

September 7, 2022

ART 310

Reflection 1

For this reflection project I was tasked with selecting a map from the art world, media, politics, or elsewhere that I felt I could relate back to the readings and topics we've covered in class.

After considering several options I settled on what my first selection had been, the board for Hasbro's Game of Life boardgame. Though the game was first created in 1860 and published in 1960, I specifically had in mind the two newest releases of the game: the physical game itself, adapted and rereleased in 2005, and the digital version for handheld devices, released in 2016. Both versions use the same board, pictured below. The modern version of the Game of Life as we know it has been around for just over 60 years and has sold millions of copies. In fact, this game is considered to be America's first popular parlor game, and its title as such could still be applied today.

The gameplay and the board itself could both be considered maps. The board is covered in images from what could be one state or several areas around the world; beaches and cities and fun activities filling the board from corner to corner. Leading the player through this realm is a yellow brick trail, weaving and winding over itself and through these various locations. In terms of gameplay, the Game of Life maps the timeline of a character's life starting in college and ending in retirement.

Though I have played this boardgame all my life I'd never considered it a map until just recently. Up until our most recent class sessions, I had always classified a map as a view of a city, state, country...etc. Now, however, I am able to understand that there are several different

kinds of maps, some that map locations but others that map ideals, timelines, politics, and even the spread of disease. On the first day of class, we looked at a painting by Thomas Cole. Though we didn't discuss them; I was immediately reminded of his series of paintings titled *The Course of Empire*. This series in itself could be classified as a map of the rise and fall of an empire, starting from a beautiful landscape, trailing through the rise of buildings and statues, and then back to a landscape lacking human life. Much the same, the Game of Life is a map of each players characters' life from picking college, choosing a career, marriage, buying a home, having children, and retirement. The beauty of this map is that it is different for everyone, and the map of each gameplay is unique. The Game of Life is a map of chance.

Physically, I think the board looks much like the map of Boston we looked at in class the other day. Both show an aerial view of their respective locations; however the Boston map labels streets and the boardgame labels life events. Still, the viewer is able to lead their eye through each area by following the roads and paths laid out before them.



© 2009 Hasbro, Inc. All rights reserved. Hasbro and LIFE are trademarks of Hasbro, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. Action LIFE is a registered trademark of Hasbro, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. Hasbro.com