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# From Mishra to Monastery

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For nearly ten years, players have been clamoring to blend the line between different card types. We've seen creatures which turn into enchantments, enchantments which turn into creatures, sorceries and instants which produce creatures, artifacts which produce sorceries, and the occasional artifact which turns into an artifact creature. None are as beloved though as the category of lands which turn into creatures.

Commonly referred to as "man-lands," these are the lands which have the ability to turn themselves into creatures. These mana producers all owe their roots to the Alpha edition of **Magic: The Gathering**. The good Dr. Richard Garfield created a pair of cards which allowed lands to become creatures. They are **Kormus Bell** and **Living Lands**. Each turned their respective land types (swamps for the Bell and forests for the Lands) into 1/1 creatures. Even though these weren't true man-lands, they certainly were the first amalgamation between lands and creatures.



The original Mishra's Factory had four different versions corresponding to the four seasons.

Flash forward a couple of expansions to *Antiquities*. The two brothers Urza and Mishra were embroiled in a fearsome war, and both were known as powerful artificers. While Urza seemingly concentrated on the production of mana, Mishra built a series of factories which were able to join battle and assimilate with each other. While the Urza lands three synergized with one another, the Mishra lands four (summer, spring, winter, and fall) didn't care so much as which type was in play, as much as "are we able to power each other up?"

**Mishra's Factory** proved rather powerful. On the first turn, it was possible to drop a 2/2 creature which could not be counterspelled. In addition, each extra Factory in play had a cumulative effect in making the other Factories larger. This power came with not a few drawbacks. First, the land turned into an artifact creature, making it vulnerable not only to land and creature destruction, but artifact destruction as well. Second, it cost a mana each time you wanted to animate it. Although this created a sort of mana sink if you had extra mana available (such as from a **Mana Crypt** during your upkeep, back when artifacts **turned off when tapped**), it did staunch the flow of

your mana production. Last of all, **Mishra's Factory** became "summoning sick" the turn you brought it into play, if you activated it as a creature. While this might not seem major, it meant that you could no longer tap it to boost itself (or another Factory) or tap it for mana.

A long time went by before the next man-land was printed (it was in *Tempest*) but in the interim *Alliances* brought **Kjeldoran Outpost**. Although it's not a true land which can turn into a creature, it was the centerpiece for a strategy which would reach its pinnacle with **Stalking Stones**. The similarity between the functions of these two cards cannot be ignored, so compare Jon Finkel's Counterpost deck with Team CMU's build of Draw-Go.

Counterpost		
Jon Finkel - PT Columbus 1996		
<b>Main Deck</b> 61 cards		<b>Sideboard</b>
4 Adarkar Wastes	1 Binding Grasp	1 Binding Grasp
7 Island	4 Counterspell	3 Burnout
6 Plains	4 Disenchant	1 Circle of Protection: Black
5 Mountain	2 Force of Will	2 Circle of Protection: Green
3 Thawing Glaciers	1 Hydroblast	2 Circle of Protection: Red
2 Kjeldoran Outpost	3 Icy Manipulator	1 Circle of Protection: White
	2 Jester's Cap	1 Hydroblast
27 lands	1 Lava Burst	2 Lodestone Bauble
	2 Power Sink	1 Pyroblast
4 Blinking Spirit	2 Pyroclasm	1 Pyroclasm
4 creatures	4 Stone Rain	
	3 Swords to Plowshares	15 sideboard cards
	1 Zuran Orb	



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## MESSAGE BOARDS



## RULES



**CMU Blue (Draw-Go)**

Randy Buehler - Worlds 1998

**Main Deck**  
60 cards

4 **Stalking Stones**  
4 **Quicksand**  
18 **Island**

26 lands

1 **Rainbow Efreet**

1 creatures

4 **Force Spike**  
4 **Counterspell**  
1 **Memory Lapse**  
3 **Mana Leak**  
3 **Forbid**  
2 **Dissipate**  
4 **Dismiss**  
4 **Nevinyrral's Disk**  
4 **Impulse**  
4 **Whispers of the Muse**

