

XMOS Notes on Game Themes – Space, Cyber Robin and the Gang, Detroit kNights

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An “outlier” idea but maybe very “on the mark”

Can we use this and things like it in a Game - if not the first, then maybe later?



I will explain what this is and what I am thinking about for a Game theme that will draw in MORE people than some of the super-popular ones we have seen thus far in MMORPG and e-sports, AND fit in very well with our arena tournaments (keeping in mind that the arenas can be leased-out also to other gamers for other games besides “our own”).

Prefatory Points:

I have been literally pouring over everything about different e-sports games and how they are played, what are the story-lines, the backgrounds, all that.

Up until now I have been mostly talking about keeping a connectivity with RW and using VR, AR, and what I call DR, to make things different in all the ways people want something different from RW.

And I have been thinking about mentalities of large numbers of people from different demographics, especially (but not only) about Chinese, Koreans, and Americans.

I see a heck of a lot of attention in sci-fi type fantasy, in Space.

How, I have been thinking and struggling, to put it all together?

Now I have mentioned various stories, characters, motifs, which are unfamiliar to many who have not read the same books, articles, etc.

In the Appendix here are some EXCERPTS from some of the stories, scripts, unfinished novels, and things that started out not as game designs but for textual and graphic novels. That can help a little with understanding those characters mentioned elsewhere.

Now to the MAIN IDEA:

Think about racing, all types of races, encounters, fights, and all the weapons, special powers, vehicles, etc. that you want, in the context of a background-story. We do not need to bring in, tell, explain, or visually implement the whole background-story, we just need to put in enough elements so that it can be understood by gamers that they may be in “phase 1” of something that is going to grow and grow and get really Big and Cool, as long as they and more and more of their friends keep on playing, winning, and pushing us Up (by playing, but this is what brings in the sponsors, the big money, the capital to build the “more and more”).

I want to weave into the story some motifs that will pull together diverse audiences including people who thus far have not been into gaming. Here’s just a list of the “motif” elements – 2001, Star Trek, Star Wars, Rama (also Arthur C. Clarke) – and at the same time, Action on the Streets and Alleys of Earth (e.g., “Detroit kNights” theme).

And let’s face it – SPACE is Very Big (no pun intended!).

It is BIG (popular) with people especially youth in China, more so than in USA.

It is also something that has all sorts of variety –potential – everything from monster-aliens to benign good-guy visitors, and what we as humans can do, and so, it has a lot of potential for being in the background of games, including the first one, that may be heavily about racing and shooting/defending.

In other words, we can do Space, without initially having anything about spaceships or leaving Planet Earth.

Here’s how I think it can be done.

When Cyber Robin, Heyah, Sheng, Oliver, and their circle of friends (see Appendix here) meet up with the Professor and a few other “Good Guys” – quite on Earth, in a familiar-enough environment (like Detroit) they are already quite “on the run” from various “Bad Guys”. There are various special things that are being sought, and they give all sorts of powers. One is a mysterious encrypted book, almost similar in ways to the

famous and very real “Voynich Manuscript” (housed now in the permanent collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University).

Finding the book by itself won’t be enough. Players need to have done a lot more, earned points, even prizes, and probably each “leg” of the journey through one gameplay and another leads to some “intermediary” findings – e.g., some clues for decrypting the book, once it’s been found.

Well, all these different things that need to be found, taken, properly used, etc. connect up with a special and secret Order (a bit like Jedi Knights) who are charged with duties in their civilization that include watching over technologically developing civilizations, like the humans on Earth, and being “mostly-unintrusive” observers and guides.

So there are even elements here from the classic movie, “The Day the Earth Stood Still” (1951, starring Michael Rennie and Patricia O’Neal – and not the 2008 remake).

This Order gets around the galaxy (or galaxies) in a variety of ways, including with robot-operated solar-sail spaceships, and a lot of cool stuff with quantum telecommunications, teleportation, and even wormholes and such. But these things don’t necessarily enter into the gameplay, certainly not in the beginning levels.

One of those things the Order uses is what’s pictured above. It’s for getting-around, and for monitoring. Somewhere down the road in the Game(s) there could be various interactions with persons in the Order – but it’s not necessary for anyone to be physically traveling around, in terms of the game world.

