

A Journey Through the Tarot¹

KEY 0 - THE FOOL

With carefree steps, an apparently naive and innocent youth approaches a precipice, as if oblivious to any possible danger which might lie ahead. In his right hand, he carries a staff, a bindlestiff, on the end of which is a satchel, possibly containing his fortune; and in his left hand, he carries a rose. A little white dog jumps playfully at his feet. Some might think him a vagabond, a wandering minstrel or poet, or a fool.

But notice that his outer garment is richly decorated with a motley display of symbols (the most prominent of which resemble a kind of trefoil or three-part leaf surrounding a yellow wheel with eight red spokes); his boots are yellow; in his cap, he wears a red feather; and his inner vestment is white. The sun is at his back, at an angle of forty-five degrees to the eastern horizon, for traditionally our traveller faces the north-west, the direction of the unknown or of that boundless state which exists just prior to the initiation of a creative process. It is morning, and our hero's sun has yet to reach its zenith.

This is The Fool, the most powerful of all the Tarot trumps. We have referred to it as masculine; but actually, this particular figure embodies characteristics of both the masculine and the feminine. Certainly it. It is Key 0, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. In Chinese philosophy, it is known as Wu-Chi, the ultimate nothingness, the void which precedes conception. Out of this void, both male and female evolve.

The Fool is pictured as a youth because it represents the beginning of a quest, not unlike the young knight Galahad's search for the Holy Grail. The dazzling white of his inner vestment, representing perfect wisdom, is almost Totally concealed by his black cloak of ignorance, with its orangy-red lining of passion and material force. Yet even here, we may be reassured by the patterns which adorn his cloak; for the eight-spoked wheel reminds us that the only permanence is change, while the seven trefoils surrounding each wheel remind us of the divine wisdom which guides the Fool's steps along his way, on his journey towards self-knowledge and self-realization.

In fact, the Fool is "The Divine Fool", the traveller's goal as well as the traveller himself, the embodiment of the realization that life is a journey, not a destination. The yellow of his boots is symbolic of the all-pervading life energy that guides his steps. The wreath of green around his head and the 'feather in his cap show him to be in harmony with both the vegetable and animal kingdoms. He is at peace with the world and at peace with himself. He serves as a model for us to follow as we pursue life's journey. In looking for the answer, he shows us the Way.

¹ The Tarot can be considered a guide to self-actualization. The journey is through the trumps (the Major Arcana) and back again, beginning with the Fool and ending with the Fool. Interpretation of the other cards in the deck (the Minor Arcana) is included for "completeness."

“The royal feast was done. The King sought some new sport to banish care and~ to his jester, cried ‘Sir Fool, kneel now and make for us a prayer.’ The jester doft his cap-and-bells, and stood the mocking court before. They little saw the bitter smile behind the painted grin he wore. He bowed his head and bent his knee upon the monarch’s silken stool. His pleading voice arose, ‘Oh Lord, be merciful to me, a fool. ’Tis not by guilt the onward sweep of truth and right, oh Lord, we stay. Tis by our follies that so long we hold the earth from heaven away. These clumsy feet, still in the mire, go crushing blossoms without end. These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust among the heartstrings of a friend. The unkind word we might have kept, who knows how harsh it pierced and stung. The word we had not sense to say, who knows how grandly it had rung. Our faults no tenderness should ask. The chastening stripes must cleanse them all. But for our follies, oh, in shame before the eyes of heaven we fall.’ The room was hushed. In silence rose the king and sought his gardens cool. And walked apart and murmured low, ‘Be merciful to me, a fool.’”

The Fool reversed is the most desirable outcome of all. Translation: deification. “Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.”

KEY 1 - THE MAGICIAN

A long time ago, human nature was divided into two parts, an executive part called a god and a follower part called a man. Neither part was conscious. The man simply lived his life without thinking about it, and the god-part spoke to him from time to time, as one person to another, to provide him with directions about what he should do. It wasn’t until language had evolved to a certain extent, probably about 2500 B.C.E., that consciousness began to evolve. It was at this time that the gods began to disappear from the earth and to be thought of as located in the heavens, and winged beings, angels, began to appear as intermediaries between the vanishing gods and their forlorn followers. In addition, demons began to appear and needed to be defended against, and a priestly caste arose. In Persia, they were known as the Magi, or Magicians.

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he that is; born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east.. and are come to worship him.’” From these few sentences in St. Matthew, a whole legend developed during the Middle Ages. The wise men became th~ee in number, were promoted to kings, and finally, during the sixth century, acquired the names of Meichior, Caspar, and Balthazar which, in Syriac tradition, are Persian and associated with Persian religious history.

The term “magic” is derived from the Greek “mageia,” meaning the occult learning and practices of the Persian Magi. This magic is not merely an irrational substitute for a riot-yet-developed science; it was, and continues to be, an active attempt at mastery of a none-too-friendly world. But where the ancient Persians read the entrails of sacrificial animals and studied the star-gods in an attempt to obtain protection against the dangers and misfortunes of their primitive world, modern men and women read the Tarot cards and study astrology in an attempt to learn more about themselves, so that they can take a more active role in creating their own fortunes and

misfortunes -- not in an attempt to abdicate responsibility but, rather, in an effort to assume a more active role in determining their fate.

Which brings us to our Magician of the Tarot. The Magician is the first step on our path towards self-knowledge and self-realization. He symbolizes will-to-power, our desire to re-establish contact with our God-nature. His divinatory meaning is initiative, activity, and potency.. Notice his magic wand, a phallic symbol which he holds erect, symbolizing his acceptance and application of conscious authority. And while his right hand is raised towards heaven, his left hand is pointing to the earth, as if to show that he stands as a link between heaven and earth..

