

Zach Baker

COG 444 - Skeletal Draft

The Meanings Behind Chess

Introduction

The goal of this paper is to communicate various concepts relating to either chess, semiotics [[47]], or both. This will be accomplished by means of the following eight sections, which each hold information relating to a specific thematic facet of the world's favorite board game.

The second section of this paper will attempt to convey a basic understanding of the aforementioned game in an attempt to elucidate the following sections. I will talk about the origin of chess, in addition to some context [[7]] about the game's constituents and rules. I will also make mention of various styles of playing chess, and what each might indicate.

The third section of the paper will be dedicated to the history of chess. ((8)) Following a rehashing of the invention of chess, I will dive deeper into the role chess has played during its history, and mention notable world champions and what their victories meant for their countries. Mention will also be made of the highly important and equally recent honing of the modern chess engine, which uses artificial intelligence to play chess, often better than even the best human.

In the fourth section, I will review all the information I have previously mentioned through the lens of a semiotician, by talking about signs [[51]], presentational symbols [[41]], codes [[2]], syntagms [[61]], paradigms [[34]], image schema [[21]], and relative meaning associated with chess ((6)).

The fifth section of this paper contains a host of variations made upon the original game, each having their own rules and interesting positions to stumble upon ((9)).

The sixth section discusses many pop culture figures and icons within the semiosphere [[48]] of chess. It will serve to further an understanding of today's world of chess and important figures within it. It will also cover a recent tournament involving many relevant figures, not just in chess ((10)).

The seventh section will signal [[54]] a close to the body of the paper by instructively informing the reader of the codes [[2]] associated with playing chess in person, or “over the board” ((4)).

The Eighth section (which may or may not be included) will discuss chess as it is interpreted as a language ((7)). Many of Saussure's ideas about both language and semiotics apply readily to the board game, as it contains a plethora of paradigmatic [[34]] and syntagmatic [[61]] choices, in addition to being able to draw from the concepts *langue* [[26]] and *parole* [[36]] ((5)).

On the Game of Chess

I want to write about the game of chess, how it is played, and some common strategies or plans within the game. **I plan to focus on** The differences between chess and other popular board games, and how a player goes about winning the game. **I would like my reader to** understand and appreciate the complexity of the game of chess.

- I will write about the rules of chess, and how it is played
- I will write about the board and its notation
- I will write about the pieces involved in chess
- I will write about the function chess serves and connotations associated with it
- I will write about styles of playing chess

History of Chess

I want to write about the history of the game of chess. **I plan to focus on** The development of the game, modifications made to the game such as the addition of certain rules over time, and its function in society over time. **I would like my reader to** gain a basic knowledge of the history of chess.

- I will write about reasons behind the invention of chess
- I will write about the functions it has served throughout history
- I will write about rules added during the lifetime of chess
- I will write about notable famous players of chess
- I will write about the invention of the modern engine

Signs Within the Game of Chess

I want to write about the pieces of chess as interpreted through the lens of a semiotician. **I plan to focus on** the pieces in chess as signs, in addition to strategies and their meanings, perhaps using famous world champion's strategies as examples. **I would like my reader to** understand the differences between the pieces, and take away some basic knowledge of semiotics.

- I will write about the pieces in chess, and what each one signifies
- I will write about strategies in chess, and what each one means
- I will write about tactics in chess, and what certain tactics represent
- I will write about the meaning that relative position lends to pieces on the board
- I will write about syntagms and paradigms as they relate to chess

Chess Variations

I want to write about variations within the game of chess, such as chess 960, a variation invented by Bobby Fisher. **I plan to focus on** various modifications made to the game over time to keep it fresh, and the motivations behind doing so. **I would like my reader to** gain some knowledge of the different versions of chess and the meanings associated with them.

- I will write about variations of chess and how they arise
- I will write about chess 960
- I will write about double chess and four-player chess
- I will write about other variations of chess (potentially more than one paragraph)

Pop Culture of Chess

I want to write about common pop culture figures in chess, and their notable achievements or effects on the game. **I plan to focus on** various pop culture figures in the world of modern chess.

I would like my reader to get to know today's most important chess icons and what they stand for.

- I will write about how social media has influenced the spread of the influence of the game
- I will write about the pogchamps tournament
- I will write about Eric Rosen and GothamChess
- I will write about Hikaru and Daniel Naroditsky
- I will write about the rise of “showy” chess

The Code of Over the Board Chess

I want to write about conventions widely accepted at over the board chess tournaments. **I plan to focus on** social interactions and etiquette one might encounter with formal in-person chess. **I would like my reader to** understand the conventions of over the board chess.

- I will write about what to expect when arriving at a tournament
- I will write about conventions regarding the pieces
- I will write about conventions regarding the clock
- I will write about conventions regarding the scoring of players
- I will write about conventions regarding the titling of players

Chess as a Language (?)

I want to write about how chess might be interpreted as a language. **I plan to focus on** how the concepts of language might apply to chess. **I would like my reader to** understand the differences and similarities between chess and language.

- I will write a brief note or introduction about linguistics or some other opening word on Saussure or something
- I will write about Saussure's langue
- I will write about Saussure's parole
- I will write about Saussure's meaning through difference, as it applies to chess (similar to potentially aforementioned relative meaning)
- I will write about how the functions of language might be applied (or not applied) to chess

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to impart some knowledge of general semiotics and chess, in addition to some more advanced concepts regarding how the two might intertwine. The history and nature of chess were recounted, before viewing chess through the eyes of a studious semiotician. The concept of chess being a language was considered, to dubious but meaningful success, and modern-day chess concepts and icons were explored.