# Part 1: What do you want your custom archetype to do?

The first thing you want to do is to think about what you want your archetype to do.  This is like an idea that you make.  A custom archetype starts with an idea.  It doesn't have to be a very complicated one.

Next, you want to use that idea that you have come up with, and implement that idea.  For example, an idea could be "monsters that get stronger the less cards you have in your Main Deck".  In that case, Pot of Desires can be an excellent tech to the deck.  In order to implement that idea, you'd want card/effects to thin your deck size and or recycle, because if you have 0 cards in your deck and it is your Draw Phase, you lose the game.  However, you'd also want to ask yourself, "How would I thin out my deck?". The point is to keep the idea simple so that it is easier to execute, and then stick with that idea.  Another example is Union monsters, which open a galaxy for you to explore (e.g. contact fusion w/ Union monsters whose Fusion are Unions themselves which are summoned by sending main deck unions you control to the GY to Special Summon those.).

You also want to stick with the same idea throughout the archetype creation process.  If not, your archetype will become incoherent and not perform well.  If you can pick 4-6 cards in your archetype and your opponent can see that the other cards do the same thing, it is coherent.  Otherwise it is incoherent.  Incoherent archetypes tends to brick more often.  If one idea does not suit you, or that idea causes your archetype to be hard to execute to the point where it does not work, try another idea and see that if it suits you.  Keep in mind that custom archetypes are a way to experiment.

Now for Costs

These are resources that you must give up in order to do something.  Costs in Yugioh can include the following (in general, anything that comes before the ; is a cost):

* Discarding
* Tributing from hand/field
* Send from field/hand to GY
* Return from field to hand
* Banish from GY
* Paying LP
* shuffle from field/GY into deck

Now an essential rule is cards should net +0 card advantage or require conditions to break that barrier.

It is always a good idea to use unexplored ideas as a way to make custom archetypes. But check their endboard and balance when doing so.

You can do a FLIP monster archetype that utilizes Equip Spells with GY effects as the GY effects of the equip card will activate when they are sent to the GY, with the intent to use the FLIP mechanic to interact with them.

Some people use lore behind a show that they like to make custom cards.  Even the artwork on the cards can tell a story just by looking at the art.

Try to thing of something very unique that does not break the game as a whole.  This process is easier said than done.  Look at what Konami has done and try to see something that you like.  For example, Morphtronics are very easy to understand.

Try to put a spin on things when making custom cards.  For example, the deck below puts a spin on the way Unions are designed, and capitalizes on the concept of build your own boss monster.  This is because the monster can go up to very high attack very easily due to their stat gain.

Example: <https://www.duelingbook.com/deck?id=10613319>

The way custom cards should be designed is thinking of putting yourself in an experimental lab and not something that should be rushed.

Trap monsters are a weird case.  Though you can play around with the idea to make a workable archetype.

For example, want to Link Summon using Cont. Trap monsters? Be my guest, as Paleos did that.  Or even fusion Summon with them?  Go right ahead.  There's literally nothing stopping you from experimenting with the idea to make a cohesive archetype.

Please do not make a vague idea when making a custom archetype.  For example, I want my archetype to be a control deck.  That is very vague as every control deck works differently.  Instead, ask yourself, how do you want to hinder what the opponent does? Nor should you say something like "I want my custom archetype to resist 2 handtraps", because combo pieces can be used to bait them out.

And also, do not do something along the lines like Swordsoul Yang Zing but better.  That tempts people to play the original rather than your archetype, as you have copies an idea. Making a custom archetype is about using your own ideas and inspiration, not copying an existing idea from a TCG archetype and claiming it as your own. You could put your own spin on them for example.  Copying the existing archetypes show that you have little to no creativity.

You can also use ideas that are never before seen - for example, Insects that have effects when banished, or Insects that protect each other upon linked with other Insect Link monsters.

# Part 2: Mechanics for achieving the archetype’s goal

Now that you have your idea set up, it's time to get creating with mechanics.  You can use ideas that have been abandoned or start with existing ones.  Here are the basic ideas you can use.

* Battle Position manipulation (Morphtronics, Karakuri)
* Co-linking (be creative if you want to use this one)
* Columns (Mekk-Knight)
* Contact Fusion (Gladiator Beasts, Thunder Dragon archetype, Neos, etc.)
* Counters (Alien, Venom, and other cards with counters)
* Equipping of monsters (Unions, Inzentors, Dragunity)
* Level manipulation (Fortune Ladies)
* Tokens (try to be creative, the Brave series)
* Trap monsters (Paleo Frog)
* Xyz monsters (these can range from getting an end board of them, ranking up/down), and please focus on one idea in mind when doing this.

And let your imagination flow when doing customs.  Nothing is stopping you from trying something new.

For example, if someone's idea was customs Dinosaurs that aggro, the idea is very vague since the goal is not clear.  Do they want to OTK? If so, then Ultimate Conductor Tyranno should be the boss that assists those dinosaurs. Do they want to co-link? Without a clear-cut specific detailed idea, you won't get far.  And keep your ideas simple so that you can expand on them later on.

Another example would be if someone's idea was to control the opponent, the idea is very vague because EVERY control deck hinders the opponent in some way.  How do you want to hinder the opponent? Again, without a clear cut idea, this will not get far.

Try to avoid doing stuff that does not make the game fun.

When thinking of a mechanic, keep it simple and expand on it later on.  Like for example, the less number of cards in your Main Deck, the stronger your monsters becomes.  This bring some Gren Maju Di Eiza vibes.

You'd also want a solid strategy for your archetype, which will come later.  So plan in the long run, and you should be fine.

Keep in mind that Battle Phase related effects are weak in terms of the meta, so you could use those in custom cards, whether to make a focus on it or not is your choice. These effects don't make a custom archetype overpowered, and even if it was a part of the end board, it's a weak component.

Combination Attack is a Battle Phase related support for Unions, but it's very weak in terms of usage and is very situational.  Even if it had a HOPT slapped onto it, people would rarely use this card.

In the case where you want to make a custom archetype that relies on the GY, ask yourself, do you want cards whose effects activate in the GY? Do you want to banish from the GY for Fusion Summoning or something?

In that case, you can use cards likes Lightsworns that self mill your Deck at the End Phase.  Or you can use stuff that discards from hand for cost, or a mixture of the two.  If you want to use the GY to banish monsters as part of a Fusion Summoning, you also need cards like Burial From a Different Dimension to return the banished monsters to the GY.

Always think of a clear cut goal before making a custom archetype.  It doesn't have to be complex though.

Do NOT use floodgates as a means to design your custom archetype, as that is no fun if you are playing against your opponent.

NOT every archetype has their own Ultimate Conductor Tyranno, which is literally the king of ALL going 2nd decks.

If you want a custom archetype that doesn't require the Extra Deck, look at Monarchs and True Dracos for guidance.  In that case, Pot of Extravagance will be a tech card as it provides draw advantage.

Or if your archetype's idea is "If you have less cards in your Extra Deck than your opponent, your monsters get stronger" Extravagance is a good tech card for it.

One more thing to keep in mind - use the mechanic throughout when designing the archetype.  For example, if your mechanic is putting Counters on the opponent's monsters make the counters have meaning.  If not, the mechanic does nothing.

If an archetype has a mechanic that consists of 2 parts, BOTH parts 1 and 2 must be implemented into the archetype.  Otherwise the archetype loses its identity.

In the next section, we will talk about what it means for a custom archetype to utilize its mechanics. It is best to stick to a simple idea and work with that idea.

If an archetype really cohesive, every card in that archetype fully utilizes the mechanics of that  archetype.  Keep in mind, even the simplest of ideas can have A LOT of potential when making custom cards.

