

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS

A TWO-PLAYER FICTION GAME OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN GOODNESS AND WICKEDNESS.

WICKED

BY NATHAN D. PAOLETTA

GOOD

THE NEVERENDING STRUGGLE

United, harmonious, all was once one. Then, one became many, and many became many, and in the end that which was whole splintered into the innumerable. Most retains some of all things. Some, though, are all of one or of the other. Of the Good, or of the Wicked.

Throughout mortal history, these two factions have sought dominion of their nature over the world. Bound by laws universal and arcane, those who fight this endless war see their fortunes ebb and flow with the currents of time.

Today, now, there are those who only contain the essential nature of wickedness, or of goodness. Some have been fighting for their entire existence, some are newly awakened, and some have yet to realize their true nature. But something new is happening. This is an inflection point, an opportunity to make a real and permanent victory in the long struggle, a chance to finally say “yes, this world is ours, forever more.”

This is your story now.

SETTING UP THE GAME

Choose who will play the Good, and who the Wicked. The Good player takes the Good playsheets (Making and Playing the Good), the Wicked player takes the Wicked playsheets (Building the Blight and Playing the Wicked).

There are 5 decks of 6 cards each: the North Wind, the South Wind, the East Wind, the West Wind, and the Prophecies. Shuffle each deck separately and place them facedown on the table.

Both players should be able to reference the Playing the Game and The Winds of Magic playsheets.

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

The two players are struggling to gain control of an ancient Prophecy. This Prophecy is represented by snippets of verse, contained on the Prophecy cards.

Play progresses through a series of scenes. The Wicked and the Good player alternate setting scenes representing the steps they take to build their own power, bring down the other, or discover new elements of the Prophecy. Details are on the Playing the Game playsheet.

During these scenes, players narrate how they enforce their will upon the world, and invoke their Magic to make changes permanent and important. They use their Winds of Magic cards to fuel this Magic. The Winds also determine who gains control of any face-up Prophecy cards.

The player who first gains control of 3 Prophecy cards wins the game.

To gain control of a Prophecy card, a player has to use their Magics, fueled by the Winds of Magic. The only way to take control of Prophecy is to play Winds cards during a scene.

The Winds of Magic playsheet describes how the Winds cards are used in scenes, how to determine the winner of Magical contests, and who gains control of Prophecy.

Setting interesting and evocative scenes that demand investment from the other player is the best way to get Winds cards into play.

At the end of the scene, the amount and kind of Winds cards played determine who can take hold of a Prophecy card. It is possible to lose the Magical contest during a scene, but still have the stronger overall force with which to take control of a Prophecy.

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: CREDITS

Game design, graphic design and layout by Nathan D. Paoletta.

Special thanks to Gregor Hutton and Eric Mersmann for their critical aid.

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First Issue

THIS GAME WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY MY WONDERFUL PATRONS

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FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: MAKING THE GOOD

You are the force of Good in this world. You may have been fighting for your entire existence, you may be newly awakened, you may have yet to realize your true nature. Regardless, you know an inflection point is coming, an opportunity to make a real and permanent victory in the long struggle against the Wicked. A chance to finally say “yes, this world is ours, forever more.”

Your Goodness is individually embodied. Use this playsheet to make a champion, the single person who has the greatest chance of breaking the power of the Wicked. There are other Good characters, but this is protagonist of your story.

WHO ARE YOU?

Pick one trait from the “I am” list and one trait from the “but not” list. Write your choices on the lines.

I AM _____ BUT NOT _____

- **YOUNG** (YOU KNOW THE **MAGIC OF BEASTS**)
- **STRONG** (YOU KNOW THE **MAGIC OF PROTECTION**)
- **FIERCE** (YOU KNOW THE **MAGIC OF PASSION**)
- **QUICK** (YOU KNOW THE **MAGIC OF THE OLD WAYS**)
- **OLD** (YOU KNOW THE **MAGIC OF KNOWING**)

- **WISE**
- **RIGHTEOUS**
- **CLEVER**
- **TRUSTWORTHY**
- **SYMPATHETIC**

WHAT IS YOUR MIEN?

This is how you appear on the surface, and how mortals see you always. Your mien is non gender-specific, and you should describe yourself however you want. Your first Trait will prevent you from choosing one option.

