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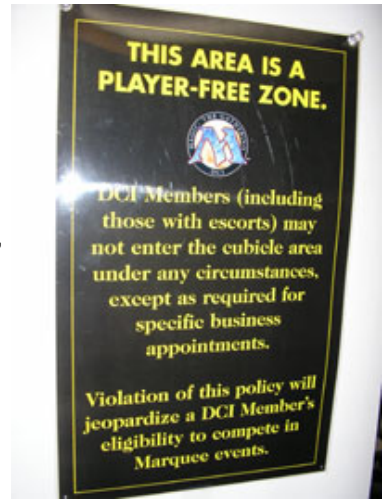
Ideas Unbound

Adrian Sullivan · *Single-Card Strategies*
 Wednesday, May 25, 2005



I am not on Wizards R&D and have never been on their R&D (though I have seen their pad, ages ago, and it was nice). But even if I'm not on R&D, I still know that one of the things that Maro and friends like to do is recreate the classics. Now, I never was one for Ted Turner's move colorizing tons of old classic movies, but somehow attempting to recreate the old classic Power cards is more appealing.

We've seen recreations of the original Moxes (Pearl, Emerald, Ruby, Sapphire, and Jet) in *Jeweled Amulet* and in the much more playable form of *Mox Diamond* and *Chrome Mox*. *Black Lotus* had a big comeback in the form of *Lion's Eye Diamond* (which was supposed to be unplayable, but ended up on the Vintage restricted list anyway), and though you could make arguments of *Lotus Petal* or *Gilded Lotus*, I won't. We've seen new *Time Walks*, *Timetwisters*, and *Mind Twists*. *Ideas Unbound* is another shot at remaking one of the more valuable cards in *Magic's* history, *Ancestral Recall*.



I'm not going to consider any simple card-drawing spell an attempt to recreate *Ancestral*, though perhaps even *Concentrate* was an attempt to revisit *Ancestral* by R&D. *Ideas Unbound* is definitely the newest *Ancestral* attempt, and is strikingly similar in many respects to *Three Wishes*, one of my favorite old cards. Both cards suffer from a 'use it or lose it' aspect, and I expect both cards will have players chasing after it with their *Philosopher's Stones*, hoping to change it into gold. Granted, *Ideas Unbound* might not be an instant – if only! – but it is still quite good.

All the old, familiar places...

So, **Ideas Unbound** isn't Ancestral, but it does let us visit a place that we've been to before with card drawing. It is very efficient, fairly cheap, and can dramatically impact what our graveyard and hand looks like. In a way, it has a home in any of the decks that we've ever seen use **Careful Study**.

Obviously, we have Madness. The Madness trigger is easily one of the most powerful mechanics in **Magic's** long history. Madness would require an 'enabler' of sorts to work, and because of this limitation to the mechanic, the Madness cost of cards was often incredibly cheap for the bang they gave. The most tournament-worthy Madness cards came primarily in Green and Red, with cards like **Basking Rootwalla**, **Violent Eruption**, and **Arrogant Wurm**, but you could look to other colors for Madness as well. Blue's **Circular Logic** is a great card, but you're not likely to be able to find yourself countering anything with Logic from an **Ideas Unbound** discard.

Threshold is also an incredibly easy thing to help achieve with **Ideas Unbound**. If you have an empty graveyard, just casting **Ideas Unbound** means that you're quite likely to have four cards in the graveyard at the end of the turn should that be your goal, and that's assuming you don't bother to cast anything else! Some of my favorite Threshold cards include **Possessed Aven**, **Werebear** (everyone's favorite Bear), and **Lightning Surge**, but there are plenty of others that you can crank up the power on with a full graveyard.

Speaking of **Lightning Surge**, Flashback is yet another mechanic that just loves **Ideas Unbound**. When you are tossing a **Roar of the Wurm** to the yard for later use, it often feels like you haven't actually discarded that card at all. It's not too shocking that all of these mechanics are popping out of **Odyssey** block. After all, **Odyssey** was the block that a card like **Careful Study** was designed for, so it stands to reason that using **Gatherer** on cards from that block is bound to pop up a bunch of real winners for you.

