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Cosmic Encounter

The Order: Has Semi-Permanent Allies

Game Setup: Place a Believer token on this sheet for each player in the game

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you may use this power to offer your opponent "lay membership" in The Order. If accepted, place a Believer token on the opponent's sheet.

When both main players are in The Order, no alliances are allowed, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is in The Order, all Order member ships in the system being attacked count for him or her; those ships are sent to the warp upon a loss. A game win for a member of The Order is a win for all members of The Order.

Lay members: As a main player, before alliances are made, you may "renounce" by paying The Order alien a Fee: highest attack card and one non Encounter card. Flip your Order token to "lapsed".

Begun as a simple religious retreat group for one of their species' six genders, The Order soon began to organize other events for all genders of their kind. Over the millennia, The Order also became the dominant force in their planet's economy and government. As they expand to other galaxies, The Order has decided to offer "open enrollment" in hopes of seeing peace and stability throughout the universe.

Main Player Only Optional ...Alliance

Wild: All ships belonging to you and your allies in the system being attacked count towards your total in this encounter.

Main Player Or Ally Only.. Resolution

Super: Order members cannot renounce their membership.

As Any Player ..Alliance



Fan Design Expansion Set

The Order, power of unity. Has Semi-Permanent Allies

All content from the Fan Based Cosmic Encounter Expansion Set

By: Cosmic Encounter

People Who Like This

[Jefferson Krogh](#) and [Rune Romàn Hagen](#) like this.

Discussion

final posted version with correct dates/times.



Peter Olotka The Order awaits your critique.

December 21 at 2:52pm · Like

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o

Maxwell Holle I don't understand the picture

December 21 at 2:58pm · Like · 1



o

Jefferson Krogh Question: can a "lapsed" member of The Order be offered membership again on a future encounter?

December 21 at 3:05pm · Like



o

Stephen Sloboda I would consider dividing this into two alien powers. One that "conscripts" other ships in the system rather than "offer a membership," and the other with the more diplomatic effect of negotiating rather than fighting.

December 21 at 3:07pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson The Game Setup paragraph can be deleted. Tokens only need to be stacked on the sheet at game setup time if the precise number of tokens in the game affects the power. If they are just markers handed out whenever necessary, then no Game Setup is used (see Grudge, for example).

December 21 at 3:09pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson Alien sheets always speak to the owner, never to other players. Also, some folks will not understand "lay members". Both of these issues can be addressed by phrasing the appropriate paragraph something like this:

When another member of The Order is a main player, before allies are invited, he or she may "renounce" by paying you a fee of his or her highest attack card and one non-encounter card. Flip that player's Order token to "lapsed".

Are they Believer tokens or Order tokens?

What happens when you renounce? What is the purpose of the "lapsed" indicator?

Are the other ships in the system that belong to Order members considered to be participating in the encounter?
Are they treated as "in the gate"?

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Are they considered "winning ships", "losing ships", "opposing ships", etc.?
Are their owners considered allies? Considered participating in the encounter?
What happens when a player has ships on both sides of the same encounter?
LOTS of opportunity for questions and issues with other effects here.

If a member of the order achieves a win condition but is prevented from winning the game by some odd restriction, does this prevent the other members from winning?

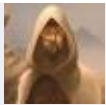
There is a LOT of text here. We may need to simplify the effect, or cut some of the inline flavor in the game text.

December 21 at 3:25pm · Like



Bill Martinson The Super flare is written in Eon style (infinitely repeatable). Under FFG, it needs to be made clear when one use of a flare has a longer duration than just the current action ... so the basic structure would need to be something like "You may cancel all attempts to renounce membership in The Order this encounter."

December 21 at 3:41pm · Like



Gregory Metzger The illustration comes off as very Earthly & pedestrian. I'd suggest something more Cultish or Monastic. A style similar to Pink Floyd's The Wall might work.

December 21 at 3:42pm · Like



Jack Reda So what happens if the first time The Order is attacked at home, and has no members- then loses the encounter? He loses all ships and colonies (and then power)?

December 21 at 4:00pm · Unlike · 2



Jack Reda I don't see much incentive to joining the Order (I wouldn't want to put my uninvolved ships at risk). There has to be a real downside to not joining.

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This alien reminds me of when I played CE in the 90s and our girlfriends were playing. They were always in The Order (you could count on them playing negotiates every time against each other and going for the joint win against the guys).

December 21 at 4:05pm · Unlike · 4



o

Bill Martinson Agree with Jack, and actually I think it's even worse than what he said: any time any member of The Order *ever* loses an encounter in his own system to a non-Order opponent, all of his ships in that system go to the warp and his alien power is gone. In fact, even if some *other* member loses such an encounter in your home system, you're equally annihilated. WAY too big a risk for anyone to take, compared to the mediocre benefits of membership.

None of this really clicks for me. It takes several readings through to understand what's going on, and it's essentially a non-power if everyone else just chooses to ignore it because the risk is too high.

December 21 at 5:05pm · Like



o

Jack Reda The Order needs to have a good carrot and a big stick. Players should want to join the Order, because not joining is too painful. But even being a member needs to benefit the Order player way more, so player will eventually feel compelled to leave (and leaving his its own penalties).

December 21 at 5:08pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Martinson The problem is, if you make the carrot and stick too big, the game gets really lopsided. By definition there will be haves and have-nots (unless The Order player somehow wants *everyone* to win, but I certainly hope we're not designing for that as the typical case). Maybe offering membership needs to be partly situational (not entirely under The Order's control) ... perhaps some kind of demagogic effect like being able to invite the people who have the least number of colonies or something.

December 21 at 5:16pm · Like · 2



o

Jefferson Krogh I agree about the carrot and the stick. Currently the stick only applies to Order members. How about having all Order ships in system count during an encounter *without* putting them at risk? Or maybe having all Order allies get compensation if The Order plays an N? There's quite a few options.

December 21 at 5:19pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
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o

Jack Reda Offering membership to someone who doesn't have more colonies than you could result in some kind of "if one member of the order gains a foreign colony, they all do", or if there's a way to single out the Order player (Head of the Order, or something) who always gets something, even if it's just a card- or the ability to give and/or take from other Order members.

December 21 at 5:22pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle The description of this alien's power should make it clear that when the system in question is the ORDER system, only the ORDER player's ships on the planet which is being challenged count for the Attack total and are at risk. However, the ships of all other players who are currently members of the ORDER on all planets in the ORDER system count for the total in an Attack and are at risk.

Re: incentive . . . this is an "opportunity" power - what happens depends on the actions and persuasiveness of the ORDER player.

December 21 at 5:55pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle @Gregory The illustration was a "throw-away" . . . we need a better one. Perhaps, evoking the feeling of the inside of a large, colorful cathedral.

December 21 at 5:58pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Martinson @Bill: So when a "lay" member is defending in his own system, ALL of his ships in his own system are still at risk? And all members' foreign colonies are all at risk whenever the encounter is taking place in the system where those foreign colonies are, right?

Under those conditions, I can't see why I would ever join (regardless of how persuasive The Order player is) unless I had one of those (rare) "doesn't need home colonies" powers.

December 21 at 6:08pm · Like

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o

Peter Olotka Amoeba can lose a ton of ships s one fatal fell swoop

December 21 at 6:14pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka @ Bill Martinson renounce is simple and needs no explanation you are not a believer, hence you like any other non believer.

December 21 at 6:17pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle I don't think an Order member's ships on their own system should be at risk. I've created a v02 rewrite to handle that and Bill M's issue with how player sheets are supposed to be used.

