

A Case Study on Effective Scenario Writing and Session Management employing Call of Cthulhu TRPG in Peace Education for Adults

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Abstract

To investigate the possibility of entertainment to be a part of peace education for adults, the author wrote a *Call of Cthulhu TRPG* (CoC) scenario for this case study. The players who participated in this scenario afterward answered an open-ended survey. On the one hand, the survey results point to limitations of the current version of the scenario but also implied essential factors for developing and managing CoC TRPG scenarios and sessions for peace educational purposes. First, for effective sessions, the scenario needs to incorporate the main theme intelligibly for players. Second, letting players think about how their characters perceive social issues may help players rethink their views and contribute to raising awareness of an issue. Third, sessions benefit from adapting them to different formats of play: offline and remote play, voice chat, and text chat sessions.

Keywords: Peace education, scenario writing, serious gaming, tabletop role-playing games

要約

大人の平和教育の一部にエンターテイメントを利用する有用性を探求するために、筆者はクトゥルフ神話 TRPG のシナリオを本研究のために書き下ろした。このゲームセッションの参加者による自由記述式アンケートの回答から、現在のバージョンのシナリオの弱みが明らかになったが、同時にクトゥルフ神話 TRPG のシナリオとセッション運営を効果的に発展させるために重要な要素が判明した。第一に、平和教育に効果的なセッションのためには、メインテーマを参加者にわかりやすくシナリオに織り込まなくてはならない。第二に、セッションはプレイヤーにキャラクターがどのように社会問題を捉えるかを考えさせることで、ひいてはプレイヤー自身が社会問題についての意識を高めるきっかけとなる可能性がある。第三に、セッションは異なる形式に対応すべきである。TRPGセッションの形式は大きく分けてオフライン(対面)プレイとリモートプレイがあり、リモートプレイにはボイスチャットセッションとテキストチャットセッションが主な形式として存在する。

キーワード：TRPG, 平和教育, シリアスゲーム, シナリオライティング

1. The Motivation behind this Study: What is the Significance of Learning through Entertainment for Adults?

As human beings living on earth need to cooperate with other humans, attaining and maintaining peace remains a critical issue. Without a doubt, violence reduces the expectancy of our lives. The “Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training” by the United Nations (2011), Article 3 states that education about human rights is not exclusive to children, but it “is a lifelong process that concerns all ages.” Learning how to respect the rights of all people continues to be as crucial for adults as education for a more peaceful world is for children. However, several surveys suggest that usually few adults choose peace education as a subject to learn.

For example, a survey about education and lifelong learning conducted by the cabinet office of the Japanese government (2015) attempted to investigate if 3,000 Japanese citizens, male and female, aged over 20 would take part in lifelong

learning. The largest group (52.3%) answered that they never engaged in any form of education after graduating from university during the previous year. The survey did not include an option explicitly related to peace, but only 5.7% of respondents studied a topic regarding social problems (about society, current events, global or environmental issues). The most popular learning subject was health and sports (21%). Judging from these statistics, most adults in Japan are not actively engaged in learning for peace.

Conversely, 50.8% of adults declared hobbies and entertainment as what they would do during their free time, while about 14% chose learning activities (Cabinet Office 2019). We cannot simply compare such data since the cabinet office conducted the second survey four years later with a different target age group (Japanese citizens aged over 18). Still, many Japanese adults seem to engage in entertainment activities rather than studying, and only a small group of adults chose to explore social issues. Therefore, incorporating educational elements into entertainment appears as one way to increase learning



time compatible with preferences in Japan.¹ Following up on these considerations, the case study at hand examines the possibility of utilizing Tabletop Role-Playing Games (from now on referred to as TRPGs) as a tool for peace education.

