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



Cosmic Encounter

Cosmic Qualifier (working title) - Friday December 30, 2011

This is an idea spawned by the exponential complexity of adding new features to Cosmic Encounter. Let's try to write a Cosmic Qualifier type of rule which would simply let players decide any conflict via a vote with the offensive player breaking a tie.

One of the joys of Cosmic is to have the players wrangle out a conflict . . . but over time various publishers have had it in their heads to write perfect aliens which tend to get very fussy. The Cosmic Qualifier would enable a host of aliens to arrive unencumbered and could be used in any Cosmic Conundrum. The Qualifier should be short. Perhaps it could fit on a card. Or a Power Sheet. Players could vote on a dispute and have tie broken by other factors. Have at it!

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



Fan Designed Cosmic Expansion Set - Current Work

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This is an idea spawned by the exponential complexity of adding new features to Cosmic Encounter. Let's try to write a Cosmic Qualifier type of rule which would simply let players decide any conflict via a vote with the offensive player breaking a tie.

Discussion



Jefferson Krogh Hm. I suspect that the drive for "perfect aliens" comes not from the publishers, but from the fans who have bombarded the publishers with questions about alien interactions for 30 years. Because of this, I suspect this idea will go over like a lead balloon.

The idea that players wrangling out conflicts is a feature, and not a bug, in Cosmic is left unsaid in this edition. Some players will have inferred this attitude from the silence on your part, and FFG's, regarding rules questions over the last 2-3 years. It really flies against the norms for boardgaming in the 21st century, where a FAQ is demanded and expected within days of a game's release.

That being said, I support this idea, if only so that players approach the game with the proper expectations. I just expect heavy resistance to it.

December 30, 2011 at 2:49pm · Like



Peter Olotka Not at all - it started with mayfair decades ago

December 30, 2011 at 3:52pm · Like

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Peter Olotka Plus I like the idea of putting the players back in charge of figuring things out

December 30, 2011 at 3:56pm · Like



Bill Martinson I despise stopping a game to argue about the rules. That's not a feature, it's a bug. The thought of a slew of sloppily-written aliens corrupting this wonderful game with a patch rule REQUIRING players to have in-game debates to "fix" and "finish" those aliens sounds horrible to me. Just horrible.

Please don't do that.

December 30, 2011 at 3:57pm · Like · 3



Bill Martinson Nobody is demanding "perfect" aliens. Just reasonably well designed, *fiinished* aliens. I can see where it would be interesting from the designer's perspective to imagine players arguing over their designs and pondering "what will be the outcome, I wonder?" ... but from the player's perspective it's not fun at all. We want to spend our precious time playing this great game, not debating poorly written text. Why inflict that on the customer?

December 30, 2011 at 4:02pm · Like · 2



Bill Martinson I guess if your goal is to develop something that's only fun for right-brained people, then this may be a good strategy to accomplish that.

December 30, 2011 at 4:03pm · Like

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Christopher Aurel Oliveira You can't have an entire game's rules system come down to player voting. That is absolute chaos. Cosmic Encounter is a board game, not a social experiment, and this is coming from a right-brained artist.

December 30, 2011 at 5:32pm · Like · 1



Jefferson Krogh If I'm not mistaken, Christopher, this is just to cover any interaction that the players cannot otherwise agree on how to interpret. This would not replace the rest of the rules, but simply would give an "official" way to handle a conflict over interpretations of various things.

Honestly, the game does need a final fallback rule, even if the aliens are all written with great care and painstaking verbiage. Just look at BGG, or the FFG forums. People misread, misinterpret, or otherwise screw up even the simplest rules on a frequent basis. Having a Rule of Final Arbitration, be it by vote, Ouija board, or appeal to random passersby, provides a way to resolve these conflicts *faster* than endless arguing. So if you dislike these arguments, then you should support this idea.

This being said -- this rule should have been in the base game, noting that not all interactions will be clear enough to satisfy everyone in any particular game.

Finally, even if this rule is added, I don't believe that the fans will be willing to have the aliens be any less "perfect" than they are now. At least, the ones who take the time to post on Internet sites.

December 30, 2011 at 6:33pm · Like · 1



Stephen Sloboda I like the idea. Just as Cosmic is a different game every time with different aliens, it's also a different game every time with different PLAYERS. Allowing room for interpretation of alien interactions means you can actually create even more variety. Imagine if we made alien powers that INTENTIONALLY create these conflicts, forcing players to think even harder.