- SAGE.** I am elderly, full of advice and easy to ignore. (Cannot be chosen if you *are young*)
- TRAVELER.** I am not from around here, curious and conversational. (Cannot be chosen if you *are strong*)
- SCHOLAR.** I am studious, pedantic and academic. (Cannot be chosen if you *are fierce*)
- SOLDIER.** I am strong, grim and quiet. (Cannot be chosen if you *are quick*)
- CHILD.** I am just come of age, innocent and carefree. (Cannot be chosen if you *are old*)

THE WINDS OF MAGIC

The winds are eternal, outside and above your struggle, and yet crucial to it. Both the Good and the Wicked call on the winds to power their magics. See the Playing the Good sheet for how to use the winds to power your Magic.

The Winds are represented by four decks of six cards each. You and the Wicked both have access to the same decks.

You know two Magics due to what you are and your Role. Pick a third Magic you have learned as well.

You draw a card from the Wind that fuels each of your Magics, and then one Wind from each deck. You draw before the Wicked player.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Pick one. This is the role you are meant to play in this last chapter of the struggle against the Wicked. Your choice of Traits will prevent you from choosing one option. Also, those of both sides, good and wicked, know what your role is (unless you use Magic to conceal yourself).

- I AM THE SMITH.** I will forge all together for the final strike. (Cannot be chosen if you are *not wise*). You know the **Magic of Making**.
- I AM THE PALADIN.** I will wield our weapons against our foes. (Cannot be chosen if you are *not righteous*). You know the **Magic of Fighting**.
- I AM THE SEEKER.** I will find that which has been lost. (Cannot be chosen if you are *not clever*). You know the **Magic of Finding**.
- I AM THE GUIDE.** I will gather those who need to come together. (Cannot be chosen if you are *not trustworthy*). You know the **Magic of Time**.
- I AM THE MUSE.** I will lead those I can away from our enemies. (Cannot be chosen if you are *not sympathetic*). You know the **Magic of Emotion**.

YOU KNOW THE MAGIC OF:

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: PLAYING THE GOOD

You are the force of Good in this world. You may have been fighting for your entire existence, you may be newly awakened, you may have yet to realize your true nature. Regardless, you know an inflection point is coming, an opportunity to make a real and permanent victory in the long struggle against the Wicked. A chance to finally say “yes, this world is ours, forever more.”

YOUR AGENDA

You are trying to save the world. In order to do this, you need to understand and fulfill the prophecies that tell of the ultimate fate you, and all else, face.

Over the course of the game, Prophecy cards will be revealed. If you use the Magic at your command correctly, you can take control of those snippets of Prophecy. If you take control of a third Prophecy card, you win the game. If the Wicked player takes control a third prophecy card before you do, they win the game and the world is doomed.

PROPHECY

During each scene, you will play your Winds cards to enforce your will upon the world. At the end of each scene, consult the Winds of Magic playsheet for resolving who's winds are stronger. If you win, you pick one of your cards that you've played, and place it on the Good side of the Prophecy card. Once a Prophecy card has Winds totaling 5 or more between them (a 3 and a 2, two 2's and a 1, etc) on the Good side of it, you take control of that card.

MAGIC

You chose your Magics when you made your character.

- **The Magic of Beasts:** Summoning, controlling, gaining the attributes of and protecting from mortal animals. Fueled by the **East Wind**.
- **The Magic of Old Ways:** Finding, defending, closing, traveling on or destroying the ancient and dangerous eldritch paths, closed to mortal eyes. Fueled by the **North Wind**.
- **The Magic of Passion:** Unveiling, heightening, channeling, changing or damping the deadly passions of mortals. Fueled by the **South Wind**.
- **The Magic of Protection:** Shielding something or someone from harm; also dismantling those protections. Fueled by the **West Wind**.
- **The Magic of Knowing:** Uncovering lost facts, finding hidden truth, the pursuit or accumulation of knowledge. Fueled by any Wind.
- **The Magic of Emotion:** Discovering, shaping, creating or changing the emotions of mortals. Fueled by any Wind.
- **The Magic of Finding:** Discovering, uncovering and tracking a specific person, place or artifact. Also making things unfindable. Fueled by the **West Wind**.
- **The Magic of Time:** Manipulating, perceiving and shifting time for yourself or for others. Fueled by the **South Wind**.
- **The Magic of Making:** Creating, fixing, modifying, giving supernatural abilities to and destroying the inanimate. Fueled by the **East Wind**.
- **The Magic of Fighting:** Martial conflict, engaging in combat, killing or destroying. Fueled by the **North Wind**.
- **The Magic of Darkness:** You do not have this magic.

