



# THE GLASS DREAM GAME



## BY BEN ROSENBLOOM

A game of *belonging outside of belonging*  
Inspired by *Dream Askew* by Avery Alder,  
*Dream Apart* by Benjamin Rosenbaum,  
& *The Glass Bead Game* by Hermann Hesse

*Powered by the apocalypse*

Cover image from W.73, a cosmography manuscript  
Courtesy of the Walters Art Museum

## THE OVERVIEW

The Glass Dream Game gives us teachers and students, ivory towers and scars of war, ethics and politics, games and philosophy, catastrophe and the glint of a better world from an intellectual community, asking “*What do you do next?*”

The time of war and destruction has ended. It ended because the world rose up as one, then banded together to create an academy, meant to preserve our best lessons and teach us how to move forward. And then they moved on, and forgot.

Nations once again populate the map, industry is returning, and people continue to live as they always have, as best they can.

But we, the teachers and students, are still here, still studying, still learning, still building a better world. If we learn enough, could we finish what they started? Can we teach the world utopia? Can we learn it ourselves?

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**Utopian thought and action in and beyond the academy.**  
Collaboratively generate a post-post apocalypse world.  
*For 3-6 players across 3-4 hours.*

## TONE & SETTING

My obvious, overwhelming influence is *The Glass Bead Game*, but it should not be considered required reading. In *The Glass Bead Game*, Hermann Hesse paints a picture of a collegiate country - in the book, it's referred to as "the pedagogic province" - created by the combined might and will of the global population, after an age of apocalyptic war and destruction. Players do not need to have direct experience with higher education to play either - the real world academy is exclusive enough. In this game, you get to create your own. It need not look anything like the academy we know.

The one message from *The Glass Bead Game* that bears repeating is that it is (and I am) deeply critical of academic society, and its efficacy and purpose. The story concerns the journey of one brilliant man who is particularly successful in the academy, but realizes that he cannot accomplish what he wants from within.

That said, there are pieces of *The Glass Bead Game* that I don't wish to directly influence this game - only men can join that academy, for example, and it's rooted deeply in a white european understanding of education and accomplishment. In collaborating on your own academy, some of these oppressive traits, and others inspired by the academies of today, are included as prompts for things your academy might still struggle with. That's not for "realism" - that's to investigate whether a utopian society can address its own problems and history.

The last explanatory piece of *The Glass Bead Game* is the game referenced by the title. In the book, it represents the most abstracted form of academic pursuit - the reduction of all knowledge to symbols, and the playful manipulation of those symbols to perhaps prove a point. Its rules are intentionally never explained, so they can't be reproduced here. The game (and its players) represent a kind of tradition and promise that is at its best, playful, educational, and revelatory, but at its worst, navel-gazing, dull, and counter-revolutionary. In the setting of *The Glass Bead Game*, the game is an important piece of culture, but is moving from a position of respect to one of tolerance. You are free to create your own institutional game, and how it works into your world.

Aside from other pedagogical works that have influenced this game, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his belief that a responsible, loving, action-taking education can change the world is also incredibly important. A successful, revolutionary dialogue requires love, trust, reflection, and action, and is built not out of preconceptions of revolution, but by the people who know what needs to change.

Much of my thinking about Utopias has recently centered around Friends at the Table's two latest seasons, Twilight Mirage and Spring in Hieron, and before those, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

## & A PERSONAL NOTE

There are many problems with academia today. As I was finishing playbook design in earnest, a news story began circulating that, in 2017, there were more than a dozen disciplines where no black students earned Ph.D.s, merely one of a horrible number of affronts against students of color. College is enormously expensive, and I've seen the way my college failed to serve my friends of color, or my friends in poverty. The academy is sexist, racist, exclusive and exclusionary, causes real harm through action and inaction, and profits from all these and more. It's hard to see sometimes that there's anything good about it.

And yet, the dream is hard for me to shake. I am the child of professors and librarians. Since I was a kindergartner, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher, and now I am one. I know that education alone cannot save the world, but I have also seen the way meaningful connection and insightful help can change peoples' lives. It does not excuse, or make up for, or change what the world is, but I hope that it can change what the world becomes.

As a parting note, I want to make clear one last thing and apologize - the line drawn by *Dream Apart* and *Dream Askew* suggests that the way the *belonging outside belonging* engine/design philosophy/playstyle works best is by telling the stories of marginalized communities. *The Glass Dream Game* does not concern a marginalized community, unless your academy is different. The point is certainly not that anti-intellectualism or meritocratic exclusion makes a community marginalized, or, maybe worse, that "gamers" are a marginalized community.

