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*A COLLABORATIVE
UTOPIA-BUILDING
GAME*

UTOPIA

Do you believe we could live in a better world if things were organized differently? That we can all play a role in constructing an inclusive and flourishing community? Then, this game is for you!

Utopian thinking is about social betterment, and critical and innovative thinking. It expresses two characteristics distinguishing us from non-human beings: our capacity to imagine better worlds and our future-oriented psychology.

*Few utopias are being imagined today, though. Neuroscientists explain this phenomenon: over the centuries, we have overused the left part of our brain, which has a rational, logical, and verbal nature. This started at the turn of the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic when our ancestors became sedentary and had to rationalize their lives. As the history of our civilization has been the history of the redefinition of its political, social, economic, and religious foundations, the right side of the brain has been much less engaged. Yet, it is this side we need: its emotional, intuitive, and relational nature is instrumental in the imagination of better futures. The good news is that, if we are exposed to the right stimuli, we can develop the right side of our brain – and **HORIZON** offers an energetic workout plan for it.*

*We, Utopian thinkers, are problem-solvers. We have **four crucial tools** at our disposal. The first is **Prospective Thinking**, a methodological tool and a system of analysis that promotes imagination. As Utopian thinkers, we research and explore possible futures to anticipate what will happen. Those futures are beacons projecting light backwards to our present and providing it with meaning. This adventure starts with a primary question – “What do we want for our society?” – followed by an exploratory question leading to different hypotheses – “What if?”.*

*The second tool is **Critical Thinking**. To think utopically, we need to master the six core critical thinking skills – interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation – to assess the hypothetical paths devised by prospective thinking. With critical thinking, we must develop a capability to formulate inclusive perspectives, resist the influence of preconceived ideas and prejudices, and be ready to reconsider and revise our views when necessary.*

***Holistic Thinking** is the third tool. The new science that arose from the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries relied on a method that divided problems into small parts to examine them better – and this legacy was further developed over the centuries. This method is no longer suitable for understanding the systemic crises we live in today, where all problems are interconnected, thus calling for a multidimensional analysis to reveal their local or global roots and repercussions. We, Utopian thinkers, have an acute awareness that societies work as systems and that the part is always present in the whole (and vice versa), meaning that all problems must be contextualized.*

The last tool is **Creative Thinking**. It challenges our imagination by inviting us to devise alternatives to the present. However, the creativity required by utopian thinking need not imply the creation of anything radically new. Instead, we are requested to combine what already exists in new ways and at different scales, taking to the centre what used to be on the margins and conceiving every possible consequence.

HORIZON

This game was first imagined by a group of utopians: young researchers working at CETAPS, coordinated by Luciano Moreira. It resulted from many discussions, first within the group and then with Andre Novoa, who was invited to write the game's narrative and create its final version.

The idea of creating a game at CETAPS resulted from the conviction that playing a game collectively fosters a sense of community and empathy between the players. This is clear in **HORIZON**, as players are asked to create a shared narrative resulting from joint efforts, debate, and much negotiation.

By playing the game, you will be aware of your **capacity to imagine solutions for real problems**; you will understand that **perfection is not ideal** (as it prevents further developments) and that the **utopian search is not an end but a process**; you will realize that **infrastructures may be re-signified** and used for totally different purposes; and will comprehend that a **radically new society** requires its members to cherish **utopian values** and master **utopian thinking**. Moreover, as the game replaces the concepts of profession and job with those of occupation and function, you will understand **we all have a role to play** in creating, preserving, and developing a better society.

At CETAPS, where we have been doing Utopian Studies for over three decades, we believe that fiction contaminates reality: just as reading a book can be a transformative experience, playing a utopian game can make us return to the real world equipped to look for solutions to real problems. This is what **HORIZON** is about: **making new possibilities visible** so that we can walk towards them.

Shall we walk together?

Fátima Vieira

Coordinator

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CETAPS

VTOPIAE INSVLAE FIGVRA



Introduction

Inspired by map-making games like Avery Alder's *The Quiet Year* and *Beak, Feather, & Bone* by Tyler Crumrine, *Horizon* is a collaborative worldbuilding game of utopias, where players sit down to construct a utopian community.