His inner robe is white, symbolic of purity; his outer robe is red, symbolic of passion. About his waist is a Uroborus, the serpent devouring its own tail, symbolic not only of narcissistic self-absorption but also of individuation as a circular, self-contained process. Above his head is the Lemniscate, the sign for infinity, reminding us of the ceaseless interaction of opposites, endlessly changing into one another, as sure as night follows day and day follows night. Before him on a table are the implements of his trade, the symbols of the four Tarot suits – pentacles or coins, swords, cups, and wands – signifying that they are the focus of his attention. He stands in a garden of lilies and roses, suggesting his cultivation of purity and passion.

The Magician is number one among the Tarot trumps (or triumphs); he indicates the beginning of ego-consciousness, the first active step along the Way.

As the magician heralds the beginning of ego-consciousness, the Magician Reversed heralds its end. Now, as we near the end of our journey, we begin to approach the world-soul. At this stage of development, the seeker no longer needs to defend his or her puny self, for he or she has found the eternal power of the Self. The Magician Reversed is a sign of transcendence and the freedom which it brings.

KEY 2 - THE HIGH PRIESTESS

A young woman sits between two pillars, on which are inscribed the letters B and J. She is dressed in flowing robes of blue; and on her lap, she holds a scroll. Her throne is a cubic stone; and the cross suspended on her breast, a solar cross. At her feet, we see a lunar crescent; and on her head, a silver crown composed of crescents with a globe between. Behind her is a curtain or a veil decorated with pomegranates and palms. She is the High Priestess, one of the highest and holiest trumps of the major arcana, symbol of the archetypal virgin.

An archetype is an inborn tendency to form representations of dominant themes in life, as the ancient Greeks did in their myth of Artemis, whom the Romans called Diana the Chaste. Artemis and Apollo were the children of Zeus, the king of the gods. When Artemis was just a child playing on her father's knee, Zeus asked her if there was any present that he could give her; and she immediately replied that she wanted a bow and arrow like those of her brother Apollo, a hunting tunic with a red-hem, twenty river nymphs to care for her hounds, all the mountains in

the world, eternal virginity, and sixty maids of honour. Zeus granted her wish, and it wasn't long before she roamed the hills as free as a bird. It was there that young Actaeon, the son of the king of Thebes, saw her bathing in a mountain stream; and there that she changed him into a stag and, having chased him down, let her hounds tear him apart.

Artemis/Diana also had her compassionate side, however, for it was Diana who, some years later, sent her daughter, Aradia, to teach men and women the secrets of witchcraft, because she felt that they needed a defence against the Church and the aristocracy who were treating them so cruelly at the time. So there are depths to this young woman which are not immediately apparent. Fortunately, we may gain a glimpse of them through examination of the symbols on her card.

The pillars between which she sits are the columns of Boaz and Jachin which, according to tradition, stood at either end of the veil of the Temple of Solomon. They represent severity and mercy, and the location of the High Priestess signifies her power to mediate between them. The blue of her flowing robes is symbolic of water which, in turn, is symbolic of the unconscious, the feminine side of the personality, and intuitive wisdom. The scroll which she holds on her lap is the scroll of Sophia or Wisdom, the feminine side of the godhead.

The High Priestess Reversed is one of the most desirable outcomes of all, for she represents the temple harlot. She reverses all our feminine ideals, so that we may reach a deeper understanding of the Feminine in life. Like the Fool, she bursts in where angels fear to tread, bringing a message which cannot be made conscious but can only be lived. She speaks from the depths of the soul to all those who will listen, and she tells of a bodily wisdom which the seeker is enjoined to tap.

KEY 3 - THE EMPRESS

A handsome matron, seated on a velvet couch in the midst of a lush garden, and wearing a gown decorated with pomegranates. Around her golden hair, she wears a myrtle wreath and crown of stars; and in her hand, she holds a sceptre surmounted by a globe. Near her feet, there rests a shield; and on her shield, the symbol of Venus. A field of wheat is ripening in front of her; and behind, we see a forest and a waterfall. She is the Empress (literally, "she who sets in order"), representing the helter-skelter, prolific fertility of Mother Nature.

The velvet couch on which the Empress sits enthroned reminds us that she rules by love. Like Venus who, in addition to being goddess of love and beauty, was also mother of the Roman people, the Empress is madonna (literally, "My Lady"), through choice an active partner in procreativity. The garden recalls her earliest role as goddess of the springtime, of gardens and the vine. The pomegranate motif on her gown is symbolic of fecundity and of the feminine. The yellow of her hair is the colour of light, of life-breath, and of creativity.

Her diadem consists of twelve six-pointed stars. Like the sceptre which she holds, it shows she has dominion over the seasons of our lives. She is the queen of this world and of time, although

not queen of the universe nor of that spiritual land beyond time. The shield at her feet is in the shape of a heart, at once a symbol of love and of the one longing for the other. In the Empress, then, lies the reconciliation of contraries; it is through her sacrifice that male and female may be joined; she is the doorway to life.

Yet there is another side to this woman (as there is to all), for Venus was also regarded as the goddess of the dead; and this we may learn about through consideration of the wheat growing at her feet. Grain is sacred to the Roman goddess Ceres (from whom we get the term “cereal”), and Ceres was the Roman equivalent of the Greek goddess Demeter, whose daughter Kore was seized by Hades and carried off to his underworld kingdom where she came to rule as queen of the dead. In grief and in revenge, Demeter forbade the plants to grow until her daughter was returned to her. With intercession from the gods, Hades eventually agreed to let Kore return to her mother, but only because she had been so unhappy with him that she refused to eat anything until allowed to go free. As she was setting out for home, however, one of Hades’ gardeners observed that she had indeed eaten something while his captive – seven seeds of the pomegranate tree – and Demeter had to agree to a compromise whereby Kore would return to the halls of the underworld for three months out of every twelve. But the grain doesn’t grow during that three months of the year.