YOUR FIRST SCENE

The Wicked player sets the first scene of the game, so your first scene will be the second of the game. You always set a scene after the Wicked player's scenes.

Your first scene is always to **discover something the Wicked is planning**.

You set the scene - location and time, people and things that are present, environmental details to help set tone and mood, and anything else you want to mention.

The Wicked player narrates things that the Blight is influencing, and any Blight characters, artifacts or strangeness present in the scene. **This sets the status quo.**

You now use the tools at your disposal (your Traits, your Role, your Mien, and your Magic) to make a discovery. The Wicked player uses their appropriate aspects of the Blight to counter, misdirect, obfuscate or intimidate you.

Your Traits, Role and Mien represent what you have the most control over in the mortal world. If the Wicked wants to push back against something you narrate that has to do with those things, they have to use Magic.

You each use your Magics and/or play Winds cards to back up the things that matter, that you really want to have impact on the unfolding story.

When you set the scene, the Wicked player decides when it's come to a climax, and that's when you go to the cards you've played and see whose Magic is stronger.

YOUR LATER SCENES

When it's your turn to set a scene, choose one:

- YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING THE WICKED IS PLANNING*
- YOU EMPOWER SOMETHING GOOD OVER SOMETHING WICKED*
- YOU SEIZE A TOTEM FROM THE WICKED*
- YOU TURN SOMETHING FROM WICKED TO GOOD*
- YOU SAVE AN INNOCENT FROM THE WICKED*
- YOU UNCOVER ANOTHER PART OF THE PROPHECY*

Check off each scene when you set it. You may only set unchecked scenes. Other than your first scene, you may set scenes in any order. When you've checked all 6, erase all checks and start again (in any order you wish).

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: BUILDING THE BLIGHT

You are the assembled might of the Wicked in this world. You have embodied yourself in divers forms and have recruited many allies over the ages, some stronger than others. You know an inflection point is coming, an opportunity to make a real and permanent victory in the long struggle against the Good. A chance to finally say “yes, this world is ours, forever more.”

The Wicked controls a suite of forces. Use this playsheet to define who and what they are. It will take multitudes to break the power of the Good and finally drive that which stands against you from this world.

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

There is a specific endgame scenario that will finally drive Good from the world. The Good knows that this is your goal, unless you use Magic to keep it hidden. Pick one:

I MUST

- *TURN BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER*
- *DESTROY THE WORLD TREE*
- *DARKEN THE SKIES FOREVERMORE*
- *AWAKEN THE SERPENT*
- *CALL THE FIRE SPIRIT TO THIS WORLD*

NOTE YOUR PLANS TO ENACT THIS GOAL:

WHAT ARE YOUR TOTEMS?

These are objects of power that exist in the world. At the beginning of the game, the Wicked controls two of them (the two you pick now). All of these are potentially important to the course of events, and can be found (or taken) by either power. Totems enable their holder to use the magic they possess, and if they lose possession, they lose that magic.

- THE BROKEN CROWN.* It possesses the **Magic of Beasts.**
- THE JEWELLED DAGGER OF THE LEVANT.* it possesses the Magic of Emotion.
- THE GOLDEN HORN.* It possesses the **Magic of Finding.**
- THE SIGN OF ENDING.* It possesses the **Magic of Time.**
- THE STAFF OF THE MAGI.* It possesses the **Magic of the Old Ways.**

THE WINDS OF MAGIC

The winds are eternal, outside and above your struggle, and yet crucial to it. Both the Good and the Wicked call on the winds to power their magics. See the Playing the Good sheet for how to use the winds to power your Magic.

The Winds are represented by four decks of six cards each. You and the Wicked both have access to the same decks.

