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Uyo, Silent Prophet



Adrian Sullivan · Single-Card Strategies
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It's been a little while since the prerelease, and [everyone and their brother](#) has written an [article](#) about it for good ol' **magicthegathering.com**. So, I won't write another prerelease article. I'll just write about the card that has gotten into my craw since the prerelease. Last week, I asked you which cards you wanted me to look at.

What set should the next card in Single-card Strategies be from?		
A set not currently legal (yet)? (<i>Champions of Kamigawa</i>)	4808	59.9%
A Classic legal set? (Everything older than <i>Tempest</i>)	1338	16.7%
An Extended legal set? (<i>Tempest</i> thru <i>Odyssey</i> Block)	1036	12.9%
A Standard legal set? (<i>Mirrodin</i> and <i>Onslaught</i> Block)	840	10.5%
Total	8022	100.0%

I'm not surprised that you went with new cards... So, a *Kamigawa* card it is!

Given the set, it's probably not that surprising that the cool card I can't stop thinking about is a Legend.



Looking at the art of *Uyo, Silent Prophet*, I can't quite tell what Uyo is about, and there isn't any flavor text to help me out in that department. In its place however, we get lots of rules text. Quality rules text, I might add.

When you're working with a card, there is something very important you have to do. Of course, the first that already happened was that it got your attention. Clearly the card does something significant. The question you have to ask yourself is "At what cost?" There is no such thing as free lunch, as the economists say.

Essentially, there are three costs to this card.

The first cost is pretty small (and may actually be a help, at times): Uyo is a Legend. For the most part, you can expect that your opponent isn't going to have an Uyo too. The opponent isn't likely to smack your Uyo around with the Legend rule. You, however, may be smacking yourself around. Unless you are only running one Uyo, there are going to be times when you already have an Uyo out and you'll draw a second one. While you get the benefit of cards like **Pendelhaven** or other Legends-targeting cards, this cost of drawing a second Uyo mostly weighs in greater than the benefits of Legendhood. Think of those extra Uyos like an insurance policy. You might not need them, but it's still probably worth having it in case you do.

The second cost is a bit bigger (though simpler). Uyo costs 6 mana. Once you get up to 6 mana, you really better be winning the game. Cards like **Pristine Angel** and **Upheaval** win games. Thankfully, Uyo is a pretty good candidate for "Game Winner".


The third cost is the cost that all Moonfolk have: activating a Moonfolk means you'll return your land to your hand. This is actually another big cost. Uyo's initial cost of 6 mana is pretty hefty, but each activation sets your development back significantly unless you work hard to fight that extra cost. You can expect that if you use Uyo, you won't miss a land drop (even if you are slowly losing out on mana every turn). Thankfully, Uyo's activation means you get to cast a **Fork**.

Essentially, there are two major ways of fighting these costs: drop more land in a sneaky way, or end the game (before it matters).

Taking care of land

There are so many ways of getting around the land returning to your hand and the basic expense of casting Uyo. The simplest fix is to play with **Mox Diamond**, but perhaps that is a bit blunt. The other methods are a bit more elegant, however.

Dropping More

If you are able to simply drop a bunch of land, this generally solves the problem as well. **Fastbond**-like cards serve quite well here. Without having to go to Vintage decks, you can also play **Exploration** or dip into another new Legend, **Azusa, Lost but Seeking**. Both of these cards can help you power out an Uyo at an incredibly rapid rate. **Summer Bloom** can work the same trick, and enjoys the added benefit of being able to be **Forked** by Uyo. You can actually get a surprising amount of work out of Uyo this way. If you have out 8 mana, you can cast **Summer Bloom**, **Fork** it 3 times, and be able to drop an additional 12 land into play from your hand that turn. You'll already have 6 land in your hand from the **Forking**, and if you have any kind of card drawing (say, a **Horn of Greed?**), you'll be able to draw something like one million cards (or so). Dropping additional land with **Horn of Greed** out is a now-classic effect, and we have Zvi Mowshowitz's many forays into his famous tournament deck called Turbo-Land to thank for the mainstreaming of the idea. If you want to get a bit wackier, you can try out **Burgeoning** or **Mana Bond**, however neither of these cards triggers the **Horn of Greed** (they put land into play, they don't let you play extra land). 

