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Cosmic Encounter

The Qualifier Rule

The Q

A conflict in Cosmic Encounter which is not resolved by the timing rule is to be settled by a vote of the players. Tie votes are decided by the player to the left of the offense.

Timing rule capsule: When a conflict arises as to the order of effects play proceeds as follows: Offense, Defense, and then to the left of the Offense.

A Class of Q Aliens, Artifacts and other Cosmic features governed by the Q will be tagged with a Q.

What's the point?

I found an analogy in the United Airlines Hemispheres Magazine on my trip back from California on Saturday.

MEANINGFUL GESTURE

Inside Aviad Maizels' quest to render your remote control deader than the VCR. "It's about time, he says, because gadgets have become increasingly complex. "The consumer electronics industry pushes so many new features into devices that people forget how to operate them," says Maizels, who previously worked as the head of research and development at the Israeli Ministry of Defense. "It happened in mobile phones, and it happened in gaming."

My thinking is that Cosmic Encounter 2012 is the rules equivalent of the multiplicity of loaded Remote Controls which are stacked up circling our electronic media as though waiting for an open runway.

It's not that we don't use and enjoy our multimedia devices, rather it's that their success has complicated their use. I recently bought a sound bar for the Samsung TV. I had to search to find the only Sound Bar that I "could teach" to respond to the cable remote so that I did not need a SEPARATE REMOTE for the sound! Remotes and buttons: [TV-47] [Blue Ray-44] [cable-53] [Sound Bar-14]. A whopping 158 buttons.

Maizels whose company worked on Kinect, is out to replace the remote with hand gestures and voice.

We are trying to side step volumes of codification with a player driven decision mechanism.

To be clear, this is not a slam on the existing game, existing rules or on the superb analytical skills of the fans who are contributing to the Fan Expansion Set design. And I am not suggesting that we abandon the effort to create features within the existing system. We will get back to that whether we succeed or fail with the Q project.

If we succeed, playing Cosmic with Q features will be much like adding Hazards or Techs to the game. A player choice. But it may also be different in that it could become an introductory form of Cosmic which requires less intricate rule parsing in favor of player adjudication.

At this point it is unclear if we can create a class of Q features. But it will fun to try. And lastly remember that all of our BETA work to date on the Fan Expansion has yet to be totally vetted. I anticipate that we will have too many features for the final set so some material will be dropped (as with any design).

People who like this



Bill Hand

Founder at Overkill US

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Stephen Pickering

Fox River Grove, Illinois



Amy Crook

San Leandro, California

San Leandro, California

Discussion



Bill Eberle Interesting, Peter. You're all out on a Q ship in the middle of nowhere with lots of time before you'll be near anything or anybody else . . . and your little group (of players) is on its own amusing themselves by playing a strange game which has different rules every time it's played.

January 9 at 7:42pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda I like it.

January 9 at 10:22pm · Like



Peter Olotka @ [Stephen Sloboda](#) Well, me too, but can we come up with a couple of simple examples? I was thinking of seeing if we could make a list of Alien Names that are not currently in the game and then see if we could assign each a simple power. Here are some example off the top of my head: MOM, power of "because I said so"; SCIENTIST, power of hypothesis; WIDGET, power to be generic; DARK MATTER power.....; LIFEBOAT, power.....; SPIDER, power ...;DRIFT power...;RYTHM, power..;

January 10 at 10:52am · Like

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o

Stephen Sloboda ONSLAUGHT, the power to bombard

January 10 at 12:52pm · Like · 1



o

Stephen Sloboda TAROT, the power of fortune

January 10 at 7:52pm · Like



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Jack Reda This seems pretty disconnected without having the aliens doing something. I mean, there's a list of a thousand alien names on The Warp that are not currently in the game, if you just need names. What are these aliens going to do? That is what I want to know.

January 10 at 8:36pm · Like · 2



o

Peter Olotka @ Jack Reda It is disconnected because one way of starting a new alien is to just name it. And then think about the properties of the name. So I thought that if we make an unencumbered list we could than see if we can create some simple Q aliens...just a thought.

January 10 at 9:01pm · Like



o

Amy Crook I really want there to be a QUISLING alien, personally. Such a great word, but I couldn't figure out a good mechanism for traitor or double agent like behaviour. The power to play both sides?

January 11 at 5:45pm · Like · 1

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Jason Troutman I'm having a really hard time trying to wrap my head around this. Mainly it's my passion for CE that is getting in the way. It sounds like you need to box up a game without alien powers or rules and get a group together that has never played CE and tell them to come up with a game. They may have different uses for ships, planets and attack cards. Kids would have no problem with this since they do it all the time. Adults have a bit of difficulty. Kids have imagination, adults have RPGs, imagination with rules.