For example, let's say on your turn, you have an encounter with someone where there's a conflict, and your allies vote you to victory. However, on that other someone's turn, they have an encounter with you, and your allies' loyalties may have switched. So the same conflict may arise, but they vote you down and you end up losing!

My only concern is that you're basically writing "house rules" into the game, and as such, play groups may decide for themselves that, "it always works that way." If a house rule becomes popular enough, it may become a standard interpretation. For example, in casual Magic: The Gathering, there are no rules for deck building. However, most people adhere to the Standard Format, with 60-card decks and only four copies of non-basic lands. In casual games they're not forced to do that, but they do it anyway. So this idea may become moot if the players decided, in order to eliminate confusion, to always interpret the game rules the same way.

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In any case, I offer that this idea be called Cosmic Sanction.

December 30, 2011 at 7:35pm · Like · 2



Stephen Sloboda Actually, an even better example is Free Parking in Monopoly. The Free Parking space is essentially a blank tile on the game board, but people couldn't accept that. So people came up with the rule that things like Luxury Tax would go to a pot in the middle of the game board and if you landed on Free Parking you get the pot. That is not an official rule of the game, but you will be hard pressed to find someone who hasn't heard of it. For many people, "that's how we always played."

December 30, 2011 at 7:38pm · Like



Bill Martinson And yet many players despise that Free Parking rule. It lengthens a game that is already too long, and it degrades the core gameplay, making the game less about strategy and deal-making and more about pure luck.

Players who like more luck and more chaos have a million ways to easily make Cosmic play that way, already, right now. Those who like vaguely-defined aliens that have to be argued about and voted over already have literally /hundreds/ at their disposal via the Amazing Power Thingy, right now, today. But players who prefer a game that they can just *play* and not have to *argue about* will only like the game less if this kind of poorly-defined content becomes official.

Why publish content that, almost by definition, only half the players (the right-brained half) will even want? Is it a secret plan by the R folks to try to force the L folks to be "more R"? Or to crowd them out of the player base? Or perhaps an experiment to discover the minimum sales volume that the publisher can tolerate? I just don't get it.

Why wouldn't we work on content that works for BOTH halves of the brain? Cosmic Encounter has done a superb job of accomplishing that for the last three decades. It's one of the reasons this game is such an uncontested, perennial classic.

This is no time to be snipping the corpus callosum.

December 30, 2011 at 8:31pm · Like · 1



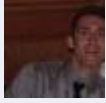
Bill Martinson [Jefferson Krogh](#), I think you are missing the point. Peter doesn't want this as a fall-back rule; he has made it clear that the intention is to facilitate the publication of more vaguely-defined aliens and REQUIRE the players to determine through voting how they are supposed to work (each time they come up). That's a deal-breaker for me, and I'll be bold enough to say that I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one. Perhaps I'm the only one here on /facebook/, an

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environment that quickly weeds out a lot of left-brained players as we've already seen happen here, but try out this concept (with an explanation of its actual intent) in a more balanced audience and see how it flies.

December 30, 2011 at 8:40pm · Like · 1



Christopher Aurel Oliveira I'm extremely right-brained and HIGHLY against this vague alien garbage. Seems like its some hippy kumbuya thing where everyone is right, no one is wrong, and postmodernism run amok. No literal interpretation or anything, just a bunch of emotions and feelings and not standards. I have to deal with enough postmodern nonsense from my own generation, having it in a game is just NO.

December 30, 2011 at 9:01pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda I despise the Free Parking rule as well.

I think we need to at least narrow this idea down to the conflicts between different alien powers. Alien powers in and of themselves and their interactions with the basic rules of the game should be well-defined.

An ancient issue to which this pertains is Zombie vs. Void. Under current rules, Void wins out. However, what if it were up to a vote to determine which power takes precedence? To me, that's with this rule represents. Not laziness in alien power design, but the inevitable conflicts that arise as more and more aliens are added to the game.

December 30, 2011 at 10:35pm · Like · 1



Peter Olotka While I prefer to sort of stick to the idea on the table, as opposed to attacking the messenger and to assigning motives to said messenger and to consigning the messenger to a secret right brained society which was formed to foist hair-brained hippy ideas on the evil left brain cosmic players to drive them out of the fan base, I remind said accusers that since we have not played Cosmic together it is a bit bold to claim such intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the accused psyche. To wit: were you one of the players who lost to me as Calculator, arguably the king of the left brain aliens, when I had a 100% record of equalizing my way to a solo victory ? I loved the win because it went against type. But I always disliked the alien - still do.