Now, in growing up, each of us passed through a depressive phase reminiscent of her loss of her mother. From a scientific point of view, this can be seen as being related to loss of the mythical “good mother” when the child first becomes aware that there is only one mother and that she is neither all good nor all bad, but some of both. This loss can be seen, however, from a different perspective, the suppression and loss of the physical self which all too often accompanies the socialization of the child. In celebration of her daughter’s return, Demeter instructed her worshippers at Eleusis in her mysteries, which represented an attempt to regain the once-known wholeness within man’s nature, to heal the split between intellect and the repressed physical eroticism of the very young child.

The Empress, then, offers us an invitation to life, a very full life.

The Empress Reversed signifies “the dark night of the soul”. Strength is lost and inertia sets in. If the work which you have been actively engaged in has sufficient merit, however, it will be carried on through inertia alone.

KEY 4 - THE EMPEROR

A crowned monarch. Stately. Seated on a throne. The archetypal father figure. He is wearing armour covered with a red robe. In his right hand, he holds a sceptre in the form of a Tau cross and circle; and in his left, he holds an orb. His throne is solid, and decorated with rams’ heads. There is a ram’s head pattern on the left shoulder of his robe as well. In the background, we can see mountains, and a sky of orangy-red.

The Emperor is the fourth of the Tarot trumps: Key 0 is the no-thing out of which everything is created, Key 1 is active mastery and Key 2 is intuitive wisdom, Key 3 is reconciliation of contraries and Key 4 is consolidation of wholeness. This monarch institutes the masculine rule of reason over nature. He is come to bring order and to defend civilization against barbarity, much like King Arthur in the legends of old.

His armour represents his strength and determination to defend his realm. The red of his robe is symbolic of his passion, drive, and endurance, those qualities that make for love of life and love of adventure. The sceptre in his right hand is the crux ansata or ankh, the Egyptian sign of life and generativity. The orb in his left hand signifies his dominion over this world. The rams' heads on his throne and on the shoulder of his robe, the astrological sign for Aries, and the orangy-red colour of the sky, suggest the exaltation of the Sun in Aries, indicating that the Emperor's Sun (i.e., spirit, will, vitality) is most powerfully-asserted in the first house of the horoscope, Aries (i.e., in the shaping of his personality in infancy). The mountains in the background are cold, forbidding heights, symbolic at once of the Emperor's loftiness of spirit and of the sterility of reason unless it is combined with love.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God”. Now, with the advent of the Emperor, the power of the Word is conveyed upon humanity. It is only as thoughts are expressed in words that we are able to gain perspective on our experiences, to understand them, and to use this understanding to “bind time” – in effect, to make time work for us. The Emperor is our introduction to the world of words and ideas; and yet, he is at the same time a wise and benevolent ruler. In him, the world of feelings has not been overthrown but merely subordinated to the world of thought.

“The subjects of the best rulers perceive no government. The next best are loved and praised.. Still lesser ones are feared; and lesser still, despised. The truly great rulers just do their job, and their subjects do their own.”

The Emperor is a mature and stabilizing influence, and it is in that capacity alone that we should let him rule our lives.

When The Emperor appears in the Reversed position, it is a sign that the world of ideas has been subordinated to the world of spirit, the rule of natural wisdom over thought. The loss of control is not to be mourned.

KEY 5 - THE HIEROPHANT

Between two pillars, a figure sits in priestly robes; and before him kneel two tonsured priests, their vestments decorated with roses and lilies. His right hand is raised in benediction (although this has also been known as the sign of esoterism, distinguishing between the visible and the more concealed parts of the doctrine). In his left hand, he holds a sceptre terminating in a triple cross; and on his head, he wears a triple crown. At his feet are shown a set of crossed keys, and a

cross and circle motif.

He is the Pope or Hierophant, fifth of the twenty-two Tarot trumps, revealer of sacred mysteries. The pillars between which he sits have generally been regarded as phallic symbols, while the design on their capitals is at once symbolic of femininity and of union. In the Roman tradition, the various items of clothing of the priest are symbolic of Christian service. The amice or “helmet of salvation” is a shawl, symbolic of protection against evil thoughts. The alb is a flowing robe of white linen, worn over the amice and symbolic of purity of mind and soul. The chasuble, the outer garment covering nearly all the others, symbolizes the yoke of service; its colour red symbolizes blood (of the martyrs) and fire (of the Holy Ghost). The roses and lilies on the vestments of the priests are symbolic of passion and purity.

The triple-crossed, golden sceptre is his staff of office, showing his dominion over the three worlds of body, spirit, and soul. That he holds it in his left hand shows that he rules from the heart rather than through force of will. This same theme is continued in his golden triple crown; while the crown, itself, is decorated with three rows of trefoils, symbolic of the three worlds as well as of the Trinity (i.e., Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The crossed keys at his feet are the Keys of St. Peter, indicating his authority over spiritual matters, at least insofar as they are embodied in the Church. Their golden colour, in this context, is symbolic of philosophical wisdom. The cross and circle motif decorating the carpet underneath his feet is the solar wheel, representing Sol Invictus (Mithras), the Persian god of wisdom whose mid-winter festival led to our celebration of Christmas on the 25th of December.

Now, the Name of God (Jehovah) consists of four letters: Yod, Heh, Vau, and Heh – I.H.V.H. – and in ancient Hebrew tradition, these four letters are given the deepest symbolic meaning. The first letter expresses the active principle, the beginning or first cause, motion, energy, “I”; the second letter expresses the passive element, inertia, quietude, “not I”; the third, the balance of opposites, form; and the fourth, the result or manifest energy. Since all things in the world consist of these four principles, all things consist of the Name of God. When man finds these four principles in phenomena of quite different categories, therefore, he begins to see similarities which he had not seen before; his consciousness is expanded, and gradually, he becomes convinced that God is present in all things. According to tradition, however, there is a fifth principle which is also present in all things, the quintessence or most essential element in any substance, and this is the heavenly spirit which is latent in all things. It is this fifth principle or essential element to which our attention is directed by Ley A, the Hierophant, purveyor of sacred truth. For man is also represented by the number 5, the quintessence acting upon matter (i.e., 4 + 1); and it is through our expansion of consciousness inwardly that we will come to find this heavenly spirit within ourselves.