January 11 at 10:55pm · Like



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Bill Martinson I guess what I'm having trouble with is the idea that Cosmic Encounter should be turned into a completely different game in the last expansion set.

January 12 at 9:57am · Like · 1



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Peter Olotka I am not sure I think that Q is fundamentally different from adding TECH in FFG, or LUCRE. MOONS and REVERSE Hexes in the old Eon. What are the differences?

January 12 at 1:51pm · Like



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Jason Troutman Any examples of a conflict in CE that cannot be resolved by the timing rule? Personally they rarely come up in the games I play.

January 12 at 2:03pm · Like



o

Stephen Sloboda The difference is it's different. :4) The idea that we are shaking the foundations of an already established paradigm is threatening.

January 12 at 2:11pm · Like

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Peter Olotka I agree Jason. This is an effort to see if we can design a collection of simply worded aliens that can function under the Q. I actually think that the timing rule could have been used to resolve any potential conflict of existing aliens (and other cosmic content) were they to be reworded with simpler text. An example is that Oracle and Sorcerer can co-exist in the same game, with the timing rule governing a different order depending on Offense and Defense.

January 12 at 2:12pm · Like



o

Bill Martinson I can't claim that I'm actually following this concept very well, but in the context of your comments that the game's rules should be continually broken up and rewritten, and Jason's comment about getting folks together to help reconceptualize the game, I'm thinking about this general goal of taking rulings debates (which for some of us only detract from the play experience) and bringing that into the game as an intentionally designed aspect. Taken as a whole, it all seems like an overhaul of how gameplay is to be governed.

January 12 at 2:13pm · Like



o

Peter Olotka The established paradigm of Cosmic Encounter is to change the paradigm

January 12 at 2:14pm · Like



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Bill Martinson Oracle and Sorcerer already co-exist. There is no conflict (and if there were, the Timing Rule would be irrelevant since the powers activate at different times).

January 12 at 2:15pm · Like



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Peter Olotka @ Bill Martinson I still don't see why Q has to overhaul the game, if it is an optional "add in" that players can elect to use.

January 12 at 2:18pm · Like

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○

Bill Martinson Re: "The established paradigm of Cosmic Encounter is to change the paradigm". Sure, but such an open-ended statement doesn't mean anything without qualifiers. Nobody denies the game evolves. Where we are sort of "lost in concept" is the *degree* of that evolution.

January 12 at 2:19pm · Like



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Bill Martinson This "optional add-in" will create a class of aliens that are useless without accepting the add-in, much as Lucre did. Tech doesn't do that, nor do the reward deck, hazards deck, or even Team Cosmic. If the last expansion set contains (just to throw out a number) five or ten "Q" aliens, then that's 25% to 50% of the new alien content in the very last expansion that will be useless to players who don't choose to use the optional add-in. So it's not really as "optional" as the other variants mentioned ... or, to be more precise, its footprint is much larger; it consumes many more resources and thus has a much larger opportunity cost.

Just as a rough comparison, Lucre can also be seen as a paradigm shift. It didn't bother me as a mechanic (I did play it a few times), but many of us still lament how un-fun most of the Lucre powers were. Had that expansion set not paid the opportunity cost to support that mechanic, we theoretically would have had several different alien powers instead of a whole group that for some of us have gone unused for three decades.

Now I am certainly not saying that Lucre shouldn't have been added to the game. But I am saying that the group of aliens dependent upon that mechanic were, from most accounts, not well received. So I am wary of the concept of focusing a significant portion of the aliens in the very last expansion set on an experiment, especially when the stated goal of that experiment is to bring something into the game that some of us find unpleasant.

January 12 at 2:31pm · Like · 1



○

Stephen Sloboda Ok, let's use an example.

Let's say alien Q1 says, "whenever you lose any ships, each player discards a card for each ship you lost." Then Q2 says, "whenever your opponent loses ships, each player draws a card for each ship that player lost."

These are simplified examples and have no theme, but we can see where the Q rule comes into play. If Q2 defeats Q1, both effects try to occur at the same time. Instead of using the timing rule, players may vote whether to draw first or discard first.

For most instances, drawing first would be better than discarding first. However, should a player have fewer cards than the number of ships lost, they may want to discard first, allowing them to draw cards after they're dumped their whole hand and actually end up with more cards than they started with. So it's not just an arbitration of, "how do you guys think this should work?" It's a strategic decision of "how do you WANT this to work?"