Cosmic serves all the brain types and it's a fools errand to think that it can be made all one way or another. The genesis of cosmic is to break the rules. The irony is that it has a ton of rules to codify the exceptions. Bottom line, lets have some fun with this idea to see if we can create another class of fun experiences with out prejudging the outcome. I for one, love the clever ideas that players are tossing into the fray. And I truly don't even mind the impassioned reactions - if no one cares its a lot less interesting.

December 30, 2011 at 11:15pm · Unlike · 5

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



Peter Olotka Also there is no Peter requirement - just casting out a starting point. And recall that putting content into beta means only that it's in consideration. At the end of the process we should have a rich collection of content to choose from.

December 30, 2011 at 11:40pm · Unlike · 1



Bill Eberle Beautifully and correctly stated, Peter. Thanks.

December 31, 2011 at 1:11am · Like



Mark Bickford Do we really need to specify a voting mechanism, etc.? I liked the Eon phrasing re: multiple powers: "Players are advised that this variation can lead to conflicts not covered in the rules! House rules must then prevail." Adding a specific rule to essentially codify the means of creating house rulings seems like overthinking. If this rule is to exist, though, I suggest two things: we create an alien called The Robert (after Robert's Rules), which has the power to decide all disputes for an arbitration fee of a card taken from each involved player (i.e., if the Robert is in the game, the voting is dispensed with and the Robert rules by decree... and probably to his own advantage), and also that we name the voting rule Cosmic Chad.

December 31, 2011 at 2:19am · Like



Jack Reda An alien whose sole purpose is to decide rules conflicts has been proposed before, and it really doesn't ever get much traction. While there are plenty of examples of players having a rules dispute in a game, it's also quite easy to play 50 games without ever having a single dispute.

There would definitely need to be an additional element that was very open to interpretation, and would then require dispute resolution. But then you have an alien that is tied to a specific expansion component, which it seems the FFG edition of CE is trying to avoid.

December 31, 2011 at 10:24am · Like · 3

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Peter Olotka Well the proposition is a rules framework to expand the territory that aliens and other stuff can exist within. Not that there's anything wrong with an alien.

December 31, 2011 at 10:36am · Like



Peter Olotka @ Stephen Sloboda Gotta love the Free Parking reference. Always loved the quirky house rule Free Parking fun. Different house different custom.

December 31, 2011 at 11:06am · Like



Bill Martinson If it appeared I was attacking the messenger, I apologize. I thought I was attacking the *message*, which (as described thus far) seems like it will have some undesirable consequences. The messenger made it clear what the purpose of the message is, but I think some people missed that. I just want to be sure we are all on the same page here regarding what the GOAL is. Please correct me if I am wrong:

* The goal of this new rule/system/idea is *not* specifically to create an alternative to the existing Timing Rule or to address conflicts among existing game effects.

* Rather, the goal of this new rule/system/idea is to allow the publication of new CE aliens that are "unencumbered" by the usual design process that would have them work within the game engine with a minimum of conflicts. It seeks to create a more open-ended design space where larger gaps in the aliens' definitions are allowed and, perhaps, encouraged. In short, to bring the published game's design space to be more in line with the homebrew design space.

If I misunderstand, please correct me and I will adapt accordingly.

The messenger was not "wrong" to propose the message, nor are the detractors "wrong" to say that's not a direction they want their game to go in.

December 31, 2011 at 11:36am · Like



Jefferson Krogh Heavy resistance predicted and encountered, Captain! Permission to set evasive maneuvers and to retire to Ten Forward for a stiff drink. Or three.

December 31, 2011 at 12:40pm · Like

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



Peter Olotka Actually I think that if we can construct a new rule we might then see what different applications it might have. Maybe its a rule set, maybe an alien, maybe a class of aliens, maybe a type of planet, maybe something we haven't thought of yet.

December 31, 2011 at 12:41pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda Well, again I want to bring up Zombie vs. Void. What Peter is trying to avoid is having to create specific wordings for two effects such as these so that it becomes clear which one takes precedence. What if we wanted to make an alien that instead of its ships going to warp, they go to, I don't know, Ship Heaven, and come back as Valkeries or something. The point is, you'd have to go back to Void and scratch your head at its wording every time you wanted to make an effect like that.