Tabletop Role-Playing Games, sometimes referred to as “pen and paper role-playing games,” are a relatively new type of game that emerged in the 1970s. As the name suggests, in TRPGs, players originally sat around a table using pen and paper, different from how they would engage computer RPGs or live-action role-plays. Such games proceed via verbal communication between participants, usually one so-called game master, who manages the game session by referring to a rulebook and a scenario, and more than one player who controls characters through role-playing (Endō 2000; White et al. 2019). This archetype of TRPGs required pens, paper, and a table to sit around. Contrastingly, TRPGs today depend less on such spatial and material requirements because websites such as “CCFOLIA” allow for online play.² Beginning with *Call of Cthulhu* (from now on called CoC), TRPGs thus increasingly gain popularity among the Japanese online community. Section Two below will expand details of *Call of Cthulhu*. TRPGs see not only increased popularity as entertainment, but today researchers also conduct studies to investigate and develop TRPGs for educational purposes.

Cao et al. (2018) introduce several cases in which they used TRPGs as a tool for developing communication skills. Significant findings include the potential of TRPGs for enhancing communication skills to create a social community. Moreover, in successfully designed game sessions, players of TRPGs can improve several human skills such as problem-solving, collaborative decision-making, and skills to find creative solutions to problems (Danianu 2016). Yet, questions of the possibility of TRPGs facilitating a peaceful way of thinking or anything that directly connects to peace education for adults remain unexplored. For this reason, this case study attempts to identify important factors for organizing TRPG sessions and writing scenarios to serve as a tool of peace education.

Instead of limiting education for peace to teaching only human rights or how bad war is, it should be open to utilizing different topics. For instance, religion can be a thought-provoking theme for peace education. As some scholars suggest, great religious teachings and spiritual leaders have been the earliest written guidance to achieve peace (Duckworth 2008; Harris 2008). Many scholars who study religion believe that all groups on earth have

some form of religion and thus refer to it in their works (Burkert 1998; Takezawa 2003; Wilson 1978). Especially, sociobiologists including Wilson (1978) and Burkert (1998) argue that it served as a system to maintain the social order. By serving as the basis of ethics, morality, and laws, religion helped prevent egoism and nihilism of society’s members (Tsuruoka 2004). Therefore, some ideas about furthering peace to live in harmony with others in today’s world might be found at the core of religion or gained from religious philosophy.

Furthermore, having a chance to understand religion may decrease discriminatory attitudes towards people with religious faith. Religious convictions may lead to “insanity” both positively as impressive art and negatively as genocide (Machida 2004, 146). Still, labeling all religious people dangerous can increase social tension and stress. Therefore, it may lead to more crimes by the haters and the people whose beliefs are violated. A survey by Lyons-Padilla et al. (2015) discovered that experiences of discrimination could lead to increased support towards violent extremism among Muslims in the United States. Thus, offering chances to reduce prejudices about religion can contribute to peace in society in the long run.

Lastly, many different approaches towards education for peace would enrich its usefulness. An effective way to learn peaceful attitudes should be distinguishable by people’s backgrounds and preferences. The author used religion as a theme for this scenario, but different approaches present themselves for other scenarios. The importance lies in increasing the chance to find proper ways to foster peace within each person’s mind. The scenario written by the author seeks to let participants encounter helpful ideas from religion.

So, what could be a valuable idea to nurture peaceful attitudes? Studying philosophies concerning faith can be a means to inspire people to live in harmony with other people to create a more peaceful society. For instance, the pantheism Baruch de Spinoza affirms can be interpreted as a hint to respect the human rights of all people. Spinoza states that everything is a modification of God (Spinoza 1951). If we translate God as the most essential existence we should revere, we can interpret his statement like this: Everything around us, including ourselves, is the transformation of this most essential existence, so we should respect every human, animal, and nature. In his work *Ethica*, Spinoza demonstrates the theorem of his pantheism logically. Thus, anyone convinced with his demonstration can interpret this view to the form that the person feels right and adopts the reason

¹ The use of play as a tool of education was proposed already in ancient times, for example, by Plato (Wilkinson 2016). Today, using the elements of games in education primarily through digital means “has become a

popular tactic to encourage specific behaviours, and increase motivation and engagement” (Huang and Soman 2013, 5).

