

ENCOUNTER

Volume 2, Number 3

Introduction

Welcome back to the third issue of *Encounter* Volume 2. We have a lot of good material, so I'll keep this short. By the time you read this, *More Cosmic Encounter* should be out (or very soon). The bad news is that Technology was cut due to cost problems. Maybe it will resurface in a later expansion. I will be at Gen Con/Origins helping to run the big *CE* tournament. Hope to meet a lot of you there.

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Continue to send article submissions to me, Mike Arms, at:

Encounter Magazine
12011 Palo Duro, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

One last note, the *CE* FTP archives are located on "alpha.gnu.ai.mit.edu" in the "ce" subdirectory. You will find compressed-shell archive files stored there that require a Unix system to unpack. I do not maintain the archive but will try to get the administrators to support ARC or ZIP formats. Those on the InterNet or Compuserve who wish to receive the *CE* mailing list should send e-mail to Brian Kohn at "bicker@hoqax.att.com".

Once again, a tremendous thanks to Nick Sauer for his invaluable help and continuous feedback.

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Questions & Answers

Jeff Leggett
2102-B Wexford Dr.
Norcross, GA 30071

Just wanted to share some ideas my group has about *CE*. Most of us have been playing *CE* since the Eon edition came out. I was very glad to see Mayfair re-release and do a better job than West End. Anyway, I have a couple of things for *Encounter*'s next issue. First some questions. We have come up with our own answers on these, but I wanted an "official" answer if you print them.

Q: When someone has a power that makes players trade powers and a traded power is Terrorist, does the new Terrorist player get to plant new bombs or just know where the former player's bombs are, at which time he/she can plant new bombs? Note that this is only in cases where there is a more or less permanent change (Changeling, for example), not Insect, Plant, etc.

A: In the case of Changeling's swapping with Terrorist, the list of bombs goes with the power to its new player. The same would hold if the Terrorist played the Wild Philanthropist to give his power card to another player for the challenge. The same would also hold in the case of Wild Sorcerer's swapping the powers of the two main players permanently. There are a few powers that have "artifacts" that go with them when the power is taken (not copied). These include the Hurtz, Industrialist, Miser, Pentaform, Queue, Schizoid, Symbiote, Terrorist, Warrior, Witch, and other unofficial powers.

Q: We play the Terrorist that bombs only explode when new tokens land there as a result of a challenge (or some Flares switching tokens, etc). We do not consider allies' returning to bases after a challenge new tokens for the simple reason it is very hard to keep track of who came from where and where will he go back, etc. Based on the clarification of the Zombie power in *Encounter*, I think we may be playing this wrong. Could you clear it up?

A: With respect to bombs, it doesn't matter where tokens came from. It only matters when tokens are added to a planet. So, yes, you are playing this wrong. Allies' tokens that return to bases will set off bombs.

Q: In an Anti-Matter vs. Loser challenge, if Loser declares upset, does high score win with totals being calculated as designated by Anti-Matter?

A: Remember that under a Loser "upset," the winner loses and the loser wins. Thus, you compute the outcome of the challenge normally due to the Anti-Matter. (i.e. Anti-Matter's and all allies' tokens subtract, while the opponent's tokens add. Lower total wins, and ties go to the defense.) Then apply the upset. Yes, you have it correct. And remember, if you have no Attack Cards during an upset, a Compromise will lose, which means you win.

Q: In a six-player game, could Symbiote be used if extra tokens of a particular color were available from an old set of CE (for example, green from the West End set)? Does this upset a balance of power that Mayfair (or yourself) encountered during playtesting?

A: Yes, you can use Symbiote in a six-player game as you describe. No, this would not upset any balance of power. You can use pennies or anything else, though they are harder to tell the reverse side easily if Vampire is in the game.

Q: In a Deuce vs. Mirror challenge, is Deuce's first card only reversed or do you add the two Deuce cards and then reverse or reverse them separately then add? Also, in a Deuce vs. Laser challenge, we assume that Laser only picks Deuce's primary card. Is this correct?

A: The Mirror reverses all Attack Cards played in a challenge. The Deuce adds his second card to his total, not to his primary card. This distinction is important. So in your scenario, both of the Deuce's cards would be reversed and each would add to his total. In the Deuce vs. Laser challenge, the Laser picks Deuce's primary card and then Deuce selects his secondary card himself.

Q: When Filth evacuates a planet in a deal situation, does he still own that planet for purposes of losing his Alien Power or is this a disadvantage of playing Filth?

A: No. Any player only has bases where he has tokens under his control. If the Filth gives up a home planet in order to exchange bases in a deal, he loses a home base for purposes of retaining the use of his power. Yes, it is a disadvantage of the Filth, which is a pretty powerful alien.

Q: With the Wild Void, does this mean that all tokens and the planet are out of the game or just the tokens, i.e. can new tokens land on the Void'ed planet at a later time?

A: All tokens AND the planet are eliminated from the game by the Wild Void. This is the wild Flare that I most regret our putting into Mayfair CE. It is an extremely destructive wild, far above the power of most Flares, even supers. Imagine being the poor Worm in a game with it! I have received letters from players who have shredded that one card from their games.

Q: When a planet has lost all tokens (from Terrorist or after sanitizing a planet from Filth), does the original player still own that planet for purposes of defending? I.e. does he own it and defend with zero tokens? If not, who plays as defensive main player in a challenge on said planet?

A: Once again, no one owns a planet unless he has a base there. However if an unoccupied planet is being attacked by someone other than the system owner, the system owner must defend it. So, no, he does not own the planet, but he must still defend it.

Q: Can Healer heal tokens lost to the Vampire or Fungus?

A: No, the Healer can only heal tokens as they enter the warp (or the Fan as it is merely the first stage of the reverse warp).

Tokens lost to the Fungus or Vampire do not even go to the warp, being taken by the victor instead. When a Fungus stack hits the warp, it breaks up and the Healer may then heal whichever colors he wishes back to their owners. When enslaved Vampire tokens hit the warp, they are still enslaved until released by Mobius Tubes or Warp Break. So the Healer could choose to heal them back to the Vampire.

Q: On another note, let me say I very much enjoy reading the Alien Bazaar and other new variants. However, I find them useless in playing because they are not included in a format compatible with the game. My group plays with secret powers & multi-powers, and in this regard we deal out the Aliens face down to each player. How do we use the stuff from *Encounter*? Sure, I could sit down at the word processor and laser printer and print on heavy cardstock and type them up, but who has time for that? And how do I get the icons on them without sitting down with a drawing program and reproducing them?

A: I know that this doesn't solve your problem, but on the InterNet we have a CE FTP archive that contains lots of new powers and also a program that creates Postscript output for Alien Power cards (and all other components too). An alternative could be to buy a deck of the blank cards (cheap!) to create your own flares for the new powers. Then to select powers, draw flares, retrieve the associated power description, and away you go. Yes, it would be very nice if we could make photo-ready versions of the *Encounter* powers, but the magazine format does not support that. All of the pages would be taken up by the cards, leaving no room for other neat stuff. You are by no means alone in this wish. I just hope that the material that you like, you can find a way to incorporate into your game fairly easily.

