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Recently I've been spending a good chunk of my time helping put Ninth Edition together, and it has been a blast. I was working "upstairs" on the Web Team two years ago when *Eighth Edition* was being assembled; even though I wasn't on the 8E team I made a couple sound suggestions (like reminding R&D that Phyrexian Plaguelord and Plow Under were not, in fact, on the Reserve List). After that little taste of Core Set cobbling, I was anxious to have a hand in Ninth.

Choosing and testing cards has been fun so far, but, as with every **Magic** set, there are these little "issues" that need to be addressed.

Creature types have long been a problem with the Core Set. With some cards, the lack of consistency is a problem: Savannah Lions is a Lion, whereas every new lion-like creature we've made is a Cat. Some cards have really random types that don't make a whole lot of sense and are unsupported: Nekrataal is a Nekrataal and Sage of Lat-Nam is a Sage. But the issue that bugs me most right now is that of race-class.

For background: Randy Buehler wrote a pair of articles before *Mirrodin* came out about the possibility of adding the creature type Human to the game, to allow a more intuitive conventional method of giving types to sentient creatures. After all, why was Aven Flock a Bird Soldier and Catapult Squad just a Soldier? His articles, "Debating Humanity" and "Human Nature" were testing the waters for the potential introduction of the type, and as you now know, we decided to pull the trigger and go forward with it in *Mirrodin*.

Randy ended his second column on the topic with this cryptic sentence: "We would not mess with the creature types of old cards except possibly when we reprint them." Well, with *Ninth Edition* in the works, it's time to reprint some cards.



Two of a Kind?

Here's a sneak preview of two cards that are most likely going to be in the next Core Set:



On the left, we have Samite Healer. "Sammy" is a Core Set stalwart, having been in every single one. He's a nice clean card with lots of history, and he's achieved "icon" status--many players refer to the ability to tap to prevent a point of damage as "Samite Healer," regardless of what card it's on. His creature type is simply Cleric, which is what's it has been since the beginning.

On the right is Thought Courier from *Fifth Dawn*. The card was created as a replacement for Merfolk Looter once we decided to phase the Merfolk type out. Because he was made post-*Mirrodin*, his creature type follows the race-class model: Human Wizard.

Now, regardless of which method of "typing" you prefer, you have to admit that it's a little weird that they're different, especially considering that the Core Set's primary purpose is to teach new players the game. What kind of message do we send to people learning the game by having only a very small percentage of the creatures that are obviously humans actually have the type "Human"?

What Can We Do?

The big question in my mind is, "What are we supposed to do about it?" I honestly don't know. It keeps me up at night.

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There are three things we could do, in my opinion.

1) Leave it alone and have the Core Set be an inconsistent mess of creature types for all time.

That seems bad to me for obvious reasons. That decision weakens the set as a teaching tool, and the whole set starts to feel random and sloppy once you start paying attention to types.

2) Make new versions of old cards and slide them into the Core Set.

We made a new Merfolk Looter because we no longer support merfolk. Does that mean we should make a new Samite Healer just so it could have the type Human Cleric? We are talking about a lot of cards here. I'm not sure we'd want to clutter up expert-level expansions over the next few years with remakes of Samite Healer, Crossbow Infantry, Fugitive Wizard, Venerable Monk, and every other card that should have the Human type just for the Core Set. Plus we'd be throwing out all the history and nostalgia associated with those old cards, which is no small loss in my opinion. Plus, this fix would not be implemented in time for Ninth.

3) Errata the cards.

We could just say that Samite Healer is a Human Cleric and print him that way in Ninth. Errata is bad times, though, as it causes confusing situations for people that play with older versions of cards. And this errata would affect lots of cards. Just looking at *Eighth Edition* white commons, there are seven cards that would need such errata (Samite Healer, Venerable Monk, Honor Guard, Master Decoy, Standing Troops, Crossbow Infantry, and Glory Seeker) plus Eager Cadet in the Starter game.

Would we then also need to errata non-Human cards that are not race-class compliant? Should Raging Goblin be a Goblin Berserker? Elvish Piper an Elf Bard?

And what about old cards we aren't reprinting? If Samite Healer is a Human Cleric, why wouldn't Clergy en-Vec and Femeref Healer be as well? They're the exact same card.

One bit of data that is swaying my opinion towards updating the cards we reprint is the results from a poll Mark Rosewater ran a while ago. In his article "Getting in the Game" it was reported that almost 70% of his readers were in favor of updating old creature types with errata. I'm still not sure that's the best answer, and there are others in the department that want nothing to do with such changes.

So I'll pose it to you folks again, this time listing all the options I discussed.



What should we do with Samite Healer and friends in 9E?

- Nothing -- leave the old types.
- Try to come up with new versions of the cards that have the correct types.
- Errata just the cards that need "Human" added for this set.
- Errata every card in the set that should have a race-class type.
- Errata every card in **Magic** that should have a race-class type.

The results of this poll come with no promises attached, but I'm sure they'll spark many hours of arguments here. If you have any better ideas than those I've listed, drop me a line by using the email link below.

In the meantime, continue participating in Selecting Ninth Edition. We have some saucy votes on the way!

Last Week's Poll

Do you like the idea of cards designed to match art?		
Yes	9527	82.9%
No	1963	17.1%
Total	11490	100.0%

I agree, actually. I believe that everyone involved in **Magic's** creative process deserves some degree of freedom. Our next block certainly bears that out!