There are cases where custom archetypes tend to focus on their end board first.  This can be problematic because you have lost focus on why you designed your cards in the first place. Also, an end board archetype can feel like a sucker punch, which is no fun at all.

What you should do instead if focus on the design first principle of custom archetypes, which involves looking for a mechanic and utilizing said mechanic to the fullest. An example of a mechanic would be to "temporarily change the Attribute of a monster to a declared Attribute until the end of this turn, and when said monster changes Attribute, do X".

Like before, look for ideas that have been lost to history.

Nowadays archetypes tend to play on the opponent's turn so you have to make sure that the opponent has a good time dueling against your archetype.

Stick to one point when making when making a mechanic.  For example, utilizing Counters can be one thing.  You have cards that generate Counters as resources and you spend resources (Counters) for an effect.

If your mechanic for your custom archetype involves Union monsters, one way to unleash potential is to take advantage of the cards equipping/unequipping.  You can take this a bit further with some of the Union monsters being Tuners and make a Synchro archetype.

The simpler the mechanic for your custom archetype is, the easier it is for you to expand in the long run.

What is important is to focus on the mechanic that you have created earlier.  Like we said before, looking for ideas that were lost to history and implement them.

Here's a food for thought.

The mechanic of an archetype is what gives the archetype its purpose and identity. Sure, archetypes have a searcher to get what they want from their Deck, but the main point is that the archetype should have a purpose when looking at the cards of said archetype.

Do not bloat too many ideas on when making a mechanic for an archetype. Instead keep it simple - for example, a union synchro deck which utilizes BOTH level manipulation and Union monsters (which themselves are a mechanic due to them equipping and unequipping to Special Summon themselves).  Hence the union synchro idea has 2 parts of a mechanic and each part of the mechanic must contribute to the union synchro idea - the unions need the synchros, and the synchros need the unions.

Here's another idea - putting counters on the field.  Then you can look at Spellbooks, Venom, Alien as examples.  But the important thing you should ask yourself is what the significance of the counters is.

If you are putting counters on the opponent's monsters, ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish by putting counters on the opponent's monsters. Keep in mind that this is a going 2nd strategy because you need to work with a set board to do so.  Once you have answered this, make the mechanic and have every card in the archetype utilize said mechanic.

# Archetype Cohesion and Identity

*One particular piece of advise that i'd been given a hella long time ago, which i'd been trying to apply to moderate success, is that you should in general try to design your custom archetypes from the top and then downwards. What do i mean by this? Ya might wanna make first the payoff of your archetype, wether it is a specific support card that lets you plus to infinity or a certain specific boss monster, before you design the engine of your deck*

*The reason being, its in general very hard to envision from an engine alone what your deck will really be able to do. When making your archetype's engine, ya might figure out a few combo lines and get a basic idea of how your deck plays out, but it wont be after you build a deck with it, handtest the deck, and playtest it a few times that you'll be able to have a more or less accurate idea of how your deck plays off in practice. There will be a lot of general misconceptions that you'll have when making your archetype, like underestimating the overall deck space that your engine takes and believing you'd be able to cram a lot of handtraps into it, or thinking it's consistent when in practice you cannot really go full combo around a third of the time. Another thing to have into consideration is that without handtesting and playtesting, its particularly hard to figure out how often you get to do all your combo, how often you have hands that can extend further, how often your hands dont get there and how to play those hands, to not talk about how your deck might be able to respond to being interrupted by your opponent*

*Thus, since its in general so hard to figure out how exactly your engine will*really*play out, designing a boss monster or a payoff for it is in general quite challenging. Its hard to know how many materials you'd have available, wether its worth it or not for the deck to invest its resources on a boss monster, or to know if the effects of the boss monster are practical and synergistic with your engine. Its very easy to end up with a boss monster that takes far too many resources and its just plain up inconvenient for its archetype, or to make a boss monster that takes a bit too little effort to summon and ends up being problematic by just looking at an engine and trying to guess how hard it will be able to go. So, due to that, i heavily recommend making whatever the payoff for your deck is*first *and then trying to design your engine, however you want to make it, with said payoff in mind. By designing all your combo pieces with a certain boardstate to archieve in mind, not only you increase the chances of your boss monster actually being appropiate for the archetype, given that it was designed from the start with summoning it in mind, but you also increase your chances of ending up with an engine that is*at least*cohesive, given that every card was made with certain combo lines to fit into in mind. I personally find it to be much easier (when i actually follow this advice, because im a bit of a moron and i often ignore it) to make an archetype's engine and to design combo lines within it when i can have a certain goal for the archetype in mind, in this case, being able to summon the big boss monster i designed at the start of the process*

*I recommend y'all to try this out at least once, and hope that it is helpful for y'all. Also, i heavily recommend using something like DB to deck build and handtest your customs, at least for me it has really helped me improve my skills regarding to designing custom archetypes*

Well, as drowsy said, try to make your archetype cohesive by deck testing, coming up with a specific theme for your cards.  Even for a combo strategy, there are certain chokepoints to your archetype.  In some cases, your combo archetype may have a midrange strategy, which although unusual, can be really good at times.  You don't really need complex cards to make a combo.  Just ask yourself, what happens if the opponent interrupts me?

For example, chaining Ash to a searcher might disrupt your strategy, so what? If you have a secondary way to do your combo, you can mislead the opponent and give yourself an advantage. (i.e. use a secondary extender in case).  Sure there are some custom archetypes that die to 1 or 2 handtraps, but even so, the endboard is affected.

Just because a custom archetype can play through 1 or 2 handtraps does not mean the archetype itself is broken.

*Exactly as you said. A midrange archetype that can play through virtually an infinite amount of handtraps isnt inherently broken, its what theyre*supposed*to be able to do. The ability to play through multiple handtraps is only worrying if after doing so you manage to put up a formidable board. The stronger your end board is, the weaker you should make your archetype to handtraps, and viceversa. Afterall, that leads to more interaction as a player (In theory). If your combo deck churns out 3~4 negates effortlessly, BUT, falls over with one or two well placed handtraps, then the interaction between players in it is centered around your opponent trying to get a read on your hand and using their own knowledge of your deck to spot the chokepoint in your combo and interrupt it and you trying to engineer lines that dodge handtraps or bait and mislead your opponent into using them incorrectly (This is also why i dont recommend making combo customs, besides the fact that they're quite hard to make, they dont lend themselves well to the kind of format that custom duels are. Against combo, Handtrap management and deck knowledge are the most important things, and in custom duels people dont use handtraps nor would they know your deck beforehands. Sure, going second power cards also work, but people aint carrying those either, and those are most relevant post-siding, which happens rarely as most custom duels are best-of-one). On the other hand, if you have a midrange deck, the fact that your end boards are overall weaker can compensate for resillience towards handtraps, by shifting the gameplay loop from "how do i prevent this board from being made" to "how do i play through this board". So, in general, whenever your deck outputs a worrying amount of negates, or plays through a worrying amount of interruptions, you should ask yourself "Is this deck able to play through HTs?/Is this deck's enboard all that menacing?" before grabbing the nerf hammer. It might take some time playing and/or seeing other people play to get a hang of what specific types  of end boards and/or HTs dodged are most problematic from a balance standpoint, but in modern yugioh it has become kind of a requisite to make realistic-looking archetypes as those specific traits on a deck have becomed more and more relevant*

When thinking of the game plan behind your archetype, try to think of your archetype working visually in your mind.  Use your mind to see what you want your cards to do and implement that.  Once you have that. use that idea to design your archetype.

For example, if your idea was Xyz monsters that focus on ranking up or down, have cards that help you do that, but keep in mind Raidraptor.

Be very cohesive when making your archetype.  What the word cohesive means when it comes to archetype design is that if you pick 4 or more cards and look at them, you can see what the archetype itself as a whole is trying to do.  If others can't see a clear picture of what the archetype itself it trying to do, the archetype itself isn't cohesive.

