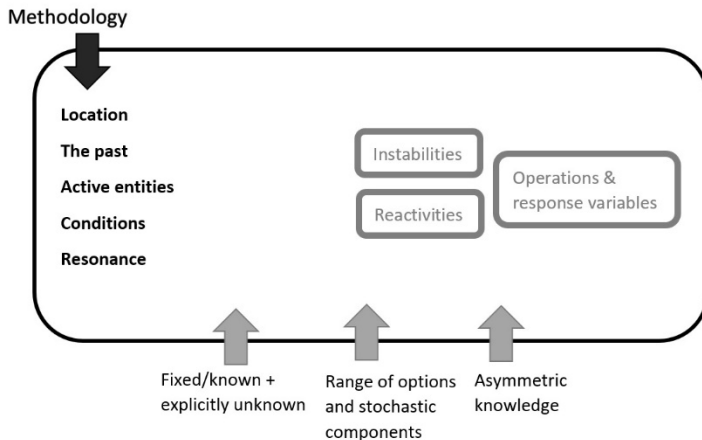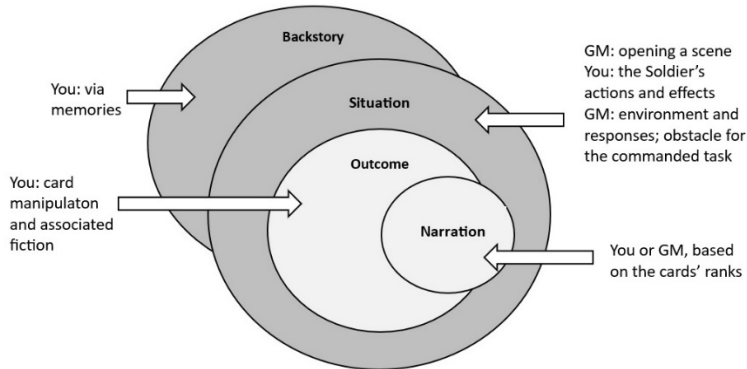## Understanding play

The anatomy of the situation is begun by the methodology of preparation but the grey arrows at the bottom indicate its varying aspects during play (Figure 1).


Fixed, shared knowledge is initially limited to the starting specifications – related content is neither prepared or known to anyone. However, such content must fictionally "exist," necessarily backstopping and accompanying the initial information, so it is added and increases during play. For example, no one knows whether the backstory includes prior interactions between the Soldier (when alive) and the Dark Master, or of what kind, or how much.

The characters' respective knowledges are deeply asymmetrical: the Soldier cannot perceive or process what the Dark Master wants and does, or at least not in any clear way; the Dark Master cannot perceive whatever connections or potential motivations may be brewing in the Soldier's mind. Only events and interactions during play connect and share these spheres of informatinon.

The authorities in play are unambiguous (Figure 2). Questions are asked and answered between the players as needed only to ground their respective exercise of their authorities, not to negotiate nor to reach prior agreement regarding what is said.

Backstory

You: via memories

Situation

GM: opening a scene
You: the Soldier's actions and effects
GM: environment and responses; obstacle for the commanded task

Outcome

You: card manipulaton and associated fiction

Narration

You or GM, based on the cards' ranks

The intersections among authoritative input and its ongoing reincorporation both feed into more backstory content **and** provoke new fictional contexts for subsequent events in play (Figure 3). Both effects provide content for further situational input within turns.

Table-talk

Authoritative interactions

Shifts in time and space

Backstory content
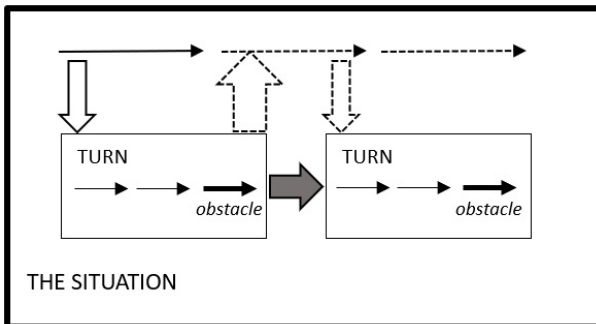
Interactions, perceptions, events
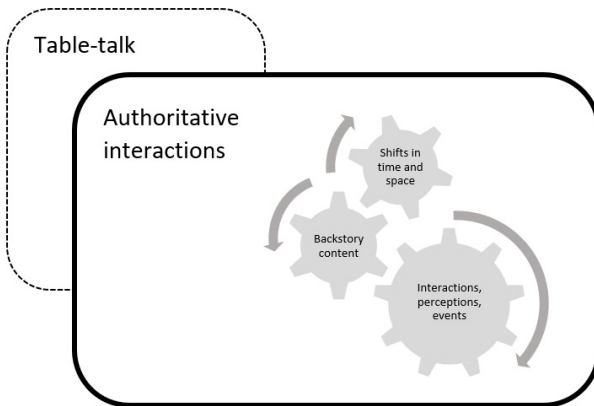
The backstory content may be fragmented or continuous, linear or skipping back-and-forth, and certain or ambiguous. The Dark Master may refer to long-past events during the course of a turn but is not a reliable narrator, whereas the Soldier's memories that arise during resolutions did in fact occur.

