



Emergent Approach Drama

Implications of Strategy as the Central Rule

Cut to London, where during a recording session where Alex, Dave, Graham, and Damon, the members of the wonderful Brit-pop band *Blur*, ponder the implications of strategy as the central unifying rule.

ALEX: Whoa, rules?

DAVE: Yeah.

ALEX: First, I thought a strategy was an aspiration. Then I was told it was a plan. Now, you're telling me it's a rule that you get from bottlenecks.

GRAHAM: Good summary, Alex.

ALEX: Oh, and you say the best strategies are what you shouldn't do?

GRAHAM: Brill, isn't it?

ALEX: The whole thing's bloody confusing, I say.

DAVE: It's really not confusing. Getting your strategy from your bottlenecks, not directly from your aspirations, solves a big problem. It keeps us from thinking everything matters. It's that granularization thing. If everything matters, then nothing matters. I'm tired of writing down lists of everything that could matter. A focus on bottleneck strips away all that crap and cuts to the chase.

GRAHAM: Yeah, the bottleneck is the stuff that's most in the way of success. It's cool.

DAMON: Yeah, remember General Doughty's decisive point?

GRAHAM: You, always with the military.

DAMON: Ok, how about the lever principle? That's not military. Hitting the bottleneck is like getting leverage to move the whole system. You know, Newton, and all that stuff we learned at Goldie's school about inertia and force.

DAVE: It is so military—it's like catapults.

ALEX: Ok, so what? Doesn't everyone who does good stuff figure out the bottleneck?

DAVE: Don't think so. And even if they did, why not create a method that mimics their good work?

GRAHAM: Ya know what else? I was reading this American chap Michael Porter's stuff about being unique and all that. I think the bottleneck is a big part of what makes your strategy unique.

Hell, everyone wants to be a bloody pop star, don't they? Play the guitar or something, what's unique about that?

DAVE: I don't want to play guitar.

GRAHAM: Come on, you get my point, don't you?

DAVE: Yeah.

GRAHAM: All I'm saying is, everyone's got a goal to be special, but what's in the way of it, and what you do about what's in the way, is what really makes you special.

DAMON: Yeah, Dave is tone deaf. That's why he plays the drums. He busted his bottleneck, you see.

DAVE: You're a wanker.

DAMON: Seems awfully constraining, doesn't it? Rules and all that.

DAVE: I think the opposite. Rules saying what we can't do give us freedom. If we have the discipline to stay within our boundaries when we write songs, we get honest songs.

ALEX: Yeah, and now you're going to say something about boundaries and low levels, and I haven't the first idea what you mean.

DAVE: Hey, did we ever really write a great song on purpose? How do you plan to write a great song?

DAMON: I lock myself in a room with a case of Carling and a really fine plan to write a good song.

ALEX: No, that's a really fine plan to get pissed.

DAVE: I think we've always followed something deeper, something in our gut that led us to the right place. For our good stuff, at least. And we don't accept any song we've written. Something guides us. I mean, what are you going to do? Plan to put a G chord here, a b minor chord here, and a C chord with G in the bass here.

GRAHAM: It's rubbish; it's like filling out forms, isn't it? It's like planning everything that you're going to do in battle.

DAVE: A bit prescriptive, isn't it?

DAMON: Ooo, is that a vocabulary word? Learn that in school?

DAVE: Wanker.

ALEX: It feels good to dream of writing a great song.

DAVE: Is it enough?

PRODUCER: (Over the microphone) Lads, while I am truly in awe of your brilliance, do you think we can get back to recording?

GRAHAM: Always a killjoy, isn't he?

DAMON: Brutal.

DAVE: Clearly does not understand our need to find the spring of our creativity.



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