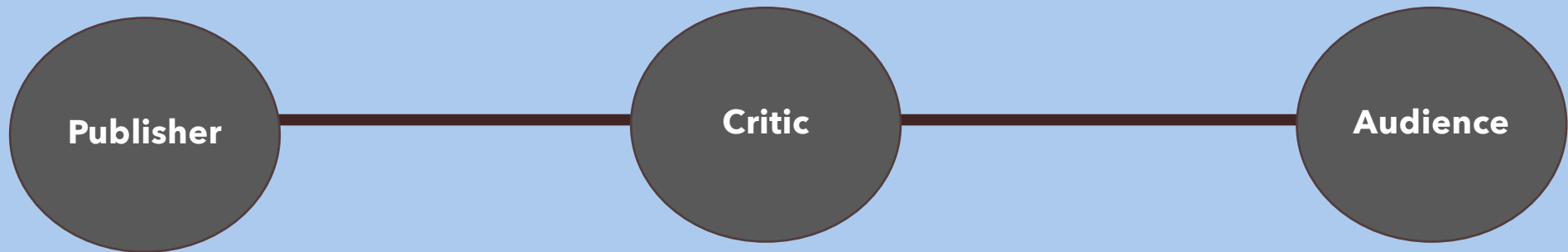




What do
we owe our
audience?

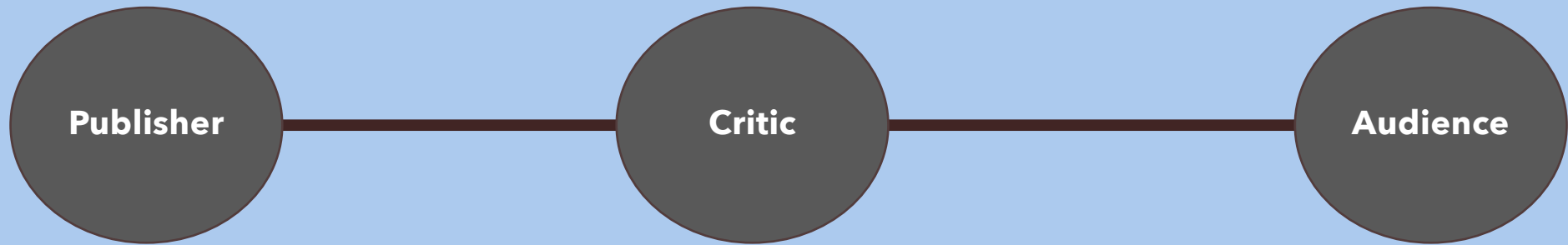
Paradigm

The relationships between critic with publisher and audience may favour one direction