If an archetype isn't cohesive, then it's hard to determine what the cards themselves want to do, as their effects are all over the place.

All the cards when looked at, should arrive at a mechanic (or goal) of what the archetype itself is trying to do.

In some cases where your archetype does not have a mechanic, as yourself, what is it that you want your archetype to do as a whole?  In this case, you want to figure out a goal for your archetype and then work backwards from there.

The simpler your idea is when making an archetype, the easier it will be for your cards to design.

Examples of Gimmicks

Morphtronics gimmick is dependent on their Battle Position, as in, if in Attack Position do X, and in Defense Position, do Y, where X and Y are two distinct effects.

Appliancers gimmick is that their effects are dependent if they are co-linked or not, as in, if co-linked do X, but if not co-linked, do Y.  As aforementioned, X and Y are 2 different effects.  And not to mention, they are best going second.

For alternate win condition custom archetypes, you would want to ask yourself how you would win the game besides reducing your opponent's LP to 0.  Alternate win conditions should NOT be very easy to achieve.  The original alternate win condition was Exodia, where you'd need to have the 5 pieces of Exodia in hand to win the Duel.

Another way to pull off an alternate win condition is to deck out the opponent from 40 (or 60 cards) to 0 cards.   Here, a lot of the cards used will be focused on milling the opponent's deck.  However keep in mind that the opponent will use this to their advantage, depending on the situation.  Mill decks nowadays are rarely played, except for Runick.  Try to make something that isn't like Runick.

Destiny Board is another example of an alternate win condition.

When making an alt win condition for your archetype, it is best to ask yourself how you want to win besides reducing your opponent's LP to 0 and focus on that.

A way to help you fine tune your archetype would be the following:

1. Find what your archetype wants to do, whether it be a mechanic or a goal.
2. Make every card in the archetype focus on said goal in 1.
3. Try to find other fun interactions in the archetype as you go along.
4. While doing 3, keep in mind of the effects that you make.

Cohesive in custom archetype design is referring to the ability for other people to guess what your cards do as a whole.  This is determined by taking 4 or 5 cards of said archetype and try to figure out what the cards in general want to do.  If one can determine from reading those cards that a possible mechanic (an goal, or both a mechanic and a goal) can be found, then it is said to be cohesive.

However, if the cards are ALL over the place randomly scattered in terms of effects, then said archetype is not cohesive.  This means that the archetype may not have a goal/common mechanic or it has no idea of what it wants to do as a whole.

Even if there was a lot going on in the archetype, it can still be cohesive if all the cards in the custom archetype align together as a whole to do something.

# Hand Flow

*I'd like to add a couple of talking points to it, based on my own experience.*

*1. When coming up with archetype concepts, I try to imagine the hand movement of the player // flow of cards when resolving the cards. Are my cards // hands doing something that hasn't been done to death already? Can I imagine a player resolving a mechanic and having fun doing it? A few examples to try and explain what I'm saying.*

*- Witchcrafters want you to discard a hand full of spells to power their abilities, only to have those resources come back in the EP. Causing massive swings in card advantage.*

*- Codetalkers / Prankkids want to vomit their main deck to power their extradeck climbs*

*- VW mill their combo pieces, then banish those, then shuffle them back. Then do it again next turn.*

*2. Is there a large amount of things you do to resolve your cards // between cards? would an opponent be able to follow what's happening?*

*IMHO, walls of text should be kept to minimum. It's one thing if your boss // payoff // main combo piece is doing a whole bunch of things for you, but if you've got more then one or two of those in the deck... then it's very likely you -*

*a. are trying to explain a mechanic that's too complicated*

*or*

*b. made cards that simply do too much, on their own*

*You should try simplify the text, or split the mechanics in between multiple cards. Hopefully you find a way to do these in a satisfying way without breaking anything, as things can get very interesting with a bit of creativity.*

*-----------*

*hope this helps! have fun coming up with cool ideas.*

Keep in mind, "what do you want your archetype to do in terms of hand flow" is the key point to making a custom archetype.  Look at Witchcrafters, Virtual World, Code Talkers, as a guide.  And if you want trouble with designing something with Counters, look at Alien and Venom.  Ask yourself, "how do you want your counters to work?"

It is good for an archetype to have a mixture of going 1st and 2nd cards so that it can adapt to the opponent.  But keep it under control, as you don't want to make something unbalanced (or broken).  For example, Combination Attack isn't busted as its effect is ONLY situational, even if it had a Hard once per turn slapped on it.

Every archetype has a way of hand flowing.  For example, Invoked is all about using Aliester the Invoker and Invocation to "Invoke" their Fusion monsters, hence you want Aliester and possibly, Invocation, in your opening hand.

If we look at Code Talkers, they want to get access to their Extra Deck by vomitting their Main Deck.

Even custom archetypes that users design have hand movement to a degree.

# Boss Monsters

When making the boss monster of ANY custom archetype, think of it as the archetype's win condition.  If you work from top-down from the boss, you can design your archetype that way.  The boss monster in mind must tie to the theme of your archetype and help with your archetype in some way with the theme you picked.

Keep in mind that the boss monster is not something that must have high original ATK and DEF.  It can have a low original ATK and DEF, but a huge buff that makes it the final boss.  Also keep in mind that not all custom archetypes need a final boss in order for it to function. And also, the final boss does not have to always be a towers (e.g. Qli, and the link 6 Ignister).

The boss monster of a custom archetype can appear in a duel mid-to-end game.

Sometimes an archetype can have a boss monster.  Usually the boss monster is one that utilizes the full potential of the archetype.  It is perfectly fine for an archetype to NOT have a boss monster to be reasonable.

And also keep in mind the endboard of your custom archetype, as your opponent will have to play against you.  In some cases, the end board will have to be tested on Duelingbook.

# Part 3: Implementation of your custom archetype

Now that you have your theme and idea, it's time to implement it.  What you want to do is design the cards so that they "center" around that theme.   All archetypes need to have searchers (and possibly recyclers).  Searchers (or tutors) help you get the cards that you need, typically, you'll need 1 or 2 searchers to make your archetype work.  Some other people use the term "Stratos", named after Elemental HERO Stratos, to refer to the word "searcher", but it's the same idea. You can make an archetype without a searcher, but they will be very slow as you may brick more often.

Some custom archetypes have recyclers to get back resource(s) that were lost.

For example, Morphtronics monsters have the theme/mechanic, "Do A when in Attack Position, but do B when in Defense Position" where A and B are different effects on the same card.  But there are 3 variants: OTK, with Equip Spells, and swarm.  It's best in this case if you want to make custom Morphtronics, pick one path and stick with it.  Keep in mind that OTKing is a going 2nd strategy, as we'll explain later.

Another example is the part where you have the gimmick of "the less cards you have your Main Deck, the stronger your monsters become".  In this case, you could use self-milling effects like Lightsworn to help you with the strategy, but keep in mind Pot of Desires is a tech card. Foolish Burial is another tech card.

Keep in mind that you don't want to design unhealthy cards.  If your opponent can't play against your deck, then you only designed a custom archetype just for the sake of winning and becomes unhealthy as a result.  This is bad because ANY archetype can win, given the right condition(s). Also, keep in mind the TCG banlist (or if you are in a custom card server, use their banlist as well, if they have one).  Nor would you have to make an archetype whose endboard has 5+ negates, as your opponent cannot play, which is also unhealthy. Cards are put on the TCG banlist for a reason.

# Naming an Archetype

When thinking of a name for your archetype once you have figured out its game plan (whether it be by movement of the player), try to avoid names that sound generic such as "Elemental", "Lost", "Night" because there are existing cards with those names.  Instead,  check to see that your name does not come into conflict with existing yugioh cards.  If the search returns no results, that name can be used.