January 12 at 2:58pm · Like

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Jack Reda I gotta say that the notion of having to vote on crap all the time to decide conflicts that are purposely added to the game holds zero appeal for me. I also don't see any reason for it... it's going to be pretty easy to design the conflict out of most aliens.

January 12 at 3:02pm · Like · 3



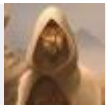
Bill Martinson Jack Reda is my hero today.

January 12 at 3:06pm · Like · 1



Peter Olotka Sounds like you won't be using this option (should it ever see the light of day)/

January 12 at 5:13pm · Like



Gregory Metzger So many good creative ideas have been presented here since CE has hit Facebook, and sadly many have run up against the same wall of resistance from those of us who love the game as it has been for decades. Ultimately, such rigid thinking may only rob the game of its best opportunity for growth going forward. Variants have always been the vehicle for plugging new concepts into the standard paradigm, but in many cases it limits what could be a full experience to a "plugged in" side show. We could consider creating Modules rather than just Expansions. These Modules could at times, almost resemble stand alone games. The designer would be free to change the game's basic structure: Its goals, components, characters, etc. Whatever is needed to fully mature the concept. It's a big Universe out there!.. Jack Reda came up with a great, elaborate idea for Lucre involving Asteroids. His concept could be presented in Modular form set in a Galaxy where the accumulation of wealth is the primary road to success. Cosmic Commerce: A Mad dash for Cash?! Just a few rule & goal changes, as well as Jack's well crafted component additions may be all that's needed. And, what could be done with the Cosmic Stars concept? Hmm.

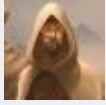
January 12 at 5:13pm · Like



Peter Olotka I always thought each ALIEN could host it's own game!

January 12 at 5:16pm · Like

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o

Gregory Metzger Cool idea Peter!

January 12 at 5:20pm · Like



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Jack Reda I don't want to be a stick in the mud- I'm just having a hard time processing this abstract concept. It feels like progress is trying to be made with the Cosmic Q, but I don't really know what it is. A way to settle disputes? What is the goal? I'm not trying to resist anything, I just don't grasp it.

January 12 at 5:20pm · Like · 3



o

Bill Martinson Gregory, resistance is irrelevant (and futile). Come up with something good and publish it. Maybe some players (who have no veto ability) don't like the idea, but this in no way prevents it from being imagined, developed, and published. Let the proof of the pudding be in the eating, rather than labeling people who don't like pudding as "robbers".

January 12 at 5:20pm · Like



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Peter Olotka I always thought each ALIEN could host it's own game! I also would not characterize Q as purposely adding conflicts to the game, but rather adding a player driven conflict resolution framework which within which a class of simplified Cosmic Content including Aliens and other content could exist. Every encounter would not need a Q solution. Perhaps it is as a parallel universe.

January 12 at 5:22pm · Like · 1



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Peter Olotka Good point, **Bill Martinson** ... This detour into the Q is just an idea that I woke up with a few weeks ago and it has been evolving - we can put it to bed this weekend by sticking it in the archive like the Artifact Artifact and return to it later if anyone has a bright idea about it.

January 12 at 5:26pm · Like

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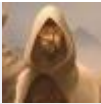
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Jefferson Krogh I haven't said much on it this week because I can't really add anything new to this expression of the idea. I'm with Jack, as is often the case -- just having time grasping it. But there may be kernels of other ideas in this idea that we could run with. Particularly, defining some sort of voting mechanism that could be used by specific aliens to do specific things might be worthwhile.

On BGG, [Bill Martinson](#) is running a very cool Star-Trek themed CE game by forum. One of the custom aliens calls for votes to make things happen by fiat. This is very cool, and very Cosmic. I'd like to see more aliens like that, so a standard "voting rule" could be very handy.

January 12 at 5:33pm · Like



Gregory Metzger @Bill M. I include myself with those who have been resistant to new ideas that change the standard format. I still on occasion like playing the game in its purest form, without Flares! I believe the Modular idea would make all concepts possible without altering the game we hope to continue to enjoy for years to come.

January 12 at 5:37pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda @Jack: You don't have to "vote on crap" all the time; only when it comes up. If no conflict arises, no vote occurs.

I think somehow people are mistaking the idea that every game is going to involve a vote in every phase and there is going to be lengthy discussions about them every time. This just isn't going to happen. It's not going to take any longer than inviting allies, and will occur much less frequently. It's not going to significantly disrupt game play and isn't that difficult to understand.