Kickstarter previews
favour the **publisher**

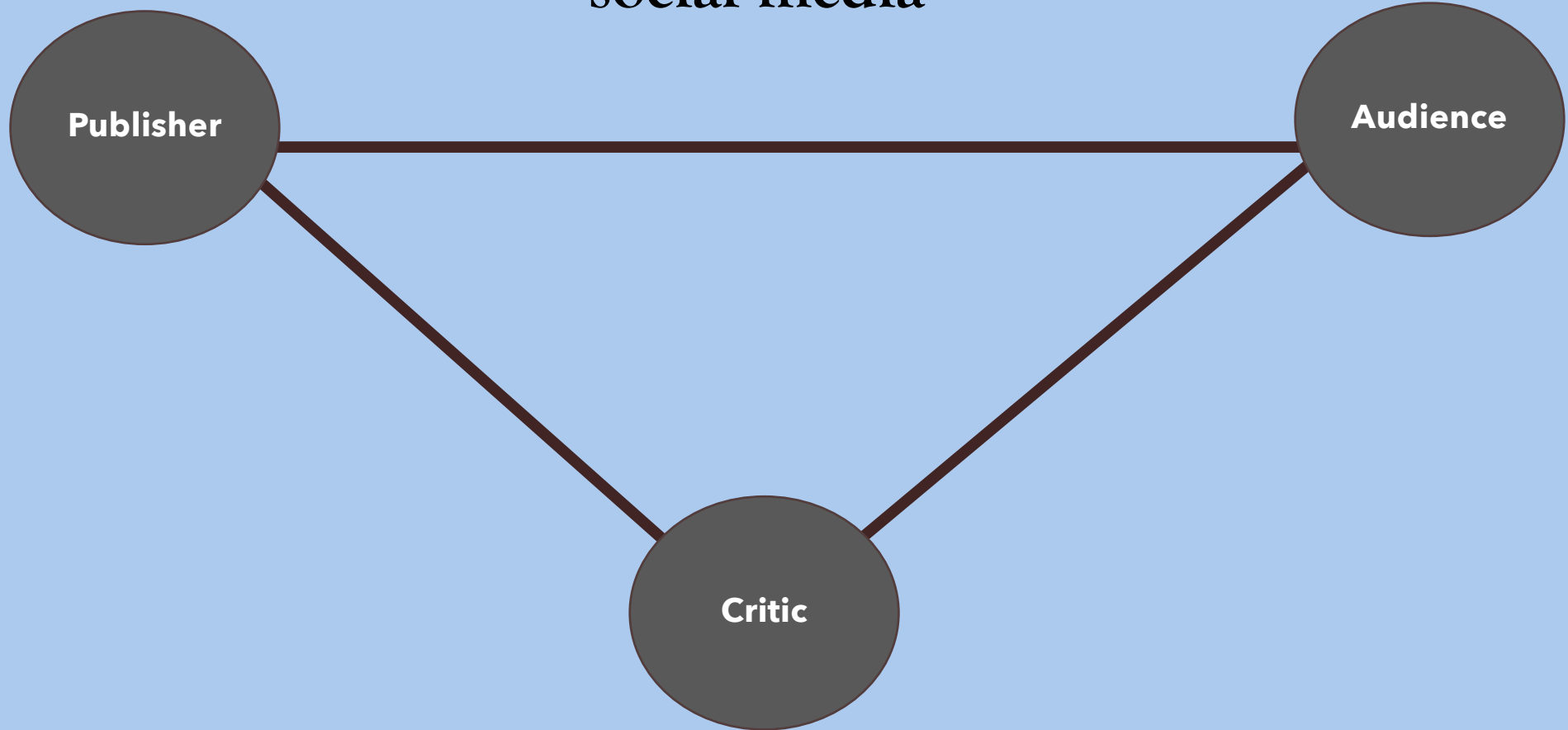


Middle ground -
accepting review copies
but serving the audience
over the publisher



Reviewers who favour
the **audience**

Criticism in the age of social media



Publisher



Critic



Audience

- When the perception of a game is negative, the audience will seek out validation
- This may lead to a lack of critical thought or an unpleasant environment

Publisher



Audience

- Publishers who bypass the critics
- Criticism may be seen as an attack on the community

Do we owe our audience transparency?

What is
transparency?

- Review copies
- Paid promotion of a game
- Paid promotion of something else
- Relationship with publisher
- Relationship with audience vs the publisher's audience

Do we owe our audience transparency?

What is
transparency
not?

- Oversharing
- Parasocial relationships
- Objectivity

Do we owe our audience consistency?

What is
consistency?

- Good understanding of your world view from outside of boardgames
- Reasons for doing what you do
- Self-assuredness

Do we owe our audience consistency?

What is
consistency
not?

- A release schedule
- Continuing to like the same games

Do we owe our audience expertise?

What is
expertise?

- Context
- Knowledge built over time
- Challenging your own assumptions
- Differentiating environment, playgroup, game element, game overall

Do we owe our audience expertise?

What is
expertise **not**?

- In-depth knowledge of the gameplay
- Being 'good' at a game

What is “Media Literacy”?

An ability to:

- Analyse
- Research
- Decode media

What is “Media Literacy” in relation to board games?



- How do you feel about this game?
- What thoughts come to mind?

What is “Media Literacy” in relation to board games?

- What is the setting?
- How does the setting influence the game?
- What does this alternative history propose?
- Does this game have commentary?
- Does it subvert expectation?

What is “Media Literacy” in relation to board games?

It's important to remember that the designer, publisher, artist etc may not have even considered these questions

But **you** should.

- It shows expertise on the subject
- It shows that you've done research on a subject with which you weren't familiar
- It strengthens your work
- It elevates future work by broadening the field of discussion

Do we owe our audience
media literacy?

YES!

How do you enhance media literacy?

Many reviewers come from an 'enthusiast' background rather than a 'critic' background

Media literacy is a learnt skill which can be acquired through many different means:

Podcasts, books, YouTube videos, college courses.

And can be practiced through even more means:

- Watching a film
- Watching YouTube videos
- Reading fiction books
- Playing boardgames

How do you enhance media literacy?

Practice by looking at:

- The Importance of the setting
- How is it presented?
- What is it trying to say?
- Does it achieve that?

- What else can you look at?

Do we owe our audience space?

What do we mean by space?

- Digital space
- Social media
- Discord
- Newsletters
- Facebook/Bluesky/Instagram presence
- BGG presence

Do we owe our audience space?

How does it apply?

- Community-building
- It's your space to create and curate
- The space should align with your philosophies/world view
- A way to connect with people in a non-parasocial way
- You're guiding your audience by showing them it's not just about numbers but that you care about the space you create
- It extends your reach

Do we owe our audience space?

Considerations:

- Moderation is the most powerful tool you have
- Effect on your mental health
- Capability to moderate
- Access into the space
- Why you are interacting
- How it best suits you to interact

What do you think you owe your audience?

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Questions for us

Examples:

- What has worked
- What has not worked
- How what we have done can apply to your own work or audience
- How to understand why something you have tried has not worked out
- How what we've spoken about applies to you