Starting with an unlabelled city map, players are assigned community roles before taking turns claiming and describing locations. No one is actually building a city—everything on the map already exists—players are rather fleshing out the various locations according to their role in the community. As locations are claimed, a narrative for the town and its inhabitants starts to emerge, including notable characters and shifting power dynamics. The goal? To build a utopian society and then spend one day in it.

This game is designed for 5 to 10 players.

What you need to play

- Stack of note cards (available digitally to print)
- Pens, pencils or markers of different colours (one per player)
- One unlabelled map (choose one of the maps, or pick your own!)
- Standard deck of playing cards

Game length

The duration of the game depends on the number of players. Each will add about 20 minutes to the total playtime. This means that a four-player game will take around 80 minutes to be played, whereas a 10-player game may take over 3 hours.

First Phase.

Building Horizon

1 IMAGINE YOUR UTOPIA

Each player starts by secretly writing down a few words describing their own idea of a utopian community, one they would like to live in.

2 DETERMINE THE CENTRAL LANDMARK

Collectively select the most prominent or interesting location on the map and mark it by drawing a circle around it. This will be designated as the Seat of Horizon. For now, it remains undefined. One or more players will get to decide its purpose and meaning in phase two.

3 CHOOSE UTOPIAN ROLES

Each player selects a Utopian Role, which represents a core occupation or essential function within Horizon. Think of them as key functions or pillars that sustain the community.

1. THE NOURISHERS

2. THE SPIRITUALS

3. THE EDUCATORS

4. THE PEACEKEEPERS

5. THE HEALERS

6. THE LIBRARIANS

7. THE ARTISTS

8. THE MAKERS

9. THE ENVOYS

10. THE NAVIGATORS

VARIANT

Instead of having only one role for the entire game, players can be randomly assigned a new one at the start of each round. Use any available method to determine this – obvious choices include rolling a ten-sided dice, or drawing cards from one shuffled suit (without the Face Cards, Jack, Queen and King).

4 ASSIGN COLOURS

Each player receives a different colouring pen to distinguish locations during the game. Use a variety of colours for clarity.

5 DETERMINE PLAY ORDER

Start with the person who most recently read a utopian book. Play proceeds clockwise.

6 CHOOSE A LOCATION

The first player picks one of the locations on the map. They may point to any unclaimed location and colour it in their assigned colour.

7 DRAW CARD

The first player draws a card and places it face up on the table. The card's suit and power play a different part in the game.

The **card's suit** determines the aims and values that the location plays in the community:

- ♥ = **Community**: emphasizes interdependence, cooperation, peace, and collaboration within Horizon. This value promotes mutual support and conflict resolution between the members of community.
- ♣ = **Sustainability**: emphasizes ecological, economic, social, and cultural concerns. This value promotes the management of resources, which includes everything from energy sources, books, technology, food, water, and other natural resources.
- ♦ = **Equity**: emphasizes equal opportunity for all individuals in access to resources, education, healthcare, employment, social services, politics, and religion.
- ♠ = **Openness**: emphasizes curiosity, exploration, and discovery, as well as artistic expression, innovation, and imagination. This includes investment, such as in research, technology, and the arts, encouraging new ideas and solutions to societal challenges.

The **card's power** (2-10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace) is relevant in two ways:

- ▶ **During play**: players must create relationships of meaning or purpose between locations sharing the same power; for example, if a player has drawn a card with the value of 9, they have to build a location that is related to another player's locations that are also associated with a card with the value of 9. It is up to the players to imagine how this is done.
- ▶ **End of game**: the sum of all card powers will determine which player defines the Seat of Horizon.