Cosmic Qualifier (I still like Sanction) eliminates the need for nitty gritty details on every alien in a vain attempt to accommodate every possible rules conflict that may occur between aliens in the unforeseeable future.

December 31, 2011 at 12:42pm · Like



Jefferson Krogh Hazards give us a good mechanism for introducing big, game-altering variants in a way that doesn't permanently affect the rest of the game. What if we try to frame this new rule as a Hazard at first? If it can fit on a Hazard card, then it's probably simple enough to work with.

December 31, 2011 at 12:46pm · Like



Bill Martinson Stephen, going back to Void and scratching your head is part of the fun, part of the challenge, part of what makes good design interesting, provides a feeling of accomplishment, and delivers value to the customer. I guess I just don't agree with the premise that this is something that needs to be eliminated. It feels like we're trying to make a rule that prevents us from ever having to climb a mountain. The climb is part of the challenge.

December 31, 2011 at 12:50pm · Like

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



Sam Connolly Adding a rule to let us not bother making sure our aliens actually work within the rules so the customers need to make arbitrary house-rules to figure out how the game is meant to be played feels like adding a rule saying the customers can vote mid-game in order to buff or nerf an alien so that we don't need to bother thinking about making sure the aliens are well-balanced. Shifting the burden of making the game work properly to the customer certainly makes the design process easier for us, but the cost is that the game is shoddier.

December 31, 2011 at 1:00pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda Having kept up with Magic: The Gathering's design for many years, I can tell you that it is not "avoiding the mountain" to put this rule into effect. Rather, it's a unique alternative to trying to word everything in legalese and errata everything that used to work but doesn't work the way you wanted it to anymore. If you don't believe me, look up the keyword Substance in the Magic comprehensive rulebook.

In the interest of the consumer, I think it will benefit them that instead of complicated wording that divides phases into smaller slivers that take a rules lawyer to understand, we should just say, "Hey, these two things are trying to affect the same game element at the same time. Which one do you want to take precedence?"

Again, try to think of it in specific examples. Think of Void vs. Zombie. Should Void always win? Why? Because not doing so would make Void useless? Well, Void is one of the most powerful aliens in the game, and Zombie is not. Why would you want to make a ruling that makes a good alien better while a weaker one becomes completely useless as a result? With Cosmic Qualifier, it's in the hands of the players, and the ruling can change just as often as do loyalties and alliances. So you could have a game where BOTH alien powers take precedence at different times depending on the situation and the strategic advantage to those voting. I think it adds more depth to the game, and to me that is more important than climbing a mountain of rules and errata.

December 31, 2011 at 1:27pm · Like



Bill Martinson Stephen, since you have the *players* climbing the mountain, I think you misunderstand my metaphor. (And, ironically, you are forcing players to climb a new mountain that you happen to like, whether they want to climb it or not.)

Regardless, I emphatically do NOT want a game where a ruling goes one way on one encounter and then contradicts itself on another encounter, based purely on current whim and what's advantageous to certain players at the current moment. For me, that would (literally) ruin the play experience. I can see where some would like that, and that's great; but others would hate it. So make it a VARIANT that players can adopt or reject as they see fit. Don't print new powers that force players to accept this as part of the CORE rules engine, unless you want to make that segment of the player base despise whatever expansion set tries to force them to play this way. If you want to make powers that rely on this rule, fine; but mark them as "Do not use unless using the [vote variant]" (or whatever this turns out to be).

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html

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

It's a whole different game paradigm entirely, and a perfectly fine concept for a game designed to work that way from the ground up, or for an OPTIONAL variant. I could even enjoy it in that kind of context. But if you want to shove that concept down Cosmic Encounter's throat by forcing it to be part of EVERY game, that's a mistake.

December 31, 2011 at 2:25pm · Like · 1



Sam Connolly The idea of voting on how the basic rules of the game work, and having the outcome vary based on what is currently advantageous for each player, sounds like a great premise for a game. Unfortunately, the game it's a great premise for is Nomic; it seems completely out-of-place in Cosmic Encounter. CE is great because the aliens inherently do all sorts of interesting things, not because the things the aliens are legally permitted to do vary based on the whims of the players.