December 21 at 6:41pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle Perhaps, the advantage of being in the Order would be that you are immune from losing your ships from your home system.

December 21 at 6:42pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle Here's v02:
THE ORDER HAS SEMI-PERMANENT ALLIES

Game Setup: Place a Believer Player token "I believe" side face down on this sheet for each player in the game.

You have the power of unity.

As a main player, before allies are invited, you may use this power to offer your opponent "membership" in The Order. If accepted, turn that Player's Believer token face up to "I believe" on your player sheet.

When both main players are in The Order, no alliances are allowed, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is in The Order, all Order member ships in the system being attacked count for the player who is a member of the Order and will be sent to the Warp upon a loss, with the following exception - when the system being challenged is

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an Order member's system, only the Order member's ships on the planet being challenged count for the defense and, regardless of the outcome they are immune to loss; all ships of other players who are members of the Order do count for the defense and will be sent to the Warp upon a loss. The penalty for failure to negotiate will only be levied against ships of the main player. A game win for one member of The Order is a win for all members of The Order.

Order members: As a main player, before alliances are made, you may "renounce" the Order by paying The Order player a Fee, either your highest attack card or one non Encounter card. The Order player must then turn your Believer Player token face down. Even though you are no longer an Order member, all of your ships in other player's systems will continue to be counted towards an Order player win and will continue to be at risk. Your home system ships are "free."

(Main Player Only) | (Optional | Alliance and Resolution)

WILD

All ships belonging to you and your allies in the system being attacked count towards your total in this encounter.

(Main Player Or Ally Only) | (Resolution)

SUPER

You may ignore all attempts to renounce membership in the Order during this encounter.

(Main Player) | (Alliance and Resolution)

History

Begun as a simple religious retreat group for one of their species' six genders, The Order soon began to organize other events for all genders of their kind. Over the millennia, The Order also became the dominant force in their planet's economy and government. As they expand to other galaxies, The Order has decided to offer "open enrollment" in hopes of seeing peace and stability throughout the universe.

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/current_work.html



Fan Designed Cosmic Expansion Set - Current Work

December 21 at 7:27pm · Like ·



Bill Eberle Picture is the old one from the current work page (glitch in Facebook remembers image from first time it was posted). I've updated to a "cathedral" pic.

December 21 at 7:30pm · Like · 1



Sam Connolly Wait, the new version of the Order doesn't put home system ships at risk... and leaving the Order now frees home system ships from the Order? But if they don't have the extra risk attached in the first place, what does that mean?

December 21 at 8:24pm · Like

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○

Bill Eberle You only get the benefit of not having home system ships at risk if you are an active member of the Order. If you renounce the order, your ships are at risk on any system in an encounter with a member the Order.

December 21 at 9:14pm · Like



○

Bill Eberle So probably an edit to say: Even though you are no longer an Order member, all of your ships in other player's systems will continue to be counted towards an Order player win and will continue to be at risk. Your home system ships are "free" but subject to normal encounter risks.

December 21 at 9:16pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson v02 has the same issues I listed before, adds some new issues, and is harder to understand than before. (I'm fairly sure I must be missing something, because it just doesn't make sense to me.) Why does The Order have a believer token for himself? How do we know which believer token corresponds to which player? Why aren't they given to the players they affect? Why would a player renounce, since he loses the benefits but still has the risks? Can a former member be offered membership again? Peter says a former believer is exactly like a non-believer, but the text says otherwise. (If the text is correct, then you need three-sided tokens because you have three distinct player states: non-believer, believer, former believer.)

December 21 at 9:56pm · Like



○

Bill Eberle Sorry, Bill. I was trying to address the issues you raised. My sense of what you were saying about the player sheet was that it was used only by the player whose sheet it was and I Peter has said that FFG will add tokens etc. for individual powers or features; so, I was adding "Player Believer" tokens (one for each possible player color) and marking one side as the "I'm a member" side. The Order player uses these for the colors of the other players in the game. (I don't care what flavor language we use; the point is that either you're a member or not.) The Order player is always a member.

Re: why renounce - people are contrary creatures; having decided to become a member, they will like the fact that they can quit if they want to and will do just that and quit for all sorts of reasons, illogical and logical, e.g. if they think they have a good chance for a single win.

December 21 at 10:07pm · Like

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○

Bill Eberle See if the ammended text for the current work page (link above), will work. Thanks.

December 21 at 10:39pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson No, it's not working at all for me. Sorry, I'm just having a real hard time getting through all the exceptions and counter-exceptions in the text, the apparent illogic of renouncing, the two-sided tokens trying to record three different player states, the alien sheet that uses second-person pronouns for other players... it's all one giant "TILT" for me. I think I should probably just shut up until this evolves some more.

December 21 at 11:56pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson I took a stab at trying to write what I **think** this power is trying to do. It's still far too long for an FFG alien sheet, but I did reduce it somewhat and fix as many of the issues as I could:

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you */*may use*/* this power to offer your opponent membership in The Order. If he or she accepts, place an Order token member-side-up on that player's alien sheet.

When both main players in an encounter are Order members, all alliances are prevented and canceled, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is a member, that player adds or subtracts 1 from his or her total for every Order member ship on a foreign colony in the defensive system. These ships are not involved in the encounter, but will be sent to the warp if that main player loses.

When the defense is an Order member, his or her defensive ships are not sent to the warp if that player loses the encounter.

A game win for one Order member is a win for all members.

When another Order member is a main player, before alliances are formed, that player may permanently "renounce" the Order by paying you a fee of either the highest attack card or any non-encounter card from his or her hand. Turn that player's Order token member-side-down. His or her ships still behave as member ships.

(Main Player Only) | (Optional) | (Alliance)

To fit even this reduced version on the FFG alien sheet, I had to crunch the text down to 6.5 points -- a full point and a half below FFG's minimum font standard and probably unreadable for some players with less-than-perfect vision. Personally, I would eliminate the entire "renouncement" paragraph since it doesn't do anything and is thus very confusing. (Also, the Super flare is useless if there is no incentive to renounce.)

December 22 at 10:19am · Like

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o

Bill Eberle Thanks, Bill. I think the ability to renounce the order is important psychologically. Perhaps, it works to increase the cost (fee) and eliminate the idea of ships still being at risk, or, if there is a simple way to manage it, simply lose any foreign colonies acquired while a member ... something that doesn't require too many words to explain.

December 22 at 11:44am · Like



o

Bill Eberle This is a shorter version of the power description and removes the idea of your ships still being at risk if you renounce. The idea of a main defense Order player not losing all his or her ships on all home planets is retained, handled well by your language re: which ships are counted toward the encounter win and are at risk.

THE ORDER

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you /*may use*/ this power to offer your opponent membership in The Order. If he or she accepts, place an Order token member-side-up on that player's alien sheet. As a benefit, Order members do not lose their power when three or more of their home colonies are eliminated. A game win for one Order member is a win for all members.

When both main players in an encounter are Order members, all alliances are prevented and canceled, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is a member, that player adds or subtracts 1 from his or her total for every Order member ship on a foreign colony in the defensive system. These ships are not involved in the encounter, but will be sent to the warp if the main Order member player loses.

When another Order member is a main player, before alliances are formed, that player may permanently "renounce" the Order by removing all of his or her ships from two foreign colonies and placing them in the warp. Turn that player's Order token member-side-down.

(Main Player Only) | (Optional [Alliance] Mandatory [Resolution])
| (Alliance and Resolution)

December 22 at 12:05pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson The icons should be as follows:

(Main Player Only) | (Optional) | (Alliance)

These icons apply only to an alien power's zappable (i.e. "may use") effects; they are not impacted by the non-zappable parts.