About the mystery-object that passed through our solar system from beyond, read about it here:

https://www.sciencealert.com/new-harvard-study-suggests-weird-interstellar-object-oumuamua-could-be-an-alien-solar-sail?fbclid=IwAR3gCs_CfgZx8NaMilfCddASbKvVA8igIIlpi33kFYluecfdmu_VHVsd8c

the URL to a news story

and

<https://arxiv.org/abs/1810.11490> (the scientific paper)

(the full PDF is at <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1810.11490.pdf>)

APPENDIX

[1]

AN EXCERPT from something unfinished, but it could be very quickly done as a Graphic Novel that leads and introduces MAX Games, even before we have any Game out there...

Chapter/Episode 2

Robin stood up and walked over from the big chair to the round table in the center of the room and sat down, facing his friends. Nobody was talking or moving. Katherine and Philippe both appeared to be stunned. Even Smudge the cat looked in some state of shock.

The 30-minute film, a collage of video clips, was over. The screen had really turned to grey static, just like it used to be on the old TV sets when the signal was not coming through the antenna. That was part of the closing minutes of the video – some kind of further impact-effect. S IF A REMINDER: WHEN IT IS Over, it will be really Over – no internet, no YouTube, no anything.

Robin spoke first. “Well, that’s it, the whole thing, exactly as I found it.”

“It’s like something out of the Future, really, seriously, some kind of message. They sure know what they’re talking about, whoever made it.” That was Cody, aka Lena, or the other way around, all depending upon whether or not she was playing genius A+ 14-year old junior at TC West High or what and who she was now, a member of the Maskmen.

“I just can’t figure out if it is something from right around now, or fifty years ago, or a couple of centuries in the future. None of it makes any sense because it is so right on the mark. That was Nick, seeming to be not quite sure of how he was sitting on the sofa and just as not sure of how he was thinking after watching this strange short film.

“We need to find this professor guy. He’s either on another planet, or from one, or something, but I want to learn from him and do things. “ That was Pavel (or Valery), online with them from Tomsk, in the far East of Russia, not home in Moscow but attending the university, and evidently totally oblivious to day and night because it was well past midnight over there.

“Well, it’s pretty ironic, or significant, or something,” chimed in Parvati, because according to what I’ve found out while we were watching this, the Doc is in both Michigan and Moscow!

“Huhhh-whaat?,” said Lena and Pavel almost simultaneously.

“Yes’ Parvati continued from somewhere in the kitchen where she was putting together a sandwich of sorts. “It seems that he has been living in many places, but he’s got some home in the northern part of Michigan – and he used to be living right in Ann Arbor, or near it at least – but also he is somewhere around Moscow now. But it’s all a bit confusing because now it seems he is in hiding from a bunch of people and some organizations that are trying to get him and probably stop him entirely. “

Robin walked over to the table where a big map of the world was spread out. “After watching this video, I am not surprised that some people are after him. I mean, even part of the technology he’s talking about, it not only blows Google and a bunch of others out of the water, but then all the implications about literally manipulating particles and molecular structures by codes in the form of signals – it’s not only about energy, but think of what it means politically!”

“Wait a minute! That was something I really didn’t understand – at least not how it could work, but the implications, I get those!” That was Philippe, and you could already feel the gears in his brain turning.

Lena grabbed a pen and some paper and started drawing and talking at the same time.

“It’s like this. And everything points to that it can really work. I don’t know if I am glad – well, yes, I am, we all are, everybody should be – but it’s scary, because I don’t know how people as a whole – and especially corporations and governments – can handle this. They get afraid and threatened by anything really new, anything that is truly “breakthrough, disruptive” even though they like to talk and brag about being innovators. But this is something earth-shaking. Revolutionary-plus.”

“So what’s your take on it, Cody? You’re the systems-thinker and our “Hermione” in this gang!”

“Right. Only I don’t have all her magic skills and spells – at least not yet!

“Not yet, but soon I think you will!”

