



GODS OF GEEKDOM

GARY GYGAX

And we end with a middle-of-the-road 7 points for knowing that Gary Gygax was one of the guys who invented Dungeons and Dragons. In a way, this is sort of a bringing it full circle sort of thing since we're ending with Dungeons and Dragons, which is often the first step on a young Padawan's path to true geekdom. Now I had intended to do a whole big thing on it being the first big role-playing game and role-playing games leading to simulation computer games leading to those big online virtual world games that now get used to study social and political phenomena. Then I thought, this is the end of the book; they should be able to go figure all that out by themselves by now. So you go do that.

Another aspect of Gary's claim to a spot in the pantheon of the geeks—and one that is appropriate to this

brief chapter—is his remarkable ability to categorize, structure, and otherwise bring order to the hopelessly complex and ethereal thing that is basically just a big old game of “pretend that magic is real.” From character traits to how magic works, to weapons and fighting, to the monsters, Dungeons and Dragons is one of the most phenomenal acts of creating order from chaos. And in many ways, that is what political scientists are trying to do with their subdisciplines and methodologies and research journals and peer review and all of that. Political scientists are not nearly as good at it as Gary, but that is basically what we are trying to do: take something as impossibly complex as politics and organize it enough to figure some stuff out about how it works.