Also, the number of planets required to keep one's power is variable between games and also affected by such things as planets being created and destroyed, so it should not be defined using any actual numbers, and should be expressed in terms of how many one has, not how many one has lost. Using FFG's wording convention, this sentence would be "Order

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members do not lose their alien powers because of having too few home colonies". You don't need to start that sentence with "As a benefit" -- almost everything on an alien power is a benefit, so that's sort of implied.

December 22 at 12:28pm · Like



Bill Eberle amended, shortened and simplified, because the two sided Order token is no longer required:

THE ORDER

HAS SEMI-PERMANENT ALLIES

You have the power of unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you /*may use*/ this power to offer your opponent membership in The Order. If he or she accepts, place an Order token on that player's alien sheet. As benefits, order members do not lose their power when three or more of their home colonies are eliminated and a game win for one Order member is a win for all members.

When both main players in an encounter are Order members, all alliances are prevented and canceled, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is a member, that player adds or subtracts 1 from his or her total for every Order member ship on a foreign colony in the defensive system. These ships are not involved in the encounter, but will be sent to the warp if the main Order member player loses.

When another Order member is a main player before alliances are formed, that player may permanently "renounce" the Order by putting all of his or her ships on two foreign colonies into the warp. Remove the Order token from that player's alien sheet.

(Main Player Only) | (Optional [Alliance] Mandatory [Resolution] | Alliance and Resolution)

December 22 at 12:37pm · Like



Bill Martinson I think I also still left a leak in my suggestion for canceling and preventing alliances. My goal was to define what happens in cases where alliances are mandatory (such as with the Alliance hazard card), but my rewrite technically still allows *invitations* and then just cancels them. This will probably get weird with things like Grudge. I probably should have suggested the following instead:

When both main players in an encounter are Order members, allies may not be invited or join for any reason, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates.

With my latest suggestions and your reductions, the game text is now at 7-point type (and the history would be at 6 points, since it runs one point smaller than the game text). Still a much longer power than any published alien. But now it's down to three paragraphs instead of five, so that's good progress.

December 22 at 12:41pm · Like

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○

Bill Eberle Thanks, Bill. Good rewrite of that sentence. Updated, here: http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/current_work.html

December 22 at 1:05pm · Like



○

Peter Olotka I think that the complex text is unnecessary. And I think that hard core gamers might not join the Order, but casual gamers and Jack Reda's girlfriends might, which is a plus, not a minus. The shorter the power description, the better. And I like aliens that turn the game on its ear and that make it feel like the universe has a screw loose. If the game ends in 15 minutes, that's also a plus, not a minus. Deal a new round of aliens and the next game might take two hours. And if the Order's ships get blown into the warp right from the get go that's fine too. 90% of players who have this expansion set will be able to cope and as we all know, the Order can still win the game, leading to the retelling of "The time I won, even though...." Players who want the game to be balanced will simply take their perceived unbalanced aliens out of their play mix so as to preserve an ironic senses of order in their Cosmic game, right? As for me, I think they are missing the adventure of having to survive in a truly unknowable universe where all the rules are broken, not just the safe little rules. If I was playing the Order I would love the challenge of trying to get just one player to Believe and the risk of being on the verge of extinction at any time. Having gotten one believer, then it gets tempting for others to join the bandwagon. Perhaps I can pick off a players secretly unhappy with their current alien. Maybe someone has to leave early and sees a way to get a win (oh the horror!) and throws in with my cult to the consternation of the SERIOUS GAMER to his left, but to my delight. And so it goes.....

December 22 at 1:17pm · Like · 1



○

Bill Martinson I'm not as concerned with balance, but I do want to plug the leaks. Seeing a weak power pull off a win or a strong power get its comeuppance can be fun ... but stopping the game to argue about how a power works is miserable.

I guess my goal is to have powers that are exciting and zingy for the causal players, but also at least work on a baseline level for the "serious gamers" (if any Cosmic Encounter player can truly be called that). There's no reason we can't have both, right? Or does a wacky power actually NEED to make certain players wish it hadn't been included in the set? In other words, is that the goal of the power?

December 22 at 1:28pm · Like



○

Jefferson Krogh Version 3 of The Order is short enough for me now. The benefits of joining The Order are now perfectly clear, and I find them enticing enough to consider. So my ships will be at risk -- big deal! I won't lose my power for having too few home colonies, and I don't need to be the one to get 5 foreign colonies to win.

Maybe it can be a bit more concise still, but I like the way this is shaping up.

December 22 at 1:32pm · Like

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○

Bill Martinson @Bill: Based on the latest version posted on Ideabout, I think some earlier comments may have gotten lost in the shuffle, so I'll copy them down here:

The icons should be as follows:

(Main Player Only) | (Optional) | (Alliance)

These icons apply only to an alien power's zappable (i.e. "may use") effects; they are not impacted by the non-zappable parts.

Also, the number of planets required to keep one's power is variable between games and also affected by such things as planets being created and destroyed, so it should not be defined using any actual numbers, and should be expressed in terms of how many one has, not how many one has lost. Using FFG's wording convention, this sentence would be "Order members do not lose their alien powers because of having too few home colonies". You don't need to start that sentence with "As a benefit" -- almost everything on an alien power is a benefit, so that's sort of implied.

December 22 at 1:32pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson @Peter Olotka: I agree that shorter is better. When you say that the complex text is unnecessary, do you have in mind some parts to eliminate?

December 22 at 1:45pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson The Wild flare will generate questions in situations with things like Anti-Matter and Macron. FFG's way of handling that is generally to say "add 1 for each".

WILD

As a main player or ally, you may add or subtract 1 from your side's total for each ship in the defensive system that belongs to any player on your side and is not already involved in the encounter.

I guess I should also mention that the strength of this flare generally outclasses similar flares like Wild Citadel, Wild Kamikaze, Wild Macron, and Wild Xenophile. I'm not saying that's a showstopper; I'm just doing the research.

December 22 at 2:12pm · Like

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o

Peter Olotka Yes! Short version pruned down to its essence coming soon

December 22 at 3:47pm · Like · 1



o

Peter Olotka The Order: Recruits Members

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you may use this power to offer your opponent "Membership" in The Order. If accepted, place a Member token on the new member's sheet.

When both main players are in The Order, no alliances are allowed under any circumstances, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates.

The Order and Members can not be zapped and never lose their powers for any reason.

A Member may renounce membership when the other main player is the Order, by offering The Order a buyout. Buyouts can be offered in cards and not more than one colony. The Order may request that the Member take Order cards and lose any number of colonies (returning ships to existing colonies) as part of the buyout package. Both sides must agree to the buyout in 60 seconds, with no consequence for failure.

(Main Player Only) | Alliance

WILDYou may play any Attack Card as a Negotiate.(Main Player Only) | (Resolution

SUPERYou may force an opponent to become a temporary member in the Order during this encounter.(Main Player)

December 22 at 4:07pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Eberle You forgot the bit about a game win being a win for all Order members. Was that on purpose?

December 22 at 4:18pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle A win for any member(s) of the Order is a win for the Order and all Order members.

December 22 at 4:20pm · Like

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Peter Olotka The win should be for all order members ...add that in

December 22 at 4:30pm · Like



Bill Martinson I like this simplified version, especially how the buyout works almost exactly like a deal, but with The Order able to request lost colonies. (I wish there were more aliens that allowed weird kinds of deals like this, and/or allowed other kinds of things to be offered in regular deals.)