You know four Magics: two for your Totems, one for your Servants, and the **Magic of Darkness.** Draw two Winds cards for each of the three Magics, and then one North Wind card for Darkness. You draw after the Good player.

WHO ARE YOUR SERVANTS?

Pick one. These are those who have already accepted Wickedness into their hearts, and through whom you can work your will. Due to your choice of Goal, however, one of these is insulated to your power.

- THOSE WHO ARE JEALOUS.* They perform the **Magic of Passion.** (Cannot be chosen if you *must awaken the Serpent.*)
- THOSE WHO LEAD.* They perform the Magic of Knowing. (Cannot be chosen if you *must destroy the World Tree.*)
- THOSE WHO MAKE.* They perform the **Magic of Making.** (Cannot be chosen if you *must darken the Skies forevermore.*)
- THOSE WHO ARE SELFISH.* They perform the **Magic of Protection.** (Cannot be chosen if you *must turn Brother against Brother.*)
- THOSE WHO DESTROY.* They perform the **Magic of Fighting.** (Cannot be chosen if you *must call the Fire Spirit to this world.*)

YOU KNOW THE MAGIC OF:

Darkness

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: PLAYING THE WICKED

You are the assembled might of the Wicked in this world. You have embodied yourself in divers forms and have recruited many allies over the ages, some stronger than others. You know an inflection point is coming, an opportunity to make a real and permanent victory in the long struggle against the Good. A chance to finally say “yes, this world is ours, forever more.”

YOUR AGENDA

You are trying to reshape the world in your dark image. In order to do this, you need to understand and fulfill the prophecies that tell of the ultimate fate your forces face.

Over the course of the game, Prophecy cards will be revealed. If you use the Magic at your command correctly, you can take control of those snippets of Prophecy. If you take control of a third Prophecy card, you win the game. If the Good player takes control a third prophecy card before you do, they win the game and you will be cast out.

PROPHECY

During each scene, you will play your Winds cards to enforce your will upon the world. At the end of each scene, consult the Winds of Magic playsheet for resolving who's winds are stronger. If you win, you pick one of your cards that you've played, and place it on the Wicked side of the Prophecy card. Once a Prophecy card has Winds totaling 5 or more between them (a 3 and a 2, two 2's and a 1, etc) on the Wicked side of it, you take control of that card.

MAGIC

You chose your Magics when you built your blight.

- **The Magic of Beasts:** Summoning, controlling, gaining the attributes of and protecting from mortal animals. Fueled by the **East Wind**.
- **The Magic of Old Ways:** Finding, defending, closing, traveling on or destroying the ancient and dangerous eldritch paths, closed to mortal eyes. Fueled by the **North Wind**.
- **The Magic of Passion:** Unveiling, heightening, channeling, changing or damping the deadly passions of mortals. Fueled by the **South Wind**.
- **The Magic of Protection:** Shielding something or someone from harm; also dismantling those protections. Fueled by the **West Wind**.
- **The Magic of Knowing:** Uncovering lost facts, finding hidden truth, the pursuit or accumulation of knowledge. Fueled by any Wind.
- **The Magic of Emotion:** Discovering, shaping, creating or changing the emotions of mortals. Fueled by any Wind.
- **The Magic of Finding:** Discovering, uncovering and tracking a specific person, place or artifact. Also making things unfindable. Fueled by the **West Wind**.
- **The Magic of Time:** Manipulating, perceiving and shifting time for yourself or for others. Fueled by the **South Wind**.
- **The Magic of Making:** Creating, fixing, modifying, giving supernatural abilities to and destroying the inanimate. Fueled by the **East Wind**.
- **The Magic of Fighting:** Martial conflict, engaging in combat, killing or destroying. Fueled by the **North Wind**.
- **The Magic of Darkness:** Creating and controlling darkness itself, both literal and metaphorical. Fueled by the **North Wind**.

YOUR FIRST SCENE

You set the first scene of the game, and the Good sets the second. You set a scene after each of the Good players scenes.

Your first scene is always to **put the Good in danger**.

You set the scene - location and time, people and things that are present, environmental details to help set tone and mood, and anything else you want to mention.