# WELCOME TO THE **ACADEMY**

## **CIRCLE 3-6 VISUALS**

towering spires, beautiful garden, well-kept temple,  
walls, ornate gate, cultivated forest, rebuilt houses,  
new architecture, train station, rebuilt buildings,  
wasteland, clever technology, patchwork libraries, the  
borders of neighboring states, conspicuous splendor,  
austere style, pastures, flowing water, the ocean,  
schools, new development, rubble, public spaces,  
concrete & glass, ivy, hillside hamlets, scarcity outside

## **CIRCLE 3 PROMISES OF UTOPIA**

historical consciousness, culture of tolerance,  
restorative justice, ethical focus, healthcare,  
flourishing arts, scientific progress, food for all,  
environmental stewardship, freedom from fear, open &  
respectful discourse

## **CIRCLE 3 THINGS IN CONFLICT**

widespread inequality, oppressive traditions,  
xenophobia, instability, dehumanization,  
over-intellectualization, dismissive of new voices,  
colonialism, capitalist thinking, insularity, reactionary  
politics

**JOT DOWN ANY NOTES YOU NEED.**

**SKETCH A MAP TO THE RIGHT.**

# INTRODUCING THE MAGISTER

*Part public intellectual, part minor celebrity, part doddering professor. The Magisters of the academy have scaled the heights of intellect, seen further and clearer the shape of a piece of the world, and returned, apparently to squabble amongst themselves.*

*The Magister is a knowledgeable individual. Their power is methodical, precise, and scholarly.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Are you visionary, collaborative, or stodgy?  
Does your work make a difference?  
How far will you go to learn more?*

## CHOOSE A NAME:

Friedrich, Jordan, Aviva, Joshua, Sree, Salar, Judith, Nathan, Tegularius, Mohammad, Enyue, Salma

## CHOOSE A LOOK:

tired eyes, intense focus, warm demeanor, strict countenance, sharp tongue, rebellious attitude

magisterial robes, practical garb, sharp dress, careless affect, teaching uniform, meticulous style

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ATTENDED:

Waldzell, Borzeguim, Lyceum, Pushpagiri, Hirsland, Taixue, Gukhak, Kachokolo, Gondishapur, Haskell

## CHOOSE AN ACADEMIC SPECIALITY:

ethics, music, art, history, economics, literature, dance, physics, alchemical symbology, aesthetics, mathematics, biology, psychology, linguistics or your own:

## CHOOSE 2 OLD FRIENDS:

your school friend you haven't kept in touch with, the professor you always get into arguments with, your aging childhood teacher, your collaborator, someone outside your field you admire, your old rival from away, an old student of yours, someone you met in the neighboring states

## CHOOSE 2 INSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS:

a magister you met at a talk, the departmental assistant, the foreign affairs minister, the professor who's teaching your work, the head of a school in a neighboring state, your latest student

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT:

- ⊞ Why did I invite you to one of my lectures?
- ⊞ What official function did we suffer through?

## TIPS

- ⊞ Advocate passionately for your interpretations and beliefs.
- ⊞ Bring forward epistemic, ethical, and metaphysical dilemmas and make them matter.
- ⊞ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone comes to you for your expertise or experience, they gain a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ⊞ Persuade someone with reason and discourse.
- ⊞ Deduce a hidden truth or subtle beauty.
- ⊞ Admit you don't know an answer.
- ⊞ Tell someone something they need to hear.
- ⊞ Leave the academy to pursue other good.
  
- ⊞ Ask "What could you teach me?"
- ⊞ Ask "What here could I make better?"

## REGULAR MOVES

- ⊞ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ⊞ Perform your duties, at the cost of your studies.
- ⊞ Travel to pursue responsibilities or research.
- ⊞ Converse professionally.
- ⊞ Teach a class or a person a standard lesson.
  
- ⊞ Ask "What could my expertise accomplish here?"

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ⊞ Get into an argument with someone.
- ⊞ Alienate and make enemies of someone.
- ⊞ Get bogged down in details or duties.
- ⊞ React with rigid dogmatism and scorn.
- ⊞ Retreat to study, lapsing on your duties.

Ask "What error have I committed recently?"