My solution for this is to include a questionnaire with every fourth issue of *Encounter* (i.e. one per year) that lists every Alien Power and variant in the preceding four issues. Each player would then rate what was presented in the previous year's issues and someone (I volunteer) could correlate the ratings to produce a list of the top 20 (or 30, 40, whatever) powers (with corresponding Flares) and favorite variants (Asteroids, Overkill and Pyrrhic Victory cards, etc.). This information could then be released as a yearly expansion to CE produced by Mayfair (maybe a Best of *Encounter* Magazine type thing). Some advantages of this are readily apparent, first and foremost being that Mayfair gets preliminary marketing information for free and that players get a continual supply of expansions for their favorite boardgame. What do you think?

Not a bad idea. I'd like to see some true expansion material made from the best of *Encounter*. As you will see in *More Cosmic Encounter*, some aliens from *Encounter* v2, #1 were included. We'll see what happens. From Mayfair's perspective, a lot will depend on sales of MCE.

West End's version of CE was pretty lousy with one exception: the plastic tokens. Do you know of any mail order craft or hobby company that sells something similar? The cardboard tokens included with the Mayfair edition are easily lost and subject to destruction. I already need to replace a couple of tokens from a couple colors, but I am loath to spend \$35.00 for an all new set of CE. Do you have a solution for this? Maybe Mayfair could sell a complete set of tokens for players? Should I write Mayfair about this?

No suggestions here.

Inverse Destiny

By Jeff Leggett

As my variant submission, I have included a variant we call Reverse Destiny [changed to Inverse Destiny to avoid confusion with the Reverse Cone, ed.]. This should be set up by using six of the blank Destiny Cards from Mayfair and labeling them "Inverse Destiny - Light Blue," "Inverse Destiny - Yellow," etc. and shuffling them in with the normal destiny pile. Whatever Inverse Destiny color comes up in the destiny pile, that player attacks instead of defends. The attacking player would become the defensive player for that round. The attacking player would get a birth (so as to allow a weak player at least one token). There would be one Inverse Destiny Card for each player in the game (i.e. one for each color, do not include any color for players not playing). If a player draws his own Inverse Destiny Card, he gets a free challenge in any system, not counting as part of his turn. Finally, for the purposes of the Assassin power (or Disease or other color effect), the attacking player's color would be assassinated (his color did come up after all). When the Dictator is in the game and another player's Inverse Destiny Card comes up, that player is the offensive player and the Dictator determines the target system.

Basically this expansion is a lot like the Timegash Edict. However, a player whose Inverse Destiny Card comes up has no choice but to attack. This challenge does not count toward the primary player's number of challenges. Inverse Destiny could occur before his first real challenge of his turn, or between his first and second challenges of his turn. If he runs out of Challenge Cards when defending in an Inverse Destiny challenge, he discards his hand and draws a new one as usual. If he runs out of Challenge Cards before his first real challenge of his turn, treat as if he were out of Challenge Cards at the start of his turn (i.e. discard and draw new hand). If during the Interphase he is out of Challenge Cards after his first real challenge but before his second real challenge, his turn ends as usual.

We have played this as a house variant now for approximately 25 games, and it has worked very well. A player whose turn it is to attack can get badly beat upon if he has a succession of Inverse Destinies. This tends to make players think a lot more about taking second attacks.

Alien Bazaar

Cosmic Encounter Contraction Set #1

By Edward S. Bolme

In *Cosmic Encounter*, every player has always endeavored to take best advantage of his strengths. This is a lot of fun, but for variety's sake, we thought it would be fun if a player had to cover for a hideous weakness instead. While rumor has it that "bad" powers have been in circulation for some time, we have not heard of anyone attempting to produce a balanced set of "bad" power cards.

Until now. This is *Cosmic Encounter* Contraction Set #1, an unofficial supplement to *CE*. It's a set of more than two dozen rotten powers, each distinct enough that players will be continually challenged to keep themselves afloat while trying to lance their opponents in their Achilles' tendons. Furthermore, a player never loses a bad power to lack of home bases. The only way to lose a bad power is by a Cosmic Zap. Hopefully, if enough of your readers write glowing reviews about this concept to Mayfair, we'll be able to add a whole new dimension to *CE* gaming!

We strongly warn against mixing these indiscriminately with the regular power cards. Keep them separate. Each player should get one weakness. If you want to play with multiple weaknesses or with a mix of one weakness and two normal power cards, be our guest, but we won't cover any psychiatric expenses you incur.

Add the normal number of regular Flares to the deck. These bad powers have no Flares of their own.

Finally, there is always room for more playtesting. If you and your friends find that one of these drawback powers is too weak or too strong, write in and let us know, too. This is your big chance to directly influence the future of *CE*.

Thanks, and enjoy.

Altruist

Gives Away Non-Challenge Cards




You have the **weakness of generosity**. Whenever you receive a card other than a Challenge Card, you must immediately give it to the player with the fewest cards in his hand. You may not draw extra cards to replace the cards you give away. If you acquire several non-Challenge Cards simultaneously, give them away one card at a time in any order that you choose. If the Lark is in the game, you do not give non-Challenge Cards to him, giving to other players instead.

History: Arising on an unbelievably drab planet, the Order of the Altruists were gravely distressed to find that the rest of the universe had variety and excitement. Protesting that they alone have transcended the need for trivial and glitzy entertainment, they give their most exhilarating possessions to others, seeking to alleviate their tension and apprehension. Witnessing the enthusiasm displayed by other races as they inspect their gifts, the neurotic Altruists regret only that they do not have more to give, for perhaps then everyone would just leave them alone to crawl back under their rocks.

Beggar


Receives Cards From Others

 You have the **weakness of poverty**. Whenever you are owed consolation, your opponent may choose which cards you will receive. In addition, whenever you are due to receive cards from the deck, including the hand dealt you at the start of the game, the other players may give you cards from their hands, so long as each player has a chance to give you a card, and you do not receive more cards than you are due. If you receive less than the number of cards you require, draw the remaining cards from the deck.

History: Lacking the wit, ability, or hygiene to hold a steady job, the Beggars survived by their ability to make other beings feel pity. Content with their lifestyle, they do not notice as others begin to fill their meager coffers with refuse.

Bick



Eradicates Own Tokens

 You have the **weakness of disposability**. Whenever any of your tokens are sent to the warp for losing a challenge or refusing to deal, remove them from play instead. They may never be recovered, nor may the Healer heal them. If you lose 16 or more of your tokens in this manner and cannot win, you are out of the game. Discard your hand, and no further challenges can be made in your system, although other players' bases there still count toward their winning the game. Any cards of your color that are revealed in the destiny pile are discarded from the game, your color is ignored for all purposes, and a new Destiny Card is drawn in its place.

History: Beginning with the first disposable club in prehistoric times, the Bick race rapidly evolved into a modern culture. Having been bred on disposable tires, pens, cameras, marriages, and even disposable cities, the latest generation of Bicks has taken the "use-it-and-lose-it" doctrine one step further: disposable children.

Bureaucrat


Preplots Challenges

 You have the **weakness of overplanning**. As soon as you receive this power, preplot, in order, your next four challenges. Whenever you use one of the plots as offensive or defensive player, preplot another at the end of the list. For each plot, you  must specify the planet to challenge (1-5, counting clockwise), how many tokens to commit, how many allies to invite, how many each of Edicts, Flares, and Kickers you will use, and whether you will play your highest Attack, lowest Attack, or a Compromise. If you are the defensive player, ignore the planet to challenge and number of tokens to commit in your plot. You must adhere to each plot as closely as possible. If you plotted to play a Compromise and have none, play your lowest Attack Card. Similarly, if you plotted to play an Attack Card and have none, play a Compromise. When you lose the use of your power, ignore the current plot, play the challenge normally, and return to your current plot when you regain the use of your power.

