

Oxidant – Western Whitewashed Workers

First Draft, March 2011, Guy Shalev.

This is a game. Games are meant to be fun. This is a game about life. Lives are not necessarily fun. The fun of games about unfun events often comes from the fact that these are not our lives. What if those truly are our lives? It sometimes helps to still play those games, for through playing those games we can tell ourselves our lives are nothing like it.

This game is a companion game to my “The Friendship Game”, in a way – it can be played as a game, but it is a mechanic/game that addresses something specific, a particular aspect “larger” games tackle, and can be plugged into systems lacking those. I think I might also come up with how to mix and match this with The Friendship Game, so you could play one game with both of these.

Finally, The Friendship Game was designed as a positive game. This game also has an atmosphere, but I don’t yet know what exactly it’ll be, as I’ve an idea of this game’s shape, but no exact details yet, as I write and then look back.

What you need to play:

- Bunch of 3”*5” index cards to write upon, and pencils/pens.
- Several six-sided dice (d6).
- Tokens in three colours, I suggest Red, Black and White.
- Friends who you’d like to sit down and have a game with.
- Those stickers you can write your name on and put it on your shirt.

Setting Up Play:

1. Discuss amongst yourself what type of setting your game will have; focusing on the socio-economic set-up: Suburban life, skilled academics, hipsters just out of high school, etc. All characters must come from the agreed upon setting, which does not have to be *overly* specific.
2. Go around the table, from the person sitting at its head and proceed in a clockwise manner.
 - a. Name your character. Write down its name on the sticky and place it on your chest. First name only, unless another character is a relative of your character and they share a last name.
 - b. Describe in a sentence or two who your character is, a string of 4-5 key-words that’d place him within the milieu discussed in stage #1 would be sufficient as well.
 - c. Take an Index card and write a major Goal for your character in their lives, in the direction they want their lives to take, aimed for the future: Starting a new degree in the university, taking a year long trip around the world, getting a promotion, etc.
 - i. Place 10 Red Effort tokens on the Goal. These will need to be cleared away for the Goal to be accomplished.

- ii. Split 5 tokens between Black Money and White Joy tokens and place them on the Goal. When the Goal is accomplished, you'll obtain these.
 - iii. Take two additional index cards, and write on each an Obligation that is external to your Goal situation (not work, university, etc. related). Place 3 White Joy tokens on each. This is how much joy and rejuvenation you gain from these connections, and how much you give them. They are the strength of your connection – for any connection is an Obligation.
 - iv. Take a fourth and final index card, and write on it "Self". Place 5 Red Effort tokens on it. This is how much you've got to give. This will never rise.
- d. Say hello to your fellow characters after each character introduces itself.
3. Begin playing.

Structure of the Game:

Gameplay proceeds clockwise, with each player taking a turn for their character before gameplay proceeds to the next player.

The player to the right of the active player is called "The Past", for they have already been passed, and they will set the scene along with the active player – the active player specifies what they wish to accomplish, where they are, and The Past will build up on it, introduce hardships and portray the other characters in the scene, especially those older and more important than the character, and those that can demand things from them – parents, significant others (sometimes), employers, etc.

The scene The Past sets with the player, but where The Past has final say is called "Paying Dues".

The player to the left of the active player, whose turn has not yet come, is called "The Future", for their turn too, will come. The Future sets those who support the player's character, who will help them, give them moral support, whoever believes in them. These are often younger than the character, such as their children, their significant others (sometimes), new workers in their work-place that trust them, etc. The Future is also in charge of scenes regarding Obligations.

The scenes set up by The Future are called "Drawing from the Future". After each of their regular scenes, if the player had drawn upon one of his Obligations, then they are entitled to one and only one Drawing from the Future scene.

After all players had taken their turns, completing one Paying Dues scene and up to one Drawing from the Future scenes, a new cycle begins. A cycle is called a Season, and at least one week of in-game time must pass between Seasons.

Structure of a Scene:

Assume you always put enough work to keep your status quo at work.

Every effort token placed on your connection will take care of one happiness, if you place less, then it'll go down by one – you can only let one connection go down by one each turn, and then you'll draw on it later.

Each effort token placed on the goal becomes 1d6. 1-3 fails, 4-6 succeeds. 1-2 you remove one Effort Token per 1-2 result. 4 you remove one effort token from the Goal, getting closer. 5-6 you

make big strides, remove two effort tokens from Goal, but you'll now have to outdo yourself, and also remove one Red Effort Token from yourself per 5-6 result.

You can also Draw from a connection (after placing enough effort tokens to satisfy it!), remove one White Joy Token from it, after, and you gain (1+ White Joy + Black Money tokens on it) dice for rolling this turn for your Goal, who get removed after, but removed last from any 1-2,5-6 results.

Get Scene after.

Can place a Black Money Token, up to one per turn for yourself, and up to one per turn on Connections (if you have two connections, or more, can only place on one, in addition to placing on your Self). This represents Debt.

If placed on a Connection, when you need to count how many Red Effort Tokens are required to maintain it, the amount is White Joy minus Black Money tokens on it.

If a Connection has more Black Money than White Joy tokens on it, it *Snaps*. Run a Drawing from the Future scene describing its deterioration beyond repair, and them walking out on you.

A Black Money token placed on your Self represents additional effort and money taken from other places for the sake of your Goal, such as a loan or burning yourself at both ends.

When you roll dice for seeing how much closer you get to succeeding at your goal, roll an additional die for each Black Money token. These dice never get removed for 1-2, or 5-6 results.

Achieving your Goal:

When a character achieves a Goal, it is a momentous event. Run a scene, refer to all the trials and hardships, all the efforts they've gone to get it. Just like a eulogy, just like the speeches they deliver for employee of the year.

First, for each Black Money token you have taken as Debt, you *may* remove one Token from your Goal – rather than obtain more money and Joy, you're paying for the road you've taken this far, but this is not mandatory.

Take the remaining Red Effort tokens from the pool and add them to your Self. You now have additional resources at your control.

Take the remaining White Joy tokens, you may add up to one to each existing Connection, and use the remaining ones to form new Connections. No Connection may have more than 3 White Joy tokens.

Write a new Goal, what your character wants to achieve *now*. Place 10 Red Effort tokens on it, and split 5 Black Money and White Joy tokens on it, which you'll achieve if you accomplish this new Goal.

Game End:

When your character has no remaining Connections or Red Effort tokens on their Self at the end of a turn, they have burnt out, and give up on their goals, and they try to hang onto what they have now, and contemplate what they have lost. Set a scene describing it as necessary, touching on the trials and hardships the character underwent. Do style it as a eulogy.

Notes:

Anything from Scene Structure was written quickly, before it escapes my mind, so it needs to be re-written for better clarity, please bear with it.

Game could easily be modified into "The American Dream", by giving Goals only 5 Effort tokens, by giving characters 6-7 tokens, by only making results of 1/6 remove effort tokens, or by any mixture of the above. You can also make things more bleak by the reverse.

Combining this with The Friendship Game at one time gives a lot of options for Secrets, but also if you enable Light Tokens from there to become Connection/Effort tokens/dice here, you can easily make things manageable, so long you keep falling back on your connections, making "The Friendship Engine" even more important. Perhaps with either each character getting a non-work scene, then work scene, then drawing scene... or having a drawing scene also be a friendship scene, or first everyone has non-work scene round then a work scene round? Many options.