The Hierophant Reversed is the sign of “ingenious unorthodoxy” and nonconformity, the breaking of icons and the slaying of sacred cows, and freedom from conventions. The seeker, however, is advised to try not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

KEY 6 - THE LOVERS

A man and woman stand unveiled before a great, winged, golden figure with flowing robes and hair of flame. The figure's hands are raised as if in blessing. Behind the woman, a snake winds round an 'apple' tree. Behind the man, we see a tree with flaming fruit. The sky is blue; the sun is in its zenith. In the distance, a mountain peak rises to meet the sky.

The couple represent Eve and Adam; the great winged figure is the angel Gabriel! the tenth and last of the great Archangel intellects which emanate from God. He rules the moon and all that dwell below it; hence, he is the Angel of Humanity, chief among guardian angels. It was he who brought to Mary the annunciation that she would be the mother of Jesus, and he who brought to Mohammed the words of the Koran; and at the final trump, it is he who will signal the resurrection of mankind. He is known as Active Intelligence. The purple of his robe depicts his spirituality and power. The red and green of his flaming hair portray his active sympathy for the couple before him, his care for them on the journey they face.

This is the sixth of the Tarot trumps, only indirectly a symbol of love. Rather, it is the card of Choice. It is said that "God created Adam Lord of all Living Creatures, but Eve spoiled it all": but that is much too simplistic a view of the relation between God and his creations. The true story is somewhat as follows: After man and woman had been created, Satan spoke to God, saying, Send me to redeem mankind; I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that not one soul shall be lost; therefore, give me thine honour. But Jesus said, Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Therefore, because that Satan rebelled against God and sought to destroy the agency of man, which God had given him, and because he wanted God to give him the power and glory, God caused him to be cast down, and he became Satan, the devil, the father of lies. Now, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, and Satan put into the heart of the serpent to beguile Eve, because he was not aware of God's plan of salvation and he sought to destroy the world. And the serpent asked Eve about God's word concerning the fruit of the trees in the garden of Eden, and she replied that He had said that they could eat of any tree except the one which stood in the middle of the garden, on pain of death. Then the serpent replied that God had told them not to eat of the fruit of that particular tree because He knew that the day they did so their eyes would be opened, and they would become as gods, knowing good from evil. So Eve took the fruit and ate it, 'and she gave some to Adam and he ate it, and their eyes were opened. And God cursed the serpent, and He sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, and He placed Cherubim to guard the way lest they eat of the fruit of the tree of life and live forever. The sun is always representative of the manifestation of God, or man in the image of God. The "apple tree behind the woman is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; while the tree behind the man is the tree of life, its twelve triunate flames symbolic of eternal life (i.e., the continual round of the zodiac, the twelve flames signifying the twelve signs of the zodiac, each subdivided into three decanates). The mountain rising in the distance is the peak they have to climb, the Great Work they have to do to be re-united with their God. But man has always found it hard to do the things he must to have the joy that was his destiny; and sadder still, has always found it hard to accept responsibility for the choices which he makes – remember that Adam blamed Eve for giving him the apple, and Eve blamed the serpent – and like Satan desires salvation for mankind without the risk. The Lovers tell us that such cowardice is not God's plan

for man. Responsibility is desired, but choice is required.

When the Lovers are Reversed, the die has been cast (pun intended – by eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve, in effect, chose to die. Then, they experience “the little death,” i.e., sex, which is their lot in life). It is through this life and death, however, that they will eventually win their immortality. The seeker, then, is advised to choose wisely in situations which (always) involve sexuality.

KEY 7 - THE CHARIOT

A princely figure with spear in hand stands within a canopied chariot which is drawn by two sphinxes, one black and the other white. On his head, he wears a myrtle wreath and crown, and on the crown, a star. His epaulets are formed of crescent moons, and on his chest there sits a shining square. His skirt and belt are decorated with strange signs. On the front of his chariot we see a golden globe with wings, and a shield with wheel and axle crest. In the foreground, we see grass, and a river; and in the background, trees and a city of towers and of battlements.

This is the Chariot, seventh of the Tarot trumps (or triumphs). It recalls the festival-processions of ancient Rome, the highest honour which could be bestowed upon a victorious commander. Who is this young warrior, and what is his victory? He is our perennial personal hero, at the point of final conquest of the realm of the gods, and about to embark on a new quest within the realm of here-and-now humanity. To understand his task, it may be necessary first to map our journey through the Tarot trumps. Considered from the standpoint of an attempt to attain self-realization, the Fool pursues a course through three rows of seven trumps, beginning with the Magician and ending with the World. The first row is known as the realm of the gods because its pictures represent so many of our childhood gods. The second row is known as the realm of here-and-now humanity because so many of its cards depict the situations man must face in order to firmly establish his identity in the world of here-and-now. The third row is the realm of self-realization because it is here that our hero will come to find himself if he is to do so at all.

The number seven of this card is symbolic of completion of one phase of existence and a temporary pause before entering some new condition of the soul, or of some new level of awareness of the realities of life. Its accompanying symbolism merely enforces and reinforces this basic idea. The chariot (i.e., as opposed to the Chariot) is symbolic of the causal body, that inner capacity which we have for incarnating God. The charioteer is the spiritual ego, the mind at the beginning of wisdom, truth, and love. In this card, the starry canopy is a symbol of the spirit struggling against darkness; the winged globe and the wheel and axle are symbolic of aspiration and uniting of opposites in action. The sphinxes are perhaps as enigmatic as ever. As mythical beings composed of parts of a human being and parts of various animals, they share the meaning of the number seven (i.e., three and four, the holy and the profane). At the same time, they hint at multiplicity and fragmentation of the One; and being opposites in colour (and in nature), they remind us that the whole of progress is achieved through dynamic interplay

between a diversity of trends. This same theme is echoed in the background city and the trees. The myrtle wreath is symbolic of a victory of sorts, as is the crown; and its eight-pointed star suggests at once the balance of opposites, baptism into a new being, realization of freedom from the world of ideals, movement towards the supreme being, and the work yet to be done. The crescent moons are another complex symbol, pulling us hither and yon: they remind us of the nether world and of those physical desires through which we become most fully human, and of their working out; and they recall Aaron's garments, and particularly the breastplate of love and wisdom through which he became worthy to judge the children of men. The shining square upon his breast is representative of purity and order, while the skirt and belt suggest triumph of spirit and of time over the forces of this world.