“OK. The professor, this guy we absolutely need to find – he described how it works to transform particle spin and charge and other fundamental properties. Everything is an informational relation, a process, a type of function, like software, actually. Only it has rules about how things can be modified, affected. It’s not about massive amounts of brute-force energy, like the way people have been thinking for the past century and a half about physics, and doing things essentially by smashing hammers on marbles.”

“It’s more like fine-tuning instruments like violins, cellos, oboes and clarinets in an orchestral.

“Right! And that analogy is not too far off, and the Professor, he talked about that and showed a couple of slides on it.”

“Yeah, the refs to Pythagoras and [... some others].

“And to Florensky, Luzin and Egorov, those math guys.”

“Precisely. God only knows where and how he found all these things and put them together into the right order so that it could make sense. At least to him.” [Robin]

“Well, it makes sense to me!” [Pavel]

“Maybe because you’re Russian!”

“Anyhow, the thing about weapons And basically anything to do with explosives, it all fits in together with the basic Functional Physics that’s underlying everything.”

“And I really like that term, ‘Functional Physics’.” [Parvati]

“You deep-math guys would, of course!”

“So go, on, Lena, give us the big picture, your take on how this technology can stop criminals and gangs and armies right in their tracks and leave them just staring at each other.”

“If the field is on and any conventional-type explosives are exposed to it, then something starts transforming in different parts of the explosive – like the charge for the shell, or the detonator, or the main explosive in a bomb or warhead. And depending upon how long the exposure continues, it will either be rendered inert, or at least ineffective, unreliable, and even, it could explode itself before being fired off from the weapon.”

“So in other words, it neutralizes guns, rockets, missiles, bombs, by altering the volatile chemical compounds used in the weapons.”

“You got it. And now you see how dangerous and threatening this is, just for that reason alone, to a whole lot of people everywhere around the world.”

“Over and beyond everything to do with virtually free energy – compared to fossil fuels, or old-style nuclear, or even a lot of the newer tech that is finally, slowly getting on out into the market and the mainstream.”

“And over and beyond everything about the quantum computing and the I-Bank and the unbreakable encryption and data havens...”

“Absolutely. Those corps and banks and their politicians and the whole lot of them can always manage to think of some ways to get themselves into the money-making about any kind of new tech, whether it is with data and information or with energy or any consumer products. But the idea that they are not going to be able to rattle their swords and sabres and point guns and missiles at each other and at anyone who disagrees with them and their schemes – this is a real Existential Threat to all those people who think that way.”

“And here it is, all summed up in a half-hour of science that goes beyond most science fiction, and wrapped up with the real situations that are going on in the world right now and over the next forty years...”

“And that’s the part that really has me wondering, How, How, how did this Doc figure out these things, not only about the physics and math and the technologies – but about the Future – it’s like he has been there, somehow, twenty, thirty, forty years into the future!”

“That is what we are going to find out, because we are going to find him and ask him!”

... ..

Some more notes along these lines, not necessarily consistent with the above excerpt, though:

Robin (US, @ 16, ethnic Angle-Irish-Scottish, native-born)

Lena (“Cody”) (RU, 16, white, transplanted by parents to USA – Ann Arbor, MI)

Katherine (US, @ 15, mixed native-american and northern Euro, grew up in Minneapolis-St.Paul)

Philippe (FR, @ 15, transplanted as child by parents to USA)

George (US, @ 15, ethnic Irish-German, native-born)

Surya? Parvati? (India, @ 14, math genius, transplanted to USA)

Pavel (or Valery?) – Moscow (somewhere familiar to me), and going to university at early age in Tomsk

Well, there was this group of super-genius kids. Except, at first, they weren't a group, they also weren't all kids, and most of their parents and teachers and peers certainly didn't think of them as any kind of super-geniuses. No... Rather, they were misfits, out of place, being labeled as delinquents, and ADHD, and Asperger's, and mainly treated as Problems, Nerds, and one way or another, bully them or ignore them, but basically stay away, too, because they'll never really amount to anything.

Only, they had some rather interesting things in common. They just naturally, innately, without any special assistance or provocation, thought Deep Stuff about a lot of things. They read, and they were not reading only flashy high-graphics-content comics and web pages, but they read Text, old-fashioned black-and-white text, and on paper as well as on their tablets, phones and computers.