² Website: <https://ccfolia.com/> (accessed 2021/11/08).

to respect every being. While suggesting philosophies does not necessarily require people to change their beliefs, it might be a new viewpoint, especially for those unfamiliar with religion. Nevertheless, many people in Japan today are not only unfamiliar with religion, but they tend to be apathetic about religion or, worse, have a negative image towards religion.

According to research by a Japanese University in 2015 investigating perception about religion among 6000 university students across Japan, almost 53% of students answered that they are not interested in religion (Kokugakuin University 2017). For the reasons for disinterest, “because I don’t feel the necessity of religion” was chosen by 50.1% of the respondents, “because I am not familiar with religions” was 43.6%. The rate was much higher than the other choices such as “because I have unpleasant experience related to religion” (3.9%), “because I see negative news reports related to religion” (19.7%), and “because I simply don’t like religion” (10.4%) (Kokugakuin University 2017, 329). For this question, multiple answers were allowed. Furthermore, 61.6% of respondents see religion as “something dangerous.” This data indicates that Japanese university students are apathetic but hold a negative image towards religion. This prejudice is not because they had unpleasant religious experiences, but perhaps due to the unfamiliarity with religion. Possibly, newly established religions or cults fostered the negative or dangerous image. For example, Aum Shinrikyo carried out a terrorist attack in 1995, and other groups harassed some students when members sought to have them join the group. According to Asahi Shimbun (2016), in 2011, the percentage of students solicited to join cults was around 17% of 2,380 university students across Japan.

The negative image of religion in Japan is not exclusive to university students. Since 1991, GESIS, the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, has conducted a series of research on religion as part of its International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The latest study of 2018 targeted people mostly aged over 18 from thirty-three countries, 46,267 respondents in total. It found out that only 6.1% of Japanese respondents answered they have complete or a great deal of confidence in “churches and religious organizations” (GESIS 2020, 52–53). This percentage is the lowest of all participating countries. In addition, 41% of Japanese respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the question, “Looking around the world, religions bring more conflict than peace” (GESIS 2020, 62). Although this percentage is not the

highest, this data supports the view that many Japanese people distrust religion or religious organizations.³

However, religious teachings or religious philosophies serve a critical view to achieve peace. As stated above, they should not be dismissed just because religion seems dangerous or untrustworthy. Hence, the author attempted to pose a question to the negative prejudice against religion and to suggest the possibility of adopting one religious concept for the sake of peace through TRPGs. This essay analyzes the respective effects of this intervention. As will be explained below, this case study employed *Call of Cthulhu* TRPG since religion and deities are one of the game’s underlying themes.

2. An Overview of Call of Cthulhu

Call of Cthulhu is one of the TRPGs based on the imaginary mythic horror novels written by American authors Howard Phillips Lovecraft and his friends (Petersen and Willis 2004, 28). Thus, the main goal of CoC is to enjoy horror experiences. This specific TRPG counts among the most widespread TRPGs played in Japan at present.

CoC became one of the most popular TRPGs on online video platforms such as Niconico and Youtube in Japan. Most videos about CoC uploaded are so-called “replay” videos, which share the play log of the TRPG sessions by reproducing the actual or imaginary play sessions mainly with texts. CoC replay videos have been released on Niconico since 2012. To the present day (November 2021), the number of videos posted reaches almost 20,000.⁴ *Are You a Werewolf?*⁵ (2,189 videos) and *inSANE* [Kawashima (2013); 1,082 videos] are other famous TRPGs with a presence on Niconico but not close as many uploads. By comparing the number of videos, we can easily argue that CoC is the most popular TRPG in the Japanese online community.

CoC players fall into two categories, the investigators and the game master called “keeper” (Petersen and Willis 2004, 28–30). The keeper prepares a scenario for the session, explains the situations investigators face, and guides or sometimes challenges them to investigate the mysteries. On the contrary, investigator players act out a character they created as one of the main personae during the session.

³ The fact that the sum of Japanese people who prays once or twice a year and several times a year reaches nearly 50 percent (GESIS 2020, 221) may seem inconsistent with the results. Although Japanese people are accustomed to religious practices such as visiting shrines on New Year’s Day, they tend not to consider this religious. Shimada (2007) argues that Japanese people do not count it religious if faith is not associated.