# Archetype Size

Notice how archetypes normally have 7 to 22 cards? This is indeed true for custom card archetypes as well, as this is how Konami intended to design archetypes.  If you start out with a very simple idea as a gimmick, you can expand on it very easily (e.g. Union monsters).

Here's an example of this: <https://www.duelingbook.com/deck?id=10613319>

Notice how the archetype has only 17 cards, and not only that, if you read the cards together, they form a very simple, yet strong cohesive concept of equipping/unequipping, and not to mention, this archetype has Marincess behaviour as well.  Keep in mind how the Spell/Traps support the theme of the archetype as a whole.

If you want to design support for an existing archetype, keep in mind the number of cards in the original archetype.  You do NOT want to over-bloat as a result.

# Part 4: Balancing your custom archetypes

Do not think of your cards inside a vacuum. Without the right restrictions, cards in an archetype can become subject to abuse due to existing support for that monster Type and/or Attribute support. Like Itsukando said, every card must have a +0 in card advantage, as card advantage is important when balancing your stuff.  For example, ROTA (Reinforcement of the Army) is a +0 in card advantage (you activate it (-1) and then you get a Level 4 or lower warrior from your Deck to your hand (+1) so the total advantage is zero.  Here's the thing though, it was limited because it was able to be put into ANY Warrior Type Deck.  Ancient Leaf breaks this case.

In the case of Link monsters, every Link monster can be converted into a Link 1 which is why you must be careful with them. For Link 2 you send 2 monsters you control to the GY, which means that it's not likely that your main deck monsters will become link 2's.  The higher the link rating, the more you must invest to summon that monster.  A monster whose Link rating is X results in a -X + 1 card advantage, where X is the monster's Link Rating, and there are ways to cheat that, so do be careful.

Locking your cards to that archetype is a way to prevent them from being abused. In other cases, if you do not want to lock your archetype, you have to test for possibilities it could be abused.  In PSCT, it comes in the form "You cannot Special Summon monsters, except 'X' monsters, the turn you Summoned this card." where X is the name of your archetype. It doesn't always have to be this case - You could lock it to Beast only, which will only allow you access to a third of Tribrigade's power as Tri-Brigade specializes in Beast, Beast-Warrior, and Winged Beast.    If you locked it to Pyro instead, Pyro monsters have very bad support outside Rekindling (which is for FIRE Pyro monsters with 200 DEF), so it's easy for you to work around this issue by making them have more than 200 DEF. (Volcanics aren't that good as of right now.)

There are other cases, as for example, in the case of Rituals, you want to ask yourself, "Do I want my archetype to work with Drytron or not?" and then work around this by asking someone to show you how to build Drytron so you can estimate the number of cards you'll need for your custom archetype.  Do take into consideration Pre-paration of Rites and other Ritual support before doing so.  If you want to have a PURE archetype it needs to have a minimum of 14 unique main deck cards. And PURE means only the cards of that archetype.

For custom Tuners, you need to be aware of Crystron Halq, as it was able to abuse the Tuners, causing them to be hit on the TCG banlist. In that case, lock the Tuners to Synchro monsters before doing this.

There is also Attribute support as well.  A DARK monster archetype who loves to banish wants Allure of Darkness as a tech card, and DARK monsters have good existing support.  For WATER monsters, there's Moray of Greed, Umi, and Salvage.  For FIRE monsters, there's Rekindling, which is easy to bypass if your monsters have more than 200 DEF.  Avoid DIVINE Attribute as that will contradict with the lore of the Egyptian Gods.

And lastly, take into consideration existing support for that monster Type. Pyro have very little support outside Rekindling.  This means that if you make FIRE Attributed Pyro monsters with more than 200 DEF or non-FIRE Pyros with 200 DEF, then Rekindling will not touch your archetype. Beast, Beast-Warrior, and Winged-Beast have Tribrigade as support. For Beast-Warrior, you also have Fire Formation Tenki and Tensu as REALLY good support despite the fact that the former is limited.

Warriors have Isolde (the Link 2) as support as it searches a Warrior monster.  Dragons have a ton of REALLY good support, as well as Dragon Link, so it's easy to set a wildfire if you are not careful with this.   Spellcasters have Magician Souls as their strongest support, so if your Spellcasters are Level 5 or lower, you shouldn't have to worry.

When locking your custom archetype, look carefully and see what can abuse it.  For example, take the following cases:

* Locking it to FIRE Warrior enables Infernoble shenanigans.
* Locking it to WIND Warriors is a good ideas as WIND Warriors aren't the strongest, and thus enables the least amount of abuse, plus you lose access to the Link 2 Isolde as an extender.
* Locking the custom archetype to WATER Beast-Warrior may be a problem as Tri-brigade is involved.  But if we look at the bigger picture, there are no WATER Beast-Warriors, so that doesn't lead to abuse as well. Plus you still want to consider the fact that you have 1 searcher due to Tenki and 3 copies of Tensu, which enable additional Normal Summons, even if Tribrigade wasn't around.
* Locking your archetype to Warrior Union monsters is a good idea, as there are 3 cards, and they aren't very good.
* Locking them to Spellcaster Union is a good idea, as there are no Spellcaster Union monsters in the database. Also, if the Spellcaster Unions are level 5 or lower, then Magician of souls won't work.

Note that these cases were obtained when searching through the card database on Duelingbook. In all cases, locking your archetype can prevent abuse.

What makes a card generic or not?

* They can be splashed into ANY deck
* They can be Summoned easily from ANY deck
* You can do generic cards but you have to be careful of what hidden power it may contain.

Mage Power is a generic Equip Card but you need a monster in your hand that can be normal summoned, hence it is a -2 in card advantage.

To determine how generic a card is, look at what can abuse it.

* Crystron Halq is very generic as it enabled a lot of degenerate plays outside the Crystron archetype.  In fact Halq caused a lot of Tuners to be banned.
* Verte Anaconda is very generic as you can play it outside a Predaplant archetype. It was used as a way to get out Dragoon (one of the ways though).
* The Link 2 Isolde is very useful in a Warrior equip deck, as well as other warrior based decks.  Hence, it's generic ONLY to Warriors and Warrior Equip decks

Being too generic is one way a custom card can become unbalanced or broken.

Using the TCG banlist is a surefire way to keep your cards in check.

And do keep in mind that balancing does not stop your imagination or from trying something new.

Another thing when making custom archetypes in terms of balance.  Even with all these cases above, the end board must be checked.  An archetype with 5+ negates isn't fun to play against.  You want you and your opponent to have a good time playing the game.  No one wants a one-sided game.  If an archetype generates absurd card advantage to the point where Drytron can't take it anymore, then that archetype is unbalanced and must be checked.

This means that you must control the # of negates on the end board.  It's alright to have 1 omni-negate Counter Trap (or a Spell/Trap negate), but if you choose to do so, don't make any more negates.

Just because a custom archetype can play through Nibiru doesn't make it broken.  For example,  Mythical Beast has a monster negate that can negate Nibiru's hand effect so that you won't get the token.   An archetype that adapts to the opponent does not make the archetype broken.

There is also a case where people will bring up the term degenerate, esp. in custom card servers.   Here's what should be classified as degenerate and should be avoided when making customs cards.  You want BOTH you and your opponent to have a lot of fun.

* Cards which prevent you from playing the game (e.g. stopping a card Type).
* 1 card which grants you a lot of advantage
* a boss monster that is literally unbeatable and easy to summon.
* 1 card when placed in its archetype can be abusable outside it (e.g. Halq)

Keep in mind that it's not the concept that determines whether or not your custom archetype is broken or not; it's the effects that do.