# INTRODUCING THE STUDENT

*The Student is the reason for the entire endeavor.  
Without Students, there would be no need for an  
academy, or a utopia, or a pedagogy that bridges the  
two. But there are Students, and we must do right by  
them.*

*The Student is an eager individual. Their power is  
creative, playful, and inquisitive.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*What does the future hold for you?*

*Will you be able to make change in your school?*

*What are you going to learn?*

## CHOOSE A NAME

Marcus, Cassie, Nathan, Sam, Lane, Jamie, Salah,  
Calder, Sofia, Amira, Devin, Paola, Lance, Will

## CHOOSE A LOOK

pensive gaze, incisive eyes, bored glare, curious  
stare, clever smirk, kind look, smiling face

dirt and grass stains, paint splotches, pencil  
smudges, inky fingers, scraped knees, rosy cheeks

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ATTEND

Hillcrest, Kasungu, Murooran, Eschholz, Nalanda,  
Somapura, Azhar, Levey, Riverside

## CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT

drawing, music, biology, the game, math, reading,  
writing, logic, dance, chemistry, social studies,  
technology, health, cooking, language, or your  
own:

## CHOOSE 2 NEW FRIENDS

the new transfer student, your hometown friend,  
your class competition, the class troublemaker,  
your lab partner, your reading companion, your  
sports rival, the “weird” kid, the shy kid, the class  
president, the kid you help with homework

## CHOOSE YOUR LATEST PLAN

prove your teacher wrong, find a ruin of the old  
world, trick your rival, impress your new friend,  
beat someone important at the game, get really  
really good at your chosen subject, skip school

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- ⇒ How did I impress you on our first meeting?
- ⇒ What trouble did I create for you accidentally?

## TIPS

- ⇒ Discover the world through trial and error.
- ⇒ Push against the rules and others’  
expectations to become who you want to be.
- ⇒ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone listens earnestly to help you  
learn or grow, they get a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ⇒ Stumble upon an important connection or idea.
- ⇒ Change someone’s mind with charm and wit.
- ⇒ Break the rules and get away with it.
- ⇒ Overhear an important conversation.
- ⇒ Stand up to authority with confidence and  
knowledge.

- ⇒ Ask “How could I get you to do what I want?”
- ⇒ Ask “What here can only I notice?”

## REGULAR MOVES

- ⇒ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ⇒ Offer to help.
- ⇒ Do your school work.
- ⇒ Gather several students to talk or play.
- ⇒ Let someone see you struggling.

- ⇒ Ask “What do you wish I would do right now?”

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ⇒ Get caught breaking the rules.
- ⇒ Lose a debate with an adult.
- ⇒ Deny ignorance or refuse help.
- ⇒ Confess something and seek forgiveness.
- ⇒ Blunder into a situation totally unprepared.

- ⇒ Ask “What do I still need to learn?”

# INTRODUCING THE EDUCATOR

*After graduating from the academy, many answer the call to teach, and so serve the academy. Between the problems of the past and promise of the future, there is the Educator, building the way forward.*

*The Educator is a compassionate individual. Their power is kind, transformative, and thoughtful.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Do your teachings help others?*

*Are you loving, demanding, or compelling?*

*Is the academy's pedagogy the best way to teach?*

## CHOOSE A NAME

Moises, Ann, Elke, Piotr, Jo, David, Mary, Geoffrey, Youssef,

## CHOOSE A LOOK

warm eyes, tired eyes, sad eyes, clever eyes, knowing eyes, smiling eyes, bright eyes, big glasses

professional attire, teaching uniform, sweaters, outdoors gear, rumpled clothes,

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ATTENDED

Waldzell, Borzeguim, Lyceum, Pushpagiri, Hirsland, Taixue, Gukhak, Kachokolo, Gondishapur, Haskell

## CHOOSE YOUR TEACHING PROFICIENCY

drawing, music, biology, the game, math, reading, writing, logic, dance, chemistry, social studies, technology, health, cooking, language or your own:

## CHOOSE 2 STRONG FRIENDS

your dear friend from childhood, your student-teacher, your mentor teacher, your favorite professor, your friend from teaching abroad, your significant other, the local figure who helped you settle here, the magister who regularly visits,

## DECIDE WHAT YOU DO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

civic volunteering, gardening, after-school activities, the game, traveling, hiking, performing, reading, independent research, attend lectures

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- ≡ What teaching seminar did we both attend?
- ≡ When did you observe my class?

## TIPS

- ≡ Consider the needs of your students.
- ≡ Leverage education and knowledge against the world and its problems.
- ≡ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone uses your lessons just like you taught them, they get a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ≡ Persuade someone with their best interests.
- ≡ Teach someone something they need to know.
- ≡ Say exactly the right thing.
- ≡ Create the perfect opportunity for someone.
- ≡ Leave the academy to pursue other good.