Situational changes depend greatly upon the outcomes of each turn (Figure 4a). At the start of a new turn, the GM opens a scene discontinuously from the outcome of the previous command (the solid arrow), using two primary sources of information.
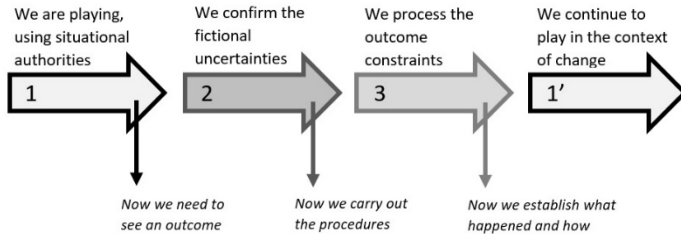
- Backstory content as well as potentially active characters or other details, as established in the previous turn (its small black arrows)
- The Dark Master's agenda (the arrows across the top)
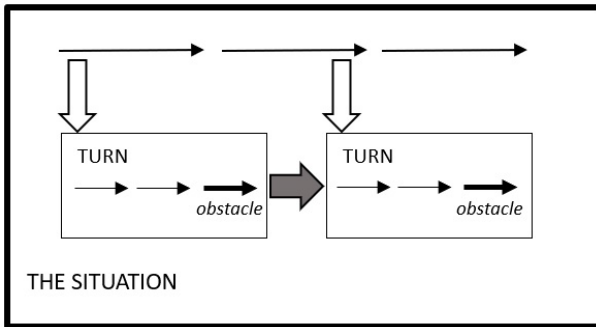
If the Soldier completed the previous command, the top arrows remain unchanged, therefore the Dark Master's agenda is secure and they issue the next task "on schedule" as it were (arrow A). However, if the Soldier failed or resisted, an upward arrow alters the top arrows' content, specifically compromising the agenda (if failed) or denying it (if resisted), therefore upsetting the Dark Master's circumstances (Figure 4b).

The obstacle arrow in figures 4a and 4b may be broken down procedurally (Figure 5).

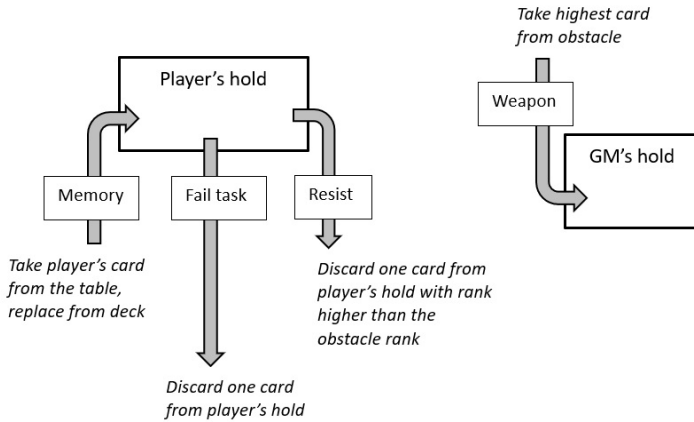| 1 We are playing, using situational authorities	2 We confirm the fictional uncertainties	3 We process the outcome constraints	1' We continue to play in the context of change
	Now we need to see an outcome	*Now we carry out the procedures*	*Now we establish what happened and how*

For arrow 1, you describe the Soldier's actions toward the completion of the command. The GM provides environmental details, conditions, or nominal opposition, so that you may describe the Soldier's movement through space, shifing locations as needed. Both players contribute to the described events and effects. The arrowhead is reached when the GM states that overcoming an obstacle will finish the task or make it easy to do so.

For arrow 2, both players confirm one another's understanding of the circumstances and relevant actions. The arrowhead is reached when the cards are drawn (Intent + Initiation).

For arrow 3, you address the options of using the Solder's weapon, triggering a memory, or resisting the command, in any permissible order [outcome authority; initial Execution]. The arrowhead is reached when the final card array and comparison are established [final outcome constraint], and completed when either you or the GM describe the actions and effects [concluding outcome and narration authorities; concluding Execution + Effect].

The transition from the second arrow's head to the third arrow's head includes systemic options and constraints (Figure 6).

Take highest card
from obstacle

Player's hold

Weapon

Memory

Fail task

Resist

GM's hold

Take player's card
from the table,
replace from deck

Discard one card from
player's hold with rank
higher than the
obstacle rank

Discard one card
from player's hold

After one of the players narrates the the commanded task's outcome, arrow 1' (in Figure 5) begins after the shift into a new turn ("shifts in time and space" in Figure 3 + the transitional arrow in Figures 4a and 4b) .