8 DESCRIBE LOCATIONS

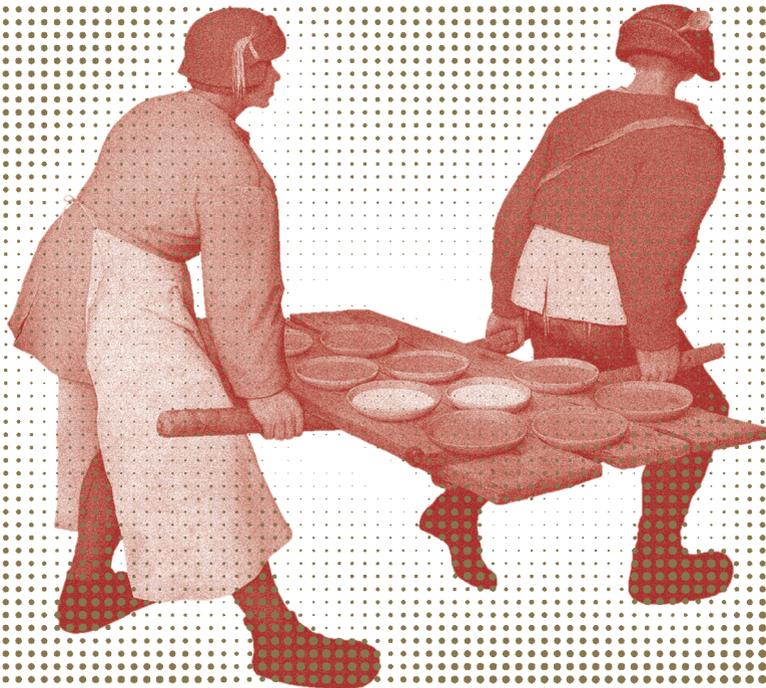
With their Role and Card in mind, the player now labels the selected location with their turn number on the map. On a separate notecard, they must write the colour and turn number once again, then describe the location and its purpose using the prompts below. Keep descriptions brief and build on each other's choices to create a cohesive narrative. Keep the card for phase two.

- Describe the location's exterior. What does it look like?
- Describe its purpose. What is the location's function in this utopia?
- Describe a potential trade-off. What may be the consequences of creating this location in relation to the aims and values determined by the card's suit?

9 REPEAT

Players repeat steps 6-8 one at a time until each player has picked four cards. When that occurs, move on to Phase Two – page XX.

THE NOURISHERS



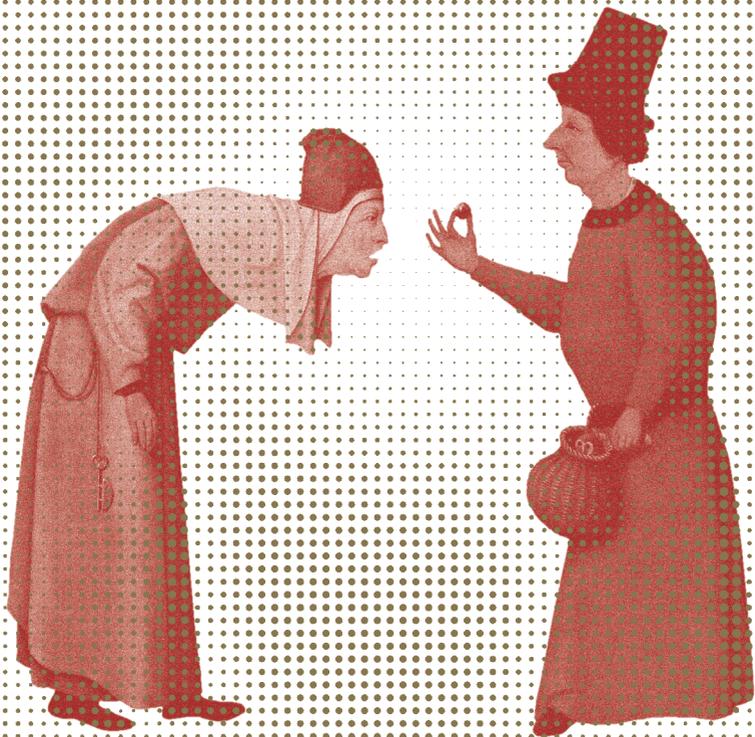
Nourishers are assigned the task of providing the population with food resources. They manage spaces dealing with providing food, such as farms, factories, and forests, which may be natural or artificial. Through their dedication Nourishers can foster a well-fed community, creating a sense of harmony and sustainability.

THE SPIRITUALS



Spirituals are dedicated to the study of the fundamental nature of reality, spirituality, and existence. They play the role of a moral compass, supporting the community with wisdom for spiritual growth. Moreover, Spirituals nurture an environment of different beliefs that allow for a harmonious and equitable lifestyle in the community.