History: Genetically engineered to fill clerical positions in the civil service of a decadent race, only the most foresightful Bureaucrats prospered. Soon natural selection removed all spontaneity from the race. Having buried their degenerate masters beneath interoffice memos, the Bureaucrats head for space, following plans drawn by those long dead.

Bystander

Loses Tokens on Captured Planets

 You have the **weakness of innocence**. Whenever your tokens are on a planet that is the target of a challenge, you suffer casualties from your tokens on that planet. If the defensive player wins or if the main players make a deal, you lose one of your tokens from that planet to the warp. If the offensive player wins or if the main players fail to deal, you lose all of your tokens on that planet to the warp.

History: Incredibly curious and outgoing creatures, the Bystanders think nothing of attending and witnessing any spectacle, no matter how dangerous. Eager to learn more about alien cultures, they often stand in the way and ask detailed questions about other races' weaponry. The other races, annoyed at the Bystanders' pestering, are all too happy to demonstrate their capabilities.

Do not use in a two-player game

Chicken

Gains and Loses Bad Powers



You have the **weakness of panic**. Whenever you lose a challenge (or fail to deal) as a main player, draw an additional bad power (maximum of three) from the deck. Whenever you win a challenge, you may return one of these additional bad powers to the deck (minimum of one). As soon as you receive this power, you start with one additional bad power drawn.

History: The Chickens are a race of spineless, gutless wimps. Shaken by the slightest misfortune, they begin to stampede, making more and ever larger mistakes. Only with repeated success will their self-confidence be restored, but until these successes come, they can be found in their coops, clutching their pencil necks.

Cockroach

Others Remove Tokens



You have the **weakness of being disgusting**. At the start of each player's turn, on every planet where that player shares a base with you, that player may remove one of your tokens and place it in the warp.

History: Loathsome and disgusting, Cockroaches thought it pure bad luck that they were assaulted from all sides on their home planet. Yet sales of pointed-toe boots have skyrocketed all across the galaxy as Cockroaches check into hotels throughout the cosmos, so now again, as they infest the interstellar cupboard, the Cockroaches curse the luck that so often finds them on the bottom of alien footwear.

Computer

Programs Own Cards



You have the **weakness of order**. You must stack all of the cards in your hand in any order that you choose. This is the order in which you must play them. Any new cards you get, as well as any reusable Flares you play must be stacked at the bottom of your hand. At the start of each challenge in which you are a main player, draw the top card from the stack. If it is a non-Challenge Card, you must play it at the first appropriate opportunity and draw the next card. If it is a Challenge Card, you must play it this challenge and draw no further. When you lose the use of your power, you may play from your hand normally and re-stack it when you regain the use of your power.

History: The Computer is the last relic of a once ambitious race who automated everything, then grew so complacent that they eventually ceased all action outside of automated sleep. Never having been given the programming for intricate planning, the Computer instead relies on plots that frequently prove unequal to the task.

Craven

Loses to Attack Cards



You have the **weakness of cowardice**. If you are the defensive player in a challenge and your opponent plays an Attack Card, you automatically lose the challenge.

History: Evolving on a planet with scarce resources, the Cravens quickly learned to take advantage of others' ethics. When conflicts arose, the Cravens would surrender en masse to their opponents. Morally obligated to feed this rapid influx of prisoners yet economically unable to do so, the enemy government would collapse and the Cravens would win the war. Now, as they apply their clever tactics to the conquest of the cosmos, the Cravens often gaze at the stars and wonder why their brave soldiers don't write home.

Dodo

Keeps Only 4 Cards



You have the **weakness of obsolescence**. You may only keep four cards in your hand: two Attack Cards, one Compromise or Kicker, and one Edict, Flare, or Reinforcement. You may only keep the first card(s) of each type that you receive. If one of these "slots" in your hand is filled, you must discard all other cards of that type that you receive. If you gain or regain the use of this power when you have more cards than will appropriately fill your four slots, fill as many slots as you can and discard the rest.

History: Unnaturally simple-minded creatures with no natural predators, the Dodos have not significantly evolved in millions of years. Mystified by the Dodos' inexplicable discovery of space travel, other races in the cosmos nonetheless find Dodos easy prey and regularly sponsor Dodo barbecues.

Fodder

Must Ally if Invited




You have the **weakness of carnage**. If you are invited to ally, you must commit. If you are invited by both players, you may choose which side to join. You must then commit as many tokens as you can (up to four) without abandoning a base. You must commit at least one token even if you must abandon a base to do so.

History: Puppy-like creatures traditionally neglected by their mothers, Fodders avidly seek any form of attention. Overjoyed by recognition, no Fodder has ever been known to refuse an invitation of any sort. Other races realize this and can usually be seen teaching the Fodders to "fetch the grenade," thereby sending the witless Fodders directly into the meat grinder of battle.

Do not use in a two-player game

Garlic

Other Players Ally Against


 You have the **weakness of halitosis**. If you are a main player in a challenge, every player who is invited to ally against you must do so. Also, you may invite at most one player to ally on your side.

History: The Garlics are a race of short-sighted beings who managed to pollute their planet so badly that it developed a whole new ecosystem based on the unsavory byproducts of Garlic civilization. Rather than clean up their planet, the noisome Garlics instead took the easy way out: they bred the olfactory sense out of their race. With nothing to hold them back, the Garlics now smell worse than was previously thought possible, and intelligent races, with watering eyes, now seek to prevent them from making the entire universe smell like Los Angeles on a hot day.

Do not use in a two-player game

Gull


Accepts Deals

 You have the **weakness of gullibility**. If you are a main player in a challenge and you play a Compromise Card, your opponent has one minute to describe a deal which you must accept, or he may refuse to deal and you both lose tokens to the warp as normal. Your opponent gets to do this whether or not he played an Attack Card, and this deal situation concludes the challenge.

History: The defenseless Gulls survived on their hostile planet only by eliminating all infighting. Casting out anyone who was not trusting, the Gulls eventually bred suspicion out of their race. Now, as they abide by the decisions of other races, the Gulls can't help but believe that these plans are for the best.

Knight



Spares Opponents

 You have the **weakness of chivalry**. Whenever you are on the winning side in a challenge, the tokens on the losing side do not go to the warp. Instead, the owning players place their tokens on any of their own bases (or back onto any one home planet if they have no bases).

History: Only a very strict adherence to a code of conduct kept continual feudal warfare from entirely depopulating the Knights' homeworld. Taking their millennia-old habits to the stars, the Knights receive not a particle of thanks as they spare their alien foes and watch them head, laughing, for home.

Lark


Does Not Keep a Hand

 You have the **weakness of frivolity**. You are not dealt a hand. At the start of any challenge in which you are a main player, draw cards from the top of the deck until you get an Attack Card.  These cards are your hand for the remainder of the challenge. Discard any remaining cards at the end of the challenge.

History: Eternally happy creatures fond of all sorts of recreation, the Larks have absolutely no sense of time. They flit and gambol across the skies, oblivious to the slow workings of destiny, and when they find themselves in a difficult situation, they just wing it.