Outside of that block, all of the simple graveyard effects that we might want to look at are here. Take Gadiel Szeifer's **third place deck** from **Pro-Tour Columbus**, for example. His deck was a simple and dedicated Reanimation deck. Pop those copies of Akroma and Rorix into the grave with **Careful Study**, **Putrid Imp**, or some other trickiness and then bring back zombified angels and dragons for your opponent to deal with. **Ideas Unbound** can play the same role here with ease in any deck that can cast it, and be used in any other deck that might want to pop stuff into the grave – say a **Shard Phoenix** or an **Ashen Ghoul**, for example.

Use 'em or lose 'em – exceeding **Careful Study** and approaching **Ancestral Recall**

Now **Careful Study** does a lot of these things all by itself. Sure, it is less dramatic than drawing three cards, but it can still do it, and do it for one mana less. What **Careful Study** *doesn't* have becomes a bit more noticeable the longer the game drags on. Consider, for example, a Blue/Green Madness deck that has hit the end game without much gas left in the tank or any cards in the hand. Drawing a late game **Careful Study** is fine. You could cast it immediately and hope to find a Madness or Flashback card or you could hold onto it for a few turns to find some other random cards to discard in case you *do* draw something valuable.

On the other hand, if you had drawn **Ideas Unbound**, you could cast it right off the bat. Unlike the **Careful Study**, you aren't required to discard a thing until the end of the turn. Draw into those **Wild Mongrels** or find more land. It's yours to use. Any of the cards that you might have found with a **Careful Study** and simply discarded are still cards you can discard at the end of the turn. For the most part, you actually got to cast an Ancestral, even if your hand is empty at the end of it. When the discard portion of **Ideas Unbound** happens, it's not like you're going to be punished if your hand is basically empty already – you just drew three cards!

You don't even need to have anything tricky going on from a rules mechanics standpoint. You can just be fast. Take a Skies deck, for example. You are ruthlessly beating down with a bunch of little fliers, you have an empty hand and you draw an **Ideas Unbound**. Even if you only draw a land, a flier, and a spell you can't cast, you still got to use two extra




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cards because of the **Ideas Unbound**. Have pity on your poor opponent when you drop another **Rishadan Port**, a **Spiketail Hatchling**, and you **Boomerang** the blocker that's annoying you.

One other thing to remember is that **Ideas Unbound** does increase your hand size, even if it is only a quick boost. Think of it as adrenal for all of those **Deathmask Nezumi** and the like. **Saviors of Kamigawa** is all about hand size, and if you only need your hand to be big for a little while, **Ideas Unbound** can help you immensely. Pair it with sweep (or a card like **Gush** that returns land to your hand), and those overabundant lands can be semi-trickily tossed away when the time comes.

In the non-tricky department, one of the very useful things that you can be done with a deck that is going to use **Ideas Unbound** is to include mana developing cards. Whether it's a **Birds of Paradise**, a **Talisman**, or an **Exploration**, all of these cards make it more likely that you'll not only have the mana to make use of all of the cards you draw, but they make it more likely that you'll be able to turn an **Ideas Unbound** into an **Ancestral Recall** quickly.

Ending the turn

 So, **Ideas Unbound** is **Ancestral Recall** - albeit with a free **Three Tragedies** hitting you in the face at the end of your turn. Well, years ago Dominic Riesland introduced us to the end of the turn loophole. "At end of the turn" for those of you not in the know, is a moment in the game that triggered effects are generally placed on the stack. **Ideas Unbound** sets up a delayed trigger that happens at the end of the turn. There are plenty of other cards that have their effects go off at the end of the turn; maybe one or two of them might be useful to take note of. These "at end of turn" effects go on the stack once you begin to enter that phase, so as much as we might like to do broken things like cast a buyback spell (say, **Corpse Dance**) and *then* put "at end of turn" effects on the stack, it doesn't work that way. Remember, all of the "at end of turn" effects go on the stack and *then* you get to put things on the stack as well.