THE EDUCATORS



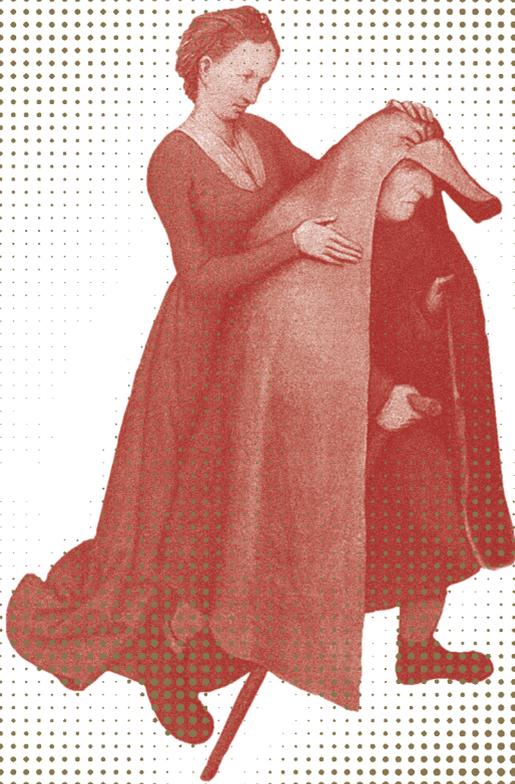
Educators nurture and guide the emotional, social, and moral development of individuals. Besides that, they encourage the sharing of knowledge and wisdom among the citizens. Moreover, Educators create inclusive environments where they integrate individuals in various fields and prepare them to contribute to the community.

THE PEACEKEEPERS



Peacekeepers are tasked with maintaining the balance of peace and tranquility in the community. Additionally, they are meant to resolve conflicts that may arise and maintain the security of the population, thus having to deal with any threats that may come from within or out.

THE HEALERS



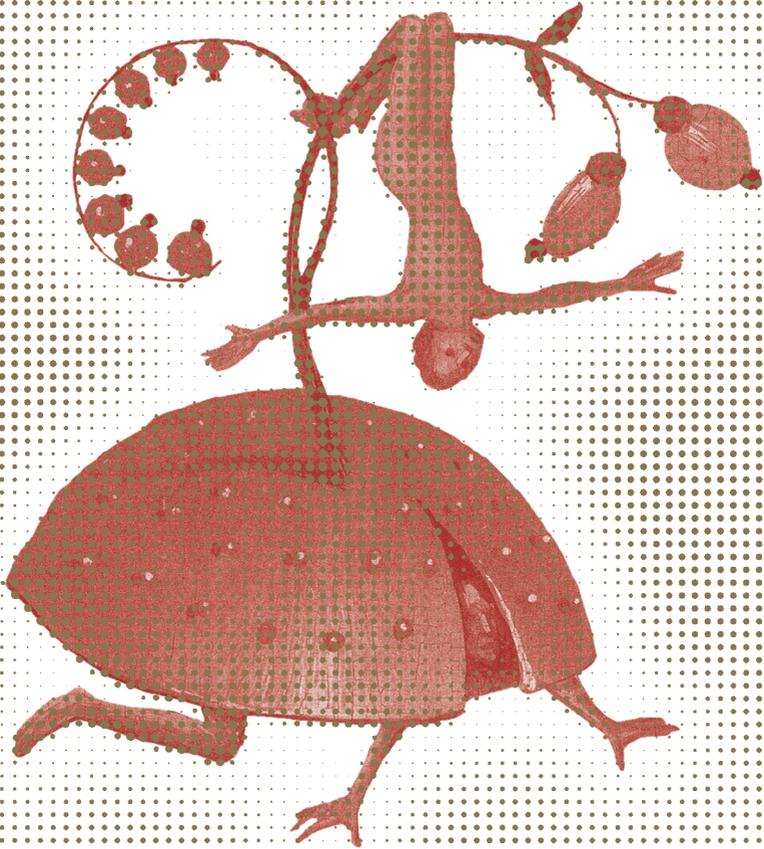
Healers are dedicated to the well-being of people, providing exceptional care and expertise to those who are in need of them. They are mainly concerned with physical, mental, and emotional health. Through their skills and knowledge, the Healers nurture wellness and vitality in the community.