Lemming


Migrates to Warp

 You have the **weakness of suicide**. At the start of every player's turn, you choose one of your tokens and place it in the warp. This migration continues until you control only 5 or fewer tokens outside of the warp. Whenever you control more than 5 tokens outside of the warp, migration begins anew.

History: Mindless little drones living Spartan existences, the Lemmings' only recreation on their barren world has been breeding. For millennia, only ritual suicide has prevented them from exhausting their planet's scant resources. Now, as they head for the stars, the call of ritual beats strongly in their hearts, and Lemming captains ignore the critical shortages of personnel and pilot their ships into black holes instead of to their assigned colonies.

Micron

Tokens Worth Nothing

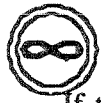
 You have the **weakness of weakness**. Each of your tokens is worth nothing for any game purpose other than owning bases. They don't count in challenges; they don't earn you rewards or consolation.

History: More of an endless horde of vermin than an intelligent race, the Microns have yet to develop any science of their own. They spread through the cosmos by infesting others' ships, where they are often mistaken for dust bunnies and jettisoned into outer space.

Do not use multi-power with any token-based power (e.g. Wrack, Phantom, Macron, etc.)

Paranoid

Segregates Own Tokens



You have the **weakness of separatism**. Your tokens are segregated into five sub-colors. Use tokens of every color not being used in the game.

If this gives you less than five sub-colors, turn over some of your tokens to create white, and use dimes, pennies, or buttons to create other sub-colors. Select 20 tokens, four of each available sub-color and set them up on your home system with one sub-color per planet. If ever tokens of two or more sub-colors co-occupy a planet at the end of a challenge, place equal numbers of each sub-color on that planet into the warp until one sub-color remains or until all of your tokens from that planet are in the warp. Your tokens may never change sub-colors.

History: Mentally deranged servitors of a malfunctioning computer, the Paranoids will stop at nothing to get ahead. Infighting is so common that they barely notice the other races they must battle for galactic domination.

Do not use with the Gas Giant reverse system hex

Peacock

Displays Own Hand



You have the **weakness of pride**. You must hold your hand backwards, facing the other players. You may not look at your own hand. You may only know the type of each card (i.e. Challenge, Edict, Flare, Kicker, Reinforcement, etc.). At any time, you may ask another player what type a particular card is, and he must tell you truthfully. If the card is a non-Challenge Card (e.g. Edict or Flare), he must also tell you when you are allowed to play it. When selecting your Challenge Card, you must draw one at random from your hand after your opponent selects his (except versus Oracle).

History: Extremely colorful and picturesque creatures reveling in all forms of flattery and appreciation, Peacocks do not know the meaning of the word "secrecy." Ostentatiously broadcasting their intentions as they spread through the cosmos, the Peacocks expect no resistance. Inevitably, they return home with tattered finery, shake their tiny heads in bewilderment, and wonder how they were plucked so clean.

Pug

May Always Be Attacked



You have the **weakness of ugliness**. During any challenge, if you have a base in the defensive player's home system, the offensive player has the option of attacking your base instead. You are then considered to be the defensive player, and if you lose the challenge, the offensive player and his allies each get one card from the deck in addition to the base.



History: Kept as showpiece pets by a dying race, the Pugs were bred for artistically hideous appearance. The creativity of their former masters is now evident in the remarkable number of grotesque flaws that now permeate the racial genes. Other races, unable to tolerate the aesthetic violence of the Pugs' ugliness, often join forces to attack the nearest Pug pen.

Do not use in a two-player game

Quantum

Has Only 1 Token




You have the **weakness of unity**. You have only one playing piece, although it can occupy many places at the same time, each of which is marked by a token. You may create as many tokens as you need, as long as no more than one of your tokens occupies the cone or any given base. If one of your tokens must go to the warp, all of your tokens in that system hex are removed from the board (none actually go to the warp). At the start of your challenge, you may place one token on each unoccupied planet in your home system and one new token into the cone. If you lose the use of your power, you do not create new tokens and must play with only the tokens that you have on the board currently.

History: The Quantum is the sole inhabitant of an otherwise empty dimension. Having nothing better to do, it concentrated on transcendental meditation and discovered a way to bridge the multiverse. Discovering other intelligent (?) creatures was a great joy to the Quantum, who is even now sending new perspectives into our reality.

Queen

Bases Migrate Home


 You have the **weakness of homecoming**. At the start of every player's turn, move all of your external bases one planet closer to your home system. If one of your bases gets to the leftmost (or rightmost) planet on a system hex, it moves to the rightmost (or leftmost) planet on the next system hex closer to yours. Once any of your bases reach your home system, those bases stop migrating.

History: The only thing the Queens enjoy more than winning a struggle is returning to brag about it. Eager for a chance to prove themselves, they take to the stars. Once their starships reach their goal and touch down, the Queens jump about like the loonies they are and run back home to have a parade.

Do not use in a two-player game

Samurai


Tortures Self for Losing

 You have the **weakness of honor**. If you lose a challenge as a main player, immediately remove two tokens to the warp and discard an Attack Card, a Compromise, an Edict, and either a Kicker, Reinforcement, or Flare. If you lose a challenge as an ally, place one token in the warp and discard one non-Challenge Card.

History: Lobotomized at birth, the Samurai know nothing but fanatical obedience to their obese Shogun. Trained by electroshock therapy to equate failure with death, the Samurai frequently carry their teachings a little too far, much to the betterment of the universe in general.

Tourist

Collects Bad Powers


 You have the **weakness of mimicry**. When you are the main player in a challenge, you must use the bad powers of each player in whose home system you have a base. If you have a base in the Chicken's home system, you begin your own set of additional bad powers.

History: Developing late on a planet with a richly varied culture and lacking any amount of creativity, the Tourists tried to fit in by imitating anything and everything. Having crushed their own planet beneath piles of Tourist junk, they now seek to imitate the varied beings of the universe. Fortunately, their tastes in quality have been warped by their own creations, so hopefully they will find themselves trying to imitate an extinct species.

Do not use in a two-player game

Vitamin

Strengthens Others


 You have the **weakness of nutrition**. If you lose tokens as the result of a challenge, place them on the opposing main player's star. If you lose tokens to the direct use of someone's power or use of a card, once again place the lost tokens on the responsible player's star. Each of your tokens on a player's star adds one to his combat total as a main player in a challenge. If you are the opposing main player, each token on the main opponent's star adds two to his combat total. Whenever you get to draw tokens from the warp, draw them instead from the star of the player with the most of your tokens, choosing in the case of a tie. Vitamin tokens may not be traded.

History: Extremely appetizing creatures evolving on a mineral-packed world, Vitamins are universally considered to be delicious and nutritionally complete. Having believed their popularity was not the result of gastronomic considerations, the Vitamins were shocked to discover that other races' diplomats were actually field researchers for cookbook publishing houses. Will the Vitamins be able to stop these predators in time?

Do not use in games with the Assessor or Phantom

Wart

Never Moves Tokens

 You have the **weakness of immobility**. At the start of the game, place one (or more) of your tokens on each of your home planets, keeping the rest in reserve off-board. Your tokens may never leave a base except to go to the warp. You may only place tokens in the cone from your reserve. Your tokens returning from the cone (as winning defensive allies for example) must land on one or more of your bases or go to the warp if you have no bases. Your tokens released from the warp may be placed in your reserve or on any of your bases. When you are the offensive player and have no tokens in reserve, and thus no tokens that may be placed in the cone, you lose your turn. When you lose the use of your power, you may not access tokens in your reserve, but you may use tokens on your bases as normal.

