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Goal

While you might already have an idea on what your game will look and play like, it's always a good idea to come up with several different ideas before deciding on what you'll be working on. You might find that you'll pick and choose between your ideas, combining the best ideas into something unique. This report has two primary sections, listed below.

Project 2: World Setting Brainstorming

Brainstorm TWO (2) different settings, genre, or style that could work for your game system. For each idea, you will need to come up with a name, define the genre, and the game's tone. Also, determine if the game's world takes place in some form of alternate reality (somehow different from our world) or an imaginary world (completely different).

- Create alternate reality concepts as a single sentence **What If** statement
- Remember: What if statements for alternate realities are formed from three elements
 - The proposition "What if"
 - The point of departure from our world
 - The major difference from our reality (outcome of the departure)
- **Example:** What if the first nuclear bomb unlocked the potential for all humans to communicate via thoughts, but some had the ability to hide their thoughts?

In addition, you should include at least THREE (3) paragraphs of additional brainstorming for each idea that gives more context: explain the overall world, setting, primary conflict, scale of play, and the PC's main role in this world.

Project 2: Core Mechanics Brainstorming

Brainstorm TWO (2) different methods that could be used for your game's core mechanics. Use your skills as a System Designer to brainstorm and visualize the best mechanics that are robust, and thematic, enough to work for your game's system.

Come up with a name for the mechanic and list out any physical components that you'll need, such as specific dice, playing cards, tokens, tarot cards, etc.

Core mechanics are the primary way in which you the player and Gamemaster resolve most actions when there is a challenge that must be overcome, such as combat, skill checks, NPC interactions, etc.

EXAMPLE: The d20 System has a core mechanic that utilizes a single 20-sided die to adjudicate most challenges. The Gamemaster (GM) sets a Difficulty Class (DC) number based on how challenging a given activity is. The player rolls the d20, applies any applicable modifiers, and compares the outcome to the DC of the challenge. If the roll's score plus the modifiers, equal or exceeds the DC set by the GM, then it is deemed a success. If the total result is under the DC, then the activity is a failure. If the player rolls a natural "20" on the die, then it is deemed a Critical Success, with additional benefits and bonuses based on the action. If the player rolls a natural "1" on the die, then it is a "Fumble" which automatically misses (in the case of combat) or fails (in the case of skill checks).

Rubric

This, like other weekly reports, is not considered a separate grade, but affects your overall final grade.

- **-2%:** Not Submitted at time of grading
- **-1%:** Insufficient information and/or analysis; Late turnover of assignment (Instructor discretion)
- **+0%:** Sufficient information and analysis
- **+1%:** Very detailed information and/or very interesting concepts

Project 2: World Setting Brainstorming #1

World/Game Name: *Heroes & Extremists*

Genre: Pulp Adventure, Sci-Fi/Fantasy(early 20th century), Noir

Tone: Heroic, Comedic

Alternate Reality or Imaginary World: Imaginary World

High Concept What If Sentence:

WHAT IF...there was a world where the stories of larger-than-life heroes, socking fascists in the jaw, and early weird sci-fi came together to form a lost world of pulp heroism, and you could be one of them?

Additional Brainstorming

The overall idea for a world such as this is that there is an imaginary dimension or world out there where the 1930s boom of tacky pulp heroes such as *Doc Savage*, *Phantom*, *Zorro*, and many more is a reality. Early comical tropes such as nameless goons, over-the-top antagonists, and damsels (or bachelors) in distress would be common use in every adventure, emphasizing the pulpy stories told in these old comic heroes. How the world space would likely work is that there are either different sections in a single world or multiple worlds/planets that are parallel to one another, but all contain different genres of pulp heroism. One would be a modern-world setting where the more rural areas reflect a “Pre-WWII” setting with fascists causing trouble like in *The Rocketeer* or *Indiana Jones*, and the more urban areas such as big cities would reflect a Noir setting where mobsters are always going back and forth trying to take over the cities like in *Darkman* and *Green Hornet*. Another would be a more fantasy/medieval setting where “sword and sorcery” stories are told like *Conan the Barbarian*. The other would be a collection of early 20th-century “Weird-Sci-Fi” adventures like those in *Flash Gordon* or *John Carter of Mars*.

Before continuing, let me be clear that the heroes of this world would not be EXACT COPIES of their counterparts that I’ve mentioned a few of above. The point of mentioning these actual pulp heroes is that their characters and their stories reflect or are the epitome of pulp heroism in the 30s and the revival of the genre in the 90s. They serve as a framework of what players can take and use to make their heroes! This is exactly how the player characters would fit into this world: They are the heroes of these worlds. Essentially every hero of this world is categorized into different types of heroes that are meant to party up together and synergize with each other. An example might be a player who decides to play as a character who has a fighting style like *Indiana Jones* where he takes a lot of the punches and controls the crowd for the party, essentially serving as a tank class. To synergize with that, a player could be a more DPS-based class that fights more single-file with a sword or rapier such as the hero *Zorro*, dishing out damage while the other takes the hits.

