

Playing Games in Relationships: How *Fog of Love* Relocates Social Deduction

In this presentation, I discuss the ways Jacob Jaskov's *Fog of Love* (2017) relocates the board game genre of social deduction. Sometimes called "hidden identity," "social deduction" games revolve around discovering the secret roles or objectives of other players. This genre includes both high player-count party games (*Blood on the Clock Tower* 2022; *Secret Hitler* 2016) and multi-hour, high stakes, survival games (*Nemesis* 2018; *Human Punishment the Beginning* 2022; *Battlestar Galactica: The Board Game* 2008).

However within this context of violence and intrigue, *Fog of Love* stands out as a deliberate attempt to create a social deduction game for an intimate, domestic setting. The game eschews both high player counts and gritty violence, instead presenting a two player, storytelling focused, rom com.

Fog of Love relocates social deduction both physically, from game nights to date nights, and mechanically, by allowing players to choose and alter their hidden agendas. In my presentation, I emphasize the ways the choice of roles in the game mirrors the way gamers adopt socially acceptable roles (Detering 2018) and consider how this creates emergent goals. I also interrogate the game's use of gender and its marketing as "a board game for couples." From the Kickstarters' gendered labeling of wives as "casual gamers" (Eklund 2016) to the focus on queer couples in expansions, I consider the game's position as a board game for women and queers but not necessarily a board game by women and queers (Hargave 2022). Finally, I investigate the possibility of board games as domestic labor and the potential for playtesting and playing games adding to the already high (Schaeffer 2019) gender disparities in domestic labor.

Keywords:

Domesticity, Fog of Love, Social Deduction, Semi-Cooperative, Domestic Labor, Gender, Queer