History: Small, unsightly creatures closely resembling a parasitic fungus, Warts depend on solar winds to blow them from place to place. Once they have established themselves on a planet, only liquid nitrogen can scrape them off again.

Do not use in a game with Changeling

Disadvantages for *Cosmic Encounter* By Mike Arms

As a companion article to Edward's Contraction Set, I decided to include my Disadvantages variant. I came up with this early last year before I became involved with the playtest for Mayfair *CE*. This variant is still pretty rough and unplaytested, but it has a couple of usable systems and some good ideas. I have updated it with concepts from Mayfair's *CE* and *MCE*. Don't worry about references to variants or powers that you haven't heard of yet. They will be presented in later issues.

The idea came to me that we have lots of powers, Flares, reverse system hexes, and other game mechanics that add to a player's ability to win the game. There are a few negative Flares (in Eon *CE*) and quite a few moons of that nature. So how about if we drew a disadvantage at the start of the game that inhibited our effectiveness in a specific way and would last throughout the game? These disadvantages could be revealed when drawn, or everyone could play with them hidden.

When playing hidden, each player is on his honor to follow his disadvantage whenever it dictates. This honor aspect is no different than many other aspects of the game. If at the end of the game with hidden disadvantages it is determined that a player did not follow his disadvantage, that player loses one outer base and one home base (this rule is mainly in place for tournaments where the number of bases determines your points for the round). If that player had "won" the game, his win is voided, and the game continues unless some other player won also. In subsequent games, the dishonest player must play with an additional disadvantage and his disadvantages revealed. This same penalty could be applied if a player was dishonest with respect to other important game mechanics.

Nick Sauer has made the suggestion that these could be cards shuffled into the Challenge Deck. Thus a player may draw a Disadvantage Card from the deck or from another player's hand through consolation or other means. These would be hidden disadvantages, and the player would be bound by each Disadvantage Card in his hand. This is a neat idea, but a couple of problems arise. First off, the disadvantages listed below are meant to be fairly severe as they were written with the intent that a player is bound to them for the entire game. If these cards were to appear in the deck and players could receive several, I would expect that they should be toned down some. Secondly (and possibly more importantly), their presence

in the deck would increase the proportion of non-Challenge Cards in the deck. Thus, as hands must be discarded when you are out of Challenge Cards, this would affect the game. Note that this is true for any and all non-Challenge Cards that players invent (Prisoner Rulings, Special Destiny, Meta-Kickers, etc.).

Nick then suggested that they could form a separate deck, like Hazards, that would be drawn from occasionally. Players would draw a new disadvantage when they gain a new outer base and could discard one of their choice when they lose an outer base. This is a good system, but it would mean having to deal with four disadvantages as you attempt to win (Ouch!).

We rejected the idea suggested to draw one Disadvantage Card at the start of your turn. This seems too frequent. If this scheme were used, maybe a player is only bound to a Disadvantage Card if he must discard it. So when he discards his hand, he must place his Disadvantage Cards face up in front of him. A big problem with this scheme is that, due to the random nature of distribution, it is likely that a couple of players may be bound to several disadvantages while others have none. The Philanthropist would be dramatically boosted in power, as would those like Teela that can force consolation onto someone else.

I still feel that the best mechanism for the disadvantages listed below is to draw one at the start of the game, after you draw reverse system hexes and select powers. The disadvantage is not a part of your hand, and it affects you for the entire game.

Groups can also use Disadvantage Cards to place handicaps on particular players. Examples: for experienced players in a game with novices, for each player who has already won a game of *CE* that day, for only the player who won the last game of *CE*, or to really obnoxious players who simply deserve it.

I have decided to attempt to partition these into Major and Minor Disadvantages. This may not be a good thing as some Minor Disadvantage may be a Major Disadvantage if drawn by a particular power. The reverse can also be true. I also added the topic subcategories as a conceptual aid.

This list will undoubtedly grow. Feel free to add your own and hopefully send me a copy. If I get or come up with a lot more good ones, I will publish a follow-on in a later issue.

Minor Disadvantages

Destiny

- Every time you flip your own color in the destiny pile, you must make a challenge in your own system if possible.
- Every time you flip your own color in the destiny pile, you must ignore the result and flip again.

Cone

- You must always challenge the base with the most defensive tokens in the defensive system hex. (Redraw if Anti-Matter, Loser, Will, or Worm.)
- You can never attack an empty planet except in your own system hex.
- You can never attack an empty moon. (Redraw in a game without moons.)

Tokens

- Any time that you put tokens into the cone, you must take them from the same place (e.g. same planet, moon, star, etc.).
- After all other modifications, your tokens only add half of their value (round down) when adding to your side's total in a challenge. They are treated as normal for determining consolation or rewards.

Alliances

- You cannot invite more than one player to be your offensive ally.
- You cannot invite all other players to be your defensive allies. You must exclude at least one non-main player.
- As a main player, you must always invite at least one player to ally with you.
- You cannot ally on the offensive side.
- You cannot ally on the defensive side.
- You cannot ally with a side if all non-main players were invited to ally on that side.
- Whenever you are invited to ally, you must accept one offer and join with at least two tokens. (Redraw if Macron.)
- Each time that you ally, you must place one of your tokens in the warp.
- Each time that you ally, your side's main player may draw two cards from your hand and keep them or return them to you.
- Each time that you ally, the opposing main player may draw two cards from your hand and keep them or return them to you.

- You must always take tokens as rewards until you have no more in the warp.

Cards

- Just before cards are played when you are a main player in a challenge, you must show your opponent your highest Attack Card (lowest if Anti-Matter or Loser).
- You can play Edicts and Flares only at the start of or during your own turn.
- Any positive Kicker you play has its value reduced by one. (Redraw in a game without Kickers.)

Power

- In every challenge, you must always use your power if possible. (Redraw if mandatory power.)
- Your Alien Power or Powers are never hidden. (Redraw if not playing a Hidden Power game.)

Victory

- You require one additional outer base in order to win the game.
- In addition to the current victory conditions, you must also have a base (moon or planet) in each system hex in order to win the game. (Redraw if Schizoid is in the game.)

Miscellaneous

- You must always refuse to deal.

Major Disadvantages

Destiny

- You must always challenge the player to your right (counter-clockwise) either in his system or your system. Destiny only determines regular/reverse cone or Comet modifications to the challenge. (Redraw if Will or Plant.)

Cone

- You can never attack a moon. (Redraw in a game without moons.)
- As your first challenge of each of your turns, you must challenge a moon. (Redraw in a game without moons.)

Tokens

- You do not retrieve a token from the warp at the start of your challenge.
- Any time another player has more tokens in the warp than you, you must equal his number of tokens there.
- Any time that you put tokens into the cone, you must use

the maximum that you are allowed. (Redraw if Amoeba or Macron.)

- You can only place one of your tokens in the cone. (Redraw if Amoeba, Macron, or Virus.)
- As a main player, you subtract the value of your tokens from your side's total. (Redraw if your power modifies its token count, number of tokens, or token value—Teela, Amoeba, Fungus, Virus, Macron, etc.).