For every hero in a story, there are villains! The idea in a setting such as this is that the world and choice of setting define what kind of villain to expect as it doesn’t make sense to go to a noir setting and find the final boss to be a guy in some barbaric or over-the-top sci-fi clothing. However, that also COULD be an option as the main antagonist faction is the Confederation of Autocrats, Gangsters, and Extremists, or C.A.G.E for short. This faction would serve as a unification among all the over-the-top villains from each world who would attempt to band together to rule all three genre worlds. However, the confederation would be shaky, since putting a gangster who seeks greed next to an extremist who wants to destroy a world isn’t always gonna work out. This would involve having moments for the factions to have civil wars with each other, since in the end, almost no pulp villain is smart enough to win. Mechanically though, this could allow for interesting encounters where the players are attempting to stop a fascist outpost, but they’re armed with weird sci-fi weaponry or C.A.G.E sent them a juggernaut-type villain from a different genre, changing up the gameplay and making it very easy to up the stakes in any scenario.

Project 2: World Setting Brainstorming #2

World/Game Name: *The Cowboys, the Robots, and the Space Station*

Genre: Western/Sci-Fi

Tone: Serious, Grimdark

Alternate Reality or Imaginary World: Alternate Reality

High Concept What If Sentence:

WHAT IF... humanity managed to develop space travel and created a space station that served as an ecosystem for humans to thrive in, but an ancient race of robots invaded it, creating a dry and lawless wasteland in space?

Additional Brainstorming

The overall idea of this alternate reality is that Earth manages to develop the ability to space travel across the galaxy and even the universe. One of these inventions was creating an entire ecosystem within a space station. This space station would come to be known as the "Repository". In terms of how the Repository would look, it would look like a giant snow globe drifting in space, except its interior is full of a lush ecosystem with trees, rivers, grass, and even mountains all around. To put it on a scale, the interior of the Repository is about the size of the state of Texas, except happier. The people of the Repository were kind, peaceful humans who wanted to see the stars and travel through the cosmos on this huge snow globe. Unfortunately, that would all change when an ancient race of synthetic automatons called the Throng invaded the Repository. The major event during this attack was when the Throng cut off the renewable water supply in the mountains, causing the entirety of the Repository to experience a snow global drought. Now, the Repository is in despair and has become a dry, broken wasteland filled with lawless cowboys and outlaws along with robots attempting to take the land, piece by piece.

The PC's role in this space would be to go on adventures (or missions since this is meant to be a bit grimmer) throughout the Repository and attempt to push back the Throng, but also other forces of evil that have risen since the beginning of the drought. They could play as different types of cowboy classes that may inherit traits that are more sci-fi in nature like technology scoured from the Throng. It could also be human-made sci-fi gadgets since it's not like humans have reverted to 19th-century weaponry due to the change in the ecosystem. Another objective would be to survive the harsh ecosystem as the drought has caused a huge demand for basic needs such as food and water. This might include having types of mechanics such as thirst, hunger, or maybe even an insanity scale in case a player runs out of basic needs or maybe kills one too many people. Another aspect might be to explore and discover secrets within the Repository that give more insight into the overall station and how maybe things weren't as great before as they are now.

The Repository would house all kinds of different factions (it is the size of Texas after all) for the players to interact or even join. Some would be more on the good side, trying to help those in need and push back the Throng like the "Repository Rangers". Other factions may seek to exploit this change in the ecosystem by taking control of the Repository and calling the shots like the "Desper-Autos". One faction in mind would be the remnants of the security force that oversaw the ecosystem and science of the Repository that have come to be known as the "Tech-ees", who sought to study the Throng and/or worse...join them. Then of course, you have the Throng who are the "greater evils" of this land as they wish to harvest the organs of human life to combine synthetic and organic life. Any encounter with these would be considered a "higher-level conflict" as they are an ancient race of automatons whose technology is far more advanced than anything on the Repository, hence why the cowboys attempt to loot what they can of the tech.

Project 2: Core Mechanics Brainstorming #1

Core Mechanic Name: *Suited for War*

Components: Playing Cards, Chips (Potentially)

An idea I had for a core mechanic within the space of a game (such as *Heroes & Extremists*) was to use a system that uses mechanics in the card game, *War* as its main mechanic for giving results. To start anywhere with this kind of mechanic, the game would require a minimum of at least two decks of playing cards. Using one is problematic because although a regular game of *War* uses one deck (to my knowledge), it creates a technically weighted outcome as the cards are halved and then shuffled, which could mean one person's hand has higher numbered cards than the other, making the shuffle the decider of who wins. That's not to say other card games aren't luck-based either, but a lot of other card games involve some kind of choice or strategy that allows players to progressively become better at playing the game whereas with *War* it's almost entirely based on luck. Anyways, the point is that each player having their deck is better as both the GM and the player would have the same amount of random chance to winning as both decks have the same values of cards.