33 other spells

**Sideboard**

4 **Hydroblast**  
4 **Sea Sprite**  
2 **Capsize**  
4 **Wasteland**  
1 **Grindstone**

15 sideboard cards

The addition of a land which could become a creature (and was colorless to boot) gave Draw-Go the push it needed to shed white and become mono-colored. The deck name comes straight from the deck's main strategy: You draw a card, and then say "go." If you opponent casts a spell, you counter it. Eventually you get enough mana to activate **Stalking Stones** at the end of an opponent's turn (with mana to back up with counterspells), and then kill them with the land, having literally never cast an offensive spell the entire game. In fact, it's one of the few decks that can be played which can win without ever having cast a spell on its own turn!



*Nantuko Monastery joins Stalking Stones and Kjeldoran Outpost among the game's most dangerous lands*

land which simulated a creature? In addition, each of these lands tapped for a specific color of mana, which furthered their initiation into their respectively colored decks. Why play twenty forests when you could play sixteen forests and four **Treetop Villages**, and still have the same color base? Unlike Draw-Go (where the man-land was the only real kill mechanism) and decks that played **Mishra's Factory** (often putting them in the place of a creature instead of counting them as lands), the five color man-land cycle could preempt the normal mana base and assimilate directly into preexisting mono-colored (or heavily mana sourced) decks.



*Judgment* introduced the largest man-land printed to date: **Nantuko Monastery**. It sits on the precipice between the *Legacy* lands and **Stalking Stones**: on one hand, you really need to build a deck around it, since it only produces colorless mana, needs both  $\color{green}{\blacklozenge}$  and  $\color{red}{\blacklozenge}$  to activate, and only comes online once you have threshold. In this regard, it fits into the classic Draw-Go type deck, which will usually fill its graveyard with countermagic before going on the offensive. On the other hand, the Monastery does require  $\color{green}{\blacklozenge}$  and  $\color{red}{\blacklozenge}$  to activate, and has the size of a green creature combined with the first striking ability of a

Although there was gap of literally ten sets between the printing of **Mishra's Factory** and **Stalking Stones**, the most beloved of man-lands were only one block away. With *Urza's Legacy*, Wizards produced a cycle of uncommon man-lands. Unlike the previous two lands, these all were attuned to a specific color and reflected such in their abilities. Green's **Treetop Village** trampled. Red's **Ghitu Encampment** had first strike. **Spawning Pool** embodied black's regeneration creatures, while **Faerie Conclave** flew and joined **Stalking Stones** in some blue decks. Only white's **Forbidding Watchtower** really didn't do anything special (and hence was the least played), but perhaps this was to make up for the power of **Kjeldoran Outpost** compared to the cycle of color-specific *Alliances* lands way back in the day.

I believe that is was the flavor of each of these cards that really endeared them to players, both casual and tournament. Aside from having reasonably

costed abilities, who could resist beating down with a

deck tapped for a specific color of mana, which

furthered their initiation into their respectively colored decks.

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**Man-Lands: Lands That Become Creatures***Antiquities*      **Mishra's Factory***Tempest*      **Stalking Stones***Urza's Legacy*      **Treetop Village**  
**Faerie Conclave**  
**Ghitu Encampment**

white creature. While it can only produce colorless mana, the tradeoff for the diminished mana capabilities of this land are counterbalanced by its truly massive size. Remember, the reasonable casting cost for a 4/4 first striking creature might be  or  (or  in the cast of a kicked **Benalish Lancer**), making this cost a full five converted mana less than a comparable creature.

	<a href="#">Spawning Pool</a>
	<a href="#">Forbidding Watchtower</a>
<a href="#">Judgment</a>	<a href="#">Nantuko Monastery</a>

Stay tuned next week when I talk about the history of tokens in **Magic**. Following that, I'm going to have a very in-depth look at what makes the creatures of each color tick.

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