⁴ Website: <https://www.nicovideo.jp/> (accessed 2021/11/08)

⁵ *Are you a Werewolf?* is a traditional TRPG. In most cases on Niconico, the replay of this game was played online, such as *Ruru Saba* (<https://ruru-jinro.net/>; accessed 2021/11/08).

Like many other TRPGs or RPG games, the investigators have “characteristics” such as physical and mental strength, intelligence, appearance, et cetera, which dice rolls determine following the 6th edition of the rulebook (Petersen and Willis 2004, 39–40). Players can decide the personal details of their investigators, such as name, age, occupation, and background, but such information should match the characteristics. Therefore, while the “avatar” of some games represents the player in the virtual world (Castronova 2003, 4), the investigator character of CoC does not necessarily represent the player’s self.

As shown later in Section Five, some CoC players seem to enjoy controlling investigator characters and enriching the personalities of such characters with different opinions from the players’ selves.

There are several ways to prepare CoC scenarios. The rulebook of CoC presents a collection of scenarios, and many more scenario books are available. However, scenarios written by amateurs are much more abundant in terms of numbers and variety. On Pixiv, a social networking service for professional and amateur artists, people can find nearly 15,000 uploaded CoC scenarios to play free of charge.⁶ Similarly, BOOTH offers over 4,600 CoC scenarios either for a fee or free. BOOTH is the online market for artists provided by Pixiv.⁷ Many CoC players in Japan use scenarios found on either Pixiv or BOOTH rather than scenarios in officially published books. While some players might turn their minds towards social problems after playing specific scenarios, scenarios written for peace educational purposes or with the potentiality of such purpose are not yet found to the author’s knowledge. Therefore, the author has created an original CoC scenario, “Nox Philosophiae.” The following section will explain the details of this scenario.

Sidebar 1: Screenshot Explanation & Legend

- 1: This part of the interface displays the background image and icons of player characters appearing in a given scene.
- 2: Player characters and keeper speech appear here. Depending on the purpose, tabs display different things, such as player character speech, important information, or questions/comments. Text sessions proceed following the exchange of messages in this section.
- 3: In this part, players roll digital dice. In this example, the character succeeded in the notorious sanity (SAN) check of CoC.
- 4: The text box to send messages.