Below I will post a version that adds FFG capitalization and wording conventions, especially for the non-losability clause (which comes from Symbiote). I have also tried to flesh out the Wild flare, although I may or may not have interpreted your desired timing correctly (did you want the player to have to commit before the reveal?). The Super still needs some indication of timing as well.

Finally I will add the "all members win" back in.

December 22 at 4:32pm · Like



Bill Martinson *You have the power of Unity.* As a main player, before allies are invited, you /*may use*/ this power to offer your opponent membership in The Order. If he or she accepts, place a member token on the new member's alien sheet.

When both main players in an encounter are in The Order, no alliances are allowed under any circumstances, and all revealed attack cards become negotiates.

A game win for one Order member is a win for all members. Powers of players in The Order cannot be zapped, lost, stolen, or copied through any means.

When you are a main player, other players may renounce membership by offering you a buyout according to the rules for deals. As part of a buyout deal you may request that the member lose any number of colonies (returning ships to other colonies). Both sides have 60 seconds to agree to the buyout, with no consequences for failure.

(Main Player Only) | (Alliance)

WILD

As a main player, after encounter cards are revealed, you may change your revealed attack card into a negotiate.

(Main Player Only) | (Reveal)

SUPER

You may force your opponent to become a temporary member in the Order for the rest of this encounter.

(Main Player Only) | (_____?)

December 22 at 4:33pm · Like · 1

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



○

Bill Eberle Peter and I have talked this through and like this simplified version much better also. The essence of this alien, and the essence of any any really good alien, is the set of emotional responses the alien creates for the alien's player and other players in the game. I think this version of THE ORDER will do exactly what I imagined it would do.

December 22 at 4:37pm · Like · 3



○

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I noticed you guys left out the entire reason why I created "Order tokens" on the rewrite in BGG - to identify the heretics so their ships count against them when fighting Order members. This power as it stands now is a complete and utter mess atm and lost it original flair. The point of the Order as originally was written by Bill was "join up to win with others or get crushed by their combined might". There is no crushing going on here. Allow me to try to rewrite it once more considering all the points made by Jack and Bill, and then considering the original intent of Bill Eberle:

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you may use this power to offer your opponent membership in your group, if they are not already a member. If they accept, place an Order token on their sheet. You are always a member.

When both main players are members, no alliances are allowed, and revealed Attack cards become Negotiates. If only one main player is a member, add 1 to the member's total for all member ships in the system being attacked. A game win for a member is a win for all members.

As a main player, when encountering a member, before alliances are made, they may "renounce" membership and flip their Order token over to the "lapsed" side. When a lapsed member is a main player or ally against a member, add 1 to the member's total for all lapsed member's ships in the system being attacked, and all such ships are sent to the warp upon the lapsed member's loss.

December 22 at 4:38pm · Like



○

Bill Eberle Chris, the "crushing" happens peacefully, by negotiated exchanges of foreign colonies; players outside of the Order will have the same intense desire to "stop the Order at all costs" in all encounters which are not between two Order members and will be hard pressed by the fact that they have no way to stop Order member aliens from using their special powers.

The issue with "too many words" is a serious issue which we need to address, both to fit the FFG format and to make new powers accessible and enjoyable.

December 22 at 4:50pm · Like · 1

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Jack Reda The Order will likely have a domino effect- where if one player agrees to join, many others will be inclined to join. That flip side is that it will be very easy for everyone to simply ignore The Order (and that will especially be true of the kind of players that prefer to win alone).

December 22 at 4:54pm · Like



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Most of Bill Martinson's issues have been addressed by making ships in the attacked system add 1 to your score instead of actually being involved, and the reverse is true for lapsed members, which is the deterrent to leave the Order to get a solo win. Also I doubt it will be very easy for everyone to ignore the Order unless it is a small game of few players. There will always be someone lagging behind and they will want to join the Order at a chance to win without the required colonies. That is as short as I can think of to write the power without losing it's effect of creating leaks.

December 22 at 5:08pm · Like



o

Jack Reda Of course, the Order is under no obligation to add a player that is lagging behind.

December 22 at 6:09pm · Like



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Very true, but it directly benefits The Order in that the lagging player's ships in other people's systems add to his total. If people prefer the rewrite that the Bills have worked on, I guess my only objection is that making your power un-zappable is even less of a persuasive reason to join the Order than to have combined combat bonuses.

December 22 at 6:13pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson Whoops, I just realized something. If the The Order can truly never lose his power, then I should not have put "may use" in bold italics and the icons at the bottom of the sheet should be blank (or be like Symbiote's illogical icons, I guess). In any case, your intent is that The Order is never, ever zappable, not even when offering membership ... is that correct? If so, I will work on a revision.

December 22 at 6:19pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Bill Eberle Yes. Thanks, Bill.

December 22 at 6:31pm · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh I was going to agree with Christopher that the Order needed more of a carrot, but upon further reflection, I side with Bill & Bill. We players often get too much up on the math that drives the encounters; The Order simply overthrows that and places the social side of the game at the fore.

Join, or die -- such a simple, but primal decision.

In a typical game, how many chances will most players get to join the order? Probably one. What a crucial decision that becomes, with huge repercussions. Fascinating idea.

However...I think it needs a new name. CLIQUE, anyone?

December 22 at 7:08pm · Unlike · 1



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira The Order and his members are still basically a non-power when fighting non-members. There is no advantage to being a member when fighting non-members.

December 22 at 7:14pm · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh The advantage is that even if you fail in your encounter, you have probably weakened your opponent so that your fellow members can defeat him later. Winning and losing individual encounters yourself is less important when you're a member.

December 22 at 7:19pm · Unlike · 2

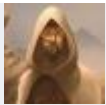
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira That would be true if winning an encounter gave all members a free foreign colony, but it doesn't. When the power says "A win for an Order member is a win for all members" mean a GAME WIN for one is a shared win for all, but one for them still has to reach 5 colonies. This still strikes me as being too weak a power overall.

December 22 at 7:26pm · Like



o

Gregory Metzger Bill Eberle It's a refreshing change to see a symbol or scene represent a power rather than an Alien portait. It opens up alot of new possibilities for illustration, as I imagine it's pretty hard to keep coming up with unique ideas for strange looking beings. Lol.

December 22 at 7:55pm · Unlike · 1



o

Peter Olotka I prefer to not evaluate powers as weak or strong, since by definition aliens, are situational. Example: Play 1 Order on defense gets a Member each now has one colony and power loss immunity. Play 2 2nd encounter Offense loses. Play 3 Order on defense again gets a second member, now Order has 2 colonies and two alien members have power loss immunity. Play 4 Order on offense, wins. 3 Colonies. Play 5 Order 2nd encounter goes to a Member. 4 colonies.....

December 22 at 7:56pm · Unlike · 2



o

Peter Olotka BTW: tons of aliens have non-powers when "encountering" other aliens. Perhaps the use of the word fighting leads down the path of weak and strong,,,

December 22 at 7:58pm · Like · 1



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Peter you can't help but evaluate aliens, there is a reason why Locust and Observer are trash and aliens like Virus and Philanthropist are gold.

December 22 at 8:02pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



Christopher Aurel Oliveira Give me one good reason why anyone would voluntarily join this new Order now unless they are behind in colonies when they can simply smash Order members in combat easily and gain a solo win?