The Chariot, then, is to be considered a most important trump, symbolizing the beginning willingness to assume responsibility for living in the here-and-now.

The Chariot Reversed is most fortunate. Like the Chariot itself, it symbolizes the beginning willingness to assume responsibility for one's own life, but in a different sense than when the card appears in its upright position. Now our hero is once again in the realm of the gods, but as apprentice to them rather than ruled by them. This is his genius (or perhaps it would be more correct to say *genii*, since the spirits are plural), that he is ready to begin to assimilate into himself the guiding spirits which dwell within his Self. He is ready to begin to assume responsibility not only for what he does but also for what he is and is to be.

KEY 8 - STRENGTH

A woman, gowned in flowing white robe and festooned with garlands, appears to be gentling a lion. Above her head, the lemniscate; in the background, trees and a blue mountain. The setting is idyllic. The yellow sky is symbolic of intellect; the mountain, of man's reaching up to God. This is a card of strength; but whose strength is being portrayed by this card? Is it the lion or the lady? Let us consider them both. Leo, the lion, is the fifth house of the zodiac, governing pride, the affections, creativity and confidence, extroversion, leadership, generosity and nobility. The Sun rules in Leo (i.e., is most sympathetic to the qualities of Leo), and its ruddy glow (symbolic of spirit, energy, and vitality) is most prominent when Leo is in the ascendant (i.e., during mid-summer). Then Leo's are most fully come into their own.. Like the lion, the Leo then is truly "king-of beasts". And his beastly energies, vital to the completeness of any well-rounded life, are reflected in the number of this card (i.e., eight is symbolic of entrance into a new condition of the soul).

And what of the lady? Her gown is purity; and the flowers in her hair and round her waist, are symbolic of the virtues with which the individual is potentially endowed and which through strength of character can be made to blossom forth. "Because her heart was pure, her strength was as the strength of ten." She reminds us of that ancient story of "Beauty and the Beast" in which, through loving acceptance, the beast is not only tamed but is transformed as well. Perhaps the lemniscate above her head, symbolic of eternity, is meant to remind us of the time it

takes to tame the beast within ourselves.

In this world of here-and-now humanity, this magical lady represents the unconscious feminine side of our hero's personality (or heightened and enhanced consciousness if our heroine is female). With her help, we can learn to tame the monster within, the animal nature which we can suppress but not deny. Symbolically, this means that the unconscious is now in charge of a beginning rapprochement between our hero's intellect and the more primitive instinctual elements within his personality (or that the feminine side of our heroine's personality has taken on that same role).

This is a most encouraging card, signifying time to take a stand for what *at an emotional level* is known to be right.

The Reversal of Strength is weakness, perhaps a lack of nerve or a lack of conviction or, on the other hand, perhaps merely an embracing of some of the more traditional "feminine" virtues such as caring and sharing. The seeker may find that he or she is "distancing" from others, no more intimate with them than with himself or herself, or merging with them more than might be desirable. Indeed, strength must be found to stand alone and isolated in the universe – interdependent, perhaps, rather than co-dependent.

KEY 9 - THE HERMIT

An ancient man stands at the summit of a mountain. In his left hand, he holds a staff; in his right, he upholds a lantern in which shines a star.

This is the Hermit, ninth of the Tarot trumps. And nine is a magical number, symbolic of attainment, of completion. He is no longer a seeker after truth; he holds his lantern high to show others the Way. His light is bright, and we may follow if we will.

But where does he lead? The answer to that question is reflected in the star which shines within. Composed of two intertwining trines, it symbolizes the desire of spirit for matter (the triangle with its apex pointing down) and the desire of matter for spirit (the triangle with its apex pointing up). Like the vagina-symbol of the mandorla, which is composed of two intersecting curves, it symbolizes interpenetration of "the two", a coupling of spirit and matter not unlike Christ's union with the Church, His bride. "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars... A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."

In the Christian mystical tradition, it is to the whole man that God calls, and it is the whole man who responds. That is, the religious experience is first of all experience; this religious experience is to be found within the bottom of the soul where God is found; and the bottom of the soul is to be found within full humanness. Christian mysticism is at once human, earthy, passionate, and wild - in the sense of being free to love. As Baba Rain Dass says, it is important to Be Here Now.

There is a book by Sheldon Kopp which is entitled "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." The suggestion is that a grown up can be no man's disciple. Or consider the words of Lao Tsze (Lao Tzu), "Abandon learning, and your mind will not be vexed by doubt. Though tight the net of words may bind, how surely Truth slips out." The Hermit Reversed reiterates this basic message; At some point in time, the seeker will need to come to terms with the wisdom of the unconscious, which is not to be found anywhere in the world except within.

KEY 10 - THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

In the middle of the sky, a wheel; and on the wheel, strange designs. Above it, a sphinx with drawn sword. A serpent descending, and Anubis rising. In the four corners of the card, we see winged golden beings in the form of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, each with an open book. Like the sphinx, the sky is blue.

This is the Wheel of Fortune, tenth Tarot trump and harbinger of change. "Oh, wheel of fortune, turning around. What goes up, must come down." And conversely, what goes down, must come up. There is a story of an eastern potentate who, on the eve of his wedding to the most beautiful girl in his kingdom, was given a golden ring by his closest friend and grand vizier; and within the ring were inscribed the words, "This too shall change." The potentate was furious and, without even asking for an explanation, ordered that his friend be exiled from the state on pain of death. Both hurt and confused by this apparent betrayal, he just could not understand. But as the years rolled by, and as his, fortunes rose and fell and rose again, he came to see the wisdom in the gift, and to realize that the only real permanence in life is change itself. "Sic transit gloria mundi."