Alliances

- You cannot invite any offensive allies.
- You cannot invite more than one player to be your defensive ally.
- You may only ally if the opposing side has at least one ally.
- As a winning offensive ally in a regular-cone challenge or as a winning defensive ally in a reverse-cone challenge, you get a reward of only one card from the deck or one token from the warp instead of a base (your tokens return to bases).
- Your rewards (winning defensive ally, winning offensive in a reverse-cone challenge, Victory Boon, etc.) are always divided by 2 (round down).

Cards

- You can never have more than 10 cards in your regular hand. If you get more than 10, randomly discard until you are back down to 10.
- Whenever you draw a new regular hand, you only get five cards. (Redraw if Mutant.)
- You cannot play wild Flares, except if the Flare is mandatory or if forced by some other player. (Redraw if Solar.)
- You cannot play Edicts. (Redraw if Mesmer or Vulch.)
- Whenever you play a Challenge Card, you must either play your highest Attack Card (lowest if Anti-Matter or Loser declaring upset) or a Compromise Card, unless prevented by some other player or Special Destiny.
- Whenever you play a Challenge Card, you must either play your lowest Attack Card (highest if Anti-Matter or Loser declaring upset) or a Compromise Card, unless prevented by some other player or Special Destiny.
- You must leave your hand face up at all times, except when you must play a Challenge Card.
- You can only play one non-Challenge Card per challenge.
- In order to play an Edict, you must discard another non-

Challenge Card from your hand.

- In order to play a Flare, you must discard another non-Challenge Card from your hand.
- You must play one Flare per challenge (if you have any) as soon as the opportunity to play one presents itself.
- You cannot use Kickers. (Redraw in a game without Kickers.)

Power

- You cannot use your Alien Power when you are the defensive player. (Redraw if your power is usable only as defensive player or if your power is never usable when defensive player.)
- You can use your Alien Power only once per turn. (Redraw if you have a mandatory power.)
- You lose the use of your Alien Power when you have less than four bases in your home system. (Redraw if Gas Giant or Space Dust reverse system hex.)
- You can only use your Alien Power as a main player. (Redraw if your power is usable only as a main player or if your power is never usable as a main player.)
- Discard your Alien Power. The other players in the game decide which Alien Power you will be for the game (simple majority voting).
- You must discard one of your Alien Powers. (Redraw if not a multi-power game.)

Victory

- You require two additional outer bases to win the game.
- In addition to the current victory conditions of the game, you must also have bases on each of the planets in your home system to win the game. (Redraw if you have Gas Giant, Space Dust, or any system hex with less than five possible "planet" bases. Redraw if Schizoid is in the game.)
- In addition to the current victory conditions, in order for you to win the game any two players must currently have lost their powers because of a lack of home bases.
- In order for you to win the game, you must have one additional outer base and must currently have lost the use of your power because of a lack of home bases. (Redraw if Schizoid is in the game.)

Miscellaneous

- You cannot take a second challenge in your turn.
- You are never entitled to consolation. (Redraw if Pacifist or Empath.)
- You do not get a reverse system hex. (Redraw in a game not using reverse system hexes.)

Cosmic Hearts

By Josh Smith, Jeff Hildebrand, Melissa Shaner, and Jeremy Thorpe
Additional powers by Mike Arms

We idiots here at Swarthmore's Experimental Gaming Research and Design Center recently came up with a hybrid of *Cosmic Encounter* and Hearts, which we're calling "Cosmic Hearts" for now. (We haven't gotten in touch with the Cool Names For Games Institute yet).

Our standard game is four-player Hearts, passing three left, three right, three across, and hold, with the Jack of Diamonds worth -10 (that's 10 points in your favor), the first lead is the 2 of Clubs and no points on the first trick, Queen of Spades breaks Hearts, and Hearts can be led if you have only Hearts or only Hearts and the Queen of Spades.

The following might be a sample trick in CH:

Visionary leads the 4 of Spades and says to the player to his left:

"You will play the King of Spades."

Sorcerer, the fellow to the left, plays the King: "I'll swap this with your 4—have fun..."

Visionary, staring at the King he just "played," curses his lack of foresight.

Negator, the third player, drops the Ace. Visionary heaves a sigh of relief.

Terrorist, the fourth player, plays the Queen of Spades. "Don't play that," suggests Negator. Terrorist grumbles at Negator and plays the 6 of Spades instead.

Negator takes the trick, as Visionary thanks Negator profusely, Negator accepts thanks modestly, but Terrorist grins evilly and reveals, "Oh, by the way, that 4 and 6 of spades you just took were both bombed..."

It's a real trip, but a lot of fun. We may never play regular Hearts again. Here are the powers:

Changeling [Lead]

You have the **power to change form**. Before you lead, trade your power with that of any other player. You may use your new power as well if appropriate.

Chronos [Play]

You have the **power of time travel**. When the player to your left plays a card after you, you may call "time travel." You each then take back your card and play again. You may play the same card again, but the other player may not.

Connoisseur [Passing]

You have the **power of refinement**. During the passing phase, you are passed six cards, keep three of them, and return the other three to the player who passed them to you.

Filch [Trick-taking]

You have the **power of theft**. After all cards are played, if you take the trick, you may steal a card played by one of the other players. Take it out of the trick into your hand, swapping it for a card of the same suit from your hand.

Insect [Passing]

You have the **power of metamorphosis**. Each hand, you play as if you had the power of the person who passes you cards. On a hold hand, you choose before the first lead which player you will copy.

Laser [Lead]

You have the **power to blind**. Before you lead, you may name any one player to play blind during the next trick. When it is that player's turn, he must select a random card from among the legal cards in his hand. That is, if normally he could follow suit, then select randomly only from his cards in that suit.

Loser [Lead]

You have the **power of upset**. Before you lead, you may call "upset." If you do so, the lowest card played in the suit led takes the trick.

Mind [Lead]

You have the **power of knowledge**. Before you lead, you may look at any other player's hand for five seconds.

Negator [Play]

You have the **power to negate**. Once per trick, after any player has played a card, you may negate his decision. He must then take the card back into his hand and play another.

Oracle [Lead]

You have the **power to foresee**. Before you lead, name a suit, but do not play a card. Other players must "follow" the suit you name. Once all others have played, you must follow suit as well.

Pentaform [Setup]

You have the **power to evolve**. At the start of the game, draw four additional powers at random. Order them as desired, and play each during one of the hands in a round of four.

Philanthropist [Lead]

You have the **power of giving**. Before you lead, you may name any other player to lead instead. That player may lead any card, and play proceeds normally.

Reincarnator [Trick-taking]

You have the **power of reincarnation**. When you first take a trick with points, you draw a new power from those not in use and play it until you take points again. At that point you redraw, discarding the old power. If you draw a "Setup," "Deal," or "Passing" power, you may discard and draw again.

Schizoid [Passing]

You have the **power to alter reality**. Each hand, before cards are passed, name a card that will be worth 13 additional points (instead of the Queen of Spades) for that hand. You cannot name the 2 of Clubs as the card to be worth 13 points.

Seeker [Lead]

You have the **power of truth**. Before you lead, you may ask any other player a yes-or-no question. You may ask about his hand or his intentions, and he must answer truthfully (or abide by his answer, if your question concerns his intentions). **Warning:** Do not abuse!

Sorcerer [Play]

You have the **power of magic**. After you play a card, you may swap it with a card played by any other player. The other player is then considered to have played your card, and you his. To swap with a player who has already played, your cards must be of the same suit.