As an example, I'll use one of my more ill-fated moments in deckbuilding. After helping prep Bob Maher for US Nationals several years back, I suggested that he include a **Dragon Mask** in the deck's sideboard to fight **Meekstone** and other randomness. It was a bad idea, definitely, and though I've forgotten if he did, I hope he didn't end up playing it. **Dragon Mask** *can* however be used to pump up a creature and not be lost to an **Ideas Unbound**. So pump up that **Flametongue Kavu**, get in the damage and at end of turn put the **Dragon Mask** trigger on the stack and the **Ideas Unbound** trigger on the stack; when they resolve, you'll have your **Flametongue** in hand, if nothing else.

Krovikan Horror is definitely one of my favorite examples of a great card here. **Krovikan** returns to your hand at the end of any player's turn if there is a creature card directly on top of it in the graveyard. In any deck that might include both **Krovikan Horror** and enough creatures, you can definitely get a lot of bang for your buck with **Ideas Unbound**, using the **Sorcery** either just to fill up your graveyard or to work as later game powerful card drawing. The **Horror** can take advantage of the situation either way.

There are a bunch of these cards, but some of my favorites are **Sakashima the Impostor**, **Cauldron Dance**, and **Glitterfang** (and his bigger non-Spirit brother, **Viashino Sandstalker**). All of these cards can be made use of in creative ways, but if you draw into one of them with a **Ideas Unbound**, you won't lose it when it returns to your hand unless you want to.

Wrapping Up

I tried, I really did, but my deck this week ended up being a burn deck. It was the **Viashino Sandstalker**'s fault, not mine, really!

Ideas Unbound		
60 cards		
4 Shivan Reef	3 Viashino Sandstalker	4 Ideas Unbound
9 Island	3 Fledgling Dragon	2 Thoughts of Ruin
7 Mountain		4 Firebolt
20 land	6 creatures	2 Lightning Surge
		3 Fiery Temper
		4 Obsessive Search



This Future Online Extended deck is a bit of a merge of some of my Ponza ideas from the State Championship tournament I won about a billion years ago, some counter-burn stuff, and a bit of random fun to dash. The deck should be incredibly good at achieving Threshold with the **Ideas Unbound**, but it also makes use of a couple of **Compulsions** to help out. Once you've gotten to Threshold the **Fledgling Dragon** goes large and the **Lightning Surge** becomes spectacularly ridiculous. The **Compulsion** can also serve as a great Madness enabler to help out the Madness portion of the deck.

Even without Madness, **Violent Eruption** is an awesome spell that can be incredibly devastating, and the entire burn suite can be useful in keeping control of the table. The abundant jewelry is there to help build up your mana and keep you afloat should you **Thoughts of Ruin**. I don't expect that this deck would be too competitive in the most challenging of future tournaments, but it can definitely do fine in a less rough environment.

Before I close, a few more words on [last week's article](#). My mailbag was incredibly full after last week's article on **Grave Pact**. Stuffed in between the hundreds of e-mails submitting Tortured Existence decks for the upcoming Challenge were a few ideas on **Grave Pact** that some of the readers wanted to share.

One reader, Jake, was the first to mention that he thought that last week's decklist should have included some **Shirei**, **Shizo's Caretakers** to bring back the 1/1s in the deck. I thought this through a little bit, and I'm going to have to say I disagree. There really aren't enough to make **Shirei** seem worth it, but I am sure that you could modify the way the deck is built to make this option worthwhile. Jason Ciotti tossed out a bunch of great card ideas, but I liked his idea for using **Plunge into Darkness** in **Grave Pact** decks.

I think my favorite e-mail about the article had to have come from Gis Hoogendijk. If you remember the beginning of last week's article, I talked about the complicated game of **Magic** that a bunch of the judges played in. Gis was the judge who had the **Dominating Licid** Imprinted on the **Soul Foundry**. Besides the bit I saw with **Grave Pact**, he said there was even more to see:

I actually forgot about that part you mentioned, because we had an even weirder thing happen later in the game. You can read Sheldon's version of it [here](#).

It was cool to see you mention the game as well because it was probably one of the most memorable magic games I ever played.

Take care,

-Gis

Thanks a lot for the heads up, Gis. I always love a good story, and it was fun reading a Sheldon Menery article that I had missed.

Have a great rest of the week, and remember, only two weeks until the Reader Challenge on **Tortured Existence**!



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