

Sarah Cahn

Art 380

Assignment C

Durak

This game was explained to me by Asher Arenbayev.

Culture:

This is a game that was played in Tajikistan in the 1990s between family and friends, young and old. It was/is a very popular game in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Asher says that Durak was/is as popular as poker in America.

Play:

There are two to six players sitting around a table. Durak is an exciting game, involving intellect, skills, and luck. There is no real winner, only a loser. No one wants to lose and be dubbed “durak” or fool.

Equipment:

International deck of cards.

Definitions:

Attacker = player who places down the cards for the defender to beat

Defender = player that must beat the cards placed before her/him by the attacker

Durak = fool = loser

Rules:

The jokers and cards with numerical values ranging from two to five are removed from a deck of cards. This leaves only thirty six cards. The deck is shuffled and six cards are dealt to each player. Because each player must have six cards each, only up to six people can play at a time. However, sometimes two decks are combined in order to allow more players within a game, or you can leave in the low cards.

After the cards are dealt, the top card on the remaining deck is flipped over and placed sideways beneath the deck with its numerical value and suit exposed for everyone to see. This card determines the trump suit for the game. It is still part of the deck and will be picked up last and used. The player with the lowest trump card goes first, but s/he does not need to use the trump card that turn. Aces are high, and trump cards are higher than non-trump cards.

The starting player is the first attacker. S/he can choose to attack the person to her/his left or right. The game will proceed clockwise or counterclockwise depending on the first player's decision.

The first attacker will choose a card to place face up on the table for the defender to beat. If the attacker has more than one card of the same number, s/he can place it down in the same attack. Other players may also add cards to the attack pile of the same numerical value. If the defender beats the card or cards placed before her/him by the attacker, s/he becomes the attacker and the person to her/his other side becomes the defender. However, if the defender cannot beat the cards placed before her/him by the attacker, s/he must pick the cards up and add them to her/his hand. S/he also

cannot become an attacker this round and the person next to her/him continues the attack. When the cards are beaten, they are set aside, and no longer used in the game.

The defender must beat each card placed before her/him by the attacker by placing a card of higher value on top of it. Non-trump cards are beaten by another card of the same suit but a higher numerical value or any trump card. Trump cards can only be beaten by another trump card with a higher numerical value.

Durak has no winner. The goal of the game is to get rid of all your cards. The last person who has cards is the loser who is dubbed "Durak" or fool.

If all cards dealt in a person's hand in the beginning are the same color, the deck is reshuffled and redealt. Players cannot look through the discard pile. The attacker cannot change her/his mind after announcing her/his attack.

Critique:

Two hints for effective play: Count cards and bluff.

Meaningful: no one wants to be a fool.

It is stupid when six people play with one deck of cards because gives advantage to first attacker and disadvantage to last.