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My comments about Duel Masters

What makes Duel Masters better than Magic?

Magic the gathering is not a bad game, or should I say, was not a bad game. MTG was the first CCG, they were the ones who started this new kind of game. So you can't expect the game to be perfect on the first edition. It is like monopoly which was one of few board games available at that time, you can't ask it to be perfect the first time.

Now MTG has been around for more than a dozen of years and there are a few hundreds of other CCG that has been released by that time. So the world of collectible card game has evolved, wizard of the coast took part of this evolution since they made many other CCG including Duel Masters, but MTG stayed the same: it did not evolve. This is why MTG is bad, it is an old game that should been updated with modern knowledge.

Let's get in the technical aspects. The first problem in MTG is the fact that you draw one card per turn and you can play more than one card per turn. At the beginning it does not matter, but you quickly realise that you run out of cards. So after 5 or 10 turns, you can only play 1 cards, the one you have just drawn. So you simply wait for the card that will make you win the game. Of course, there is some cards that can make you draw other cards, but they are generally only available in blue color. This problem becomes even more obvious when you play multiplayer games because they are much more longer. I have tested it with my fiends, if you play MTG where you relendish your hand of cards when it's empty, the game becomes much more interesting and it gives you more option on how to defeat your opponent.

In duel masters, they partially solved the problem. You can play more than 1 card a turn and only

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draw 1 card per turn, but when your opponent breaks a shield, it makes you draw an additional card. Which means that before you die, you will be able to draw 5 additional cards. So if a game lasts 10 turns, you will have drawn 15 cards, which means 1.5 cards per turn. Even if drawing more cards would have been better, the extra 5 cards can help a lot. Again, there are cards that allow you to draw more cards and fortunately, these are available in more than one color.

You must also consider that in Duel Masters, you need less cards in play than MTG to achieve what you want. Which means less cards to draw and less turns to play. For example, in a duel master game, you need on average 3 to 5 creatures, plus 3 to 5 cards in your mana zone plus 2-3 spells to win a game. Of course, games could be longer or shorter. In MTG, you need a bit more of creatures, lands and spells, but you might also need: enchantment, artifacts/equipment, etc. What it does is that you need more cards in play to win the game. Since you end up lacking cards, it extends even more the length of the game.

The land system is the next bug in MTG. The problems with land is that they are useful at the beginning of the game and useless at the end of the game. Since you only draw 1 card per turn, near the end of the game, when you need a card to reverse the outcome of the game, it is really frustrating to draw a land. The second problem is the concept of land shortage. You must place many lands in the deck not because you need that much lands, but because you want to make sure you have a good probability to draw some at the beginning of the game. If you are bad lucky, you can simply lose the game because your lands were not stacked well in your deck. So when you lose a game this way, it's simply not your fault. This kind of situation can be frustrating especially in a tournament.

The land system's bug could be referred to as what I call "maximising information on game component's space". All games have components with a certain amount of information. Components that have no information are useless in a game. Components with few information can be removed more easily and the information could be transferred elsewhere. The land system has the same bug. Basic lands contain only 1 information, the color of the mana produced. It's minimal compared to the information contained on other cards (casting cost, power/toughness, rule text, etc). Which means that these lands could be removed to simplify the game or you could add more information on land cards to make them have the same weight than the other cards. That's what Duel Masters did.

In Duel Masters all the cards have two usages: they can either be played as a card or be used as a

land. So at the end of the game, the cards drawn will be cast while at the beginning of the game, the cards drawn will be placed in the mana zone. You can also never get mana short, if you have some cards in your hand you can have some mana. The only mana shortage possible is when the color of the cards does not match. This is more likely to happen in a 5 color deck or if the proportion between your colors in your deck is not the same. But those kind of problems does not depend on luck since you are the designer of your deck.

So each duel master cards can be used in two different ways : mana or cast. This is interesting when you place in your deck cards that are not always useful. For exemple, in MTG, if you place a spell in your deck that allows you to destroy a green creature, this spell becomes useless if your opponent does not have any green cards in his deck. So you simply get stuck with this card when you draw it. It also mean that this card might never be placed in a deck unless you are making an anti-green deck. But in duel masters, this kind of cards does not create any problems because you can place this card in the mana zone instead. So all card can become useful even if they are not.

As I have analysed the rules of most of all Duel Masters cards, there is some standisations in the card rules. There is a logic in the structure of the rules. Some things can only be done in some specific phases, each card can only have 1 ability with attribute, there are no fast effects, etc. So Wizard of the coast has established a series of rules to follow when making the unique rules on their cards. While in MTG, it is the free for all. There is no way to control the game. Players find loop holes or deadly combination that the designer of the cards cannot prevent or plan in advance. In the end, players can even make combos that allow them to have infinite mana or summon an exponential number of creature or make an exponential number of damage.

The game has reached a point where the goal is not to reduce your opponent's life point to 0. The goal is to play the most abusive combo that will force your opponent to quit the game before it ends. I consider that if a game does not have enough tokens and place on the table to keep track of of an exponential number of creatures, it is seriously flawed. So magic the gathering sincerely needs to be remaked from scratch without keeping the compatibility with all the cards released so far.



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[Next page](#)



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