Going back to the VOID vs. ZOMBIE argument, if these two were retconned into being Q aliens, instead of the question being, "which effect should take precedence." the perspective is, "which effect do the players WANT to take precedence?" It isn't a deliberation about what the rules should be; it's a strategic choice.

Last but not least, the Q rule has provisions for a tie, which acts as a default rule if nobody can agree on which effect to take precedence. So if anything, the deliberation of the Q rule is just to decide whether or not you want to allow the Defense's power to take precedence or not. If you don't vote on it, then the Offense automatically will take precedence. How hard is that to understand?

January 12 at 7:58pm · Like

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Jack Reda Stephen, if we're talking about a whole subset of aliens, hazards, tech and other effects based on the Q, then we ARE talking about voting on crap all the time. You say "if no conflict arises, no vote occurs", but if the whole point of this is to introduce a paradigm that enables it, then aren't we talking about creating conflicts to resolve? Can anyone articulate what this idea is, because it's way too ambiguous for me at this point.

January 12 at 8:02pm · Like · 3



Stephen Sloboda "If we succeed, playing Cosmic with Q features will be much like adding Hazards or Techs to the game."

Will be much LIKE adding Hazards or Techs to the game.

No where do I recall anyone suggesting that we make Hazards or Techs that use the Q rule, although it's certainly possible.

The rule is this:

Two or more Q alien powers try to affect the same game element at the same time, creating a conflict.

Players may choose to vote on which alien power takes precedence.

In the event of a tie or otherwise unresolved vote, the Offensive player takes precedence.

January 12 at 8:30pm · Like



Jack Reda Stephen, right in the third paragraph at the top "A Class of Q Aliens, Artifacts and other Cosmic features". I think it's fair to suggest that hazards and techs count as cosmic features that could be part of it. Aliens, artifacts and more = plenty of opportunities for this "whatever it is" to rear itself in the game.

January 12 at 9:40pm · Like



Jason Troutman Reign Supreme Variant: 10 rank cards numbered 1-10. At the start of the game each player is dealt a rank card which is then revealed. Timing conflicts are now resolved in rank order from highest to lowest. Such as use of powers, playing cards simultaneously, inviting allies etc. A player may not have more than one rank card at a time. If the offensive player wins an encounter, he or she may trade rank cards with the defensive player. Rank cards may be traded as part of a deal. If two or more players share a win, only the highest ranked of those tied wins.

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Granted this strays from adding new aliens and player voting, it's just a result of brainstorming. What if another alien was 'hosting' the game? That alien power could be used by the highest ranked player in addition to their own power.

January 13 at 3:55am · Like



Jefferson Krogh The Timing Rule is invoked so infrequently that I just don't see any percentage in messing with it. Or maybe all the people I play with just have no trouble sorting out the power interactions without it?

January 13 at 11:38am · Like



Peter Olotka The Refuge, power to harbor (Q) In lieu of following Destiny the offensive player may instead take ships to the Refuge, along with payment to Refuge of card per ship from the hand. Place ships on the Refuge sheet. Refuge may use the ships with no obligation on defense. Ship owner may remove the ships normally with additional payment of card per ship.

January 13 at 11:52am · Like



Bill Martinson Not grasping Refuge at all. Other players can place their ships on his alien sheet and give him their bad cards instead of encountering someone? Then Refuge can use those ships as if they were his own, unless the owner takes them back and gives Refuge more crappy cards?

I don't understand what "with no obligation on defense" means.

I don't understand what makes this a "Q alien". What are we voting on/arguing about?

January 13 at 3:29pm · Like



Stephen Sloboda So, if you were to have an Encounter with someone you know you can't beat, you can just send a ship to Refuge (as opposed to the warp).

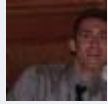
One thing that concern me is the hefty cost of the Refuge. You can always send a ship and a bad pod into an Encounter you know you're going to lose, but instead you're giving those resources to a potential rival. I fail to see the trade-off for the Refugee, unless perhaps this counted as a successful Encounter.

Second, the theme of a Refuge seems like a place you'd retreat to when attacked, not attacking. Like, if the Defense were going to lose to a powerhouse like Virus or Warpish, after the planet is selected but before alliances, the inhabitants of the

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planet would just run away and abandon the planet to the attackers. As an advantage to the offense, it seems more like an Outpost.

January 13 at 4:09pm · Like



Christopher Aurel Oliveira So we're putting this on the backburner this weekend and getting back to all the normal home-brews right?