They also seemed to instinctively have not so much trouble with things like advanced math, geometry, languages, computers, programming, and the arcane and darker, tougher realms of science, the "we don't want to go there" kinds of things that most teachers, and thus most other kids, just stayed away from, big-time.

Now it so happened that these kids were not all in the same place, most definitely not. Some were in the USA, some in Europe, others in Asia, Africa, the rest of the Americas. They really were all super-geniuses, and really creative - dreamers, thinkers, inventors, and much of the time, bored out of their minds, but not interested in the usual escape-routes of drugs, booze, and the rest. They were not all "kids" in age, either. Some were in elementary school, some in the middle, some in the high, some in college even, and some, well, some were of all sorts of different ages, even grey-haired characters. None of them named "Gandalf," though, but a couple rumored by some who knew them to be kinda related to the Grey Wanderer, to Mithrandir himself, and probably of the same spooky Order, with all those strange powers and doings and those things like wands and orbs and things that either glow in the dark or explode in flashes of light and stars - and without matches, no less.

All of this motley and quite unknown-to-each other crew did have one thing superficially in common. They used the internet, and they were often drawn to some of the same topics, searches, sites, pages, and media. They began to form some kind of a loose social network, almost unintentionally. (Well, so it seemed to them at first!) Eventually they were talking to one another and sharing things, and have a lot of creative dialogs including big arguments. Classic "flaming" in the way it used to be down Back When the Net Was Young.

And one day...

...one day someone was lurking and digging around and found what appeared to be a really ancient find, something right out Archeology 101 - Early WWW Style, pre-"SEO Religious Orthodoxy", and it was about some things to do with science, tech, engineering, art and maths, to be sure, and about Space, but also a lot of other things. It was no hodge-podge, no helter-skelter, and no pop-science, but it was evidently

some ancient and long-forgotten organization's site, some people who were into this concept they called "coadunatio" and "ecoaduna", and in fact that was the name of their Big Project, ECOADUNA. Then this fellow in South LA, a young teen named Ramon, super-bright and using a lot of his internal "lamps" to stay alive on the streets of LA and sometimes Riverside, well, he got wind of this website and went to it, and clicked on a link that had been broken for awhile and which his friends thought was as dead and gone as probably the old geezer who must have made this primitive website some decades ago. "Watch This Short Movie," the link said

[2]

Other Character and Scene Development

SOME PERSONALITIES

They are the names of developing characters in the Script, the ORBIS world, the ASTRIC Team.

(Female characters include, so far:)

Kali - Northern-European + Indian (Northern) blend

Ki-Or - Asian + Native American blend

Tara - still not sure

Sharia - no connection with "Shariah Law" stuff aty all) - Traditional American-blend

Devadatta - N. or Central Indian

Shantih - mysterious-origin, not Indian, reminding one of maybe ancient Celtic types

(Male characters include, so far:)

Ramon - very "LA" Hispanic

Tor - probably N. European type

Shariq - Arabic-Lebanese + America

Khan - exactly like the "Khan" of Star Trek in some respects but not quite so...

Mi-Kha-El - just like one would expect the Archangel to be - some Jewish+ also Russian/Slavic blend

Minas - Greek+ N. European blend

Q or Que - mysterious in many ways. Maybe not humanoid at all. Maybe trans-dimensional. Not the same as "Q" in Star Trek.

SOME ACTION AREAS/LOCATIONS

Lost City / Lost River area of West Virginia

Upper Shenandoah Valley (Broadway to Luray and up to Marys Rocks)

Hopewell-Petersburg area of Central Virginia

Washington DC (Smithsonian; friends in the military and CIA who help them get parts and junk they are able to use)

Chicago

Mojave Desert --- Rutan's composites company

London

Glasgow – the space guys there

Basel/Zurich

Different places in India, but esp. @ Nalanda, Sarnath and Varanasi

Colombia – Instituto Leonardo da Vinci and Maria Carolina and her circle of colleagues and friends

Chile – the astronomy folks

France – more astronomy friends

Russia – ASTRIC people, all sorts of science people, not only physics and space