- ≡ Ask “*What do you need in order to grow?*”
- ≡ Ask “*What are you really planning?*”

## REGULAR MOVES

- ≡ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ≡ Provide comfort, support, or advice.
- ≡ Give someone a chance to show off.
- ≡ Teach your class a standard lesson.
- ≡ Share food or advice with someone.

- ≡ Ask “*What do you need help with currently?*”
- ≡ Ask “*What should I be on the lookout for?*”

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ≡ Admit you don't have the answer to someone's question or problem.
- ≡ Make a mistake that damages your relationship with a student.
- ≡ Appeal to your superiors for help.
- ≡ React with dogmatism or a closed mind.

Ask “*How did I fail you recently?*”

# INTRODUCING THE VISITOR

*The academy is not closed to those who live outside in the neighboring states, but Visitors are rare. Some come to learn, some to debate, and some to prove to themselves that this so-called paradise is doomed to failure. Rarely does a Visitor leave fulfilled.*

*The Visitor is an observant individual. Their power is investigative, challenging, and refreshing.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Will you change or be integrated into the academy?  
Can the academy offer anything to the outside world?  
Are you argumentative, pedantic, or sincere?*

## CHOOSE A NAME

Vladov, Plinio, Golden, Aphra, Charles, Yuri, Battu, Harriet, Zheng, Ricardo, Viet, Faith, Marta, Ivan

## CHOOSE A LOOK

traditional fashion, cutting-edge style, heavy coat, traveling garb, professional wear, honorary robes

combative attitude, earnest demeanor, distinctive accent, untrustworthy vibe, silvertongue,

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ARE VISITING

Waldzell, Borzeguim, Lyceum, Pushpagiri, Hirsland, Taixue, Gukhak, Kachokolo, Gondishapur, Haskell

## CHOOSE YOUR RECENT INTEREST

international relations, economic history, logic, evolutionary psychology, comparative mythology, business, information theory, or your own:

## CHOOSE 2 CONTACTS FROM NEAR AND FAR

your host and their family, your spouse, your child, your representative back home, the ambassador, your friend you met as an exchange student, the magister you've been arguing with, a fellow traveler, your spymaster and handler, your intern, the mysterious researcher you keep running into

## CHOOSE WHAT YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH

show the academy their error, reconnect with an old friend, prove yourself smarter, get revenge, a mission of national importance, learn something

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- ≡ Why did I meet you when I was traveling through your part of the academy?
- ≡ What did you think of me when we met at the event for notable visitors?

## TIPS

- ≡ Tell other people about your home and how it is different, valuable, and compelling.
- ≡ Challenge the academy and its assumptions.
- ≡ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone gives you an opportunity to prove yourself to the academy, they get a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ≡ Change someone's mind with passionate debate and resonant experience.
- ≡ Deduce an important truth of the old world.
- ≡ Realize a personal mistake or error.
- ≡ Change the academy's opinion of your home.
- ≡ Return to your home, prepared with knowledge and the power to change it.

- ≡ Ask "What do you wish I would do next?"
- ≡ Ask "How are your beliefs vulnerable?"

## REGULAR MOVES

- ≡ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ≡ Travel to another part of the academy.
- ≡ Challenge someone to a debate.
- ≡ Meet with someone important.
- ≡ Point out someone else's mistake or error.

- ≡ Ask "What here do only I observe?"

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ≡ Blunder due to inexperience or ignorance.
- ≡ Trust someone you shouldn't.
- ≡ Stubbornly lose an argument.
- ≡ Demand an explanation from someone.
- ≡ Fall prey to doubt or skepticism.

- ≡ Ask "Do you think I actually belong here?"

# INTRODUCING THE FUNCTIONARY

*The nations of old world failed. But they left their blueprints for us - their paperwork. Therefore, we have the Functionary, to manage the paper and the people. What else are utopias made out of, if not paper and people?*

*The Functionary is a meticulous individual. Their power is material, interpersonal, and bureaucratic.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*Does bureaucracy serve the people and utopia?  
Are you servile, altruistic, or determined?*

*Who and what do you prioritize, when time is short?*

## CHOOSE A NAME

Bertram, Margaret, April, Richard, Shirley, Cassius, Samir, Stanley, Donna, Randall, Yann, Lucy, Liz

## CHOOSE A LOOK

wimpy build, bad posture, stiff back, tense shoulders, relaxed demeanor,

biting wit, calm voice, sarcastic tone, practiced patience, chipper attitude,

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ATTENDED

Waldzell, Borzeguim, Lyceum, Pushpagiri, Hirsland, Taixue, Gukhak, Kachokolo, Gondishapur, Haskell

## CHOOSE YOUR PURVIEW

academic administration, departmental assistant, foreign ministry, elections and assignments, calendar & holidays, travel logistics, supplies, or your own:

## CHOOSE 2 CONNECTIONS

a librarian in the archives, the lab manager, someone in food service, the local taxi operator, the assistant to an important magister, your counterpart in the neighboring countries, a gossiping school secretary, the care coordinator at the local clinic.