Thinning the land

The other route isn't mutually exclusive to dropping more. Rather than play spells that allow you to lay more land, you can play spells that directly put the land into play. Many of the best versions of this effect are also spells that Uyo can copy.

A card like **Harrow**, **Explosive Vegetation** or **Primal Growth** (with Kicker) all fetch out two land from your deck. **Explosive Vegetation** at 4 mana guarantees 6 mana on your next turn, but does come into problems with coming into play tapped. The **Harrow** and the **Primal Growth** both require an initial sacrifice to get going, but they thankfully come into play untapped. Plus, Uyo's copying ability is a sneaky one: rather than paying the costs for the spell, you simply activate his ability. This means that you only have to sacrifice the one card to your original spell and the copy spells *do not* require anything be sacrificed if the sacrifices are part of the spell's cost.

Every two mana spent to make a copy of the spell gets you two more mana in play. Because of the stack, this means that you can effectively strip out every basic land that you have left in your deck. Cast the original two-land searcher, copy it, let the copy resolve, then recopy the original spell, let it resolve, et cetera. At the end of this, you'll have a lot of land left in your hand, but you'll also have a deck empty of land. Maybe someone could think of a combo where this might be useful...



All of these points raise up two interesting ideas: are there times when you want land in your hand, and are there any other ways we can “cheat” with copying extra costs.

Cheating with Fork costs

There are a smattering of great spells that include additional costs like sacrificing something. We already mentioned the land searching power of **Harrow** or **Primal Growth**. There are also a number of other useful ways to exploit this window.

Nostalgic Dreams is a pretty potent card, but not without a heavy cost. Discarding a bunch of cards is a part of the cost of the spell, so an untimely counterspell can truly hurt. Now, however, doubling (or tripling, or what have you) the amount of **Nostalgic Dreams** you are casting can be a *devastating* play. Even if one of them is countered, it will take a lot of work for an opponent to recover from the huge amount of cards you return to your hand.

But, on the other hand, why not just kill them?

Shrapnel Blast copied three times is death, all for the low, low cost of a single dead artifact. This method is *extremely* resilient to disruption, given enough mana. Counterspells won't stop it since you can just copy the spell once again. Effectively, each two mana you have is the equivalent of 5 more damage. That's pretty ridiculous. Other similar options include **Fireblast** and **Reckless Abandon** (though it takes a few more copies to produce the same result), **Goblin Grenade**, or **Urza's Rage** with Kicker (it takes a *lot* of mana, still, of course). Of those, **Shrapnel Blast** seems like the best route here.

A fistful of land



All this talk of damaging your opponent with Uyo leads easily into my friend Ben Dempsey's Uyo idea: **Seismic Assault**.

As a **UUU** spell, **Seismic Assault** isn't necessarily an easy cast (though it can be quite easy with **Harrows** and the like), but it does allow you to have a huge amount of potential damage on hand at almost any time. Seismic/Uyo is a fantastic combo: essentially any time your opponent casts a Sorcery or Instant, you can copy it once for every two land you have in play untapped, and turn that immediately into 4 damage to whatever you'd like.

Trade Routes is another great card that goes well with land in your hand. Coincidentally, it also is a great combination with **Seismic Assault** as well. You'll likely need to keep some small amount of that land you keep picking up, but having a surplus wouldn't be at all surprising. **Trade Routes** is a simple way to make that

land turn into something more useful that you can then copy.

One of my favorite cards in the last couple of years also works with a mitful of land. **Nantuko Cultivator** saw a lot of play in many of the decks I've made. Essentially, the Cultivator was a **Living Wish** target – if I'd get mana flooded, a **Living Wish** would turn that mana flood into a big creature and a mitful of new spells. Uyo pretty much guarantees that mana flooding is likely.

Mechanics and Strategerie

I've already touched on how the ability to copy spells essentially makes Uyo a really strong anti-counter card. There are other implications of this ability, and other mechanical factors that I'd like to get into more.

Huge counter-war advantages

Fighting a counter-war against Uyo is likely to be frivolous. If you are not casting a copyable spell, you can still always copy their counterspell and protect your original spell. If you are casting a copyable spell, you can always copy your original spell once again. If they cast yet *another* counter, well, you're still in fantastic shape. As long as you feel like returning land to your hand isn't crippling you, keep copying as long as you'd like.

