Evolution Analysis

Game name: Evolution

Developer: North Star Games

Play time: 2 hours

Evolution, the card game in a concept of adaptation in the nature. The game was originally a board game published by North Star Games, later they made it an online card game available for Android, IOS and Steam. The mechanic represents the concept of the game perfectly. Looking into the game's mechanic, you will also see that Evolution is also based on the basic biology. This analysis essay will be seeing how Evolution makes the mechanic of the game matches with its concept. And how the game itself teaches player about the rules of nature through the mechanic and dynamic.

Beginning with the basic rules, the units that player plays in the game is called species. Player will have to feed their species to let it survive. In the middle of the screen, there will be a waterhole which players have to place a card on. The number on the top left corner of the card will be the amount of foods added in the waterhole. In this part, player has to think carefully before adding food. Because adding many foods could result in enemy getting more foods than the player can get. Sometimes there are cards with no food or decrease the amount of foods, player can optionally use these cards as they does not have to always add more food every

round. It depends on the situation and how player plans to adapt themselves to give disadvantage to the enemy such as placing less foods so only player's species can eat, but not the enemy. There is no win or lose in each round, just collecting the amount of foods fed to the species and turn them into points for judging the winner at the end. But of course getting more food in each turn does give a positive feeling of having a chance to win the game.

Looking into the details of species, there are population, body size and traits. The population shows how many foods the species can eat in each round, player has to feed the species the amount of foods that reaches the number of population. Player can add more population by placing any card on the population number. But if player did not feed all population, the species will lose the population that has not been fed. If the species loses all population, it will die. But player can still create another species. Still, it is not always good to have a big number of population because sometimes there might not be enough foods to feed the species and that will take player into the disadvantage. This mechanic teaches player what happens when the population exceeds the amount of foods available which is why the greater one survives.

Traits are the cards in player's hand that has different abilities to be played. Each species on the play area can receive up to three traits. Some traits are useful for normal species, some are for carnivore species, and some are for both. Carnivore is also a trait card that when being added to

the species, it will turn into a carnivore and must eat only the normal species. Carnivore cannot eat the food from waterhole. The best situation that player can use the carnivore species would be when the enemy has more species and population, which means the enemy can get more points from the foods. So with carnivore trait, player will be able to decrease enemy's species and population by attacking the enemy's species. But some traits also give protection to the normal species. In this case player will need the trait that can surpass the normal species protection. Player can learn how nature gives the animals their own way to survive by hunting or protecting themselves from the predator by trying different combinations of traits. And the interaction between each trait is accurate to how it works in the real world where animals evolve and adapt themselves to their habitats.

Body size is another factor of protecting the species from carnivore. Player can increase the species' body size by placing any card on the body size number, which is similar to how player increases population number. If the body size of the species is more than the carnivore, the carnivore cannot attack that species unless it has the same body size as the target species or even more than it. Increasing body size is mostly useful in many situations, especially when player plays in a carnivore style. Logically the predator is at disadvantage hunting the prey larger than its own size unless it can grow as big as the prey. Or rather take the prey down with small size, but came in a pack.

To explain clearly how player can learn about the rules of nature, the dynamic would be the best part that explains it. The way player plays the game represents the ecosystem and the adaptation of endemic life. For example, when there are carnivores in the area and they are hunting the population down one by one, what the herbivore species would do is evolving themselves to be immune against the carnivore's attack. So in Evolution, player would add defensive traits for the species to protect them from enemy's carnivore. Or taking a risk by adding carnivore trait and fight back. But if it is herbivore against herbivore, it depends on the number of population and how they help each other to survive. Clearly, playing as herbivore species has to think a lot more than carnivore, because carnivore just waits for an opportunity to attack. But for herbivore, player will have to plan carefully on creating a synergy between the population and species' traits to be able to feed all of them while also trying not to let the enemy get a big number of foods.

In conclusion, Evolution is a card game representing the animals' adaptation in the ecosystem accurately through the gameplay. Player gets to learn and experience the nature of wildlife in each mechanic such as feeding, increasing population, traits, and more. Player will have to create a synergy between all mechanics by themselves and see how well they adapt into the situation of the game to win. Evolution is basically based on the logic of nature which North Star Games did well on teaching player about it.