Also, there's a reason why custom card guides stray away from a Link 1 monster - this is because the card advantage generated by a link 1 monster is -X + 1, and since X = 1, this is a +0 in card advantage, so you haven't really lost resources other than filling up your GY.  If a Link 1 monster had the effect of searching a certain field spell on Summon (i.e. Balelynx), the total advantage on that link 1 is +1, which is essentially like pot of greed, which was banned because it was splashable in every deck and goes for +1 in card advantage with no cost.

Also, keep in mind that if your archetype has a way to cheat out link monsters of your archetype with a higher rating, it becomes a problem as well.

When looking at the feedback of your custom cards in terms of balance, do not take it too personally.  People struggle with this a lot.

For example, say someone made a custom archetype that involved non-effect Extra Deck monsters.  They can use the Phantasm Spiral way to do it, or they can use Tenyi, which is effect monsters that activate in the GY that protect non-effect Link monsters.  Even though Tenyi has 1 link 1 monster, it is a non-effect monster, one must be careful when doing so as the card advantage is +0.  If the Main deck monsters of the custom archetype involve making Link 1 gain effects when they are used as material, that is another red flag.

Now we need to talk about effects that you should watch out for when designing (i.e. other custom card pitfalls)

Consider an effect that says based on Miscellaneousaurus

*During the Main Phase (Quick Effect): You can send this card from your hand to the GY; during this Main Phase, Dinosaur monsters you control are unaffected by your opponent's activated effects. You can only use this effect of "X" once per turn.*

Now consider this.  

*During the Main Phase (Quick Effect): You can send this card from your hand to the GY and declare 1 monster Type; during this Main Phase,  monsters you control of the Type your declared are unaffected by your opponent’s activated effects. You can only use this effect of “X” once per turn.*

In terms of the meta that would be literally unhealthy even if it were meant to protect your archetype monsters from being Ash Blossom.  It would cause Dragon Link to go to absurd power levels, even Swordsoul would benefit from this as well.  Even though the effect has a HOPT, no one wants to play against you.  This is a generic card that powercreeps Miscellaneousaurus to very unhealthy levels hence it is unbalanced.

*While I agree that every deck should have some degree of* ***recovery****,* ***search****, etc. Each deck should focus mainly on one aspect - that's how different playstyles are developed.* ***Control*** *strategies primarily consist of* ***interruption*** *and* ***removal****,* ***combo*** *strategies are primarily* ***searching*** *and* ***summoning****,* ***grind*** *(for lack of a better term) strategies focus on* ***recovering resources****.*

*You can also have combinations of these, but* ***it shouldn't do anything as effectively as a deck that focuses entirely on one thing****. For example,* ***midrange*** *is a combination of* ***combo*** *and* ***control****, but it doesn't* ***search*** *and* ***summon*** *as much as* ***combo*** *strategies, and it doesn't have as much* ***removal*** *and* ***interruption*** *as* ***control*** *strategies.*

***The problem arises when a deck can do more than one these things without sacrificing power****. For example, a* ***combo*** *deck that puts out as much* ***interruption*** *as a* ***control*** *deck and has as much* ***recovery*** *as a* ***grind*** *deck, is broken beyond belief.* ***Meta decks tend to do exactly this, and it's the reason they become so dominant.***

*Of course, the 3 classes I described aren't the only playstyles. There's* ***milling*** *strategies,* ***burn*** *strategies, alternate win conditions, so on and so forth, but the same applies to these. A deck should either do one thing really well, or multiple things but not as good.* ***A deck should never do more than one thing, and still do it as effectively as a deck that focuses on that one thing.***

***Edit:*** *I thought I should give some examples of decks that do this and why they're problematic.*

*First,* ***Kashtira*** *can* ***search*** *and* ***summon*** *as much as any other* ***combo*** *deck, and it can also* ***mill*** *better than* ***Runick*** *(which is primarily a mill deck), and it has as much control as* ***Subterrors****, and* ***Shangri-la*** *also has* ***protection****, and* ***Ariseheart*** *is a* ***GY floodgate*** *and has* ***high ATK****.* ***The fact Kashtira can do so many things without sacrificing power in any of them is what makes it so oppressive****.*

***Tearlaments*** *are also guilty of this: it's a* ***combo*** *deck, where you* ***shuffle back the materials so they can be used again****,* ***Rulkallos*** *and* ***Kaleidoheart*** *both* ***revive for no cost****, and on top of all that,* ***Rulkallos*** *and* ***Kaleidoheart*** *are* ***both forms of disruption with high ATK****.* ***Tearlaments can do combo, control, AND recovery without sacrificing in any of those.***

*This one was never meta, but it's hated for the same reasons as the other 2.* ***Runick*** *is a* ***mill*** *strategy, with some* ***control*** *elements.* ***If that was it, it would actually be fine.*** *The problem is that they threw in the* ***Runick Fountain****, which makes it so* ***Runick never runs out of resources****, in addition to* ***fusion monsters that are extremely easy to summon and protect the field spell.*** *You see,* ***Runick is toxic because Konami crossed the line and give it one too many things, just like Tearlaments and Kashtira****.*

For burn based strategies, you do NOT want to make an FTK.  Look at Trickstar - it is the very first burn based archetype in the TCG.  Every card in the archetype focuses on slowly using Sparks (inflict 200 dmg) on the opponent.  If we were to look at the game as a whole - that would require 40 turns to cause an FTK which is very impossible to do.  Hence, one can say Trickstar is very reasonable in card design.

When making customs, you do NOT want to copy the meta due to the aforementioned reasons that you said.  Copying the meta makes you no better than a toxic player who only designs cards to win.

The main point of this post is to make an archetype that does one thing and one thing only otherwise you aren't any better than one who wants to show their toxicity to yugioh custom cards as a whole.

Sure one can brainstorm many ideas for an archetype, but you have to keep in mind your opponent has to play as well.

# Unbalanced and Toxic Custom Archetypes

Try to make something that will not end up on the TCG banlist.  Cards get put on there for a very good reason, they have very strong effects that may put the opponent at a disadvantage, and if these cards were ever made, you'd only make customs to win, which isn't the point of making custom cards.

It is ill advised to copy the TCG meta and use that to make your custom cards.  This is because by copying the TCG Meta, you are making cards solely to win.

The TCG Meta makes it so that you are playing solitaire against the opponent. As said before, the TCG Meta is like stale bread right now because there's not a lot of variety of decks that can be played competitively.

Avoid the following when making customs:

* making 3+ negate end boards (these make the player want to surrender against you or at best, give you a Kaiju or Ra - Sphere Mode)
* floodgate cards that deny the opponent to do certain actions
* cards that cheat out powerful boss monsters. (e.g. 1 cards that can cheat out an "X" Link 6 monster, where X is the name of your custom archetype)
* tower like bosses with absurd protection - these will force the opponent to draw the Kaiju or lose.

Keep in mind that you want your opponent to play against you, despite the fact that the TCG Meta is about not making your opponent play Yugioh.

Avoid floodgates - keep in mind that Mask of Restrict and Iron Wall are the weakest ones.

Also keep in mind, if it's something Konami would not make, don't make it into your custom archetype.

One more thing, if Konami wouldn't do this when making a custom card, you probably shouldn't.  There are toxic players on DuelingBook (like acaciapeincess) whose philosophy is making the opponent play solitaire with a negate board, or to make the opponent quit playing against them.

Custom cards are about having a good time in a two sided interactive duel, as in you and your opponent can interact, and experimenting with your creation.  If it doesn't work, try another - that goes true when building an archetype, or experimenting with a single card in an archetype.

It is inadvisable to use the meta game to make your customs, because the meta game as of right now is like stale bread that can at best be used for bread pudding.  Simply put, it's not very interactive.