December 22 at 8:04pm · Like



Bill Martinson [Jefferson Krogh](#) is right. When you are a member of The Order, your life and all your material possessions are expendable. The only thing that matters is the good of the group, the body. You can throw away cards, ships, colonies, planets, whatever in order to help any one of the other members win. Instead of pursuing your own colonialism agenda, you can become a distraction, a decoy, a meatshield ... whatever it takes.

If you are Siren, pull the infidels away from your friends' colonies even when you don't think you can prevail. Give your entire Miser's hoard to The Order and then draw a new one. As Fido or Philanthropist, offer outstanding toys to the other altar boys. When you are Will, go to another member on every encounter and give them a colony plus all your good cards. Step on your own Saboteur traps whenever it helps your co-cultists. As Hacker, forget about winning encounters and rob the muggles blind with the negotiate cards you get from the other members in all the deals you make.

In fact, depending on the aliens in play, The Order player himself may often become the sacrificial lamb, since other members will often have encounter-winning strengths to play to. When The Order makes deals with his members, he can tailor those deals to set his followers up for success. If negotiating with a converted Disease, try to grant him a colony in the system where he is most likely to spread soon based on what's still in the destiny deck. Trade your low attack cards to Loser or Anti-Matter or Reserve (and take Anti-Matter's high-card kryptonite off his hands). If you have recruited Warpish or Sadist, keep lots of your ships in the warp. Trade The Claw one of your 06s, recommending it to him as a highly grabby card, then reveal your other 06 as the offense against a nonbeliever, caring little whether you win or lose. Give Pacifist or Empath your negotiates. Load up Cavalry with big guns.

If I were playing The Order, I would give my good non-encounter cards to the other members, along with enough decent encounter cards to keep them from having to get a new hand too soon. In this way my own hand becomes expendable/trashable as a resource to improve my members' hands whenever possible.

Pretty quickly this starts to feed itself: the faster you give away your cards, the faster you get a new hand with which to feed your proselytes some more.

December 22 at 8:09pm · Unlike · 2



Christopher Aurel Oliveira This is starting to sound like something out of Bioshock 2 involving Sofia Lamb...

December 22 at 8:20pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Jefferson Krogh For those of us who don't play video games, perhaps you can explain what you mean?

December 22 at 8:35pm · Like



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I still have the final level to play through the game but: Sofia Lamb is a PHD of psychology that basically is a collectivist and seeks to eliminate the self through means of a form of mass hypnosis and some drugs and by a pseudo-religious rhetorical fervor, since she is an atheist. She is trying to create a utopian society by having all people lose their sense of self and self-identity in order to "liberate them" and make them part of the "Family" as she calls it. However she is secretly crating a child that absorbs all the consciousness of the people in her cult as her selfless "Messiah", untainted by the genetic disposition of self-preservation and awareness.

December 22 at 8:42pm · Like



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira She is the main bad guy (as far as the game has revealed.)

December 22 at 8:42pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka Never had the pleasure of making her acquaintance :), but as [Bill Eberle](#) says players will see the Order through their own prisms.

December 22 at 8:49pm · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh Thanks! I do see the similarity. The name "The Order" is certainly very sinister, which is why I suggested changing it to something more whimsical like "Clique."

December 22 at 8:49pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Jefferson Krogh Whatever we call it, this is definitely **very** different from any published alien, and is going to throw a lot of people. Which is exactly what we should be trying to do!

December 22 at 8:51pm · Like



o

Amy Crook We played with our friend [Eric Lytle](#) last night, and I think he'd love the current revision of this power -- his driving goal in Cosmic is to find a way to make everyone win!

December 22 at 8:55pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Martinson [Peter Olotka](#), I wholeheartedly agree with your terminology comment. These are definitely "encounters" and I cringe a little bit when folks refer to them all as "battles" or "combat". (The conversion from tokens to ships has of course added fuel to this fire, but I can't really stay mad at them 'cause they're so awesome.)

Encounters are **representative** and as conceptually varied as the aliens themselves ... I might get a colony from you in a space battle, or I might get it by sending my mercenaries planetside to subdue that despised rebel stronghold on your capital world without firing a shot. Or by brokering a trade agreement or falsifying a legal document or winning a super-high-stakes card game or besting your Skraantu Chieftain in the three-legged leg-wrestling championship that closes out your annual Gorfmortle Festival.

Thinking of Cosmic Encounter as a "battle game" is just wrong. Always has been.

December 22 at 9:04pm · Unlike · 2



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Perhaps another name for this power could be "Collective" or "Hivemind". Something that doesn't sound ordinary, so that it fits an alien race better.

December 22 at 9:13pm · Like · 1

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



○

Bill Eberle "Collective" would work for my psychological sense of this alien; started as a small "business" running retreats for one of the species' six genders and gradually expanding its influence by running retreats for all of the different genders of their species, and now "owning" all of the different economies and governments of their home systems, perhaps, even with "behind the scenes" control (they have learned from and idolize Frank Herbert's Bene Gesserit).

Personally, I think "The Order" suggests an organization with a multi-generation life-span, one which has actually been around for "Eons" ... and I like alien names that trigger subtle visceral reactions in human players.

December 22 at 9:52pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson Crap. As much as I despise these things, I think The Order may need a restriction that says Do Not Use with Machine. Otherwise Machine will find it child's play to win for the cult in a single turn: every time he encounters another member, he deals for a colony plus that member's entire hand. The received encounter cards fuel plenty of additional encounters, and the non-encounter cards provide a buffer against compensation. Machine is also probably revealing negotiates a lot against non-believers to prevent losing cards to them, and whenever he encounters another member, that member gets a fresh hand, which he gives to Machine along with another colony. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Unfortunately, the "tramp-stamp" restrictions are very costly in terms of space on the sheet — and ugly — so it might be better to have the text say "... to offer your opponent (unless he or she is the Machine) membership in The Order".

I can easily see a storyline justification for this, and really there's no problem having these two powers in the same game together; it's just a boring and protracted landslide if Machine becomes a member.

December 22 at 10:05pm · Unlike · 2



○

Bill Eberle Agreed. Thanks.

December 22 at 10:18pm · Like



○

Bill Eberle

History

Begun as a simple business running religious retreats for one of their species' six genders, the Order soon began to organize events for all genders of their kind. Over the millennia, the Order became the dominant force in their planet's economy and government. Now, having solved a troubling uprising by their mechanical inventions and ready to expand to other galaxies, The Order is offering "open enrollment" and hope to see a tidy progression towards peace and stability throughout the universe.

December 22 at 10:23pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Bill Martinson @Bill: I'm working on the revised text now, and will use your his history. In my last attempt, did I interpret the timing on the Wild flare correctly?

December 22 at 10:28pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle Either way works. Your Wild version is more powerful (*better*). I did an alien power rewrite with the key phrases of your text changes on the archive current work
page:http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/current_work.html

December 22 at 10:51pm · Like



o

Bill Eberle Note, in some cases I kept Peter's wording where it was simpler/shorter and I thought the meaning was the same.

December 22 at 10:54pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson Here are the key points of my rewrite:

* Since it can't be zapped, "you may use this power to offer" needs to become just "you may offer". (The player is not *using* the power in the zappable sense.)

* Per FFG conventions, the non-loss sentence should be "Powers of all members in The Order cannot be zapped, lost, stolen, or copied through any means." (We can say just "all members" rather than "The Order and all members" because it's already understood that The Order is itself a member, and other parts of the text already depend upon this understanding.)

* Following the Symbiote model for an unzappable alien, the power's icons would be (As Any Player) | (Optional) | (All Phases).

* I had forgotten to flesh out the Super flare. It should start with "As a main player, before allies are invited, you may force ...".