## CHOOSE WHAT YOU REALLY WANT

a quiet life, power & prestige, to travel, civil harmony, to pursue creative endeavors, to master the game, to spread the academy's reach everywhere, love

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- ⊞ What favor did I do for you?
- ⊞ What official function did we meet at?

## TIPS

- ⊞ Collaborate with others about rules and bylaws and make them important.
- ⊞ Explore the tension between community and laws, and between red tape and civil service.
- ⊞ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone comes to you for help with official duties or the rules, they get a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ⊞ Convince someone using rules and logic.
- ⊞ Use or break the rules to help someone substantially.
- ⊞ Reveal that someone present owes you a favor.
- ⊞ Create a lasting change in the traditions or bylaws of the academy.
- ⊞ Leave the academy to pursue other good.

- ⊞ Ask “Who’s really in control here?”
- ⊞ Ask “What here could I make better?”

## REGULAR MOVES

- ⊞ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ⊞ Make a useful connection to or for someone.
- ⊞ Take care of your official responsibilities.
- ⊞ Make someone think you are beneath notice.
- ⊞ Advise someone on a rule or point of fact.

- ⊞ Ask “What do you wish I would do?”

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ⊞ Fail someone who is not served by the rules.
- ⊞ Fall behind on your responsibilities.
- ⊞ Draw someone’s scorn or disgust.
- ⊞ Cave to the demands of your superiors.
- ⊞ Interfere with a friend out of scruples.

Ask “What do you really think of me?”

# INTRODUCING THE LUDOR

*For some, the game represents the highest possible truth. The culmination of human knowledge. A universal framework, in which all art and science, all thought is made to play together. That is the Ludor's task - to make everything and more into entertainment.*

*The Ludor is a creative individual. Their power is playful, holistic, and analytical.*

## PLAY TO FIND OUT

*What is the game, and does it reveal important truths? Are you inventive, insightful, or self-centered? Can you use play to help others learn and grow?*

## CHOOSE A NAME

Kat, Joseph, Eleni, Phiona, Gita, Austin, Gonzalo, Brenda, Kacey, Judit, Nihal, Hikaru, Natsuki, Boris

## CHOOSE A LOOK

sharp & piercing, languid, joyful, mischievous, careful, manic, contemptuous, wise

well-dressed, official robes, teacher's uniform, casual wear, gaudy outfit, disheveled

## CHOOSE THE SCHOOL YOU ATTENDED

Waldzell, Borzeguim, Lyceum, Pushpagiri, Hirsland, Taixue, Gukhak, Kachokolo, Gondishapur, Haskell

## CHOOSE YOUR CURRENT AREA OF FOCUS

invented languages, optimization mathematics, solid-state physics, theoretical chemistry, 18th century dance, feminist philosophical history, race & class in post-industrial economics, aesthetics, innovations in harp music, or your own:

## CHOOSE 2 RIVAL PLAYERS

A stubborn magister who won't quit, your old master, a child prodigy, your best friend, the academy's favorite, a strange recluse, a surprising school teacher, the underdog, your rival school's champion, a challenger from outside the academy.

## DECIDE WHAT DO YOU DO BESIDES PLAY

read voraciously, scavenge old tech, explore the old world, travel here and there, meditate, get into arguments, go to live performances, sleep

## CHOOSE ONE TO ASK LEFT

- ≡ When did we play together, and what did you think of the game?
- ≡ Why were you at one of my public games?

## TIPS

- ≡ Involve other players and their interests in the game, and describe to us how you play.
- ≡ Explore the tension between play and work.
- ≡ Make your character fallible and relatable.

## LURE

Whenever someone invites you to play the game with them, they gain a token.

## STRONG MOVES

*SPEND A TOKEN*

- ≡ Persuade someone using demonstration and play.
- ≡ Win a game.
- ≡ Deduce an important, true, and beautiful idea.
- ≡ Teach someone something they should know.
- ≡ Leave the academy to pursue other good.
  
- ≡ Ask "What could you teach me?"
- ≡ Ask "What do you need in order to grow?"