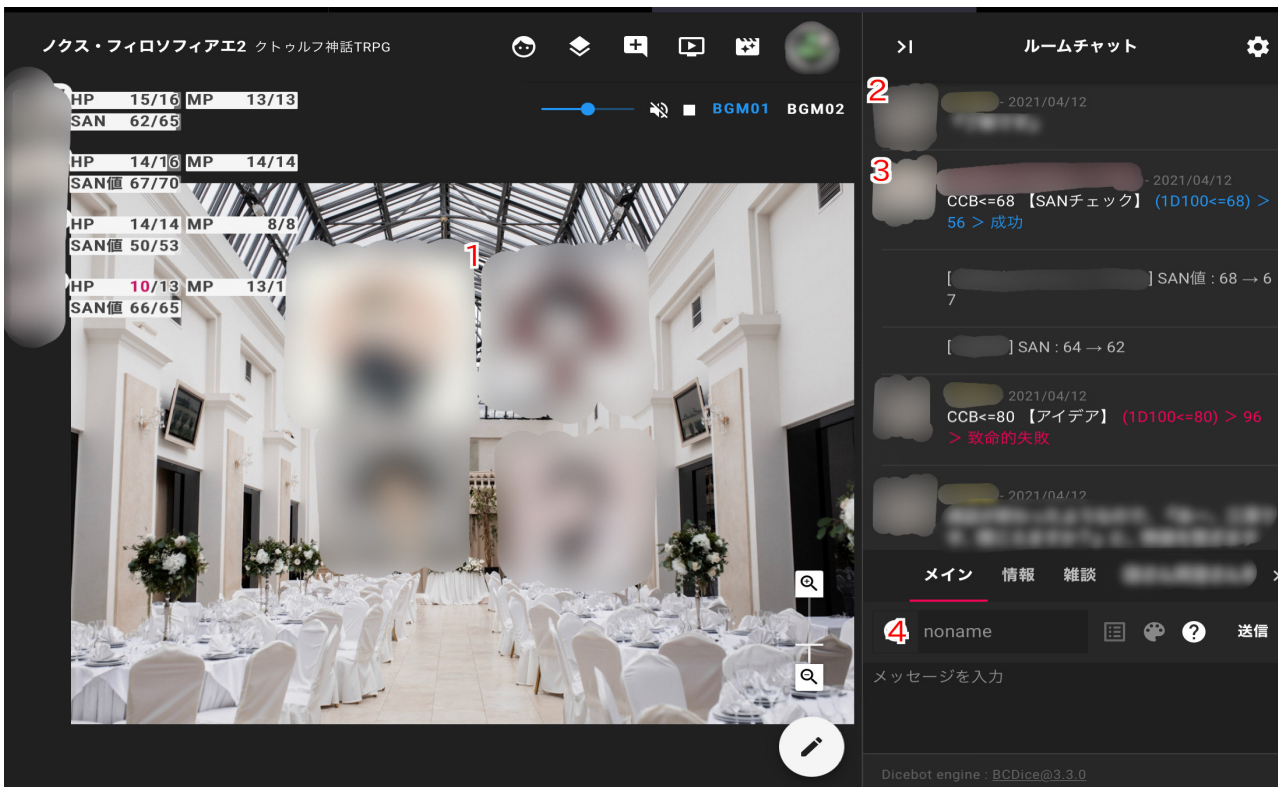


Fig. 1: Screenshot from a “Session Room” Prepared by the Author on ccfolia.com.

⁶ Website: <https://www.pixiv.net/novel/> (accessed 2021/11/08).

⁷ Website: <https://booth.pm/> (accessed 2021/11/08).

3. “Nox Philosophiae”

To investigate the possibility of peace education for adults, the author has written a CoC TRPG scenario, “Nox Philosophiae.” The initial motivation of the participants of this scenario is to act as undercover agents to find out about a suspicious group working at a high-class hotel, “Suikyo So” (Water-mirror house). Participant investigators should be two or four police detectives whose task is to attend a “Nox Philosophiae” party held at the hotel. Half of them take the role of party guests, and the other half acts as guards of these guests. All investigators are provided with information about the hotel and the party before they start the mission. With this preliminary information, investigators think that this hotel and the party are related to suspicious cult groups.

At the party “Nox Philosophiae,” the investigators should act as party guests and their guards. Therefore, the hotel owner Mizuno will call the investigators taking the role of the guest to join an icebreaker game called “Sophia’s Exchange.” If the guest completes the exchange, they receive a special prize as their award. The “exchange of Sophia” is not a special game, but it is just a one-to-one exchange of views about philosophical questions. The question asked by Mizuno to the investigator is, “Can you believe in a God who does not bestow any miracles?” Mizuno will accept any ideas a guest provides. After the investigator’s turn, Mizuno tells her opinion that she would believe in such a God because having religious faith is an invention of human beings cooperating. Thus, faith itself is instructive for her. After the exchange, the investigator receives a “Golden Key” as a prize for this “exchange of Sophia.”

After some party activities, the investigator who received the “Golden Key” will be kidnapped, so the guard investigator(s) need(s) to search for their partner. As both guests and guards investigate, they will know that cyanide will be sprayed all around the hotel in two hours if a “rite” fails. Later, investigators find out that the rite will be performed on the lake in the hotel’s garden by throwing the “Golden Key” with the new owner of the key into the lake. If the guest investigator successfully gathers information from a notebook titled “Sophia’s Exchange Notes,” one should know that the hotel owner Mizuno adopts pantheism. She believes that respecting everything in the universe is one way for humans to live in cooperation and harmony. As a counterargument to Mizuno’s opinion, a stranger, Honda, claims that everything emerged from an empty space, so everything should return to the emptiness too. He believes that for anyone who believes in the power of the empty space, miracles will happen. From this notebook, investigators should have an idea of who is the mastermind of this evil plan.