Here's the full text:

THE ORDER

You have the power of Unity. As a main player, before allies are invited, you may offer your opponent (unless he or she is the Machine) membership in The Order. If he or she accepts, place a member token on the new member's alien sheet.

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

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When both main players in an encounter are in The Order, no alliances are allowed under any circumstances, and all revealed attack cards become negotiates.

A game win for one Order member is a win for all members. Powers of players in The Order cannot be zapped, lost, stolen, or copied through any means.

When you are a main player, other players may renounce membership by offering you a buyout according to the rules for deals. As part of a buyout deal you may request that the member lose any number of colonies (returning ships to other colonies). Both sides have 60 seconds to agree to the buyout, with no consequences for failure.

(As Any Player) | (Optional) | (All Phases)

Begun as a simple business running religious retreats for one of their species' six genders, the Order soon began to organize events for all genders of their kind. Over the millennia, the Order became the dominant force in their planet's economy and government. Now, having solved a troubling uprising by their mechanical inventions and ready to expand to other galaxies, The Order is offering "open enrollment" and hopes to see a tidy progression toward peace and stability throughout the Universe.

WILD

As a main player, after encounter cards are revealed, you may change your revealed attack card into a negotiate.

(Main Player Only) | (Reveal)

SUPER

As a main player, before allies are invited, you may force your opponent to become a temporary member in the Order for the rest of this encounter.

(Main Player Only) | (Alliance)

December 22 at 11:03pm · Like



Peter Olotka Disagree re machine ... Let it be. Nothing is fatal.

December 22 at 11:09pm · Like



Peter Olotka It is good for cosmic to have weird outcomes between 2 aliens in 110

December 22 at 11:11pm · Like



Jefferson Krogh Or 150+, by the time all this is done....

December 22 at 11:11pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
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o

Brad Long The Order. Believer tokens. "I believe." ... I would prefer a Hive-like theme rather than a religious one.

December 23 at 2:09am · Like



o

Bill Eberle Current version has no believer tokens; has simple member/membership tokens, and the religious theme is muted, a historical story. The emphasis of this pervasive organization is on orderliness and an end to messy disagreements.

December 23 at 8:33am · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh I don't get a religious undertone from this alien. It makes think more of secret societies and conspiracies.

December 23 at 11:31am · Like · 2



o

Bill Eberle Yep. My sense exactly. More modern. The "order" in The "Order" is "follow orders" and "orderliness."

December 23 at 11:55am · Like · 1



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I think there needs to be a very important distinction between the alien who is THE ORDER and all his members. In order to do this I highly suggest that all other players are referred to only as "members", and when describing the power to extend membership, it should probably read something as "offer membership in your GROUP"

December 23 at 2:28pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
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o

Bill Eberle Peter and I also think that power description language which is clear about the distinction between The ORDER and members of the Order is important. The current power description has eliminated previous complexity which defined picky differences between the two. Now, only The ORDER can offer others membership in the Order, both The ORDER and Order members are immune to losing their alien powers and always negotiate when main players are either the ORDER and a member or both are members of the Order. A win for the Order or a member is a win for all. And, finally, when The ORDER is a main player, Order members can try to quit by negotiating a buyout.

December 23 at 2:48pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka Members is only used for members and order is only used for the alien itself.

December 23 at 2:54pm · Like



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I have some art in mind I'd like to do, but I am still waiting on my laptop to be fixed, hopefully by tomorrow. I will make a rough comp of a sea-horse looking alien in the middle wearing interesting garments and having some runic marking on his body, and the Chosen will be on his left in the same garb and Empath on his right with the garb on. It will look like an insidious secret society fronting as a religious group.

December 23 at 2:58pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka **Bill Eberle** and I have a difference of opinion. Bill is for Order to rule: Do Not Use With Machine In Game and I am for not disallowing Machine. Bill likes the concept of the Order fearing Machines as a humorous subtle Dune reference, which he can explain better than I. For my part, I have two reasons for allowing Machine. First, it is not an automatic power clash a la Sorcerer / Oracle; but rather a hypothetical situation that might or might not come up. The situation is that Machine as a Member of the Order would in theory, be able to propel the game to a quick ending. And I love those kind of quirky alien combinations. (Bill loves them too, but not in this particular case.) Either way will not harm the alien. What do the Fan Designers think?

December 23 at 3:05pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



Christopher Aurel Oliveira It's not "in theory", it is guaranteed that if Order and Machine are in the same game and Machine becomes a member, the game will INSTANTLY end once Machine's turn comes around, because he will have infinite cards and rapid colonies off bases. It will make that game session inherently pointless. I vote for DO NOT USE WITH MACHINE

December 23 at 3:34pm · Like



Jack Reda It is not guaranteed.

December 23 at 4:04pm · Like · 1



Jefferson Krogh Machine, in theory, has access to all the cards from members of the Order. That's not infinite, but it may be nearly so. A lot depends on the Destiny draws during Machine's turn.

The real problem is that members of the Order are immune to Cosmic Zap. That I have trouble with. I don't mind them not losing powers to insufficient planets, but being unzappable does make the Machine/Order combo very difficult to stop.

I will not object if the Order is given a "do not use" restriction, and I will not object if it does not. I lean towards giving it the restriction, though.

December 23 at 4:13pm · Like · 1



Peter Olotka Nothing in Cosmic is guaranteed and games that end quickly are, well supposed to end quickly. To try to legislate against quick endings flies in the face of the surprise that alien combos serve up to us. It is highly possible that Machine will want to play for a solo win and stick it to the Order. Should the Will be banned because it can go to the Order on every Encounter? Should the Dictator be banned because it can prevent players from ever going to the Order?

December 23 at 4:19pm · Like



Jack Reda I guess I'm missing the part where Machine or any player has full access to cards from any or every player in the Order. Certainly they can talk about exchanging cards in a deal, but no player is forced to even agree to a deal. The

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Order forces deal situations between its members, but those deals can fail. Is there a version of the Order floating around that lets any player cherry pick cards from the other members whenever? I can't find it.

December 23 at 4:23pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka Ruling an alien ineligible because it could - if it used its power in a certain way - bring a quick end to the game just seems against the whole Cosmic ethos. Keep in mind that the vast majority of players who find themselves in a game with a combo which has Order and Machine in it will not be steeped in the minutia of design and will be surprised at what may happen. And surprise is the most important feature of Cosmic.

December 23 at 4:35pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka Did I miss the part where all cards are shared?

December 23 at 4:36pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson @Jack Reda: Under the theory that Order members will cooperate to achieve the win (otherwise why did the member join?), it makes sense for all other members, when dealing with Machine, to give him their entire hands, since he can achieve the win for all of them in one turn. It's not mandatory, but as [Jefferson Krogh](#) suggests, it is "nearly" inevitable that this will be the outcome.

December 23 at 4:37pm · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh "Shared" means that in theory, Machine could just do a deal with a fellow member to take all his cards during each encounter.

December 23 at 4:38pm · Like



o

Jack Reda Ok, but "in theory" does not equal guaranteed.

December 23 at 4:41pm · Like · 1

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



o

Jefferson Krogh I was not the one opining so, sir.

December 23 at 4:41pm · Like · 2



o

Bill Martinson @Peter Olotka: I'm generally okay with weird exceptional outcomes, but the Order/Machine situation seems different; it crosses that nebulous aesthetic line between "Cosmic" and "clunky". It's so predictable, protracted, and boring that it feels non-Cosmic to me. (Perhaps this might explain Bill Eberle's atypical stance?) Other than the fact that it's a bit more elegant if the text doesn't say "except Machine", I guess I can't really see what's gained by allowing such a foreseeably dull game ending.