## REGULAR MOVES

- ≡ Take action that risks reprisal or rebuke.
- ≡ Challenge someone to a game.
- ≡ Travel somewhere on "official" business
- ≡ Perform in official ceremonies or events.
- ≡ Spot a flaw in someone's logic or idea.
  
- ≡ Ask "What do you intend to do?"

## WEAK MOVES

*GAIN A TOKEN*

- ≡ Lose a game.
- ≡ Repel others with your focus on minutiae.
- ≡ Make a mistake that costs you respect.
- ≡ Treat someone like a game instead of a person.
- ≡ Isolate yourself in contemplation or study.

Ask "How do I offend you or push you away?"

YOU ALSO PLAY THE

# NEIGHBORING STATES

*After the world ended, people went on. The age of wars, of climate change, of apocalypse? In time, even these become lessons.*

*And so, they made the academy to teach them. Once upon a time, that was the deal. Can you teach someone utopia? Can you educate away the harm of war? We owe it to them to find out, if they'll let us.*

## CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

unrest, scarcity-thinking, war, self-preservation, hegemony, cultural exchange, alliance

## TIPS

- ≡ Describe and introduce people from outside the academy, give them names and make us care about them.
- ≡ Make decisions about the politics and culture of other nations.
- ≡ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## PICK UP WHEN

Someone travels to the neighboring states, or you have an idea why they might send an envoy.

## TRADE AWAY WHEN

You have to interact with the neighboring states or they take an interest in you.

## MOVES

- ≡ Introduce a political or cultural threat to the academy.
- ≡ Expose factions among the neighboring states and pressure the academy to take sides.
- ≡ Exploit weaknesses in thought or statehood.

After every move, ask “*What do you do?*”

## SOURCES

*But that the present order of things was not to be taken for granted, that it presupposed a certain harmony between the world and the guardians of culture, that this harmony could always be disrupted, and that world history taken as a whole by no means furthered what was desirable, rational, and beautiful in the life of man, but at best only occasionally tolerated it as an exception — all this they did not realize. Except for those few political thinkers like Dubois, almost all Castalians were unaware of the secret complex of problems underlying the existence of Castalia.*

– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*Rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, climbing sea levels and more extreme weather events will intensify the challenges of global instability, hunger, poverty, and conflict. They will likely lead to food and water shortages, pandemic disease, disputes over refugees and resources, and destruction by natural disasters in regions across the globe.*

– Chuck Hagel, “2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap”

*One cannot teach the conflicts (or anything else, for that matter) by assuming this neutral “view from nowhere,” for it is no view at all. In other words, the Assumption of a View from Nowhere is the projection of local values as neutrally universal ones, the globalizing of ethnocentric values...*

– David Theo Goldberg, “Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader”

YOU ALSO PLAY

# TRUTH & BEAUTY

*Once, the world was so cruel as to make the study of truth, the appreciation of beauty, the domain of only the powerful and privileged.*

*We know better now, that these have always belonged to all of us. That a better world depends on all of us, hearing from each other what is true and beautiful. Listen - someone is speaking it to you right now.*

## CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

metaphysics, artistic expression, fixation, isolation, ethical action, awe, parsimony, utopia, kindness, passionate debate

## TIPS

- ≡ Explore the beliefs of characters and how they impact action.
- ≡ Describe the beauty in everything, even immaterial things, using sensory details and imagination.
- ≡ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## PICK UP WHEN

Someone devotes themselves to study, makes a claim about knowledge, or you want to discuss philosophical society.

## TRADE AWAY WHEN

You seek out the truth or the beautiful, or get otherwise lost in study.

## MOVES

- ≡ Provide opportunities for revelation and grandeur.
- ≡ Twist easy answers and show complication.
- ≡ Make it beautiful and true.

After every move, ask “*What do you do?*”

SOURCES

*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.*

– Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”

*“My enemy is not Europe, it’s purity—the idea that purity ever exists, or that if it does exist, that it is somehow more culturally creative than mixture.”*

– Martin Bernal

*“If you can see a thing whole,” he said, “it seems that it’s always beautiful. Planets, lives.... But close up, a world’s all dirt and rocks. And day to day, life’s a hard job, you get tired, you lose the pattern. You need distance, interval.”*

– Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Dispossessed”

*All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions: 1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope?*