THE LIBRARIANS



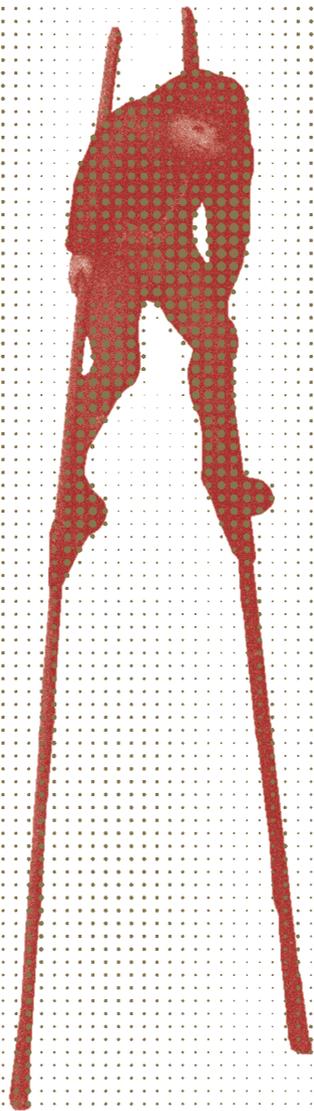
Librarians are the custodians of knowledge. They have been entrusted with vast collections of books, resources, tokens, and systems to cultivate an intellectually vibrant society. They deal with history and culture, knowledge and accessibility as they preserve ancient wisdom to be passed down to future generations.

THE ARTISTS



Bringing creativity to the community, artists are inspired by the social and emotional aspects of life. Their work engages the senses—sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell—as well as memory and emotion. They play a vital role in enhancing the well-being of the community.

THE MAKERS



Makers bring ideas to life through innovation, design, and craftsmanship. Furthermore, they blend creativity and practicality to create the structures that keep the community materially afloat, whether they are high or low-tech. Makers' expertise and precision build pillars for the welfare of the community.

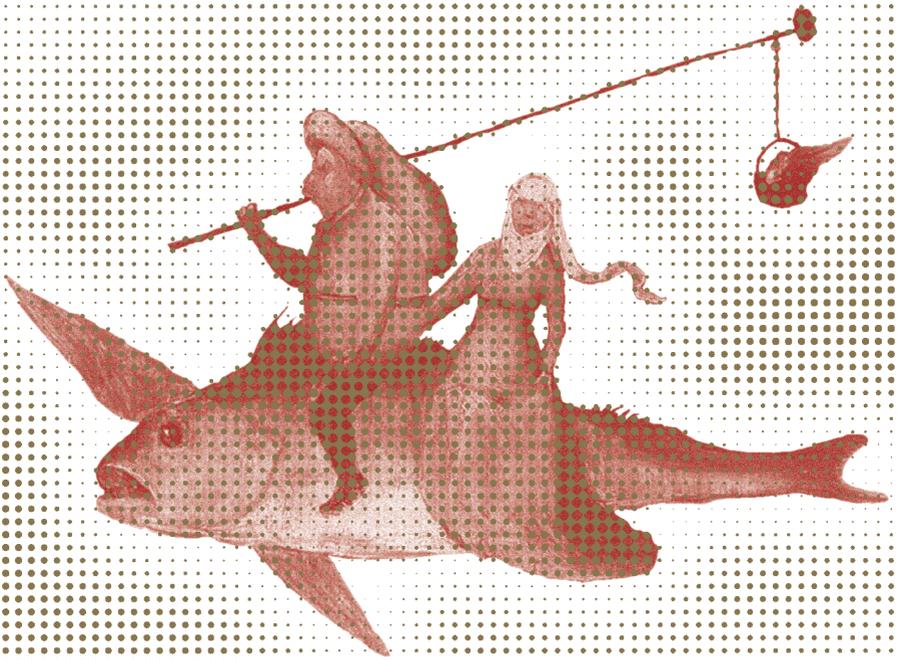
THE

ENVOYS



Envoys manage external relationships by navigating complex social or political dynamics outside the country's borders. They manage external affairs, facilitating dialogue abroad to maintain overall peace. Envoys promote understanding and cooperation with different foreign polities and ensure amity, which helps the citizens to feel safe.

THE NAVIGATORS



Navigators are tasked with exploring outside regions and unknown territories. They have a deep understanding of the natural world and are responsible for learning about new horizons. Through their voyages, they not only bring goods but also information and knowledge from other worlds to Horizon.