January 13 at 4:19pm · Like



Peter Olotka Christopher Aurel Oliveira Yes to the delight of more than a few I suspect! But I will mull over it and see if it deserves another outing down the road ...

January 13 at 4:31pm · Like



Peter Olotka Christopher Aurel Oliveira Yes to the delight of more than a few I suspect! But I will mull over it and see if it deserves another outing down the road ...

January 13 at 4:32pm · Like



Peter Olotka @ Bill Martinson Re what are we arguing about..well I wasn't arguing, just tossing out an alien idea that might be a Q. To wit it has language that is up for interpretation. The way the Refuge works is that a player who is destined for a sure loss - now has a refuge to go to. The player might pay with a bad card, but also might give up a better one to avoid loss of turn and loss of the good card anyway. The player might take 4 ships and unload its Encounter cards in payment - some even decent, for a shot at a new hand. Yes, The Refuge can get stuck with bad cards, but that is the price it pays. On the back side it can "count" the refuge ships towards its defense offsetting the potential burden of bad cards. Why is it a Q alien? Not sure. But the goal is to simplify the language and let players (who like creative interpretation) have fun with the possible interpretations.

January 13 at 4:41pm · Like

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Stephen Sloboda Tarot, the power of fortune (Q)

Game setup: Add the Tarot Cards to the Destiny deck.

Whenever a Tarot card is revealed for Destiny, USE this power to grant the Offensive player their fortune. That player reads the Tarot card and does what it says.

After a Tarot Card has been resolved, reveal another card from the Destiny deck. (This must happen even if Tarot doesn't have its power.)

Example Tarot Cards:

Strength: If you reveal an Attack card this Encounter, add 4 to your side's total.

Death: You lose your alien power this turn.

The Star: Draw 2 cards.

Wheel of Fortune: Discard you hand and draw that many cards. :D

January 13 at 4:42pm · Like · 1



Bill Martinson Sorry Peter, I didn't mean to imply that "you" were arguing; I just meant what are "we" (as the hypothetical players playing a game in which Refuge is included) arguing about that would make it a Q alien.

I guess we have different views of what makes an alien "simple". Reading the text and not understanding how it works (because it has been intentionally left "open to interpretation") is, from my perspective, the opposite of simple. For me, simple is when I grasp what the alien does on my very first read-through.

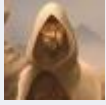
January 13 at 4:56pm · Like



Bill Martinson Same question for you, Stephen: What makes Tarot a Q power? I really must not be understanding this Q concept at all.

January 13 at 4:58pm · Like

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Gregory Metzger @Stephen Sloboda: Your character feels like it would have a lot of personality, and be fun to have in the game. Some care might need to be taken to keep it from being an Alien version of the Hazard Deck. You might want to consider giving him the option to use his power to grant the fortune. That would give him leverage to "bless" (or not) some player who he might hope to influence for the benefit of himself; i.e. subsequently receiving an alliance invite, favoring a preferred side in the encounter etc.

January 13 at 11:27pm · Like



Mark Bickford I like the idea of the Tarot, particularly with the high-quality artwork the game receives these days (that would be a kickin' Major Arcana). But I have a question about something Bill said: is it true that this fan-designed expansion, whenever it ships, will be the last FFG Cosmic expansion? Is there a tentative year for this? (Personally, I'm still hoping to see Moons and Lucre, but that may just be me....)

January 14 at 1:06am · Like



Stephen Sloboda There are a 1,001 ways Tarot could potentially be a Q conflict, but I specifically listed it because it has a timing issue with Refuge.

Let's suppose Tarot did something that would affect someone's decision to take Refuge. In what order does it happen?

January 14 at 11:58am · Like



Jack Reda Offense goes first, then defense, then clockwise from offense. Any reason not to use timing rules?

January 14 at 1:04pm · Like · 1

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Bill Martinson If the concept is that an alien becomes a Q alien any time it has a conflict with any other power, then we would have to errata a bunch of existing aliens into the Q category, right? I had thought the idea was the Q's have some built-in, inherent conflict or ambiguity that would likely come up in most games; something that explains the "Q" icon or text label or whatever identifies them. But again, I certainly cannot claim a solid understanding of the concept yet, so just ignore me if I'm seeming increasingly incoherent. 8-P
January 14 at 8:31pm · Like



Peter Olotka I was forced to AWOL tis weekend (a home renovation project got out of hand). Is that an oxymoron? Anyway , we will officially put the Q into the Artifact Artifact bin for a while to be revisited when we need a boost in feistiness :)

January 15 at 6:35pm · Like