

PATREON COMMENTS FOR Q&A 9

SEAN

I suppose that either my Poli Sci is out of date or I did not get far enough into the academic side, but I considered it impossible to have meaningful discussions if people did not have strong opinions. But that is an undergraduate point of view, with only a dipped toe in graduate level courses. And PoliSci is such a transient field, often used as a precursor to other fields, that many of those "getting a degree" do not take the science of it very seriously.

- Me: From about 2007 onwards, I interacted constantly with political science colleagues, and varying other fields, regarding the school's official and unofficial politics regarding Palestine. It's probably forgotten now, but that topic at DePaul was a national and international issue. I noted immediately that publications or positions which did not suit the administration were always dismissed as "polemics," and that this habit or standard was apparently accepted and often used in ordinary in-discipline topics as well.

CHRISTOFFER

Good answers and makes the urge to play even stronger! The wording of "dragging it to the table" was not ment to show of weight in ammount of material but me being hesitant if my scattered notes and ideas would be enough, much more inline with "is this instrument I think I've cobbled together in some kind of playable way something we will enjoy playing around with?" and I guess the only way to see this is to just play it.

- Me: You can always play *something* wth it, even if it's only for a short while.
- Christoffer: Yes! I think that's the perfect answer for me. I think I got the idea of play testing vs playful play down, in my vocabulary I mean more testing our/playing around with, as opposed to stress testing or product testing. But I can see that playful play is a better way to state is to get away from the assumption of what's being tested is the functionality of the thing itself and not if we get inspired by it to do something with it. Whatever it might be. As a musician, actually played the saxophone for at least 15 years or so, it's easy to see the analogy to music and instruments. But, it's easy for me to say yes and nod my head, how to actually do it is another thing but I'll try to keep the playful approach for later this week when me and some friends will play around with it and see what will come out of it.

PAUL G

I wonder if the language of design goals, playtesting and all the stuff of production and marketing... if this is something that's come into roleplaying through the video game industry. And previous to the video game industry, wargaming. In other words, the term "gaming" means something very different than it meant in 1980 or even as late as, say, the end of the 90s. In wargaming, playtesting makes sense. It seems necessary, in fact. And in videogame production it's also a necessary phase. You have to literally test a thing and see if does a thing and people have to try to break it. But even in the video game production tunnel I think they usually miss the stage of just giving a thing to people and letting them PLAY AROUND with it. Which may be why so many people feel like even videogames are "shallow" or "soulless" compared to an earlier era of development when such things, such ways of thinking about design, were more common. Just some thoughts.

- Me: I'd like to learn more about the production and commerce of wargaming during the 1950s and 1960s, and how it changed during the 1970s. Although the general idea has been around a

long time, this specific industry during this time was conducted among a pretty tight cultural network and - as far as I can tell - demographic. My take, pending more information, is that it wasn't comparable to game production and sales as for, say, Parcheesi or whatever franchise tie-in might hit the stores or catalogues for a year or so. And, given better knowledge of wargaming in this exact topic, how it laid groundwork or helped shape how role-playing was initially presented or distributed. I know a little more about that specifically but without the background, it's hard to understand "what did what." Anyway, though, your larger point is about whether video (and later digital) gaming production and commerce came into or affected role-playing design culture, as language at the very least. I think this is very important but it's also pretty complicated. After all, a very great deal of the content of these media was mined from table-top role-playing, and these media also have their own grassroots and rather loveable phase during the pre-internet amateur computer era (basically the 80s). So I bet there are a lot of circles and arrows to understand. For role-playing, all of those would be operating at the same time as the remarkable "crunch" inward of available titles, and the potential ongoing presence of a title, via consolidated distribution. The shelf-space production-side competition between FASA and the Williams' TSR is part of that too. In other words, if a term or concept or production process "got in" via any of the titles and companies favored by distribution, then it would "get in" to the rest of them very quickly via the peer race to the middle and, for smaller companies (i.e., a couple of people) because they knew no better than "the way it's done." Which is a really complicated way simply to agree with you, but I think some of these details played a significant role in what "got in" and why. Two other things occur to me as well that might be relevant. (1) The remarkable consolidation of pop culture during the 90s, so that if you like X, you must like Y and Z, and various snotty distinctions among, say, manga vs. superheroes, or film vs. prose, or toys vs. wargames, disappeared. (2) The rather recent influx of digital/video gaming terminology and presumed application to table-top play, especially "sandbox," but also many aspects of character generation and concepts. There may be some circularity in that some things about these can be identified in older table-top play, but their modern manifestations are definitely screen-based programming-produced play in origin, and as I say, only imported into role-playing quite recently. I think it has a lot to do with Kickstarter becoming the common venue for production and promotion.

- Paul: Oh I know nothing about that :) I understand wargaming from the point of view of someone who used to play wargames. And who as a kid made up a few of his own systems for playing out battles. It just seems very practical and obvious to me that you need to concretely TEST a wargame. Because it's literally a thing, like a can opener, even if the thing is a process. I think what you're saying is that even an established company like Avalon Hill was still part of the "hobby" scene, i.e. part of a "a tight cultural network" or demographic? I suspect that's true, although I also suspect that AH wasn't that DIY fanzine culture which you described early roleplaying games being like. But I recall that "fanzine" culture still existing in wargames even in the early 80s, when I joined the hobby. There "hobby store" still carried these little wargames stuffed inside plastic bags :)
- Me: I think you're right about all those things.