Some custom card servers offer a chance for you to errata your card, which is a good thing.

Do not design your archetype so that it counters another archetype that someone else is designing.  It is no fun at all, as it takes the design aspect out of making a custom archetype, and are doing it just solely to win, which is not healthy for the yugioh card game.  You can discuss with others about how they design their archetype - that's okay.

If you have duelled a toxic player, don't use that experience to make your custom cards because that is like the equivalent of getting back at a bully.  Two wrongs don't make a right.

Make something that you like when making customs so you can cope with meta does NOT mean copying the meta to do so.  If we look at the TCG meta right now, it is like extremely stale bread.  Hence using your custom archetype to copy the meta makes one no better than plagiarists.  For example, if your custom archetype is based on Rokkets, what can they do that is unique from Rokkets?

Toxic players on DuelingBook like to make customs to win because they want to win.  Hence they want to assemble their negate board and force the opponent to rage quit.  But what is the point of making customs if you want cards that win - none, because custom archetypes will eventually win when the time is right.  These toxic players want to make cards that win without considering the fact that their opponent wants to play against them.

A lot of people on Duelingbook think that making custom archetypes in yugioh is about winning.  Yes, it is about winning, but it's also about being reasonable in your card design as well and making you and the opponent have a good time dueling.  If you look at the TCG Meta, a lot of the Meta winning strategies have something in common - consistency.  Consistency is the way of getting the resource(s) that you need at a given time, and this includes searching, and not to mention recycling as well.

Let's look at the TCG Meta for 2024.We have Labrynth Deck, Centurion Deck, Fire Kings, Kashtira, Branded Despia, Rescue Ace, etc. Every one of these decks has something in common - the ability to recycle their cards and get their resources consistently.

So the point is, you want to win with something that you have created by yourself.  It is better to be innovation first, and then think about the Meta 2nd.   
  
Do:

* Think of ideas that have been abandoned by Konami and give them new light.
* Explore uncharted territory with your cards (e.g. Synchro Union/Link Union monsters as Konami has never touched on that territory.)
* Try to get help from others with writing the PSCT of your cards (even better if someone can do BOTH PSCT and balancing as well).
* Be innovative when making custom cards.
* Use HOPTs to balance out your cards.

Don't:

* Take the TCG Meta and put that into your own custom card design.  This shows laziness, as people would rather play the originals as opposed to your deck.
* Link 1's - Konami abandoned Link 1 because of how easily spammable they can be.  The only exception is that you put a spin on your Link 1.
* Try to make a deck to shut down the opponent.  Lockdown decks can be tricky, as it is like a "poison" that must applied to both side.
* Make 5+ negates/disruption end boards - this is the type of deck that makes people want to quit against you.
* Make custom hand traps (like custom Ash Blossom) for your archetype.  Every card in the archetype should help in a way to the archetype's mechanic.
* Try to make an meta archetype on day 1 and expect everything to work out just fine.

*I was just talking with a guy on here about not making custom archetypes too oppressive.  It isn't impressive, cool, or clever to design a custom archetype that can't be stopped.  That's just lazy card design.*

*Most complaints from casual players about meta strategies is that there are too many negates, there are too many interactions from the opponent during your turn, boss monsters are too tough to out, your own favorite boss monsters get nuked before they ever do anything, etc.  So then they take that mindset and make a custom strategy that is 99.99% consistent, can play through anything thrown at it, and has an end board with a titanic boss that can't die, can nuke the opposing field, and embodies in one card everything that that person dislikes about the TCG meta.  At that point you have become the very thing you despise.  Been there and done that myself.*

You know, you have a good point.  Consistency is a good thing, but it must be kept in moderation when designing a custom archetype.  For me, the way is simple, when I put a Counter Trap for my archetype with 1 negate I stop, and then I make sure the disruptions are reasonable like probably 1 or 2.  The thing is, seeing the meta has taught me one thing - to keep things check.

And you are right - making a custom card archetype that is too oppressive is not a good idea.

Think about it, all Union monsters do is boost stats but they don't do very cool things, except SBC Therion, which I don't want to emulate.

So then they take that mindset and make a custom strategy that is 99.99% consistent, can play through anything thrown at it, and has an end board with a titanic boss that can't die, can nuke the opposing field, and embodies in one card everything that that person dislikes about the TCG meta.

That should be treated as a warning to those to design custom archetypes.

Too many negates is a problem.  Makes people want to quit.  Agree on that one.

Too many interactions from the opponents during your turn.  You need to know the difference between an interaction and an interruption.  An interruption is something that clears the opponent's board on your turn.  And interaction can be like link summoning on your opponent's turn, which can be frustrating, yes, but it depends on what is going on.

Boss monsters that are tough to out.  That I agree on.  No one wants those.

The end board is definitely where the problem lies at.  If you end on 1 Counter Trap negate and 0-2 interruptions, that's okay, but more than that and people start to quit.  I have seen those.

# Floodgates

Try to make your cards so that you and your opponent can have much fun as possible.  A lot of people are saying that floodgates are bad in design, but let's compare the floodgates to a degree.

Mask of Restrict prevents anything from being tributed.  However, it's not a problem, as not all decks nowadays use Tribute Summoning.  Sure that stops True Draco, but at the same time, they have an out to it, and so do other custom archetypes.  Hence it's the weakest floodgate.

Royal Decree negates all trap cards on the field.  However, not all archetype are trap card based (e.g. Altergeists and Traptrix),  It doesn't stop you from playing the game because Trap cards need one turn to set.  Plus not all custom archetypes rely on Trap cards.

Rivalry of Warlords/Gozen Match stop your opponent from playing unless they play a deck with either exactly 1 Attribute or exactly 1 monster Type.  This shuts down the game completely.

There can only be one prevents opponents from playing the game unless they use an archetype which consists of multiple different monster Types.  This is unhealthy for the game because it says "Screw you" to the opponent ... which encourages bad sportsmanship.  Hence it is one of the strongest floodgates.

Macro Cosmos prevents the opponent from playing the game because nowadays, a lot of decks rely on the GY to make their plays.  Hence it is the strongest floodgate.

Imperial Iron Wall prevents ALL banishing, but it doesn't stop your opponent from playing it s/he uses a strategy that does not rely on banishing.  It is a somewhat medium-strong floodgate, as it doesn't shut down the game completely.  Plus it can be used as an out to certain banishing strategies.

Cards that prevent you from Special Summoning are very badly designed because it takes away the most powerful aspect of the game - Special Summoning.  Some cards even prevent your opponent from playing, or limit them.

Floodgates are commonly called Prison Cards as they lock the opponent out from either playing the game, or an aspect of the game.  Let's look at the floodgates in the TCG and how they pertain to custom cards.

* The Dark Door
* Mask of Restrict
* Gozen Match
* Imperial Iron Wall
* Macro Cosmos
* Rivalry of Warlords
* There can only be One

The Dark Door only allows 1 monster to attack during each Battle Phase. This is not meta relevant, and there are S/T removal that can deal with this.  It is only good at slowing down the duel pace, but not enough to take away the game at all.  A multi-attacker can be an out to this. Weak to moderate in terms of strength.

Mask of Restrict is a floodgate that prevents Tributes.  Even so, not everyone Tribute Summons nowadays, so this floodgate is very weak. Even if a custom archetype wants to focus Tribute Summoning, they will include 1 S/T removal to deal with it, so it's not a problem.

Gozen Match only allows your opponent to control only 1 Attribute of monster.  This is moderate in terms of a floodgate, as it forces the opponent to play decks that center around 1 Attribute or lose the game unless they have S/T removal. The same is true for Rivalry of Warlords - if they do not play a deck that centers around 1 monster Type, they will be forced to admit defeat.  Avoid these two in terms of custom card design in general.