As a player, I would probably just go to the kitchen and wait for the involved players to work through the physical mechanics for however many encounters it takes to make the inevitable happen, while scratching my head and wondering why the designers left such an anti-climactic bad taste in the game.

December 23 at 4:45pm · Like



o

Jack Reda Here's the thing though- either pretty much everyone will be part of the Order, in which case MOST games with it will end pretty quickly with a giant group win, or enough other players will not be interested in that outcome and will fight against it. Even with Machine in the game, he can't win every single encounter, and there's still no guarantee that other members of the Order will just give Machine all cards and let him have all the glory. I play CE with 3 or 4 different groups, and I can say that pretty much none of those players will roll over and let Machine just win the game on his turn, even if they will get the shared win for his efforts. This is much ado about very little.

December 23 at 4:48pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson Nor am I arguing that it's guaranteed. But it is the likely outcome, and very likely to succeed in one turn. Even if it takes two turns, there's just nothing clever, entertaining, or Cosmic about it. I wouldn't even find it fun as one of the winning players.

Having said that, I have to admit I'm not excited about the alternative, either. I really HATE those tramp-stamps: they kinda seem like the designer just gave up and punted. There's only ONE tramp-stamp in this whole version that's even necessary, and I hate to add another one. This is why, if we choose to go this route, I'd rather see "unless that player is the Machine" in the game text, since there's not problem with Machine participating in the same game. Machine just makes an inappropriate Order member.

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html

It's actually exciting if other players team up against Machine by joining The Order. Now **that's** Cosmic.

December 23 at 4:49pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Martinson Jack, are you saying that players in your group will join The Order and then deliberately **not** work with their co-members to achieve the joint win? That doesn't make much sense to me.

December 23 at 4:52pm · Like



o

Jefferson Krogh I think a significant part of The Order's charm is that social dynamics are so important to it. Will everyone play it "optimally," or will they use it in a metagame fashion to stick it to their friends? No way to know until it hits the table.

I have a stubborn streak; if I was Machine, I would likely turn down the Order's invitation just to see if I could withstand the tide alone. It's such an interesting conundrum, which is why I like this power so much.

December 23 at 4:56pm · Like · 1



o

Bill Martinson I'm still conflicted on this. In the context of some of the clunky crap that happens with Masochist, I guess this situation isn't any worse. I would just like to think that we can put our heads together and do better than that.

December 23 at 5:01pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson There's another topic I want to address before it gets away from us. A couple of hours ago, [Peter Olotka](#) was discussing terminology and said "Members is only used for members and order is only used for the alien itself." This is not quite how the power is current worded: it has at least one passage where "members" is clearly used to include The Order itself, and it also uses "in The Order" to refer to members. If you want to maintain the distinction you described in the quotation above, the text will need to be lengthened. Is there a reason we need that?

December 23 at 5:07pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

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○

Jack Reda I play CE with a lot of people that like to win alone, so the presence of the Order in the game will certainly make people think twice about shared wins. But I believe in a 6 player game, The Order will typically only get 2 other players to join up- maybe 3. The others would work together to stop the Order from winning, and then either jostle for their own solo win, or perhaps join together as an Anti-Order to win as a group.

But let's say that Machine is in the game (something that I don't think would happen often if ever, since Machine doesn't get picked much in our games, and in this case someone would have to also choose The Order over another alien)- Even if The Order player manages to convince Machine to join, and gets one or two other players as well, the folks in our games are still going to be reluctant to hand over their good cards to Machine and let him to do the winning. I can't say I would be interested in giving all of my high attack cards to an ally in a game where there are 2 or 3 (or more) non Order members that I still need to contend with.

This just doesn't compare to Healer and Masochist in a game.

December 23 at 5:09pm · Like



○

Jefferson Krogh **Bill Martinson**: I don't see any need to change your wording; it should be very obvious to everyone that The Order is a member of its own Order.

But now I want a Groucho alien that would not be a member of any order that would have him as a member!

December 23 at 5:26pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson **Jefferson Krogh**, I agree that the current wording is good. I am just responding to **Peter Olotka's** statement about the terminology being different than what the current version uses. I would actually prefer that we stick with the wording we've been using, but if Peter wants it to mean something different, then a recast will be necessary.

December 23 at 5:28pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson **Jack Reda**, forgive me for this, but your argument is partly based on the fact that it will probably never come up in your group. Thus whichever way we go will not really have an effect on you. But that doesn't mean it isn't going to come up for other groups, and be a Really Boring Outcome in those cases when it does happen.

Again I will ask: What do we gain by *allowing* the Really Boring Outcome to happen? How does this enhance Cosmic Encounter?

December 23 at 5:29pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



○

Jack Reda And Bill, you are arguing that Machine and The Order will always result in a boring outcome, which I don't agree with. It has the potential to be boring, but whose criteria for boring are we using? Some people undoubtedly enjoy it. If we put our minds to it, I bet we could come up with a few other combinations of aliens that have the potential to result in a boring game by somebody's standards. The fact that you can have these 2 aliens in a game is no guarantee of any particular outcome, boring or otherwise.

December 23 at 5:36pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson Where did I say "always", or "guarantee"? Even if a problem only happens "sometimes", it's still a problem. All these things must be both weighed and intuited so the greater good can be assessed. My intuition and experience tell me that in however many games across the years where the Machine ever joins The Order, more of those outcomes will be Clunky than Cosmic. To my way of thinking, that is a net detriment to the glory of Cosmic Encounter.

But I don't want to belabor this. I've said my piece, and I'm pretty sure it's going to go the other way anyway. So I'm content to let this go and move on to more interesting issues.

December 23 at 5:44pm · Like



○

Bill Martinson Such as this one! ;-)

Now that membership tokens don't need to be double-sided, I think there is another way to do this that's a bit more elegant, doesn't require us to know in advance how many player colors there will ever be, and also thematically shows the commitment and sacrifice that members make when joining The Order. See what you think about this:

... you may offer your opponent membership in The Order ... That player may accept by placing one of his or her ships on this sheet to indicate membership.

... another player may renounce membership (sending his or her ship from this sheet to the warp) by offering you a buyout ...

Now we don't need tokens at all. If you want to join, instead of The Order handing you a membership card, you must symbolically offer up your firstborn, send a delegate, go to Jedi training, etc. You are investing yourself in The Order before you ever receive a single benefit.

It seems like the collection of members' ships on The Order's sheet is a bit more dramatic and angst-y for the non-members than a bunch of spread-out tokens, too, and folks like Jefferson who've added their own custom player colors don't have to manufacture additional member tokens.

(Note that these ships are deliberately not defined as "captured" and thus cannot be recovered except through renouncement or other unusual circumstances, such as the homebrew Ship Zap card.)

December 23 at 5:45pm · Like · 2

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Gerald Katz This reminds me of psychology puzzles I've read about. Given a group of people, they are given the choice of leaving or staying, simultaneously. Which ever is the largest, those who leave or those who stay, are given a reward. (Something similar to this at least.) This is done several times. Eventually either everyone decides to leave or everyone decides to stay. That is what I see happening here. Either everyone joins the Order, thus everyone wins, or no one joins the Order and the player has no power. Initially I see no one joining the Order. The first player to do so, if one does so, is one who is in bad shape and needs The Order in the hopes of boosting his strength. Once he joins, if he benefits enough and The Order grows in strength, then soon everyone else joins. Someone who leave The Order would do so the moment he thinks he can win the game alone, benefiting from The Order in the meantime. I don't see any advantage to playing this power. Either you never have a power because no one joins or you exist to make others better just because you're there. I'm not liking this power.