I don't understand the Zombie versus Void analogy either. Is the problem that Zombie is poorly worded and creates rules questions as a result? In that case, that's a problem with the way Zombie is written, and something that should have been fixed prior to publication (and would have been fixed if Bill Martinson had gotten his hands on it first); it's not a sign that, since FFG's writers screwed up in this instance, we should just throw out all effort to write aliens unambiguously and just let the players try to guess from our broad strokes what we intended to happen. If the issue is that Zombie is underpowered (now that FFG robbed it of compensation), then yes, I agree - but again, that means we should try harder to create balanced aliens, not just print the first thing that comes into our heads and make the players create different house-rules to fix these balance issues.

December 31, 2011 at 3:28pm · Like · 1



Tyler James Martin Hmm... It might be interesting. It would just have to be set up in a way that players can't game the system in a way that consistently breaks the game with it. I'm not sure though I'm kinda new to all this.

December 31, 2011 at 6:09pm · Like



Peter Olotka Well, all aliens game the system, players are simply tools for alien dreams.

December 31, 2011 at 6:50pm · Unlike · 1

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html
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Bill Eberle So true, Peter.

December 31, 2011 at 7:11pm · Like



Tyler James Martin Of course, I just would not want to see something disputed unjustly and ruled upon "wrong" because it was favorable for the majority while obviously being wrong. That being said I really think this game is great because it does an excellent job at emulating survival of the fittest on a societal level.

December 31, 2011 at 7:16pm · Like



Peter Olotka On a cosmic level, justice and wrong are terms easily seen as parochial Earth/human centric concepts.

December 31, 2011 at 10:23pm · Like



Peter Olotka Does the Void seem just and right?

December 31, 2011 at 10:24pm · Like



Tyler James Martin Yeah, the Void has abilities and it should use them to the fullest. I'm just saying that if players decided to purposely misinterpret a rule to "break" the game often the game might stop being as fun. That being said I fell if it were implemented right it would be a great addition.

December 31, 2011 at 11:53pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html
http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111228_fb_talk_menu.html



Jack Reda It's kind of hard to design something so esoteric without really having a clear idea how it would be implemented or why. CE has a pretty solid framework that has all of these alien effects resting on. The mechanics of the game work just fine, and it's the aliens twisting and fiddling with the framework that can sometimes cause a dispute. I'm not sure what, other than timing resolution, is needed- because it seems to me that most conflict that people ask about in forums and emails gets resolved pretty satisfactorily with the timing rules.

I guess one can put out a variant for additional resolution, but I have a hard time seeing an expansion that is designed around it. You could have every player play a card face down and reveal, and use a card hierarchy to determine who "wins" the dispute. A Super flare trumps a wild flare, which trumps an artifact, which trumps any other non-encounter card, trumping Attack cards by value, and ending with Morphs and negotiates. Any "ties" are canceled out. Or something.

January 1 at 10:11am · Like · 3



Peter Olotka I don't think the expansion needs to be designed around the Qualifier. I think of it more along the lines of Team Cosmic in Exp Set 3, which adds a choice for a play style as do Techs.

January 1 at 11:36am · Like



Sam Connolly It's an okay way of settling disputes where there is no clear correct answer in the rules, but even then I think most groups do something of the sort already - it's not like we all just stop playing anytime a disagreement occurs. I think the part most of us are objecting to is "but over time various publishers have had it in their heads to write perfect aliens which tend to get very fussy. The Cosmic Qualifier would enable a host of aliens to arrive unencumbered", which seems to imply that the purpose of this rule is to allow us to make aliens without making sure they actually work properly.

January 1 at 12:15pm · Like · 2



Bill Martinson Maybe we just need a very clear statement of the goal here. Then we will all know what we are talking about and can work toward getting on the same page. Like [Bill Eberle](#) said earlier, sometimes we need to back up and ask, exactly what is it we're trying to accomplish?

January 1 at 2:16pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html

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



Peter Olotka Can we test the idea that we might create a class of aliens which work within the Qualifier Umbrella? The term "work properly" could be seen as encompassing Qualifier Aliens.

January 1 at 3:10pm · Like



Jefferson Krogh Bill M. was right; I totally didn't get the idea at first. Do we need to create the rule first, so we know what kinds of aliens can go with it? Or vice versa?