Terrorist [Passing]

You have the **power to booby trap**. Each hand, after cards are passed, write down three cards that will be "trapped." Each of these cards is worth three additional points at the end of the round to whoever takes it during play. "Trapped" cards do not break hearts.

Trader [Lead]

You have the **power of transference**. Before you lead, you may trade hands with another player.

Vacuum [Scoring]

You have the **power of catharsis**. At the end of the hand, you distribute among one or more players as many points as you took during the hand.

Visionary [Lead]

You have the **power of perception**. Before you lead, you may tell one other player to play a specific card. When it is his turn to play, if he has the card you named and it is legal for him to play it, he must do so.

Will [Play]

You have the **power of choice**. After any trick, you may call "will." You then lead the next trick, and play proceeds normally.

Comments

Changeling: A power that, as in *CE*, tends to be a complicating factor more than anything else. Even more disruptive than in *CE*, since in *CH*, a player's plans can be even more drastically altered by the sudden loss of his power.

Chronos: The net effect feels like something of a variation on Negator. You can force someone to play a different card, but only the player to your left. On the other hand, you get to take back your card as well if you like. This would be a more interesting power if the person to your left changed over the course of the game. Recommend that the Chronos player exchange seats with the player to his left after each hand.

Connoisseur: A useful power that can really mess with your opponents' heads. The person passing to you will seldom have six cards he doesn't want, which means you can give back the ones he doesn't want and keep the ones he does. What you return can often confuse or mislead him as well. This power is unfortunately worthless

during a hold hand, and it isn't as much fun to play as some others because it only does something once per hand.

Filch: A very potent power, sharing with Sorcerer and Trader the potential to dominate the game. We originally left out the same-suit clause, but even with it included, Filch is almost too powerful compared to some of the milder powers. Being able to filch the Jack of Diamonds into the first diamond trick you take or filch the Queen of Spades out of a trick that you take it gives you an enormous safety margin. Still, players who are aware of Filch's potential will be able to act in some ways to neutralize it.

Insect: We haven't used Insect much, mostly because we've been focusing on playtesting the other powers. It seems like it would be fairly balanced, since on average, you end up with as good a power as everyone else in the game.

Laser: A good way to harass other players but limited in its utility. Someone has occasionally been able to use it to get the Jack or avoid the Queen, but not with the regularity of something like Sorcerer or Filch. Still, it can definitely throw a wrench into the well-laid plans of your opponents and leave them frustrated.

Loser: Powerful, though not as dominant as the big three. Loser makes it a lot easier to shoot, since your 2s and 3s can suddenly take tricks. Other people have to watch what they play early on: if you have an Ace-Queen and a 2-4 pair, discarding either the King or the 3 sets you up nicely. Additionally, if you get in trouble, it's easy to get rid of the lead as long as you have either high or low cards. People will eventually catch on to this and start passing you 8s and 9s, but even then, if you keep track of what's played, you can keep out of trouble.

Mind: A strong one if you can get the lead early and have a good memory. Trader mimics a lot of Mind's power and thus is even stronger, but Mind can do very well with a judicious look or two. We put the five second limit in mostly keep Mind from taking notes or similar skullduggery.

Negator: A potent and very enjoyable power. Negator lets you frustrate your opponents while protecting yourself. It doesn't dominate the game like Sorcerer, but it comes close in potency. This is one of our favorite powers to play.

Oracle: Another powerful but not dominant one. Oracle has the net effect of letting you play last, but in a suit of your choice. This makes it easy to get rid of high spades safely (if you can get the lead) and also lets you set up suits in which you're missing a few cards by calling them to yourself. You can also shoot easily with Oracle and the A-Q-10-8-etc. of Hearts.

Pentaform: Another one we haven't tested much. It seems mostly useful for providing some variation in the game.

Philanthropist: This power also suffers from the fact that people's seats don't change: since it's often most advantageous to play last, you end up giving the lead to the player to your left a lot. That player will soon come to hate you intensely. There may or may not be anything he can do about it. This power is more subtle than many of the other strong ones, since it has a much less obvious influence on the results of a hand than something like Negator or Visionary. It often ends up being a little like a subtle version of Oracle.

Reincarnator: We have played this one a few times, and it gets pretty wild. Because your powers change in mid-hand, it's very hard for your opponents to predict what you're going to be up to. Of course, it's similarly hard for you to figure out what you should be doing, but at least you have fun in the meanwhile.

Schizoid: This hasn't seemed too powerful. Since you call before cards are passed, it's hard to screw anyone over particularly well, and it's not a particularly strong offensive power, since you still need all the hearts to shoot even if you name something else as the Queen. Schizoid is most useful in a hold hand, when you can dramatically improve your hand by calling a card in a suit you have a lot of low length in. Otherwise, it's been popular because it's fun, but it's not as strong as some of the others.

Seeker: An extremely problematic power. Asking questions about someone's hand is fairly impotent next to someone like Mind, who can see the entire contents of a player's hand. Asking about intentions is the only way to go, yet Seeker players in our games have failed to do this much to date. This still needs some playtesting.

Sorcerer: My favorite power to play, Sorcerer dominates any game it is used in. Our original Sorcerer lacked the same-suit rule, and I totally controlled the two hands I played it in. I could effectively keep the player to my left leading, split the points at will, and guarantee myself the Jack, all without breathing hard. Even with the same-suit rule, this is a potent power, and wise players will do anything they can to harass Sorcerer from the very beginning. One use of the power that might not be apparent from the description: you can swap with someone who hasn't played yet; by playing a card in front of him, you then get whatever card he plays. If you know that the Ace and King of Spades are gone, this is a good way to give the Queen to whomever you want. On the other hand, if the other player has one of these two, he'll play it for you, and you'll end up cursing your stupidity. A proposed modification that we haven't tried yet eliminates this ability, since Sorcerer is almost too strong even without it.

Terrorist: Another one that folks here have found fun but that hasn't seemed that powerful. If you play well, you can avoid taking any of your bombs, effectively decreasing your score by three points per turn. On the other hand, sometimes you can't avoid getting stuck with a bomb or two, which really defeats the purpose. People seem to enjoy it, though, even if it isn't that strong. Note that terrorist bombs should be declared when they're taken, but they aren't considered "points" for purposes of breaking hearts or shooting the moon. It might be simpler to just not announce them until the end of the round. It shouldn't make a whole lot of difference.

Trader: A much stronger power than it seems. Getting rid of a few key cards and then passing your hand off to someone else can really kill the player who gets the remnants. It's hard to get stuck with the lead as Trader, since you can always just give your hand away. You can also do really nasty things, like trade with Visionary and then trade with someone else—now Visionary knows the entire contents of someone else's hand and can abuse the victim into the ground. You can also interfere with shooting attempts and shoot yourself if you play it right. I originally didn't think much of this power, but it turned out to be a real force in the games it's appeared in.

Vacuum: One of the more boring powers to play, unfortunately. It could as easily read "you reduce the number of points you take by 1/3" in terms of its advantage to you. Being able to assign the points around is fun, though, and you can also use your power to threaten people occasionally. In one game, Negator led the King of Spades, clearly planning to negate the Queen if it fell. I played the Ace immediately after her, saying: "If the Queen falls, and you don't negate it, you're getting the points too." This kind of thing can keep

people from throwing points on you, but it still isn't as interesting to play as some of the others.