December 23 at 6:51pm · Like



Bill Eberle Nice! I like your sacrificial ship display refinement, Bill.

December 23 at 6:58pm · Like



Peter Olotka @Gerald Katz interesting that you see no advantage, since there is a school of thought that it will simply walk away with the win. I suspect it will fall either way - based on the other aliens in the game as well as the temperaments of the other players. It wold seem an advantage to have other players potentially clamoring to be your best friend.

December 23 at 7:04pm · Like



Christopher Aurel Oliveira I don't think Jack has a valid argument here... Mainly because he is using a solo-win mentality argument for an alien that is completely based off of shared wins. No one who is a "solo win only" type person in your games would choose to play the alien or to join with him so the point is mute. Good players use their aliens to their full potential. You aren't going to see The Claw put the Attack 30 or the Attack 40 on his sheet, because that would be stupid and not using his power correctly, which is exactly the same as joining the Order and still playing with a solo win mentality, you CAN'T solo win when you are part of the order... EVER. Unless that player has 4 colonies and everyone else is at 2, and then bails out (which won't happen because he would have to satisfy the demands of a deal with The Order and The Order can just refuse to deal and keep him in forever), he can't win solo. Someone would have to be as stupid as an Attack 40 The Claw to stop an order member Machine from racking up colonies when it gives them the win also. Bottom line.

December 23 at 7:36pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
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○

Bill Eberle Re: ORDER and MACHINE if asked to vote, I would vote for the ORDER being paranoid about thinking machines and never being able to imagine such as a Member of the Order... partially because I think it's funny (and it breaks the mostly unwritten rule about aliens not having histories which include each other and I love finding new ways to break the rules). However, as Bill says, it's not that big a deal. Works for me either way.

December 23 at 7:38pm · Like



○

Jefferson Krogh Christopher, part of The Claw's power is the ability to stash a good card where no one can get it. If you think that stashing the 40 in the claw is "stupid," then I really think you don't understand all the aspects of that power. Also, I think you're way off base to say that Jack's argument is invalid. Way off base.

December 23 at 8:00pm · Like



○

Christopher Aurel Oliveira How am I "way off base"? Is Jack unable to be criticized? Is he some kind of Cosmic Encounter celebrity? Did I personally insult him? actually think about his argument and my counter-argument and you will see that his argument can be boiled down to "Order members will play the game incorrectly on purpose, therefore Machine is ok" The bottom line is that if Machine is given cards from other players he WILL win the game GAURANTEED. He will NOT be zapped ever, and will use each encounter card as another turn, and every other member he encounters is a free colony, and X more turns. The chances of him RUNNING OUT OF CARDS which is the ONLY WAY his turn would end are about 2%. Let's please be reasonable.

December 23 at 8:32pm · Like



○

Christopher Aurel Oliveira And REALLY you are going to remove the 40 from the game and officially remove yourself from having a power for the whole game? What does that do for you dude when you have no power and you trashed your own best card. Think about it.

December 23 at 8:35pm · Like



○

Jack Reda Christopher has missed the point. And yes, I am a Cosmic Encounter celebrity. It's awesome. I get priority seating at restaurants and everything.

December 23 at 9:20pm · Like · 2

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
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o

Bill Martinson Jack, I'm still waiting for that autographed 8x10 glossy you promised me.

FWIW, Christopher, I do think you have a valid point, although you're expressing it in a way that makes me look like the King of Tact by comparison. I understand the frustration (believe me), but ticking people off doesn't get your point accepted. At least it don't never work for me.

December 23 at 9:34pm · Like · 2



o

Jack Reda My point of view has nothing to do with players wanting the solo win. It has everything to do with suggesting that a single outcome of "Machine will just win the game as part of the order EVERY SINGLE TIME and it will be boring" is pure speculation. Again, this matchup is not like Masochist and Healer, which is broken, and never should have been allowed. Machine should not be forbidden from being in a game with The Order (provided The Order even gets included and published, as is). It doesn't even warrant a FAQ entry, in my opinion. 8X10s are out of stock until after the holidays.

December 23 at 9:41pm · Like · 1



o

Peter Olotka I can imagine a strategy of throwing in with the Order and figuring to renounce it and win alone...in Cosmic it is not possible to predict in advance a "certain behavior " on the part of players who will be playing in real game situations featuring Hazards, Artifacts, Flares, Techs, Rewards, and millions of alien combinations. To state with certainty that the game breaks when Order and Machine are in the game is an analysis which must ignore so many unknowns that it can only be accepted as a valid dislike of the possibility that the game might end quickly. It is certainly a player prerogative to prefer to not even start a game which might end abruptly and early. Many players won't let machine in the game for that reason. But arguments that flatly predict other players behavior based on the authors style of play fail to meet the reality test.

December 23 at 11:14pm · Like

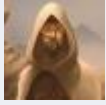


o

Peter Olotka Lets sleep on it. Tomorrow we can call a vote. Either way is OK in the big scheme of things.

December 23 at 11:46pm · Like

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o

Gregory Metzger Sheesh! After 138 posts & counting, I think we have to consider ourselves all permanent members of the Order...Like it or not!!

December 24 at 3:50am · Like



o

Peter Olotka Putting the poll up now. I think this is the fun part of designing in a group of partisan players

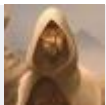
December 24 at 12:48pm · Like · 1



o

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Peter, the strategy of "joining the order, grabbing colonies and getting out doesn't exist". The Order has to LET you get out via a deal, and no Order player is gonna let a 4 colony member out under any circumstances other than him trashing all his foreign colonies... they are stuck

December 24 at 1:28pm · Like



o

Gregory Metzger A species with six genders? Some kind of "Order" would seem mandatory for their very survival! God knows, the battle of the sexes in our world of just two genders continues to strain its very fabric ;)

December 24 at 1:44pm · Like

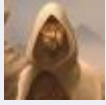


o

Bill Eberle Well noted, Gregory.

December 24 at 2:49pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111228_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



Gregory Metzger Bill Eberle: Maybe there in lies another endorsement for boardgaming? "The family that plays together, stays together".

December 24 at 3:24pm · Like



Peter Olotka Once again [Christopher Aurel Oliveira](#) I just don't have the Oracular power foresee exactly how another player will always play in a certain way. And having played Cosmic since 1972, I still have not personally acquired that particular power. I can however imagine scenarios where the Order would cave in to let a Member leave if the goodies were tempting enough.

December 24 at 4:33pm · Like · 1



Peter Olotka The poll on Machine IN or OUT will be posted after Christmas

December 24 at 4:34pm · Like



Bill Martinson Peter Olotka, can you please include three options in that poll?

1. No restrictions
2. The Order (via its game text) cannot offer membership to Machine
3. The Order has a Do Not Use with Machine restriction line

So that folks can be fully informed when they vote, it should probably also be noted that the Do Not Use With restriction would cause The Order (not Machine) to be excluded from a game, since the rule is that the alien that has the tramp-stamp is the one that is kicked out.

December 24 at 7:05pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda The biggest problem with the Order is that the concept itself is based on non-competition clauses. That's fine you might say, except people keep talking about "carrots" like the Order has to offer a bikini girl and a sports car to get people to join. The benefit of the offer is non-competition. If we were going to rename the Order anything, it would

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be the Monopolist: The Power of Trusts. Members don't have to compete with one another.

December 25 at 4:41am · Like