Other plays with their spells

One of the darnedest things about Uyo is being able to “steal” your opponent's wind right out from under them. Many decks like to “do things” and if these things involve Instants or Sorceries, well, you get to do them too.

Many spells simply become too dangerous for a player to cast. A player trying to kill Uyo with a big burn spell might not have the luxury of casting it if you can just copy it again and again back at their head. Other powerful spells carry the same risk. **Time Walk** is a lot less exciting for your opponent when you get several copies of the Walk too. You don't have to be the one playing with **Time Walk** (or Warp) to be able to get many, many turns in a row. But, hey, you could always run it yourself.

Splice and other abilities

The copy ability of Uyo copies all aspects of a spell. Splice, Kicker, and Entwine are all a part of the initial spell that you are copying. If you cast a spell with any of those extra abilities, your copies get the extra bits too, all without the hassle of the extra cost.

When you wish upon a star


Three of [the Wishes from Judgment](#) really do well when they are copied. **Death Wish**, **Burning Wish**, and **Cunning Wish** can all search for another copy of the same spell that is in the removed-from-game zone or your sideboard (if you have one). This means that copying one of these Wishes can get you another Wish. This is a nice, potent power.

Bringing it all together, and a new challenge

With all of this in mind, I give you an Extended deck that is tourney legal for the format that will be played at the upcoming Pro-Tour Columbus. I know that this is a rough-cut version of what could be done with **Uyo**, **Silent Prophet**, but it is an excellent first draft. I used some of the ideas of Twin Cities' **Magic**-man “Haji” Mark Haase. Hopefully, he won't mind me stealing from him a little bit.

Turbo-Uyo-Land		
Main Deck 60 cards		Sideboard
4 Yavimaya Coast	4 Exploration	1 Uyo, Silent Prophet
11 Forest	4 Horn of Greed	1 Azusa, Lost but Seeking
9 Island	4 Living Wish	1 Nantuko Cultivator
24 land	4 Time Warp	1 Dust Bowl
	4 Intuition	1 Masticore
		1 Silklash Spider

3 Uyo, Silent Prophet	4 Accumulated Knowledge	1 Eternal Witness
3 Azusa, Lost but Seeking	3 Nostalgic Dreams	1 Palinchron
3 Eternal Witness		4 Waterfront Bouncer
	27 other spells	1 Boseiju, Who Shelters All
9 creatures		1 Dosan the Falling Leaf
		1 Genesis
		15 sideboard cards

This deck works on a lot of different levels. First of all, the Wish board allows it to effectively run seven copies of Uyo, **Eternal Witness**, and Azusa. Wishes also give the deck access to a lot of "answer" cards, depending on the situation. 

The deck is fully capable of casting a *lot* of **Time Warps**, with **Nostalgic Dreams** and **Eternal Witness** both doing a lot of work here. **Waterfront Bouncer** works well as a creature stall and to give you infinitely cast **Eternal Witness**. Against aggressive decks, you can also side in 3 **Waterfront Bouncers** to help you set up a defense.

Against counter-spells, Boseiju protects many of the spells, and hopefully you should be able to power-out a bunch of card drawing and **Time Warps**. One fun trick when you draw two **Intuitions** is to use one intuition to get **Accumulated Knowledges**. After you've drawn cards, the second intuition for three **Nostalgic Dreams** can guarantee a crazy mitful of card drawing from **Accumulated Knowledge** and another **Nostalgic Dreams** to keep the fun going.

With an Uyo on the table, copying Warp should be enough to hammer almost any game home. If it's not, copying the card drawing should eventually set you to a point where you have infinite turns thanks to the **Eternal Witness** combo. From there, it shouldn't be too hard to get rid of your opponent.

Of course, this is just one way to go about making a deck with Uyo.

I challenge everyone to see what Uyo deck *they* can make. Make sure you put Uyo Challenge in the subject line. This is Combo Week at magicthegathering.com, but that doesn't mean you have to limit yourself to only combo decks if you don't like.

Enjoy the rest of Combo Week!

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