Are we trying to come up with a rule that these aliens can invoke on purpose? Or are we trying to come up with a rule that can be used when all else fails with this class of alien? The former is more interesting, to me. Alien Z could say "use this power to convene the Cosmic Council. You and the other main player each propose a thing, and then the vote decides which."

I like Jack's basic idea of using cards to vote. That seems like a fairly Cosmic concept, as long as it doesn't end up replicating the current encounter mechanic.

I have to am

January 1 at 3:32pm · Like



Jefferson Krogh Er, I have to admit that this is very hard variant to envision without a more concrete starting point.

January 1 at 3:33pm · Like · 2



Christopher Aurel Oliveira The main issue I am seeing is it seems to repeatedly be stated that solid concrete terms are merely "relative" and "open to interpretation" which is a clear logical fallacy. That is what I am against. It is a postmodern deconstruction of language and clear meaning in favor of an anti-critical thinking method and generally non-grounded thought pattern. This Cosmic Qualifier will NEVER work as an "alternative" to the established rules of the game and could ONLY work in situations where the timing rule already doesn't help, which is rare indeed.

January 1 at 6:44pm · Like · 1

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Peter Olotka Lets try this:

1. The Qualifiers is a rule that enables players to vote on conflicts in any facet of the game.
2. Voting mechanism TBD (love [Jack Reda's](#) card votes)
3. We create a class of Qualifier aliens and features that have (if possible) simple short descriptions.
4. When a Q alien/ feature is in an encounter with an unQ, the Q vote is in effect if necessary.
5. And once again lets try to think of Cosmic as a game Unbound by its past, since that is sure way to keep our fan expansion mired in same. We have lots of time to evolve this and it's fun. Enjoy!

January 1 at 7:56pm · Like



Christopher Aurel Oliveira This... doesn't seem to make any sense at all to me. "vote on conflicts in any facet of the game" = we make the rules up as we go = not Cosmic Encounter.

And then a genre of Aliens called "Qualifier" Aliens... what does that mean? Aliens that are incomplete ideas? And now they have some leverage over properly written powers? As in they make up their power as they go?

This sounds like trying to turn Cosmic into a brand-new game during the final expansion.

I'm sorry Peter but I absolutely cannot get behind this. Not AT ALL. I'll be back here when we get back to talking about alien powers that are not simply "Too strong is relative term cuz its fun."

January 1 at 8:04pm · Like



Peter Olotka No need to be sorry, everyone has different styles of play and interaction. And the evidence is clear that players like different aspects of Cosmic. There is no One True Way presided over by the Preexisting Rules, when it comes to adding new features. Many aliens have leverage over other aliens - that is pretty much what Cosmic is, so the idea that new aliens might have leverage over existing aliens does not seem to be a particularly galling proposition. And since we are thinking that players will be sorting out the outcome, it is dead certain that the case will not always go to the Q aliens. Auto Advantage nullified.

There were certainly a good number of players who balked at the Eon Expansion Set 5 Moons, for its lack of "purity" and hard logic and its invitation to bypass an encounter with an opponent. "Oh the Horror!". And with Eon Expansion set 9 as well for its Reverse Hexes.

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Cosmic Encounter should always feel like a brand new game. The more so the better for Cosmic. We can't know the breadth and scope of the life forms populating the universe but we can stretch our comfort zones to come up with a multiplicity of ways that our creations interact with one another - unbound by precedent or rules (which we made up) and are continually breaking remaking, revising and reinventing. I sympathize with your gut instinct that doing so is a terrible affront to order and the logic. Perhaps these aliens are earlier versions of the current crop and so have a simpler presence, who knows.

At this early stage of creative thinking if we, as designers, feel compelled to be certain about what is and is not cosmic encounter then we might as well be trapped in amber like prehistoric bugs. A class of aliens that has the group voting on stuff to me is exhilarating! Which illustrates the value of opposing ideas in a forum like this. Your description crystallized a concept that had not been put that way. The high level of thought that is present in these discussions shows that Cosmic Players are more than capable of making on the fly judgements. Cosmic in its essence is about breaking the rules not being hidebound by them. No addition to date has killed off all that came before it. Players simply use what they like, play around with new features, and make the game in their own.

January 1 at 8:49pm · Like · 1



Jefferson Krogh Very well said. For my part, I don't have any problem with the overall concept. I'm just having a hard problem applying it to a new alien. Maybe I would do better by following Stephen's example and envisioning how it would affect a classic alien. Peter, let me know if this is more what you have in mind.

