

Outreach

- Grand Strategic-Level Planning
- Extensive Player interaction Mechanics
- Solitaire and Multi-Player Versions

Galactic Expansion in the 30th Century

As the modernization of humankind has progressed over the last century or so, people in general have gained a greater awareness of outlooks and modes of living different from their own. This growing cognizance of the grand diversity of our own species has assumed an ever more central role in the shaping of our history, as increasingly, it is our perceptions of others which key our conflicts, cultural developments, and conditions and circumstances in life. Not surprisingly, many people, enthralled and fascinated by the intricate inter-relationships of varying human perspectives, have speculated far beyond the scope of our one planet. What may result from the inter-play of diversities of extra-terrestrial origin? Just as relatively stupendous upheavals, constructions, and conflagrations have resulted on Earth from the meeting and inter-actions of our opposing perspectives and philosophies, so will it be in the future, albeit on a scale so much grander as to be hardly conceivable.

Outreach is a Grand Strategic simulation of intra-Galactic conflict. The scale of the game is genuinely huge. The 23" by 35" map depicts an area some 28,000 light years by 50,000 light years, including about one-third of the Galaxy. The map extends from the inner portion of the Perseus Arm through the Cygnus-Carina Spiral (in which is situated humanity's own Sol), Sagittarius Arm, and the Norma-Scutum Arm to and including the Galactic Core. Along the other dimension, the map reaches approximately from 89 Hercules to Beta Doradus. Each 19mm hex measures some 1200 light years across. There are 800 counters.

Outreach is concerned with a period of vast, explosive expansion by an ambitious, dynamic civilization. In the broadest sense of the word, the basis of the game is economic. Each hex on the map is color-coded to indicate the relative star density. The most dense hexes abound in the

central sections of the star-rich galactic spiral, while the borders of the spiral arms are composed of less densely occupied hexes. In between the arms themselves are the relatively empty expanses of space. The Player is charged with the task of guiding the destiny of a Civilization. At the start of the basic scenario, only a few thousand light years have been explored and settled, but the capacity for long-range telesthetic inter-stellar shifts has been developed.

Outreach extrapolates some of the trends depicted in SPI's *StarForce*. The concept of telesthetically guided interstellar travel is similar, although gigantic super-radiant "beacon stars" are chief points of reference for shifts, along with StarGates. The scale of *Outreach* is vastly larger, however, with "generational" turns and StarFleet units that represent not merely particular interstellar vessels, but a concomitant commitment of resources, mainly in terms of time, effort and people ("beings"). In general, the object of the Player is to raise his "Civilization Level" to the highest in the Galaxy. This is an object which can only be pursued indirectly—by expanding one's economic base, access to resources, and population, to take a positive view, or by interfering with the progress of other striving civilizations toward that goal.

During the course of the Game-Turn, the Player has opportunities to explore unfamiliar reaches of the Galaxy, to contact any sentient beings with the capacity for telesthetic inter-stellar travel, to interact with any that are contacted, and, of course, to allocate his resources, which basically reflect the number of regions that have been successfully explored and exploited. Resource allocation is probably the most crucial task facing the Player. It is vital to strike an effective balance in one's allocations between such disparate, but necessary activities as exploration, settle-

ment of newly explored territory, defense and judiciously conceived and executed offensive actions. Resources can also be applied to attempts to influence the Fate Table, which, keyed to such factors as population, pace of exploration/expansion, and the amount of resources allocated to maintaining cohesion in a vast interstellar empire, governs the incidence of revolt, technological advance, contact with non-Player sentient forces with interstellar travel capacities, and increases in Civilization Level.

The *Outreach* game system accommodates from one to four Players. The multi-Player version centers on the use of the Interaction Table. Basically a three option matrix—friendly, neutral, hostile—the table defines the limits of the Player's inter-relationships in game terms. If two Players choose to be friendly, then extensive cooperation with regard to the mutual use of StarGates and other facilities is possible, whereas if one is hostile and one friendly, the former gains the advantage of "surprise" in any subsequent conflict. In the two-Player version, the competition is more direct and there is less room for subtlety, although the Interaction Table is still used to determine the form that relationships between non-Player forces and the Players will take. The movement and other activities of the non-Player forces are governed by a simple set of solitaire-style rules, which combine with the vagaries of the Fate Table, to make the one-Player version a genuine and varied challenge.

After two years, *Outreach* takes its place as SPI's second science fiction game. The ultimate in strategic level conflict simulation with workable and interesting multi-Player and solitaire versions, *Outreach* will appeal to a broad spectrum of gamers, and is certainly a must for wargaming science fiction fans.

***Outreach* will sell for \$9. Available 31 August 1976.**