity. One of the requests made was to create cards that were more in the form of specific characters for them to play so it was easier to grasp how to act them out. More improvements needed to be added into the instructions of the game for greater clarity and understanding.

This led to the next stage and latest version of the game that incorporated the feedback described above. This version has three key components similar to what was described above—role-playing, witnessing, and brainstorming. This version was played with 45 people in the Processwork community during my final project presentation. It received a lot of feedback. I literally had to jump up and down to get people to stop playing it. Some of the verbal feedback given was: it was confusing to play a role in relationship with another without a clear context; a little bit more prep was needed to get into the role; it was the best version yet; it was fun to watch other faculty members who were used to being so fluid stuck in a role; it created empathy; it inspired some to do inner work; it would have been nice to have a list of the different signals that would correspond to the different rank categories, both high and low. This feedback, to the best of my ability, has been incorporated in the newest version of the game.

Chapter 4: Core Components of the Rank Game

From this designer's perspective, this game is all about an invitation to further awareness. In chapter 2, opportunities and elaborations on how to develop awareness on rank were offered. The below sections all correspond and invite an exploration of developing rank awareness through the three core components of the Rank Game.

The three core components are role-playing, witnessing, and brainstorming. As mentioned in the very beginning of this paper, the Rank Game is an experiential awareness model. Role-playing is on the experiential end of the spectrum. Witnessing is on the awareness end. Brainstorming inspires collaborative thinking as a way of reinforcing and drawing out into words the experiential awareness of the group. These three activities of the game contribute to a player's capacity for awareness, self-knowledge, and knowledge of the diversity of human experience in terms of rank.

Role-Playing

Role-playing is dreaming in action. It is the ability to let your standard identity loosen, and invoke an experience that before that moment inhabited the zone of your potential expressions. It consists of dreaming into and then expressing that dreaming. You can do role-play by just diving in and being completely immersed in the experience or you can keep your metaposition operating, which would be witnessing the whole experience. When you keep this metaposition on, you have the power of self-knowledge and reflection. This creates an environment within which to explore the possibility of human expression that before was latent, and also the power to become aware of your individual experience of those expressions. In utilizing both the power of your experience through role-playing different ranks and also the power of your awareness,

you can learn to own and also stand in the rank you do have and empathize and understand the rank of others.

Witnessing: Exercising Your Metaposition

Witnessing is the next key component in the game. Whether it is an inner witnessing of your own experience, emotions, signals, and so forth, or an outer witnessing from other people, this is one of the fundamentals of developing awareness. Awareness is all about what you notice. We tend to identify with the phenomena we notice like events, actions, thoughts, feelings, and so forth. However, the metaposition, or the outside observer both within us and as role in the field, is equally right there with us internally all the time and can be picked up by anyone as a role at any time. In this instance the phenomena that you are witnessing is outside of yourself. When you witness others' role-plays in this section of the game, it allows you to take the role of the metaposition more completely than when you are doing it inside of yourself.

When many people access the metaposition, they have content that runs along side it, like thoughts, judgments, realizations, emotions, intuitive knowing, and so forth. For example, if I am witnessing something that disturbs me then I might also have feelings about that and a story about what that means; this is what I mean by content. This is great and helpful for the collaborative thinking aspect of the game, which is next. Accessing the metaposition to the best of a player's ability means clearing the background mental state so that they can be present to the dynamic in the moment.

In the context of this game it is also helpful to let intuitive knowing, thoughts on role dynamics, and dreaming into signals arise as they are witnessed. Becoming aware of these different observations can inform the player. Some questions to ask might be: do

you actively watch and think and dream at the same time? Do you stay as close to a beginner's mind as possible and wait until the discussion afterwards to think or reflect on what you witnessed? Do you pick something, an aspect of what you are seeing, to dream into further? All this can be a gateway to inner work. What most catches your attention or interest or repulses or upsets you is probably the tip of the iceberg of a deeper experience and self-inquiry, which if unfolded will lead to deeper self and collective knowing. All of this information can also be used in the next collaborative thinking stage of the game.