– Immanuel Kant, “The Critique of Pure Reason”, tr. J. M. D. Meiklejohn

*It is the secret of beauty and the real substance of all art. The poet who praises the splendors and terrors of life in the dance- measures of his verse, the musician who sounds them in a pure, eternal present — these are bringers of light, increasers of joy and brightness on earth, even if they lead us first through tears and stress. Perhaps the poet whose verses gladden us was a sad solitary, and the musician a melancholic dreamer; but even so their work shares in the cheerful serenity of the gods and the stars. What they give us is no longer their darkness, their suffering or fears, but a drop of pure light, eternal cheerfulness.*

– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*The question is only: Where do we classify this phenomenon? What do we call it, how explain it? That sounds like the pedantic schoolmaster, but we Castalians are schoolmasters, after all; and if I want to classify and find a term for your and our experience, it is not because I wish to destroy its beauty by generalizing it, but because I want to describe and preserve it as distinctly as possible.*

– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

YOU ALSO PLAY THE

# GAME

*Everyone in the academy learns to play the game, of course. The game represents the true promise we made; not just that all knowledge would be made clear in time, or that it could be bent, coaxed, painted into a game. No, the promise is that it would be fun to learn.*

*The game uses every symbol ever devised, and new ones as well. It has its own language, it is its own language, and masterful players are constantly pushing at the boundaries to see what new connections and truths they can wield. When you play, do you feel the same way?*

## **CIRCLE 2 DESIRES**

hidden meanings & connections,  
playfulness, teachable moments,  
spectacle, cross-discipline ideas,  
escapism, transcendence

## **TIPS**

- ≡ Ask people about their passions and how those connect to other topics and people.
- ≡ Describe the physical game but leave room for symbolism and interpretation.
- ≡ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## **PICK UP WHEN**

Someone plays the academy's game, or you want to discuss its effect on the academy.

## **TRADE AWAY WHEN**

You do any of the above, or otherwise encounter the game.

## **MOVES**

- ≡ Make a surprising connection.
- ≡ Challenge someone's idea.
- ≡ Speak as universal knowledge.

After every move, ask *"What do you do?"*

SOURCES

*We live permanently in that realm beyond time and conflict embodied in those very works and which we would know nothing of, but for them. And we go even further into the realms of pure mind, or if you prefer, pure abstraction: in our Glass Bead Game we analyze those products of the sages and artists into their components, we derive rules and patterns of form from them, and we operate with these abstractions as though they were building blocks. Of course all this is very fine; no one will contend otherwise. But not everyone can spend his entire life breathing, eating, and drinking nothing but abstractions. History has one great strength over the things a Waldzell tutor feels to be worthy of his interest: it deals with reality. Abstractions are fine, but I think people also have to breathe air and eat bread."*

– Hermann Hesse, "The Glass Bead Game", tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*Foregrounding playful learning does not mean that all learning has to be playful, or that every moment of playfulness involves significant learning. What it does mean is that a close look at play and playfulness reveals numerous emotional, social and cognitive features that can powerfully abet learning in many, perhaps most, circumstances.*

– Ben Mardell, Daniel Wilson, Jen Ryan, Katie Ertel, Mara Krechevsky and Megina Baker, "Towards a Pedagogy of Play"

*"The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves."*

– Carl Jung

YOU ALSO PLAY THE

# TRADITIONS & BYLAWS

*Sometimes it's easy to forget that it's only a little academic tradition and history that keeps the various schools of the academy together.*

*That tradition and those rules cut both ways, though. When you outline the boundaries of the acceptable, you make clear who (or what) is outside. Is tradition the shield to protect the academy, or is it a sword to cut away everything that might challenge its authority?*

## **CIRCLE 2 DESIRES**

institutional knowledge, stability, bureaucracy, discipline, obscurity, holidays & celebrations, peace, asceticism, hidden archives

## **TIPS**

- ⇒ Introduce bureaucrats, faculty, and people who keep the academy running. Give them names and make them important.
- ⇒ Suggest rules and traditions for others to build upon.
- ⇒ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## **PICK UP WHEN**

When you want to describe the history of the academy, there's a debate about rules, or you have an idea about internal politics.

## **TRADE AWAY WHEN**

You are involved in debates or ceremonies.

## **MOVES**

- ⇒ Show someone the process by which things are done.
- ⇒ Offer knowledge and resources for following the rules.
- ⇒ Introduce a long-running and divisive debate.