Visionary: Another fun power to play. Since you pass three cards in each of the first three rounds, you automatically have some information about at least one player's hand, and as you play, you should be able to ascertain more. You can also psych people out with your power: one hand, I led a spade and told the player to my right (whom I had passed to) to play the King of Spades. The fellow opposite me dropped the Queen, knowing the one to the right would be taking it with the King, but it occurred to me after the fact that I could have told him to play the Ace, and when he didn't have it, the other guy would have been stuck with the Queen. Lucky guesses can also pay off in a big way. All in all, Visionary is a strong and fun power.

Will: The best use of Will is obviously for shooting the moon and getting the Jack of Diamonds. If you can set your hand up early, you don't need an entry, which really makes life a lot easier. You can also largely nullify dangerous people like Visionary, Trader, or Mind by simply calling for the lead whenever they take a trick, but you have to have a lot of safe cards to lead yourself in order to keep this up for long.

[Being a big Hearts fan, I loved Josh's Cosmic Hearts powers. I came up with some more CH powers. I have not playtested these. — Mike Arms]

Arranger [Passing]

You have the power of order. You specify how many cards (0 to 5) all players will pass and the direction of passing. Also, after cards have been passed, you specify which non-point card must be the first lead.

Aristocrat [Deal]

You have the power of privilege. Before the deal, you choose one half (rounded up) of your hand. The remaining cards are shuffled and dealt, with you receiving only your remaining cards for your hand.

Calculator [Play]

You have the power to equalize. When you play a card, you may declare that its value is two less than normal for purposes of determining who takes the trick. If more than one card of the same suit and value are played in the trick, the first one has precedence when determining who takes the trick.

Crystal [Passing]

You have the power of arrangement. You may declare one suit that other players cannot pass. Or you may declare one suit that other players must pass at least two cards of (if they were dealt two or more of that suit).

Deuce [Lead]

You have the power of two. Whenever you lead, you also lead to an extra trick. Each other player must follow the primary lead and then the extra lead. The winner of the primary trick also takes the extra trick.

Dictator [Lead]

You have the **power of command**. Whenever any other player leads, you may change the suit on his card to a different one that you can follow suit in. The new suit must be valid (e.g. you cannot name hearts if they have not been broken). If more than one card of the same suit and value are played in the trick, the first one has precedence when determining who takes the trick.

Gambler [Play]

You have the **power to bluff**. You play your card face down. After all have played, you declare what it is. You may lie about it. If all of your opponents accept your declaration, the trick is concluded as if you played what you declared. Not even the player taking the trick may look at the card until the end of the hand. If one or more players call your bluff, you reveal your card. If you lied, you add one point to your score for each opponent who called your bluff. If you told the truth, each opponent who called your bluff adds three points to his score.

Grudge [Lead]

You have the **power of revenge**. Whenever you lead a card, you may ask any or all other players to follow suit with a higher card. If you take the trick, you penalize all who did not do as you asked by adding two points to each of their scores.

Hurtz [Play]

You have the **power to lease**. You may lease cards from your hand when any other player must play. To attempt a deal, another player shows you a card from his hand that he is willing to give you in exchange for a card in a suit he names. He may request a particular card. You may show him which card you are willing to trade to him and the number of points from your score he must take. If the terms are agreeable to both, you trade the cards and your score is decreased by that many points while his is increased by that many points.

Judge [Lead]

You have the **power of fiat**. Just after another player leads, you may assign one to three extra point gains or losses to whoever takes the trick.

Lloyd [Lead]

You have the **power to insure**. You may, for a fee, insure other players against taking the trick. He pays the "fee" by adding that many points to his score and decreasing your score by that same amount. If an insured player takes the trick, he may give you any points taken in the trick.

Machine [Lead]

You have the **power of continuity**. You may keep the lead until you fail to take two of the tricks that you led.

Macron [Play]

You have the **power of mass**. Whenever you play a number card (2-10), you may declare it to be equivalent in value to a Jack of that same suit (although it does not count as such for points). If more than one card of the same suit and value are played in the trick, the first one has precedence when determining who takes the trick.

Mesmer [Play]

You have the **power of mass hypnosis**. You may play any 7-9 number card as if it were any card that you declare (suit & value). It has the effect of that new card when determining who takes the trick but not for scoring. If more than one card of the same suit and value are played in the trick, the first one has precedence when determining who takes the trick.

Miser [Deal]

You have the **power to hoard**. When cards are dealt, each player receives one fewer card, which is instead dealt into your "hoard." You may play out of your hoard when you cannot follow suit from your regular hand. Any cards that you retain in your hand or hoard after all other players are out of cards are considered to be part of your tricks.

Pacifist [Play]

You have the **power of peace**. When you play an Ace or King, you may declare it to be "low." It is then treated as lower than a 2 card of the same suit for purposes of determining who takes the trick.

Prophet [Lead]

You have the **power to predict**. Just before any other player leads, you may predict which player will take the trick. If you are correct, the score of the player that you predicted is increased by 2 points and your score is decreased by 2 points. If you are incorrect, your score is increased by 1 point.

Schizoid [Passing]

You have the **power to alter reality**. Each hand, before cards are passed, write down a card that will be worth 13 additional points (instead of the Queen of Spades) for that hand. Whenever another player leads, he may ask you one yes-or-no question about the 13-point card. You must answer truthfully, aloud. Whenever that card is taken in a trick, you announce which card it is.

Witch [Trick-taking]

You have the **power to curse**. Whenever you take points in a trick, you may cast a spell against all other players. This spell lasts for the next two tricks. Each spell can affect only one of the following game operations: alien powers, aces, face cards, number cards, suit equivalence, and suit led. Each type may be used only once (in any order) until you manage to cast spells that affect all types. Then you may work through the list again. **Warning: Do not abuse!**

Comments

Arranger: This is the only non-*CE* related power that I came up with. The control over the number of cards passed and direction seemed like such a natural. And choosing the initial lead can be very strategic. This power can really help put pressure on the very powerful powers.

Aristocrat: A little strange, as he doesn't know what his other cards will be or what he will be passed. But he can guarantee good protection in certain suits. Of course, this makes him a target for the Trader (just like in *CE*).

Deuce: Having a side trick at risk is an intriguing concept. This can be very useful when shooting or when dumping big cards when you're sure that you won't win the primary trick.

Dictator: Very powerful. Another of the heavy-hitters.

Gambler: This one is trickier than it may appear at first glance.

Since all of the cards are dealt out, it is difficult to bluff about a card that you did not start with, as someone else will know better. But you can try some imaginative manipulation of your own cards.

Hurtz: This one is very rough, but I wanted to show how points could work as a lucre-like commodity.

Judge: I'm not real trilled with this one. But if he could use this power on his own leads, it would be very powerful as he would have much more control.

Mesmer: You knew there had to be some way to work in a "wild card" type power. But on average, he will only get three of these cards in his hand, as no sane player would pass him any. The wild cards can be critical when shooting, breaking someone else's shot, or just avoiding big batches of points.

Schizoid: This is a slight modification to Josh's Schizoid. I wanted to retain that hidden game info idea from the *CE* Schizoid.

Witch: This one could be devastating if the player tries to abuse the power. Just try to be reasonable with the curses.

Mayfair Games Inc.

5641 Howard Street

P.O. Box 48539

Niles, IL, 60648