How about Macron, with its text specifying how much compensation/rewards Macron gets with each ship. If it were written with this new variant in mind (Cosmic Council, in my head), Macron's sheet would just say nothing about compensation and rewards. In a game with Cosmic Council, if the players could not agree on how much compensation Macron was due, the voting mechanism would come into play. Finally, Macron would be marked with "only use with Cosmic Council."

Am I getting warmer?

January 1 at 9:36pm · Like



Peter Olotka Interesting, to take the oldies and see how they would fair. Could we get the Q onto one card or better yet one Tweet :)

January 1 at 9:46pm · Like



Jefferson Krogh The voting mechanism? Maybe. "Each side chooses one player to play an encounter card face down. Both are then revealed; no ships are added. Flares beat Artifacts, which beat Negotiates, which beat Attacks; lower numbered Attacks beat higher. Ties broken by the offense. Revealed cards are discarded."

January 1 at 10:06pm · Like

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Jefferson Krogh I'm adding a twist to Jack's suggestion, first to give an additional use for low Attack cards, and second to better differentiate this from a regular encounter thing.

January 1 at 10:07pm · Like



Sam Connolly But using Macron as an example there, how is it better to make Macron's compensation/rewards unstated and force the players to debate what's "fair" than it is to just print Macron with specified compensation/rewards? Why do we feel shifting the burden of making the alien well-balanced from the designers to the players is something that improves the game?

January 2 at 1:13am · Like · 2



Peter Olotka It's not 'better' it is just a design exercise to help think about constructing the Qualifier.

January 2 at 11:26am · Like



Jefferson Krogh Yes, I'm using it as a random example to make sure I understand what the goal of this new rule is. I'm not suggesting that we change Macron; I'm just trying to visualize what this new rule might look like in practice. I didn't bring my anti-tomato force field, so please refrain from throwing them at me, guys.

January 2 at 12:08pm · Like · 1



Gerald Katz I created a power that does just this:

January 2 at 1:54pm · Like

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Gerald Katz CONTINUUM All/Expert

Settles Game Play Disputes

You have the power of arbitration. Whenever there is a disagreement among the players concerning game play, even if you're involved, use this power make the final decision for the solution. You cannot purposely break an established rule, but you may make a ruling that is advantageous to you. If zapped, all players must vote, but you still break ties. Players who purposely make a frivolous argument lose a colony of your choice (ships go to the warp) and have no vote if you are zapped. If you make a frivolous argument, you cannot make a ruling, other players vote while you have no vote, and you lose a colony of their choice. The ruling is bound for this game only. If the same argument appeared in a previous game that was settled by Continuum, it is not a frivolous argument; otherwise, it is frivolous. Announcing your decision is immune to all restrictions of speech.

HISTORY: Tired of the silly arguments of inferior races, the Continuum take it upon themselves to determine the rules of conduct for all.

FLARE

All

Wild: When other players try to make a deal and you are not involved, you set the terms.

All

Super: You may purposely break an established rule when making your decision.

January 2 at 1:54pm · Like · 1



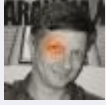
Bill Martinson Who decides what a "frivolous argument" is? If the players are able to resolve such questions objectively, then this power has no purpose; but if the players can't resolve such issues objectively, then the power doesn't work because they are mired in arguments about what constitutes frivolity. You can't resolve the undefined from a foundation that is itself undefined.

January 2 at 3:21pm · Like · 2



Peter Olotka @ Gerald Katz The Continuum? The Q? Enginroom! Give me more power! January 2 at 9:50pm · Like

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Allen Varney Create a new Qualifier planet token, placed next to the Warp, uncontrolled by any player at the start of the game. On your turn, you can attack and occupy the Qualifier planet normally in place of an encounter. When two or more players declare a rules dispute, every player gets one vote per token he has on the Qualifier planet. Acting player breaks ties.

January 2 at 9:57pm · Like · 2



Jason Troutman Instead of ruling over any conflict that can come up in a game how about adding issues through a political deck of cards that can be decided upon? (borrowed from Twilight Imperium) Qualifier aliens could then pick and choose issues, affect voting or even create issues themselves.

January 3 at 12:47am · Like · 2



Jefferson Krogh I like that idea, Jason. I think it'd find more support than what we're discussing. Players expect all the rules questions to have been sorted out by the designers before the game even starts, *unless* it's a "house rule."