After every move, ask *"What do you do?"*

SOURCES

*"Nothing is cooler than following all the rules."*

– James D'Amato, @OneShotRPG

*"Our enduring strength is also reflected in our respect for an international system that protects the rights of both nations and people -- a United Nations and a Universal Declaration of Human Rights; international law and the means to enforce those laws. But we also know that those rules are not self-executing; they depend on people and nations of goodwill continually affirming them."*

– Barack Obama

*Alexander sighed. "That is your view, but not the view of the Order and its rules. A brother in our Order has moods, and at times he wearies of his work — there is nothing new and remarkable about that. The rules show him the way to regain harmony, to find his center again."*

– Hermann Hesse, "The Glass Bead Game", tr. Richard and Clara Winston

# REPUTATION & RIVALRY

*One of the great lies of the past was that the intellectual pursuits were free from the follies and foibles that flesh is heir to. That there was something so perfect and true about it that it couldn't possibly still be human.*

*But the Academy has never worked that way. Every piece of it is human. It is a world made of people, by people, for people. Human problems, and human triumphs.*

## CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

interpersonal strife, friendship, disagreement, honor, pride, fame, self-destruction, collaboration, competition, judgement

## TIPS

- ≡ Introduce experts, academics, artists, and intellectuals, from inside and outside the academy. Make them relatable, and give them names.
- ≡ Give players and people social connections and complicated relationships.
- ≡ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## PICK UP WHEN

You want to introduce another character or when someone does something shocking or praiseworthy.

## TRADE AWAY WHEN

You do any of the above, or your reputation or rivalries get you in trouble.

## MOVES

- ≡ Bring two people together.
- ≡ Show someone the social consequences of their actions.
- ≡ Offer someone the opportunity to condemn, forgive, or rebuke.

After every move, ask “*What do you do?*”

*For many years Master Thomas von der Trave had employed a Shadow named Bertram who seems to have been more lacking in luck than in talent or good will. He was an excellent Glass Bead Game player, of course. As a teacher he was at least adequate, and he was also a conscientious official, absolutely devoted to his Master. Nevertheless, in the course of the past few years, he had become distinctly unpopular. The "new generation," the younger members of the elite, were particularly hostile to him, and since he did not possess his Master's limpid, chivalric temperament, this antagonism affected his poise.*  
– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*It used to be said of politics on the university campus that it was the worst of all kinds of politics because the stakes were so small. We should be able to take at least minor comfort, then, from the present situation in the educational world: The stakes today are not at all small.*  
– Charles Frankel

*“By the happy workings of Providence, at the same time, outside in our country, a man of the world had precisely the same thought. He dreamed of a rapprochement and interpenetration of Castalia and the world. That man was Plinio Designori.”*  
*Master Alexander's mouth took on a slightly sour expression as he said: "Well yes, I have never hoped for anything very good from this man's influence upon you, any more than I have from your spoiled protegee Tegularius. So it is Designori who brought you to the point of a complete breach with the system?"*  
– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

YOU ALSO PLAY THE

# OLD WORLD

*History tells us that once, the world was different. That it was falling apart at every seam, stuffed full of tragedy and war, soaked with atrocities and blood. We have tried to put it behind us.*

*But it's still there, in our history books. If you squint, you can see the scars of it still, in the neighboring states. It echoes even here. It is the earth, and we are its latest seed. Can we bear better fruit?*

## CIRCLE 2 DESIRES

dangerous relics of war, new life, scarcity, forgotten knowledge, environmental disaster, refuge, influence, to challenge the future, the end of the world again

## TIPS

- ≡ Give people a reason to explore the old world.
- ≡ Show the lingering impact of the old world on traditions, culture, biases, and resources.
- ≡ Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

## PICK UP WHEN

You want to describe history and its reach into the present, life outside civilization, or the natural world.

## TRADE AWAY WHEN

You explore the old world, confront the past, or dig deep into history.

## MOVES

- ≡ Reveal an unfortunate truth.
- ≡ Give history a voice.
- ≡ Offer an opportunity to someone who ventures into the old world.

After every move, ask “*What do you do?*”

SOURCES

*The great majority of Castalians, the officials no less than the scholars and students, lived in their Pedagogic Province and their Order as if these constituted a stable, eternal, inevitable world. They knew, of course, that it had not always existed, that it had come into being slowly and amid bitter struggles in times of cruel distress; they knew it had originated at the end of the Age of Wars out of a double source: the heroically ascetic efforts of scholars, artists, and thinkers who had come to their senses, and the profound craving of the exhausted, bled, and betrayed peoples for order, normality, reason, lawfulness, and moderation.*

– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*But whether or not my attempt to find a meaningful place for myself was mere conceit on my part — in any case, it ended as it was bound to end. The world was stronger than I was; it slowly overwhelmed and devoured me.*

– Hermann Hesse, “The Glass Bead Game”, tr. Richard and Clara Winston

*Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.*

– Thomas Hobbes, “Leviathan”