

First impressions

Some words in advance: This being a game about language and playing with it I would like it if everybody who wants to comment here would do so in their native language (feel free to provide an English summary, it's not a requirement but may prove helpful to others).

To play Dialect online in a group of people for whom English (with one exception) is their second language made me wonder what possible additional challenges I might face in my first attempt to be the GM for a game (called a Facilitator here). I found that I may not want to "enforce" all of the authors "rules", playing it a little bit loose for the sake of clarity for us as a group.

From the start it was clear that we never would be able to finish play within one session. At the moment I aim for 5 – 7 sessions, each being about 1.5 hours. The structure of play in Dialect provides ample possibilities to stop playing without breaking the overall arc of events in a bad way. During our first session we have chosen the three Aspects (traits, focus points) of our Isolation (community). For two of them the game provides guiding questions. According to the rules Aspects should be one word or a short phrase and the authors emphasize the importance of making sure that all around the table interpret the chosen Aspects in the same way. I found it really interesting to see how the fact that we have different native languages and cultural backgrounds added an additional layer to the discussion – at least that is how I experienced it. In the end I decided I rather have a long sentence as an Aspect than loose clarity. In addition we will create a document with our interpretation of the Aspects and other things we deem important to remember to make sure we still are "on track" some sessions in.

In the next step every player got to answer one question about our community. That is at least what the authors intended. We did not follow that rule literally, but all said and done I think everybody embellishing each others answers with additional detail provided us with a richer and more vivid environment for our play. For me a very welcome and positive effect.

Towards the end of the session everybody got to "draw" three Archetype cards and to choose one of them. We finished the session with everybody presenting their choice to the other players, reading aloud what the card said about their characters role and some little explanatory prompt why the character is important for the Isolation. This provides us with ample time to give our characters some life until next session.

I had a great evening, even better, my impression is the players had too, and I'm really looking forward to the next session.