Brainstorming

The brainstorming aspect is the next portion of the game when played in teams. The intention of this part of the game is to have the opportunity to collectively think together. This is very important in terms of rank because one of the biggest aspects of rank dynamics' oppressive nature is that it is systematized, like systematized racism. In order to counteract this, we create structure where the intention is for each voice to be equal. Collaboratively thinking together means we are all on the same team no matter our actual rank dynamics in the moment. This context gives players a common goal and the opportunity to express their different viewpoints or experiences. In the last trial run with 45 people, Processwork faculty members were playing and brainstorming with players who were at all levels of learning in the Processwork community. There was no designation in this context of teacher or student, purely a space to learn together. Hopefully, this encourages spaces and ways to speak about rank that are not so heavy or enveloped with personal involvement or value based on an individual's rank, but are

open, inspiring more of a context of equality with less emphasis on differing ranks in a

learning environment.

Summary

All of these different core components create the platform for building awareness

around rank. Role-playing gives a player an experiential exercise into different ranks,

that they might not be familiar with, which presents them with an opportunity for

acquiring self-knowledge and empathy. Witnessing does something similar but instead

gives the person a task to watch, in order to learn to identify rank dynamics, and see how

that watching affects them. Brainstorming encourages collaborative thinking and

provides a context that is counter to the power over or under models in rank dynamics.

Chapter 5: Contributions and Conclusion

Contributions

The Rank Game contributes a play-based technique to the study of Processwork and rank dynamics. It is a creative way to invite people into the journey of learning about rank in themselves and in relationship. It contributes to the development of awareness in individuals and the field of consciousness around the topic of rank. It puts these complex concepts into the hands of the user, and creates a space for creativity and dreaming. It stretches the limits of players and increases their capacity to role-play, work in teams, and have fun with a tough topic. Hopefully, it contributes to the resources that Processworkers can draw from to teach and learn about rank.

This contextual essay contributes to Processwork's method through expanding on rank and awareness theories. Some of the necessary steps for developing awareness and creating the ability to change are outlined, such as taking ownership and responsibility of your own rank. By moving through the levels of consciousness, depth was added to the theory and potential experience of rank.

All in all, this game attempts to increase our experiential awareness of rank through role-play, witnessing, and collaborative thinking. It invites people on a journey to open themselves to the diversity of human existence, and in effect, influence and change culture through playing.

Limitations

The limitations in this game span the breadth of experience of the designer. They included time, knowledge, audience, and directly addressing the issues in rank.

I have never designed a game before, and I did not consult anyone who has, so that is a major quality consideration. It is also a semi-advanced game in terms of what it asks from participants, to be able to think, act, and watch difficult concepts in action in a short time frame. There is a limit on how much a person can really observe and notice in a deep way in such a short time span. The quality of materials used to produce the game is yet to be determined.

Other limitations are time, quality, knowledge of the designer, and skills of the players. I began conceptualization of this project July 2014 and it was to be done by November 2015. This is a short frame for someone with no game designing experience. My knowledge and research in game design were initially very limited. My experiential knowledge of how to put those training in Processwork in situations where they have to accomplish a goal that puts many difficult skills together in 5-7 minutes was slim to none.

Another limitation is its audience. This game is meant for people in the Processwork community or those who are working on awareness, fluidity in roles, or a greater understanding of diversity. Because of this attention and focus on awareness and fluidity, the game works in this context. This, however, limits its ability to inspire rank awareness or understanding in others outside of contexts similar to the Processwork community.

This game puts a certain frame around rank through highlighting diversity and the dreaming connection that we all share that can teach us fluidity and a deepening of awareness. The major limitation is that this game does not directly address the power imbalances that flourish in the context of rank. This is a huge issue and causes a lot of pain, suffering, and violence in the world. This game mainly works by bringing the

beginning concepts of rank into the consciousness of others so that they can develop awareness. In that way, it is a good educational tool.

More direct ways of working on rank could also be cultivated. An example of directly approaching rank would be to look at our lives and where we use power over structures. Nations like America source their way of life on dominating others in terms of oil, labor, land, goods, education, military, and so forth, contributing to an international and intranational imperialism. Looking at that reality and really feeling it and making space for such feelings and explorations could be a very good way to look at rank dynamics and feel their effect. However, that was not the main aim of this project.