OZYMANDIAS of EGYPT

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said:—Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains: round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

In Greek mythology, the king of the gods had given one of his daughters, Tyche, power to decide what fortune each mortal should receive; and Tyche is a most irresponsible goddess. On some she heaps gifts as if from a horn of plenty, while others she deprives of even the bare necessities of life. But if it happens that a man whom she has favoured is guilty of an overweening pride, and neither sacrifices to the gods nor shares his wealth with poorer fellow-citizens, the goddess Nemesis steps in to even up the score. Nemesis carries an apple-bough in one hand and a wheel in the other. That the wheel was originally the solar year is suggested by the name by which the Romans knew her: Fortuna, "she who turns the year around." When the wheel had turned half-circle, the sacred king (winner of the Olympic games, by which he became husband of the high priestess of the mother goddess) was sacrificed so that the world could be renewed again. Originally the prize in the contest by means of which he had become king, the apple-bough became the dead king's passport into Elysium, i.e., into heaven.

The symbols on the wheel are of three kinds. First, there are the letters TARO at the four points of the compass, for which Paul Foster Case has suggested the following transformation: ROTA TARO ORAT TORA ATOR which, in translation, says "The Tarot speaks the Law of Hathor" or, since Hathor was Egyptian goddess of love and death, the two constants on the wheel of change, "The Tarot speaks the law of nature." Incidentally, Hathor was also known as the Eye of Ra; a somewhat vengeful aspect of the sun-god. The second set of letters on the wheel, reading from the upper right hand corner of the card, are Yod, Heh, Vau, Heh, the Hebrew letters which together make up the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God. They remind us that the Wheel of Fortune is also under the mercy of His eye. The third set of symbols, which adorn the spokes of the wheel are the alchemical symbols for (reading counterclockwise from the top) mercury, salt, water, and sulphur. Alchemy is (or was) a process for transmuting lead into gold or, from the standpoint of psychology, for freeing the Self from the world of matter (illusion) so that it may ascend to its original state of undivided unity. Mercurius is the Self at the beginning and the end of the process; salt is the prima materia in its passive state prior to impregnation by the Spirit; water stands for dissolution of the ego to release the true Self; and sulphur is the evolving spirit returning to the One. The same involuting/evolving sequence is portrayed in the descending serpent (Set or Typhon, god of darkness) and the jackal-headed Anubis, conductor of souls. The sphinx at the top of the wheel represents Horus, god of resurrection, with his sword of justice and/or judgment.

The four winged golden beings are derived from the vision of Ezekiel 1:10, and are known as tetramorphs. They are symbolic of the four planes of manifestation which constitute the arena of life in the present cycle of spiritual evolution. When the gods created cosmos out of chaos, they placed archers at the four points of the compass to ensure that none would disrupt the cosmic order. In Christian symbolism, the four evangelists fulfill that same role for the truth and order

of Christ. The winged man is associated with St. Matthew and with water and with the intuitive knowledge of truth; the lion is St. Mark, fire, courage and strength; the ox is St. Luke, earth, forbearance and sacrifice; and the eagle is St. John, air, intelligence and action.

According to Ouspensky, the Tarot is a summary of the Hermetic sciences – the Qabala, Alchemy, Astrology, and Magic – all of which represent parallel systems of investigation of the world of noumena (God, the world of Spirit) and phenomena (the visible, physical world). Each in its own way attempts to break the “enchanted circle” of conception which binds us to the wheel of life. In the Qabala, the four letters in the name of God, representing the four principles underlying creation, are to be found everywhere. If, then, God is to be found everywhere, all should be analogous to all, and the most humble particle analogous to God. The name of God, the Word or Logos is responsible for creation. Logos means reason, and thus there is one and the same reason behind the whole of creation. Corresponding to the first four principles or the four letters of the name of God, or the four alchemical elements, or the four classes of spirits, the Tarot has four suits – cups, wands, pentacles, and swords. Thus every suit represents one of the planes of manifestation of life, one of the first four principles, one of the elements, and one of the fixed stars of the zodiac, and each controls one class of spirits – the cups are water or undines (water nymphs), the wands are fire or elves, the pentacles are earth or gnomes, and the swords are air or sylphs. The Tarot, then, is summarized within this card, as is the whole of creation.

Its divinatory meaning is fortune (good or bad), chance, change, and particularly the working out of Karma. It suggests the work of forces beyond one’s control and the need to obtain a balance between the opposing forces in one’s life if he or she is to understand the turning of the wheel.

The Wheel of Fortune Reversed: it is not easy to understand the turnings of the Wheel of Fortune, but in the reversal of this card is to be found a reminder of the message which has just been given above. In this world, we are subject to the Wheel of Fortune, i.e., chance, change, and the working out of karma, and we need to strive a balance between the opposing forces in our lives if we are to understand the turning of the wheel.

KEY 11 - JUSTICE:

A lady sits enthroned between two pillars. In her right hand, she holds a sword; and in her left, a scales. She wears an inner garment of green, a gown of red, and a robe of green. On her head, she wears a crown in the front of which is set a small green stone. Between the pillars is hung a purple curtain.