As to how exactly this mechanic would work, it would work two different ways for two different scenarios, that being skill checks and combat. Skill checks would be straightforward, players and GM would place a card down and if the player has a higher score, they succeed in the check. Players would also have a modifier on their character sheets that dictates whether they add or subtract from the score they place down to help or add risk to the overall check. There could be ways of manipulating this by having players or GM have passive abilities through characters or NPCs that manipulate the deck in some way like letting players grab from the discard deck, the GM or player adding another card against the other, or having players place multiple cards down against the GM and they must win at least 2 or x amount of them to succeed.

How combat would work is that every player and the GM places x amount of cards based on their character or NPC's "Starting Hand" modifier. Each card placed inherently will have some kind of suit on them (because they're playing cards) and the suit will determine what actions they can do for their turn. A heart would represent an attack action, a diamond is a move action, a spade is a special ability, and a club is a "defense" action. When a player uses an attack card, they choose an enemy to fight and when they initiate a fight, they play a round of *War* by placing a new card against each other that has modifiers such as a weapons attack bonus and an NPC's armor rating. If a player succeeds, they do damage based on their weapon damage output AND the difference between their higher card and the GM's lower card (Armor Rating is ignored for damage output. Ex. I placed a 7 + 3; GM placed a 4 + 2; Damage Output: 6). On fail, the player takes no damage unless the GM is attacking. A movement action card determines how far the player can travel based on their character's Distance Class (Distance Classes: Minimal, Below Average, Average, Above Average, Maximum). A special ability card allows players to perform their character's special abilities that will do numerous different types of actions (a *War* mechanic may or may not be involved). A "defense" action allows players to defend their character against an attack the GM makes. Essentially if a defense card is used, the players take HALF the damage they were expected to take when a GM's attack is successful (another idea is that the defense card can be placed as the GM's OR the player's attack card and either the player or GM must place a card higher than the defense card to succeed). An important note is that having double suits is useful! Double hearts mean one of the cards can be used as an attack card on top of the new card placed, double diamonds are a dash, double spades are an ultimate ability, and double clubs negate an oncoming attack entirely.

Project 2: Core Mechanics Brainstorming #2

Core Mechanic Name: *Quick Drop*

Components: D6 Dice, Cups

An idea that I had for “The Cowboys, The Robots, and the Space Station” was to have combat and skill check outcomes be determined using a handful of D6 dice and cups. The idea was to take the poker hands from the dice game, “Liar’s Dice” and use them to determine how an outcome would unfold. I thought this would be a fun idea for a core mechanic since the overall idea of the world of space is that it’s space cowboys living off a lawless snow globe space station. The main function of handling a snow globe is what? To shake it. Therefore, I thought the concept of using cups to shake the dice might be a fun “in-theme” concept to use. This went further when discovering the rules of Liar’s Dice which is to obtain poker hands using the D6 dice like a Four-of-a-kind, Two-pair, or a full house. Using mechanics such as these would be very in-theme with a cowboy setting since playing cards is a huge aspect of Western spaghetti tropes or just Western video games in general.

How I imagined combat would work is that most encounters would be fast and quick or slow and stalemate like in most Wild West gunfights. In a quick and fast encounter, it would likely begin as a quickdraw that either all or one player engages in. All would not feel fair if the encounter only had one enemy on the opposite side so if it was only one person, it would likely be where only one player can engage in the quickdraw. If it was a gang or posse of enemies, absolutely every player would engage. How it would mechanically work is that the GM and the player(s) would shake and roll their dice. Each poker hand essentially represents whether the player/GM hits and how much damage is inflicted. If you got a runt (no poker hand), then your fire would miss, and every roll that is a poker hand inflicts damage depending on the rank of the poker hand and other modifiers (If it was a pair, it would be minimal damage dependent on the weapons base damage, two pair would be an increase, a low straight would increase more, and so on). Since weapons are ammo-based and in a Wild West setting, revolvers are well known to be limited in ammo, players would have the option to fire or reroll dice as many times as their weapon has ammo. A mechanic that would be used is that depending on the player's skill in weapons or maybe the weapon's condition if the players choose to fire again (reroll dice), they can choose to hold a certain number of dice without rerolling them based on their weapon skill or the weapons modifier. This would increase the chances of dealing higher damage at the risk of having less ammo or rounds of fire.

As for skill checks, this is where things get a bit dicey (pun very intended). I’m not entirely sure how a skill check could/would work for this sort of core mechanic. One of my ideas was to just repurpose the dice into a standard DC check where the dice must meet a certain number from the collective dice rolled and if the threshold is surpassed, the check is successful and vice versa if not. It’s not the greatest system as it somewhat derives from the original system of using poker hands to determine outcomes. Another idea might be to still use the system of using the poker hands to determine the outcome and have it to where characters' skills determine whether they can reroll the dice multiple times to get a better poker hand that either gives a better outcome or passes a certain threshold set like “make a poker hand better than a pair” or something. That could work since a runt with no rerolls or a runt after rerolling could be a critical failure and obtaining the highest suit of “five-of-a-kind” could be a critical success.