Further Inquiry

There are other issues that show up in rank dynamics that are not addressed in this project (i.e., past abuses done by authority, the belief and fueling of stories of disempowered versus being empowered, the desire for more rank in any situation but the inability to consciously cultivate it, etc.). Different structures in games or workshops that highlight these imbalances more explicitly could be the topics of further projects.

Further inquiries into the domain of rank would be necessary both internally and within groups in order to design a really efficient game that increased rank awareness. This present game has a lot of invitations in it that rely upon the player to acknowledge and take deeper in order for awareness around rank to grow. It would be very interesting to play this game with and without a Processworker present to clarify and help facilitate the experience for people. When I trial-ran this game with 45 people, there were still a number of people who reported that they did not learn that much more about rank or that it was confusing, which might have been largely due to the short time frame and that

many were Processwork faculty. A deeper inquiry into the struggles of awareness and learning could be helpful in order to improve this game.

Further projects listed in the limitations section might be in how to more directly emphasize awareness of our own rank in the world and how it plays out. The advantage to this game was that play helped people have fun with it when it can normally be in very serious situations that we learn about rank. However, in order to have a better perspective, a practitioner would need to have ample experience facilitating or witnessing both methods. I do not have that, and so this is an area of further learning for me.

The two other larger areas of further learning for me are to be dedicated to a continual practice of awareness around rank and to sit in my spiritual rank, in particular an honoring of the sharing of divinity and diversity in any moment no matter the content, with others in a way that shares it and does not alienate but is facilitative. The other large inquiry I have is really what is the best way to frame rank that resonates with people and also creates a difference in how they relate to it. Within the category of framing rank is also how to identify rank in the nonverbal channels. This would be a large and amazing area of study. I would need to talk to, move with, and experience a lot more people in order to develop these areas of learning.

The last step of this whole project will be to actually produce it as a marketable item that people could use in workshops or for their own learning. This will take more collaboration and experimentation, and is another journey unto itself.

Conclusion

The Rank Game for me met its aims by exploring rank awareness through the creation of a game. It was a substantial project in partial fulfillment of the MAPW

program that contributed to the field of study of Processwork, and gave the Processwork community chances to learn about rank, including sparking creativity in how to approach a complex subject. Honestly, the largest motivating factor of this game was the enthusiasm it received every time I would tell someone in the learning community about it. I got help from Processwork students and faculty in creating this game, and for me this also contributed to the community and field of rank. Because rank is created in relationship, one of the best ways to work on it is in this channel.

However, this game is only one small inquiry into how to best address the issue of rank awareness. Rank is a difficult concept because there is not a culture of consciousness around it; instead we have to create this culture of consciousness. Rank, in Processwork theory, describes a wide spectrum of concepts from innate human qualities, acquired contextual social status, internal psychological frameworks, to spiritual states of consciousness. This is a wide expanse of humanness we are trying to gather into the concept of rank. However, rank itself implies something about these different types of internal and external humanness. It implies that there are social stratifications, power dynamics, and deep struggles that arise between people of differing ranks. In order to create or see balance and equality between the ranks we must journey down the path of awareness of our own rank and power and how we use and experience that in relation to each other.

How do we become aware of these different dynamics? By admitting and taking responsibilities for our differences and similarities, and how we create this collective human field of imbalanced power. When we develop awareness through activities like role-play and witnessing, we begin to grasp rank dynamics and have a say in changing

them. By becoming responsible for our use of rank we can acknowledge how we have used rank in the past and how we would like to use it in the future. When we learn to honor our inner diversity and the diversity that lives around us in human and nonhuman forms, we step outside of a power over model, and into a new way of seeing the world. This new way of honoring diversity allows for the flourishing of us as individuals, cultures, and ecosystems. This will take a large shift in human consciousness from the place in which it currently resides and operates.

This game will most likely not create this type of shift, but will hopefully encourage and support challenge of the current way we perceive each other in our different roles, asking participants to become more fluid and more aware of the breadth and expressions of humanness in themselves and others. Hopefully, you will have fun discovering, turn your awareness on, and dive deep to expand your capacity to traverse the levels of reality. May you find wholeness through the integration of all the powers and gifts you find along the way.

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