To become a tool of peace education, this scenario needs to support two intentions: 1) to question prejudices against religions and 2) to suggest Baruch de Spinoza’s pantheism as one point of view to respect all to achieve a more peaceful world. The scenario involves two new religions for the first intention: The philosophical, religious group led by the hotel owner Mizuno and the cult worshipping a fictional evil deity “Yog-Sothoth” from Lovecraft’s Cthulhu Mythos led by the mastermind of the crime, Honda. The author sought to illustrate that not every newly established religion was dangerous by expressing the innocence of the ideology of the hotel owner, although it seemed suspicious at first. For the second intention, the pantheism of Baruch de Spinoza was introduced by citing his text and sharing a thought of Mizuno, who supports Spinoza’s philosophy in the “Sophia’s Exchange Notes.”

As Haavelsrud (2008) points out, in peace education, the production and reproduction of knowledge should be done by both teacher and students to not fall into propaganda or brainwashing. Thus “Sophia’s Exchange” was incorporated in the scenario to not force Mizuno’s idea onto investigators and players but to enjoy a meaningful exchange of opinions, expecting mutual learning among all participants, including the keeper, to occur. Moreover, during the middle part of the session, characters were strictly disjunct, and they were not allowed to know what the other characters were doing. Exchange of information was allowed only for a limited time through transceivers. The intention was to let players experience the importance and difficulty of exchanging information and how failure to transmit the truth can strengthen the prejudice and ultimately lead to a catastrophe. The result of this attempt is discussed below.

4. Examining the Effects of the Sessions

Five Japanese adults aged above 20 years joined the first two sessions of “Nox Philosophiae” for this case study. Both sessions took place online, but the first group played in a “voice chat session,” and the second group played in a “text chat session.” While the former played exclusively verbally using the meeting software Zoom, the latter played by text chat. The first group consists of two investigators and one keeper (the author), and the second group consists of three investigators and one keeper (the author). The author played two roles for the second group: The keeper and a fellow investigator (controlled by the keeper) who pretends to be a party guest. Therefore, the total number of characters who appeared in the sessions controlled by players was five. Two of them took the role of party guest pretenders, and the other three played the guards. All investigator characters who appeared in the sessions of “Nox Philosophiae” were characters who had

already been played more than three sessions using different scenarios beforehand.⁸

There was no beginner among the participants. Most participants have played CoC TRPG more than ten times. One participant had less experience than the others in actually joining the sessions but already showed excellent knowledge of CoC. After the sessions, all participants were asked to answer a survey about the session experience.

After the first voice chat session, the author revised a few points before the second session. Main amendments include the clarification that 1) the cult and the religion worshipped by the hotel owners were different. The author further 2) eliminated the time limit to exchange information. For the first change, the author explained that the hotel owner's secretary was trustworthy because it was unnecessarily misleading to imply the innocence of the hotel. For the second change, the disjunction of characters was stricter during the first run (voice session), allowing only a limited time (three minutes each round) to exchange information via a transceiver. Due to the text-based communication taking more time, the author abolished the limit upon the players' request during the text session. This change may have contributed to the satisfaction of players who prefer to think carefully, while it decreases the thrill without time lag which voice session players enjoyed. Although the data collected originates from the experiences of playtesting versions due to time constraints, the results were valuable enough to count as meaningful findings.

The follow-up survey consisted of thirteen questions, ten of which were open-ended, and was conducted online four days after the sessions. The survey allowed questions to stay unanswered if they were too difficult or uncomfortable to answer. Therefore, all five participants answered the survey, but some respondents did not answer some questions. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete list of survey questions.

Thematic analysis guided the interpretation of results. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a possible method to analyze qualitative data to find patterns and themes within the data. After coding the survey answers, the author merged codes into themes which can be hints of improving the TRPG scenario and organizing sessions to become an effective tool for peace education. Although this survey found out that the current version of "Nox Philosophiae" has limited effect in achieving the intentions mentioned in section 3, three notable themes emerged.