Play

Player 1 represents **The Nourishers** and draws the 7♦. The location serves an equity purpose. They select a location, colour it green on the map, and write #1 next to it. On a note card, they write:

Green 1: The Vertical Orchard

Exterior: old barbican covered in climbing vines and flowering plants, with wooden balconies extending outward like terraces.

Purpose: allows any citizen to cultivate their own food in communal garden tiers, ensuring access to fresh produce.

Trade-off: as the community grows, the space has become disputed, creating tension, conflict and social unrest.

Player 2 represents **The Peacekeepers** and draws the 2♣. The location should serve a sustainability purpose. They select a location, colour it yellow, and label it #1. On a note card, they write:

Yellow 2: The Eco-Police Monitoring Centre

Exterior: repurposed astronomy observatory with towering spires, each equipped with rotating telescopes protruding from intricate platforms.

Purpose: station deploying telescopes and patrols to monitor and protect the natural resources of Horizon.

Trade-off: some officers have been seen using the telescopes without authorization to spy on citizens at will.

Player 3 represents **The Healers** and draws the 9♥. The location should serve a community purpose. They select a location, colour it purple, and label it #1. On a note card, they write:

Purple 3: The Meditation Labyrinth

Exterior: hedge maze surrounded by a moat filled with koi fish, accessible by wooden bridges shaped like dragons.

Purpose: clinic for mental health therapies where citizens walk a labyrinth path to meditate and resolve conflicts.

Trade-off: the maze's design can make it difficult for some citizens to find their way out, leading to occasional frustration and stress.

Example

Player 4 represents **The Spirituals** and draws the 8♦. The location should serve an equity purpose. They select a location, colour it orange, and label it #1. On a note card, they write:

Orange 4: The Temple of Echoes

Exterior: grand ziggurat with tiered levels and acoustically designed terraces that channel the wind to produce harmonious sounds.

Purpose: sanctuary celebrating all creeds and faiths, providing a space for diverse religious practices and communal gatherings.

Trade-off: overlapping chants or hymns from different groups can cause confusion and dissonance, occasionally leading to tension among worshippers.

Player 5 represents **The Librarians** and draws the 5♣. The location should serve a sustainability purpose. They select a location, colour it brown, and label it #1. On a note card, they write:

Brown 5: The Tree Library

Exterior: tree branches extend outwards with reading nooks carved into the trunk and spiral walkways around the tree.

Purpose: library built from within a giant sacred tree, housing a vast collection of ecological and environmental literature.

Trade-off: the tree's natural growth requires periodic structural adjustments, leading to sections of the library being temporarily closed for maintenance.

Player 6 represents **The Envoys** and draws the Q♠. The location should serve an openness purpose. They select a location, colour it pink, and label it #1. On a note card, they write:

Pink 6: The Teleportation Station

Exterior: wizard tower with cryptic carvings and arcane symbols, exhibiting shimmering portals visible through tall arched windows.

Purpose: embassy that uses teleportation technology to facilitate instant communication between nations.

Trade-off: sometimes the teleportation pod malfunctions and a foreign ambassador gets lost in the astral realms, triggering diplomatic conflicts.

Continue until each player has drawn four cards...

Second Phase.

Living Horizon

When the last player has drawn their fourth card and designed the respective location, the game moves on to phase two. This phase is divided into two moments.

1 SEAT OF HORIZON

Players decide on the Seat of Horizon, the location where the government is housed. Any kind of government, or non-government, is possible. Each player sums up the values on their cards. Face Cards are worth 11 and Aces are worth 12.

- The player with the highest sum decides on the purpose of the Seat of Horizon with their Utopian Role in mind. (Example: if their role is The Spirituals, they can claim that the purpose of the Seat of Horizon is to maintain a spiritual rule; if their role is The Nourisher, they can claim that the purpose of the Seat of Horizon is to maintain a rule based on the diet of the inhabitants or the cycle of production.)
- The player with the most Face Cards describes the Seat's exterior.
- The player with the most aces describes the Seat's trade-off.

Then, each player comes up with their preferred government type based on what was just determined. Government types can range from councils, assemblies, and direct democracy to more creative forms of governance.

Finally, a vote by secret ballot takes place. Each player must vote for another player's proposed government type. Each player writes down their vote and places it on the table upside down. The proposal with the most votes becomes the form of government for Horizon.