In Greek mythology, the first gods to be created out of Chaos were Gaia and Ouranos, whom the Romans called Gaea and Uranus, goddess of the earth and god of the sky. Many of the children of this ancient couple were ferocious beings of tremendous size, probably representing the destructive forces of nature; but the most important of these giant offspring were a group of creatures known as Titans and Titanesses, the most powerful of which was Cronus, Father Time. He led a revolt against his father and assumed the kingship in his stead; and in time, his own son,

Zeus, ousted him as well. Now, Zeus was married to Hera, but he was as immoral as he was immortal, and he fathered children on everything in sight. One of his sons, by the Titaness, Maia (one of the daughters of Atlas), was Hermes, later known as Hermes Trismegistus, who was to become the father of hermetic science, which includes the Tarot. Aphrodite, or Venus as she was known by the Romans, was the daughter of Zeus and Dione (one of the daughters of the Titan, Oceanus). Pallas Athena, goddess of knowledge, was his daughter by the Titaness, Metis. Ares, god of war, was his son by Hera, as was the lame god Hephaestus. And he fathered the graces on Eurynome: the three muses on Mnemosyne; Dionysis on the mortal, Semele; Apollo and Artemis, god and goddess of the sun and moon, respectively, on the Titaness, Latona; and the seasons, the fates, and the star-maiden, Astraea, on the Titaness, Themis, goddess of justice.

Now, much of this occurred within the golden age of history, before the strife among men drove the ancient gods away to a brighter home within the sky. The last to leave was the maiden Astraea, goddess of innocence; and on leaving earth, she took her place among the stars where she became the constellation Virgo (the Virgin). The original constellation was, in time, divided into two, Virgo and Libra, and Themis joined her daughter in the heavens, with her scales of justice.

Our own golden age of innocence, of course, is childhood, our own personal Garden of Eden before we taste the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But we cannot remain in that state of innocence forever, and we have to learn to make choices and to accept the responsibility for them; we have to leave our childhood gods behind and resolve to work out our destinies in the world of here-and-now; we have to learn to accept and love and tame the beast within; we have to learn to live in a world of uncertain values, to do what we believe to be right and let the chips fall where they may

And how can this majestic lady help us? The pillars between which she sits remind us that she is called to mediate between severity and mercy. The upraised sword which she holds in her right hand is a symbol of the action which must follow choice. The scales she holds in her left hand remind us of the balance which we seek between the many conflicting goals that draw our every choice. Their golden colour, like the colour of the lady's hair, reminds us of that solar energy, or light, we hope to bring to bear on the decisions which we make. Her robe is green, as is the gem which adorns her crown, in keeping with her role as Libra, sympathetic, slow to anger, and restrained in action – and bringer of hope. The red of her robe reminds us that wisdom also arises out of action. The purple of the veil is emblematic of the wisdom with which she acts. And since, in the final analysis, we must be the judge of what we do, hopefully it can be emblematic of the wisdom with which we choose as well.

When Justice is Reversed, the seeker should be concerned about his or her own moral values. Is he or she “hung up” on law and order, or on the type of justice which Shylock demanded – the proverbial pound of flesh? This card is a reminder that humankind is best served when mercy tempers justice, whether the miscreant is another or oneself.

KEY 12 - THE HANGED MAN

A golden-haired young man hangs by one foot from a living tree in the form of a Tau cross. His blouse is blue; his leggings red. There is a beatific expression on his face, and a halo shines about his head. This is the Hanged Man, most enigmatic of all the Tarot enigmas. Why is he hanging by one foot? Why the beatific expression on his face? And what can he possibly mean?

“Monday’s child is fair of face, Tuesday’s child is full of grace, Wednesday’s child is full of woe, Thursday’s child has far to go, Friday’s child is loving and giving, Saturday’s child works hard for a living, And the child that is born on the Sabbath day is bonny and blithe and good and gay.” Why is Wednesday’s child full of woe? Because Wednesday is really Woden’s Day, of course, having been named after the Anglo-Saxon god, Woden (or Odin, to call him by his Norse name), all-father and god of agriculture, god of wind and war, and god of trees. As a young man, he hung himself on Yggdrasil, the sacred ash, the World Tree with roots in the underworld (the unconscious) and boughs supporting heaven (enlightenment): “Wounded I hung on a wind-swept gallows for nine long nights. Pierced by a spear, pledged to Odin. Offered, myself to myself.... They gave me no bread, they gave me no mead; I looked down; with a loud cry I took up runes [i.e., words of power]; from that tree I fell.” Traditionally, hanged men have been considered to be sacrificed to Odin on Yggdrasil, the gallows tree; and by custom, traitors have been hanged upside down. Coincidence? Perhaps. But the person who enjoys a reversal of his or her previous attitudes is frequently considered to be a traitor by former friends and family, and yet, sometimes this is the only way for us to “learn runes,” to obtain the power which comes through freeing ourselves from the tyranny of words, and outdated conceptualizations of the world.

Then there is the story of the God who was suspended from a tree, and of his disciple, Peter, who asked to be crucified upside down, and in this way explained his request: “Men whose duty it is to hear, pay attention to what I shall tell you at this very moment that I am hanged up. You must know the mystery of all nature, and the beginning of all things, how it came about. For the first man, whose likeness I have in appearance, in falling head-downwards showed a manner of birth that was not so before; for it was dead, having no movement. He therefore, being drawn down – he who also cast his first being down to the earth – established the whole of this cosmic system, being hung up as an image of the calling, in which he showed what is on the right hand as on the left, and those on the left as on the right, and changed all the signs of their nature, so as to consider fair those things that were not fair, and take those that were really evil to be good. Concerning this the Lord says in a mystery, ‘Unless you make what is on the right hand as what is on the left hand and what is on the left hand as what is on the right and what is above as what is below and what is behind as what is before, you will not recognize the kingdom. This conception, then, I have declared to you, and the form in which you see me hanging is a representation of that man who first came to birth.... and the nail that holds the cross-piece to the upright in the middle is the conversion (or turning point) and repentance of man.’” - Acts of Peter.

Perhaps you have heard the expression “a hung jury,” which refers to a jury that cannot make up its (collective) mind. It hangs suspended, as it were, within a moment of time, unable to get on with life. Sometimes, such a moment in time provides the necessary turning point in a person’s life, a pause when both activity (here represented by the red of our hero’s leggings) and passivity

(represented by the blue) cease, and the wisdom which we have not the wit to win comes to us through the impersonal power of growth, as if from on high, in a moment of peace.