5. Results

The author could identify the following three themes important for the development of CoC sessions for peace education: 1) the presentation of the subject, 2) role-playing as "investigators, not oneself," and 3) differences between session formats.

For most participants, the "Nox Philosophiae" sessions were unsuccessful in presenting the subject "not all religions are dangerous." For example, in the survey conducted April 14, 2021, a respondent replied this way to the question, "Do you think this scenario helps to change the prejudice against religion?" (Question 11 in the Appendix): "Because Koku Suhai [(the name of the evil cult in the scenario)] left a stronger impression [than the hotel owner's religious view], the negative image towards newly established religions will remain unchanged in the people who held such prejudice.". Another respondent recommended that "playing 'Sophia's Exchange' with the mastermind Honda [...] or adding a sequel event to the talk with Mizuno or Honda may change the impression of both characters" (Online survey, April 19, 2021). In addition, the philosophy of Spinoza appeared too complicated. Thus, it required a more intelligible explanation for players unfamiliar with philosophical concepts. However, "Sophia's Exchange" was considered favorable mainly by the guest investigator players who took part in it. For them, the game was understandable because of the example demonstrated by non-player characters, and the philosophical questions asked at "Sophia's Exchange" sounded interesting for further thought.

Both players involved in "Sophia's Exchange" mentioned the joy of fleshing out their investigator characters through the philosophical questions. Since all player characters who participated in these sessions had rich character profiles and narratives accumulated from other scenario sessions, most participants seemed to have a particular attachment to their investigator characters. This rich profile and attachment might have led players to desire to know more about their characters. One respondent wrote, "[through 'Sophia's Exchange,'] to consider how my player character conceives about God enriches the life of my character. So, I thought it would also be enjoyable to play TRPGs by controlling such characters" (Online survey, April 16, 2021). If TRPG sessions successfully offer opportunities to consider how their characters perceive objects misunderstood by many people (e.g., religion seen as "dangerous" in Japan), it could be a chance for players to rethink why such prejudice exists in some people by taking advantage of the tendency to desire enriching character profiles. However, awareness-raising did

⁸ Some players enjoy playing the same characters several times for different scenarios as a campaign play. In a campaign, characters can reflect the growths, memories, and effects gained from previous scenarios.

not fully surface through this version of the scenario and thus, remains only a possibility.

Furthermore, we should pay attention to differences between the session formats. In contrast to voice chat sessions ending in two and a half hours, text chat sessions took about twelve hours to complete. That text chat sessions usually take longer than voice chat sessions does not surprise because of the typing time required for each participant. A survey respondent mentioned that while voice chat sessions allow players to enjoy the thrill because the narrative proceeds without time lag, they do not have enough time to ponder important questions like a philosophical inquiry from “Sophia’s Exchange.” Still, this short time also contributed to the thrill (Online survey, April 18, 2021).

Conversely, the advantages of text chat sessions include an abundance of time to tackle difficult questions, and the ability to look back at the utterance of characters that would have been ignored in voice chat sessions helps players think deeply about important decisions. Considering the aim of this scenario, giving enough time to make decisions might have been more effective for awareness-raising. However, at the same time, the massive time required for a text chat session can be the disadvantage of this type of session too.

Moreover, we should consider the effect of remote play. First, in both sessions, remote play allowed to host diverse players who live in Eastern and Western parts of Japan. Second, the feature of remote play is that participants gain less information about other participants than playing offline. Both players and keepers cannot see and guess if any member is feeling uncomfortable. In fact, the keeper did not realize that some members felt unpleasant or bored during the sessions. Although remote play allows diverse people to play together readily, ensuring all participants can express their discomfort is critical, as explained below.