2 A DAY IN HORIZON

Each player now assumes a character in accordance with their Utopian Role. Or, if using the variant as described on page VI, randomly assign roles using the methods listed therein. Choose a name, appearance, and age.

Shuffle all notecards and create a draw pile face-down. The first player draws a card and improvises a scene in which their character is visiting the drawn location. They should explain what they are doing there, who they see, and what they wish to accomplish.

The second player steps into the scene whenever appropriate, addressing the first character. The two of them improvise a scene together. During the conversation, the second player draws a new card from the pile and explains why they must go to the location drawn.

Once there, repeat the process. Repeat until all cards have been drawn. In the end, all players meet at the entrance of the Seat of Horizon and enter phase 3.

Play

Example

Player 1 (The Nourishers), who created Elara, 29, a botanist dressed in green robes with intricate vine embroidery, draws Vertical Orchard (Green 1).

Elara is in the Vertical Orchard, carefully inspecting the plants growing on the wooden terraces. She notices a dispute between two citizens arguing over the limited gardening space.

Elara: “Please, we need to remember the purpose of this space. Let’s find a fair solution so everyone can share in the harvest.”

Before the argument escalates, Player 2 (The Peacekeepers), who created Zara, 35, police in a blue uniform, walks into the scene.

Zara: “Elara, I heard there’s been tension here in the gardens. Do you need any assistance from the Peacekeepers?” Elara looks up, offering a polite smile.

Elara: “I think we can handle it for now, but thank you, Zara. We’re working on a rotation system. It’s delicate, but we’ll make it fair.”

Zara: “Just let me know if things get out of hand. The last thing we need is unrest in this peaceful space.”

Player 2 now reaches the draw pile and takes out a new card. They draw the Eco-Police Monitoring Centre (Yellow 2).

Zara: “Looks like I’ve been called to the Eco-Police Monitoring Centre. There’s always something that needs watching.”

Zara gives a nod to Elara and heads off to her next location, her mind already shifting to the next duty.

Third Phase.

Questioning Horizon

SET 1

1. Do you know the diet most people follow?
2. Is art valued in this society?
3. Would you know how to raise a child?
4. Would you know what to do if you felt ill?
5. Is there police enforcement?
6. Is there healthcare for all?
7. Is there religious freedom?
8. Is education available for all?

SET 2

1. Would you know who or what presides over your society?
2. Would you be able to earn money?
3. Would you be able to travel?
4. Would you be able to have supernatural abilities?
5. Would you be able to express your opinions and feelings?
6. Would there be forms of punishment for crimes committed?
7. Would you be able to adopt?
8. Would women have equal rights?



You're together at the entrance of the Seat of Horizon. Each player compares the utopia they have built with their own ideas about utopia at the beginning of the game. Then, choose one set of questions and answer them collectively. The more questions you can answer the more fleshed out the utopia is.

SET 3

1. Are there traditional gender roles in this society?
2. Would there be censorship?
3. Would your society be able to defend itself from outside invaders?
4. Would there be pollution?
5. Would people know how to read?
6. Are there multiple languages?
7. Would you be able to marry the person you choose?
8. Would you be able to get divorced?

SET 4

1. Do you have complete bodily autonomy?
2. Is there a court system?
3. Is there high-tech in your society?
4. Are animal rights respected?
5. What is the main source of food?
6. Would you be able to bear arms?
7. Are there nature reserves?
8. Does everybody have a home?





SCAN ME FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION
AND ADDITIONAL
GAMING RESOURCES,
INCLUDING NEW MAPS

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Thank you to the following playtesters:
**Ana Helena Lobo, André Ferreira, Anna Vlachopoulou,
Bruno Duarte, Donna Nova, Guilherme Gonçalves,
Júlio Cezar Batista, Miguel Elias Leite**

Horizon is heavily inspired by *The Quiet Year* roleplaying game by Avery Alder
and *Beak, Feather & Bone* by Tyler Crumrine.

DOI: 10.21747/978-989-9193-43-7/hor
ISBNe: 978-989-9193-43-7

ISBN: 978-989-9193-44-4
Printed in Portugal by Papelmunde
Dep. Legal: 541402/24

Financed by national funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.,
under the project UIDP/04097/2020 – CETAPS.
<https://doi.org/10.54499/UIDP/04097/2020>

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CETAPS
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AND ANGLO-PORTUGUESE STUDIES

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para a Ciência
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