The Good player narrates things that they are doing, looking for, and so on. **This sets the status quo.**

You now use the tools at your disposal (your Totems, Servants and Magic) to place the Good character in danger. The Good player uses their Traits and their own Magic to counter your efforts and try to escape your plans.

Your Totems and Servants represent what you have the most control over in the mortal world. If the Good wants to push back against something you narrate that has to do with those things, they have to use Magic. When you gain and lose Totems and Servants you also gain or lose the Magic that they provide.

You each use your Magics and/or play Winds cards to back up the things that matter, that you really want to have impact on the unfolding story.

When you set the scene, the Good player decides when it's come to a climax, and that's when you go to the cards you've played and see whose Magic is stronger.

YOUR LATER SCENES

When it's your turn to set a scene, choose one:

- YOU PUT THE GOOD IN DANGER*
- YOU SEIZE A TOTEM (A NEW ONE, OR FROM THE GOOD)*
- YOU PUT A SERVANT IN MOTION TOWARDS AN END*
- YOU TURN SOMETHING OR SOMEONE FROM GOOD TO WICKED*
- YOU RECRUIT A NEW SERVANT*
- YOU UNCOVER ANOTHER PART OF THE PROPHECY.*

Check off each scene when you set it. You may only set unchecked scenes. Other than your first scene, you may set scenes in any order. When you've checked all 6, erase all checks and start again (in any order you wish).

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: PLAYING THE GAME

Playing this game centers on creating, and battling for control over, the Prophecy; an ancient prognostication that purportedly tells who win this final ultimate battle, the Good or the Wicked. Prophecy, however, is all about interpretation.

The goal for each player is to discover, and gain control of, the Prophecy.

Shuffle the Prophecy deck and place it face down on the table. This is a set of cards with sentence fragments on them; taken together, and infused with your experience of play, they create the Prophecy. Start the game with no Prophecy revealed.

TO BEGIN

Play begins with the Good player describing how their character first became aware of their heritage and destiny. Did you know from birth? Did a mentor come along when you came of age? Were you almost consumed by the Wicked, coming to the realization of who you were just at the last moment?

NEXT

Next, the Wicked turns over the top card of the Prophecy deck, and describes how this bit of Prophecy has been preserved to the present age. Is it inscribed on an artifact? Drilled into the inheritors of both powers, Wicked and Good? Is it seen in dreams?

THE FIRST SCENE

The Wicked sets the first scene of the game by **putting the Good in Danger**. Consult the Wicked Playsheet for more details about setting scenes.

THE STATUS QUO

Once the scene is set, the Good narrates what their character is doing, how they act against the backdrop that's been established for them, and what specific goals they may have, if any. **Now the Status Quo is set.** Consult the Good Playsheet for more details about playing the Good character. (At the end of this scene, the Good sets the second scene, wherein they **discover something the Wicked is planning**).

THE WINDS OF MAGIC

The Wicked narrates how their influence changes the scene and impacts the Good, or the things and people that the Good cares about. In order to make a **serious change to the status quo**, the Wicked must use their Magic. Each Magic the Wicked possesses can effect its own domain (the Magic of Beasts may be invoked for any effect to do with animals, for example); in addition, each of the Winds has its own domains of influence, spelled out in black type on the card. To use a named Magic, the Wicked must play a card of its corresponding Wind (the Magic of Beasts is fueled by the East Wind, so only the East Wind may be played to use it). A Winds card may be played on it's own, as well.

THE WINDS OF MAGIC

The Good narrates their response to the changes narrated by the Wicked, as well as any additional action or agenda they have on their own. In order to make a serious change to the status quo, or in response to the Wicked's use of Magic, the Good may perform their own Magic (as described to the right). The Good may use a Wind's domains that are in white outlined type.

THE CONVERSATION

The core of the game is the conversation between the Wicked and the Good. Each scene concerns the ongoing conflict as you each try to gain control of the Prophecy, but the details depend on what you want to see in play. Who's in danger? What threat needs to be overcome, or what puzzle needs to be solved? What questions demand answers? During your conversation, you'll bring up points you want to really matter. That's when you use your Magics, and play Wind cards: to make those points stick. Once the conversation is over, the scene ends. You now find out whose Magic is more powerful, and who gains control of the Prophecy.

