

Q&A 18 comments summary

SEAN: The album and band that inspired my question was Omen and their '84 album Battle Cry. I remember thinking it felt inspired by fantasy rpg.

PABLO: Thanks Ron. I feel like mine are Claudio's question are indeed very related. One thing that Claudio articulated better than me was the explicit reference to game texts. I keep forgetting to make this explicit distinction, but game texts was what I was referring to, also with the underlying assumption that those texts have to serve a pedagogical function, by necessity, when you are trying to get into this activity and don't happen to live in a place like 1970s California. So, going back to my own framing, I think is very useful for me to acknowledge that I am usually implicitly talking about "game texts as pedagogical devices", and to make that explicit in the future (maybe with a catchier term). In fact, I suspect that actually me and Claudio may have asked essentially the same question, but I'm not sure, as I don't fully understand the application of "situational authority" as a concept here (I probably need to review my notes from People & Play). One way in which I feel I failed to convey what I was after, was in your interpretation of what I meant by "the Dungeon". It was less related to the cultural familiarity or understanding of what types situations we want to engage in, and more to the issue of how we do that successfully. So basically: how do we make play happen? I suspect that there are many answers to this question, but also there's a famous and pervasive WRONG answer to it: RAILROADING. Another way to think about what I'm trying to get at could be, "what is the problem that railroading is trying to solve?". It seems to me like the dungeon is a device that helps play happen, or at least helps keep railroading at bay, by giving a constrained but open ended set of choices. What I meant when I said that people "failed to see" something when translating games from dungeon crawling fantasy to other settings, was that "the dungeon" wasn't just backdrop, it was as much a part of the game as character creation and conflict resolution. What I meant by "the magic", was the assumption that just given character creation mechanics and conflict resolution mechanics, play will just happen. Again, thinking of the text as a pedagogical device that needs to instill some degree of how to. I hope I make sense, and I suspect you may disagree with what I'm stating in that last paragraph, but I hope grounding my inquiries in an expectation of pedagogical value helps to clarify them.

- **Me:** 1. I suggest that you give up the expectation of decent pedagogy or even awareness of its necessity, from role-playing texts. They were almost all written by people less experienced and critical than you, or in some cases, by people who did their best but only partly succeeded, or even, in some cases, by cynical people who had no interest in effective play for anyone. In a lovely and fair world, yes, role-playing texts would either provide excellent pedagogy or state that they were not directed toward that function (and do something else well). This is not that world. 2. I understood your points about dungeons quite clearly. I think there's some fog we can clear up with a screen conversation. Like you, I am strictly interested in "how do we [engage in situations] effectively." Your paragraph about that is perfectly coherent and I don't see why you'd think I'd disagree. So let's talk it over because online text never works.
- **Pablo:** Re: #1, I don't think I'll entirely give it up, but it will certainly help me manage my expectation when engaging with new texts to not be looking for it. Re: #2, You say: "Your

paragraph about that is perfectly coherent and I don't see why you'd think I'd disagree.", ...then I may have failed to understand something about your comments on cultural background when coming to the table, so I'll re-watch. Long story short, I feel there's a disconnect between my question and the answer, whether that's on my end, your end, or in between, and I was trying to put my finger on it. So yeah let's talk about it at some point.

- We did meet for a screen conversation.