

GORDON

I'm fine with the centrality of situation, and you may be right about it in all ways - but I do bristle a bit at "only solid one of the three." Surely the practical realities of humans talking means situation is every bit as provisional, unstable, and update-able as backdrop or scene(s)?

I'm not sure where to take that thought without first nailing down more about the differentiation between backdrop, situation, and scene. I mean, I don't really feel the urge to do that - they seem clear enough, and ohgodnonotterminologydefinition**again!** But to develop "I'm not sure this thing is THAT unlike the others" further ... well, maybe only worth **anything** if it turns out to be more of an "engaging and provocative" thought rather than an "irritating and wearying" one for you, Ron.

To ground in actual play. Right now I have a character in a situation: he and the others in pretty straightforward "adventuring party explores" Pathfinder experience surprisingly encountered and (after taking a real beating) ran away from a vampire. The GM, it seems to me, could next highlight something from the backdrop or the scene itself that re-casts just about anything about that situation I (as a player) am thinking right now into something very different, and likewise cause me to re-imagine what my character thinks about it as well.

RON

I did not say "unchanging." I don't know how you got there from "solid." The distinction applies to situation as distinct from either backdrop or scene, at any given moment of play. It doesn't say anything about situation staying the same. The dotted arrows are specifically about how it does not.

GORDON

OK, understood (hopefully). Maybe that means all I should have said is "I don't quite understand what you **do** mean by "only solid one". Situation is the key/crucial element to both work with to create what happens next, and where we'll see the results of what we do **anywhere** in play show up? I think that makes sense to me, but maybe it's not quite aligned with the direction your post is going/pointing ...

RON (re-organized for this document)

That's about exactly what I mean.

Imagine some scenes which concern the sheriff's men pursuing us through a difficult landscape of woods, towns, estates. Think of the situation as the sheriff's governance over the area. So we're in scenes of being pursued because of the overall situation; that's the big black arrow from situation to scene.

By "scene," remember, I am not talking about the same unit as in literature, theater, cinema, et cetera. I am talking about active entities in some location, without reference to what they do beyond the opening moments.

Changes break down pretty well like so:

- If the scenes-as-played never change the sheriff's mind or circumstances, then we keep playing scenes in sequential logic with only "the last scene" to go on, with the overall situation remaining as is.
- We do something in scenes which changes the situation ("scenario," whatever), either specifically in one scene or cumulatively as they go along. E.g., he gets assassinated by us or by someone else. That's the dotted "response" arrow from scene to situation.
- [Also, whoever has authority over backstory may know that the situation itself may be changing intrinsically as we go along, independently from the scenes we are playing.]

The point is that a substantial change in situation will necessarily affect what scene happens next; in fact, that's exactly and only how we know or experience it to have really occurred. That's a new ("changed") big arrow from situation to scene.