WHO GAINS CONTROL?

Consult the Winds of Magic playsheet for resolving whose Magic prevails at the end of the scene. The winner places a Winds card on their side of the Prophecy card. Once a Prophecy has a total value of 5 or more in Winds cards played on it, that player gains the Prophecy for their size of the struggle.

THE FATE OF THE WORLD

The player who first gains 3 Prophecy cards has supplanted the other, and may choose what fate the world faces.

For a longer game, you may play to 5 Prophecy cards (or more for games that span an epic amount of time or distance).

FATE'S FICKLE WINDS: THE WINDS OF MAGIC

Each player can effect change in the world by using their Magic. Each of the Magics describe or imply the domains that they have power over. A player simply invokes the Magic and narrates its effects on the scene.

If a player wants to effect something that they don't have a Magic for, they can call upon the raw power of the Winds of Magic and play a card that lists an appropriate domain. Notice that each Wind has different domains for the Wicked (listed in black type) and the Good (listed in white outlined type).

When a player wants to use Magic to effect a real and meaningful change in the world, or wants to counter an effect that has been described by the other player, they must play the appropriate Winds card. Each play of a Winds card may be potentially countered by another Winds card, until the players decide to stop playing them.

WHEN A CARD IS PLAYED

Describe the magic being performed, and place the card face-up on the table. If you are using a Magic you possess, you must play the Wind that fuels it; alternately, you can play Wind to fuel an effect that falls within that card's domains, as listed on the card.

IF THERE IS NO RESPONSE

The player of the card narrates the changes in the world, and the conversation of play continues.

IF IT IS COUNTERED IN TURN

Narrate the additional Magic, and place the countering card on top of the original card. It does not have to be the same Wind. When the clash is finally resolved (see below), pick a single Wind and add the values of all cards of that Wind played. The player who last played a card picks first, if it matters.

IF IT IS COUNTERED

The other player narrates the Magic they use in response, select one of their cards in the same fashion, and place it face-up across from the initial card. A player can only counter if they have Winds cards in hand to do so.

IF THERE IS NO RESPONSE

Whichever card has a higher value is considered to dominate the clash. Note that each Wind has a Wind it is weak against, and one it is strong against - read the relevant value when comparing against such a wind. The player of the dominant Wind take control the scene and narrates the result of the contest. If the values are tied, the clash resolves in the favor of neither side, or simply cancel each other out, depending on the context of the clash. Leave all cards on the table.

AT THE END OF THE SCENE

To determine who (potentially) takes control of a Prophecy card, use the Winds cards that have been played over the course of the turn. Each player builds the best hand they can, regardless of Wind (that is, you can build a hand from any combination of Wind cards). Hands are ranked thusly:

- A set of 1-2-3
- Largest set of 3s
- Largest set of 2s
- Largest set of 1s
- A single 3
- A single 2
- A single 1

The player with the best hand selects one card in that hand and places it on their side (Good or Wicked) of any face-up Prophecy card. Both players then recover all other cards, and draw a single new card from any Wind with cards available to draw.

CONTROLLING THE PROPHECY

The game starts with one Prophecy card face-up. Both the Wicked and Good can select a scene wherein they **uncover another part of the Prophecy**. At the conclusion of such a scene, that player turns over another card from the Prophecy deck. The content of the cards are fragments, with holes left between them so that you may assemble them in any order and interpret them as appropriate for your game.

A player can attempt to take control of any face-up Prophecy card, it does not have to be in any order, nor do you need to gain one before playing cards on another.

If the best hands are tied, build hands with the remaining cards and consider those. If all hands are tied, you are equally matched, and you both choose any Winds card you've played and place it on a Prophecy card.

Once a total value of 5 or more has been played on one side of a Prophecy card, that player gain control of it. Reshuffle the associated Winds cards back into their appropriate decks. If a Prophecy ends a scene with tied values of 5 or more, it remains in play. When a player breaks the tie, they gain the card then.

THE END

Once one player gains 3 Prophecy cards, they have supplanted the other, and may choose the fate of the world. For a longer game, you may play to 5 (or more) Prophecy cards. There are 6 cards provided, but you should feel free to create your own Prophecy cards, for variety or to showcase a different tenor of struggle.