Last but not least, rather most importantly, the person who manages the session must try their best to make the session enjoyable for all. Although this scenario attempts to be a part of peace education, the entertainment aspect is as crucial as the educational element. A player felt discomfort with a scene that forced characters to dance together. Thus, it was “impossible to enjoy [the session] after this so much” (Online survey, April 17, 2021). The long-playing time required for the text session within one day made another respondent tired (Online survey, April 20, 2021). If the session left players with a bad taste in their mouths, most likely, they would not play scenarios in the future that resemble this scenario. Even worse, they might have a negative image about anything that appeared in the session. The learning would be very ineffective in this case. But if players could enjoy the majority of the session, the possibility

of playing a similar scenario again becomes high. Even if players could not learn anything new, they might learn something next time.

6. Conclusion

The result of this case study is summarized below.

First, to present the subject of the scenario effectively, the author of the scenario should explain the subject plainly and preferably with everyday examples. Let player characters have a conversation with characters who have different thoughts and push them into events that allow characters to experience the subject matter. And try to impress players with the central concept (in the case of “Nox Philosophiae,” the pantheism of Spinoza or the harmlessness of religion) but not with the counter idea (the mastermind’s evil plan). Furthermore, the author needs to be cautious not to make it a tool of propaganda or brainwashing. It is crucial to highlight the central concept, but it should not force players to believe blindly that this idea is the only truth.

Second, CoC players enjoy controlling characters who have different personal profiles, backgrounds, and points of view from the players. Enriching the characters is one aspect of enjoying the game. Thus, at the same time, it can serve as an opportunity for players to think about issues surrounding real life by letting them consider how characters would think about it first during the session.

Third, adapting to different and flexible session formats is also essential for comfortable play. For voice chat sessions, the keeper is advised to give enough time for thinking and leave important information written so that players can refer to it during the session. In the case of the text chat session, inform the players that this session will be long and divide the session into two or more parts as desired.

And most importantly, the author of the scenario should try their best to make it enjoyable for all players. Also, during the session, all players need to be careful not to deny any belief each member holds.

The survey found out that the sessions using the current version of “Nox Philosophiae” were unable to become an effective peace education tool. However, some participants shared their views through the survey about the prejudice against religion in Japan and how CoC might be possible to be an opportunity to question such bias. Such statements imply the utility of the occasion to ask players to think and share their opinions about scenario topics regarding social issues, similar to the themes often found in Nordic larps (Stenros 2014, 151). Further study on the effective incorporation of the

occasion for discussion into the CoC TRPG sessions will be beneficial.

Appendix

Survey Questions (translated from Japanese).

1. When did you participate in the session?
2. Which session format was used in the session you joined: voice chat session or text chat session?
3. Please write down the advantages and disadvantages of the session format you used.
4. Which role did you take during the session: the party guest or the guard?
5. Please write down the points you enjoyed and points you could not enjoy. If any, please tell me how the scenario or the session could be amended to make it more enjoyable.
6. How did you feel about "Sophia's Exchange" (e.g., interesting, challenging, "I'm glad I didn't need to do it")?
7. The scenario introduced the pantheism (no humanlike God is residing somewhere, but everything is God) of Dutch philosopher Baruch de Spinoza. How much did you know about this concept?
8. How did you feel after the session and after reading the explanation of the scenario about Spinoza's pantheism (e.g., not understandable, agree, disagree, etc.)?
9. How do you think about the way of thinking of Mizuno and Honda (e.g., agree, disagree, helpful, or not helpful to adopt)?
10. Please write down if anything changed within yourself, such as your way of thinking after the session.
11. This scenario was written to change the prejudice against religion as a part of peace education for adults. To this end, the scenario suggested Spinoza's pantheism and contrasted the viewpoints of hotel owner Mizuno and the mastermind Honda. Do you think some people who think religion and newly established religions are "suspicious, shady, and dangerous" will change their view by playing this scenario? If so, how?
12. How do you think we can adapt the scenario and session management to suggest a way of thinking which are helpful for our daily lives (such as philosophical and practical knowledge) and help players acquire such knowledge?
13. Please write down if you have any other opinions (anything about the scenario itself or the management of the game session, e.g., "I would manage the session in this way if I used this scenario as a keeper," "I want to play a simpler scenario next time," or any thoughts that came to your mind through interaction with other players).

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