Imperial Iron Wall is a prison card that prevents players from banishing cards.  Although there are some decks that rely on banishing, not everyone plays custom archetype(s) that have a banish focus.  In terms of strength it is moderate, as it shuts down banishing in general.  Doesn't stop the opponent from playing the game though, as not all cards in the TCG deal with banish removal.

Macro Cosmos is the strongest floodgate as it shuts down the GY.  The GY can be seen as a second hand/resource to some decks, and using it cripples the TCG meta.  For this reason, it was limited. Avoid this when making custom cards.

There can Only be One forces you to play a deck with different monster Types or be forced to lose the game.  Avoid this when making custom cards.

# Card Advantage

*Another concept that i thought might be useful to learn for people making customs is: Dont be afraid of card advantage. I see people always being hella scared of giving cards effects that allow them to draw cards, specially when those effects allow them to go +1, when in reality, a card that draws card and allows you to go +1 (Like, for example, a spell that draws you 2 cards) isnt inherently strong. To prove my point, look at Pot of Avarice. Pot of Avarice is a spell that's legal at 3 copies, sees next to no use, and has an effect that says* "Target 5 monsters in your GY; shuffle all 5 into the Deck, then draw 2 cards.". *Its not like its an imposible condition to meet, in fact, about any modern Link Climbing deck could easily use a Pot of Avarice they drawn at some point in their combo. What makes a card strong and heavily played, what makes Pot of Desires an extremely popular card while Pot of Avarice is plain up not used, isnt wether those cards allow you to go +1, but the context of how you go +1 with them*

*Drawing cards isnt necessarily always as strong. There are situations in which the cards you draw have more value, and others in which they have less. As for example, drawing a singular card at the end of you combo is pretty bad, as there are high chances that whatever card you drew will not be live on your hand, either because you already used a copy of it earlier during your combo, thus, having the HOPT on it spent, or because even if you could use it, the extension it would grant you wouldnt be enough to further your plays for far enough to get you an extra form of interaction. In general, as a good rule of thumb, the earlier you make a draw in your turn, the more valuable it is. Drawing cards earlier means that you get to play around them. You might change your lines depending on the access to a different form of extension, such as using a searcher to add an extender after the draw effect gave you the target you'd normally add with that search, to give the most clear example of it. As such, drawing cards later on is weaker than doing so later, given that later you'd be already commited to a certainly line and it would be harder to fit your drawn cards into your combo. This is more or less the root of why Pot of Desires and Extravagance were so strong within the metagame. By drawing cards at the start of your turn, the only scenarios were the drawn cards would have no value whatsoever would be if you drew either a duplicate of a HOPT card or a Garnet, heavily increasing the value in drawing cards from your deck. You are also at the start of you combo, meaning that you're still able to adapt your lines based on the new information and resources that you've got from your draws*

*Another thing, perhaps the most relevant thing, about the value of drawing early on your turn, is interruptions and digging. At the start of your turn, you are attempting to assemble a board, and your opponent is trying to stop you, either through Handtraps or just your regular interruptions. Since they have a set amount of times they can stop one of your cards, adding more resources to your combo is particularly valuable, as it makes so its easier to let your combo go through. On the other hand, adding resources after you managed to combo isnt as valuable, as your opponent already failed to stop you. You are on a winning scenario, getting even more ahead at that point is not gonna make as big of a difference that when you were on a balanced scenario. On the other hand, drawing early on your turn is valuable because it allows you to dig for cards that you might need to be able to combo off, like handtrap hate. Since cards that will draw cards later on need you to be able to combo off first, they dont provide you with any help in those sorts of scenarios. In fact, if you aren able to do so, they will be dead on hand, and will have the same value as having drawn a Garnet, which is to say, none*

*Thus, there is an easy series of things to check when trying to figure out if a card that goes +1 is strong or not (And were not talking about Extra Deck monsters because those are a tad more complex). One, can you activate it as soon as your turn starts? If yes, it might be strong. Two, are the requirements easy to met, and can they be meet even in scenarios were you arent able to combo off? If yes, again, it might be strong. And finally, three, by the moment when the card is able to be activated, do you need to already have commited to a line? Can your deck change plans based on your draws? Does your deck still have resources live in deck to draw by the point were you activate it?*

*That's more or less it. So long as the cards conditions cannot be met at the start of your turn, it will already be hard for it to be straight up broken. If it requires you to combo off, or only can be used near the end of a combo, you'd start to question wether it is even*playable, *as win-more cards dont make for good decks. It takes a bit more experience, specially with monsters that can be summoned from deck or extra deck monsters, to judge the card's power level, but at least for these less flexible cards this should be a good enough guide to follow. Dont fear Draw 2 effects. They are nowhere near as powerful as you'd think*

Do NOT take card advantage as the enemy when designing customs.  Card advantage has always been a part of yugioh as a whole because yugioh is about getting the resources you need via searching and getting back your resource(s) that you've initially used up.  Draw 1 isn't as powerful as you think because the card that you drew may be a garnet/brick at best, as it is a +0 in card advantage at best. Hell, even searchers exist in custom archetypes for a reason - to get the stuff you need in that custom archetype.

Keep in mind that baiting the opponent's handtrap does not make a custom archetype broken.  Baiting is one of the tactics used in yugioh - to falsely trick the opponent into wasting their handtrap.

If we look at Forbidden Droplet in terms of card advantage, you would have to go a -3 at best to optimize the card.  You'd have to send 1 card of each type (Monster, Spell, and Trap) from your hand/field to the GY to make this card able to go through without any interruptions.  Although this is a high risk, the the high reward is that you have 3 cards in your GY that can be used as a second hand if your custom archetype can use the GY as a second hand or activate some GY effects.

Same thing applies with Twin Twisters, you pitch 1 card from your hand to set up your GY to make an attempt to pop up to 2 of your opponent's back row.  In terms of card advantage, it is a -2 (-1 for activating the card, and another -1 for the discard).

# Linear Archetypes

Before we go asking around if your custom archetype is linear or not, we need to get a clearer definition of what you mean by it.  There are two cases

* linear combo wise: The archetype has only one specific combo it can do, and you do that specific combo throughout the game constantly. It does that 1 thing constantly.
* linear end board wise: The archetype has only one specific end board it can do. You do that same endboard throughout the game constantly.  End board components may include negating stuff, plus possibly some disruption.

If you can do multiple things in your archetype, and you do not do the same thing as the game progresses, then you have an archetype that is non-linear both combo wise and end board wise.

*Is it better to have a linear combo and endnoard or not. Because I feel like a linear combo can brick more* A linear combo can brick more because it needs specific pieces in your hand for it to work (i.e. if you do NOT have those specific pieces, then your linear combo ends up becoming inconsistent).  For example, Invoked is about having Aliester and Invocation to Invoke the machine monsters.  Another example is ABC Dragon Buster Turbo (it needs the A-Assault Core, B-Buster Drake, and C- Crush Wyvern) for it to work, as its combo is about getting the titular card by itself and using it to disrupt the opponent.

If a custom archetype is linear, it has a specific way of playing it, and not to mention that the end board that it makes, is constant.  Linear archetypes have a very specific gameplay.

Non-linear custom archetypes tend to focus on versatility and other fun interactions.  Hence there is no specific way to play the archetype.  They still have an end board though, it's just that they are more interactive than linear archetypes.

Linear archetypes are those that have a specific combo and it can be easy to figure out where to correctly hand trap the opponent.  Non-linear archetypes focus on versatility and has ways to extend to deal with pesky hand traps making them harder to interrupt than linear archetypes, or even bait the opponent into wasting their negate.