Perhaps that's the answer; change the focus of this from arbitrating alien fuzziness to allowing players, by way of the aliens, to actively add more house rules to individual sessions. There is precedent for this already in Cosmic; look at Witch, Diplomat and Schizoid.

It's no coincidence that all three of these aliens have not yet appeared in FFG. (Schizoid is due to appear in Cosmic Alliance, though.) They put a lot of stock into letting the players define things, and that's out of style.

Any way we do it, though, defining the voting mechanism does come first. So far we've got three ideas on that: 1) Jack Reda's suggestion to use regular cards to vote; 2) Allen Varney's "voting planet;" and 3) Jason's suggestion to add a political deck specifically for voting. Can we come up with more ideas for this, and perhaps leave aside for now the question of what we'll use this mechanism for?

January 3 at 2:30pm · Like



Peter Olotka There might be a multiplicity of mechanisms: one alien one vote; vote with attack cards no limit; but they are spent; one attack down - simultaneous revelation high cards win; Indian Poker and more

January 3 at 5:19pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html
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Jason Troutman During setup each alien receives a voting yes/no token. At the start of a player's turn a political card is drawn and read aloud. Each player votes in secret by placing the yes/no token on the table, hiding the token with their hand. Once all players are ready, the tokens are revealed. Majority wins with ties being broken by how the reader of the card voted.

January 4 at 6:01am · Like



Ales Smrdel @Jason Troutman: Interesting idea ... sort of Cosmic Quorum vote with the reader of the political card acting as the Cosmic Quorum President. It would require a new deck of cards and this probably the reason I like the idea better than Jack Reda's idea of using regular cards to vote. Instead of receiving yes/no token maybe players could receive 2 tokens, one yes and one no token with same back sides so they don't need to hide them or better 2 cards which are probably cheaper to make.

January 4 at 6:19am · Like



Jack Reda I'm all for additional decks of cards.

January 4 at 7:46am · Like



Jefferson Krogh A "political" deck is fine, as long as it doesn't ape Twilight Imperium. Only played that once, but I didn't find much creativity in their political cards.

January 4 at 11:16am · Like



Gerald Katz To be frivolous is to make an argument for a rule dispute for the sake of making an argument, i.e. there is no dispute happening but you make one anyway in hopes of Continuum deciding in your favor, such as if you're allies. If Continuum wasn't in the game, there would be no argument. Questions such as what happens when Warhawk is main player when Emotion Control is played is precisely the type of conundrum Continuum would decide for that game.

January 4 at 6:04pm · Like

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Bill Martinson By that definition, Gerald, you have to be a mind-reader to know the person's intent. You basically have to presume that he is a rules-lawyer to be able to swing the frivolity hammer ... so now there's a new dispute that must be resolved about whether he is actually a rules lawyer or not.

January 4 at 6:18pm · Like



Peter Olotka Heading home from California early tomorrow - will be back in action on Monday to see what we can do with the Qualifier

January 6 at 1:05pm · Like



Jason Troutman Instead of Political cards accessible to everyone each turn, only Qualifier aliens have access to the political deck on their turn. Kinda like a Hazard card that can be voted on for the turn. Qualifier powers could be different voting styles, draw more political cards and choose one, those that vote no lose a ship, add a new game win condition. Voting cards would have Yes on top and upside down No on bottom with the back matching the political deck. When cards are flipped be sure to have your vote on top. Using one card with both votes on it frees up space for more political goodness. If any other conflict arises Qualifier aliens have the power to call a vote with majority wins ties to offense. Use current timing rules to see which Qualifier alien calls the vote if more than one is in play.

January 6 at 3:08pm · Like



Christopher Aurel Oliveira If the Qualifier is a supposed failsafe for when the timing rule doesn't work, why are we even talking about creating aliens that are "based" around this rule? There's a reason there are no tech-only, hazard-only aliens in these expansions... they're not universally usable, and a Qualifier alien just sounds like making a restriction just to make a restriction.

January 6 at 3:36pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/20111230_work.html

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



Peter Olotka @ [Christopher Aurel Oliveira](#) I think the design group has moved beyond the Qualifier being a fail safe for the timing rule and into being the foundation for a class of aliens that exist under its auspices

January 6 at 10:12pm · Like · 1