Whether an archetype is linear or non-linear does NOT mean that the archetype is broken.  Linear simply refers to the fact that the archetype must have a specific combo you must use to end on a specific end board, and non-linear is basically the opposite of linear.

# How to Play an Archetype

For an additional note, say that you are really interested in someone's custom balanced archetype that was posted to the public in terms of design and you want to play with it yourself for fun. How would you go building it? The answers lie in that archetype's tutors (or Stratos - named after the Elemental HERO Stratos) and extenders.  Whatever you want in your hand, you MUST run 3 copies of that card.  For any other card, it must be discussed on a case-by-case basis, and chances are you may want to run less than 3 copy of that card depending on the card's effects.

What you don't want in your hand is called a Garnet.  A brick is something you do not want in your hand as well, as it takes up 1 card in your hand.  However, the archetype's tutors and extenders are not always obvious, so further analysis is required.  A bad way to build an archetype (whether its a TCG one or custom one) is to run 3 copies of everything as you do not always want them in your hand.  Even for the Extra Deck, it applies.  First off, there are 15 slots in the Extra Deck, and if you were to run them at 3 copies max, then that archetype (whether it's custom or not) needs 5 REALLY good Extra Deck monsters, which is rarely the case.

However there are chances that they won't post it to the public.  In that case, try searching somewhere else.  There's got to be something that perks your interest. At best, it's better to stick to your stuff.

# Going First vs Going Second

There are some custom archetypes that work best going 1st (e.g. Trap based Decks like Altergeists and Paleo Frogs) and some that that work going 2nd (e.g Gren Maju Di Eiza and Appliancer Kaiju, Crusadia Kaiju, Mekk-Knights).  However do NOT be frightened if your custom archetype has BOTH going 1st and 2nd components (i.e. can play 1st and 2nd), as this is NOT a way of saying your custom archetype is broken.

Now a going 2nd stuff has lots of things such as United we stand, Mage Power, attacking directly, and multiple attackers with the intent of finishing the opponent off in one hit (hence the term OTK).  They have some board breaking stuff in there.

Now a going 1st deck has disruptions to try to stop  the opponent with their end board with their disruptive effects.

A very versatile custom archetype can do both going 1st and going 2nd stuff.  Just because a custom archetype has a going 1st and 2nd components is not an excuse to say that a custom archetype is broken.  Sometimes a casual archetype can behave as a competitive one, which is good and unusual

Trap based archetype are strictly designed to go 1st (e.g Counter Fairies, Allergist, and Labyrynth - which is about momentum).  You can design that is focused on going 2nd rather than 1st but you would have to find a way to activate the Trap cards from hand on the opponent's turn.

If cards are all over the place, it is impossible to tell what you want your archetype to do.

A linear strategy has 1 set pattern and its combos are constant and can be figured out easily where to drop the hand trap.  A non-linear deck has versatility in order to adapt to the opponent's cards making it harder for the opponent to drop the hand trap.

Negations and Quick Effect (QE) disruptions are an example of going 1st strategies as they try to hinder you from advancing your game plan.  But keep in mind that 1 negate/disruption is NOT strong enough to stop the opponent.

Going 2nd cards are called board breakers as they turn off the opponent's going 1st board in order for you to advance your plays (tho going 1st decks can still stop you from going 2nd).  The following are examples of going 2nd cards:

* multiple attackers
* direct attacks
* massive boosts from Mage Power and United We Stand
* Preventing an opponent's Set Card from being responded to upon activation
* Lightning Storm, MST, Twin Twisters, Harpie's Feather Duster and Raigeki
* turning off the opponent's field via Dark Ruler no More
* Trap Eater (tho that is for formats where Cont. Traps run rampant)
* Forbidden Droplet

An archetype that focuses on checking the opponent's Set back row and forcing their activations a la Bait Doll is strictly going second.

Also one that equips your opponent's monsters is going second.  You can't activate their effects going first.

Mekk-Knights is strictly going second because to summon them, you'd need to know the positions of your opponent's monsters. Which is why they mesh with Invoked to have a chance going first.

Most custom archetype that want to put an explosive turn 1 board full of disruptions (they don't always have to be negates) have a terrible grind game.  The moment that they get Nibiru'ed their end board will be weak.   Even an Ash Blossom or Imperm to them can cripple them even more.

A going 2nd gameplay on the other hand tries to OTK the opponent at the right time.

Always make your custom archetype with this mentality - "I'd like the opponent to break my board going 2nd so I'll make a custom archetype whose turn 1 end board is very reasonable."

If you control no monsters, you can Special Summon this card (from your hand). is a way of saying going 1st. This is building when the opponent's field is not there.

If your opponent controls more monsters than you, you can Special summon this card from your hand is a way of saying going 2nd.  This is building when the opponent has a field present.

Midrange archetypes do NOT care about going 1st or 2nd, so keep this in mind.

For ANY archetype most of the time you want 3 copies of whatever you have in your hand to make your plays for your custom archetype.  These include searchers and things that put stuff on the board, and let's not forget the Special summon from deck, which is incredibly powerful.

You also want to take recycling into consideration which is getting back the resource(s) that were used up.  These include adding from the GY to the hand and Special summoning from the GY.

Now here's the thing - people say that having a plan to play 1st and 2nd on a custom archetype is nothing to be ashamed of. Why do people play Kaijus - so they have a chance if they are forced to go 2nd.  And having BOTH going 1st and 2nd plays does NOT make an archetype broken.

And that's a wrap folks - nothing new here, just a final conclusion to this lesson.  Happy designing custom cards.

# Summaries

In short, to wrap up this list, here's my summary of how to make custom cards.

* First ask yourself, what you want your cards in the archetype as a whole to do.
* Second, you want to ask yourself, what is your game plan of winning.  Keep in mind that all archetypes spam to some degree, hence spam is not a game plan, but rather, 1 part of it.
* Thirdly, make sure all cards in the archetype support your game plan. Using a simple mechanic in mind really helps.
* Fourthly, check your end board via vigorous testing.  If you have 1 negate in the form of a counter trap, don't make any more disruptions.  You don't want to end up like other custom players that say "break my board" or those that don't want you to play the game.
* Lastly, have fun.

Some people have other ways to make a custom archetype.  Here's a summary of how to do it.

* Find what inspires you.
* Use your inspiration to come up with an idea.
* Ask yourself, do you want your custom archetype to perform best going 1st, 2nd, or a mixture of both? Keep in mind going 1st focuses on making an enboard and "controlling" what the opponent does.  Going 2nd has a lot of board breakers (i.e. given an opponent's endboard, can your custom archetype break it?).  This is called making a gameplan.
* Implement your deck according to your inspiration and gameplan.  Test on DuelingBook.

Also as to wrap up everything here that was said before, as this part 1 comes to an end.

To recap, do the following

* Find an idea that isn't focused on too much and use it to make your archetype.  You can also use an archetype whose mechanic has been lost to history such as Morphtronics and implement them.  Like an archetype that sends 1 "X" monster equipped with an "X" Equip Spell for a contact fusion of an "X" monster.
* Make sure that your effects are reasonable and balanced when designing your custom archetype.  Should others deem your archetype weak (something like a yugioh custom card server on disboard), that's alright because you can make support for them as long as the support for it is not bonkers.
* Be warned, if it's something Konami wouldn't make, then do not make it.
* When archetype locking your cards to your archetype, make sure it doesn't end up like Dogmatika effect.
* An archetype can be cohesive and bad, but there is literally nothing wrong with making support for a bad custom archetype.

The bottom line is that you want to avoid the TCG meta when making custom cards.  And also, archetypes should focus on one mechanic and stick with that mechanic (e.g. Union monsters with Level Manipulation that have Synchro Union monsters).  In the Synchro Union monster archetype, the main deck Unions work together with the Synchro Union to create something truly spectacular.