The Hanged Man Reversed: Spinning one's wheels, trying to "force the river" when, in fact, it flows all right all by itself. The seeker needs to be reminded of the words of Lao Tsze, who said: "Goodness and water are the same in that each often runs through lowly spots, unknown to fame, which the self-seeker shuns... The weakest thing in all the world is water; yet its play, between the rocky ledges whirled, grinds the hard rock away. Water does not assert its might, but follows flow and fall: just so, who lives in wisdom's light shall serve and conquer all."

KEY 13 - DEATH

Card Number 13. DEATH. A deathshroud in black armour and mounted on a white horse. He carries a black banner displaying a white rose. A figure in royal robes lies on the ground; a child kneels; a young woman turns away; and a bishop prays. In the background, we can see water and a ship, trees, a cliff, two square towers, and the rising sun.

It isn't by chance that we fear the number thirteen, for it has been the number of death ever since the first Tarot cards were developed. The death's head is a symbol of mortality. The blackness of the figure's armour is symbolic of formality, but it also stands for penitence, the maternal, germination in darkness, and the beginning of all things. The white rose on our black knight's banner is a symbol of perfection and completion. There is, of course, no escape; death comes to all, meet it as we will. Perhaps the river in the background is the River Styx, which forms the western border of the land of Tartarus (Hell), or perhaps it flows to the sea and the ship which sails it bears a funeral pyre like the one prepared for the Norse god Baldur (the ship does look like a Viking ship). Which is not important; but recall Tennyson's immortal lines: "Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me. And may there be no moaning at the bar, when I put out to sea, but such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full for sound and foam, when that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home." The rising sun reminds us that nothing in nature is ever lost, merely transformed, although we often mourn the loss of forms. The twin towers through which it shines are a symbol of elevation or ascent, of spirit returning to its home.

And yet, most of us continue to fear Death, for the reasons run very deep. The newborn baby's high threshold for stimulation protects and isolates him from most of what is going on around him, but by the end of the first month, he is beginning to become more aware of the world around him and to develop memories of his experiences with it. By the end of the second month, the human face has become an object of fascination for him, probably because of its association with relief from discomfort and the experience of pleasure. By the end of the fourth month, he is becoming noticeably socially responsive, and by six to eight months of age, he is ready to begin leaving his mother for the wider world. This brief period of time (from two to six or eight months of age) is known as normal symbiosis because, while the infant is becoming increasingly aware of the existence of his mother and later of the wider world, he has not yet had enough experience to be able to distinguish between himself and her, and he behaves as if he and his

mother were a dual-unity with one common boundary. His first differentiation within this microcosm appears to be between good and bad (i.e., pleasure and discomfort), and only later between good self and good mother and bad self and bad mother. It is later still that he comes to see himself and others as single entities, each composed of good and bad. And when they combine, the wholly good mother is lost, and her loss is mourned by a child who does not know that his hate has not killed her. Thus none escape the fear of death, for if his feelings can kill, so must the feelings of others; but to appease them he must deny himself (literally his Self), which is also experienced as a form of death. He is caught in a double bind from which socialization is the only viable escape. Socialization, however, involves its own kind of psychosis, the accepting of the world created by society as if it were real, and sometimes death alone can free us from such powerful illusions.

For us, it is almost guaranteed that trouble lies in our attachment to material things, over which death has dominion, and our salvation lies in turning away from material manifestations of life and toward more enduring values. The card, then, heralds change, renewal, and transformation, the clearing away of the old to make way for the new.

When the thirteenth card, Death, occurs in the Reversed position, the meaning is not necessarily life. Death heralds change, renewal, and transformation: Reversed, it is more likely to indicate the paralyzing effects of fear – stagnation, inertia, withdrawal, and so on – a hesitation in the journey towards self-actualization.

KEY 14 - TEMPERANCE

An angel stands with one foot on land and one foot in water, pouring from one golden vessel into another. His wings are scarlet. His hair is golden. On his forehead is the sign of the sun. On his chest is a triangle within a square. Flowers grow near the water, and a path leads from the water to a mountain range above which shines a crown.

In general, angels are symbolic of spiritual influences which are able to minister to the aspirations of the soul, here represented by the colour of the angel's hair. This particular angel is the archangel Michael, one of the four princes of the Cherubim. The sun-sign on his forehead, in the position of the Eye of Ra, is symbolic of his supreme wisdom (Ra was the Egyptian god of the sun. Once upon a time, he lost his son and daughter, Shu and Tefnut, god of the air and goddess of the life-giving dew, and he sent his Eye to look for them. By the time the Eye returned, Ra had replaced it with another – so, to mollify the fury of the Eye, he placed it in the centre of his forehead where it could rule the world he was about to create. And the tears of joy that he shed for the return of his son and daughter fell to earth and became the first men and women). Statues of Buddha always bear some such sign on the forehead as a sign of awakened consciousness, a symbol of the twice-born. In Yogic philosophy, this is the location of the sixth energy centre or chakra, the centre of spiritual enlightenment. It is at this level of development that the individual starts to become aware of a spiritual imperative from within the Self, which gives him a destiny or purpose in life.

The triangle and square on the angel's chest represent the ternary (i.e., the threefold aspect of God to man, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the quaternary (the four planes of existence below the true Self – the buddhic plane, source of all the higher emotions related to wisdom, truth, and love; the mental plane, source of the thought-forms which become our material world; the astral plane, source of instincts, passions and desires, corresponding to the unconscious; and the physical plane, in which the patterns emanating from the higher planes are manifest). Its number seven (and remember that the number of this card is 2×7) is symbolic of completion of one phase of existence and a new level of awareness of the realities in life. One foot of the angel rests on land, the other in water, suggesting that he unites the conscious/physical and the unconscious/spiritual. The path which leads directly to the heights indicates that the way is now clear for our hero to reach his goal.

In Greek mythology, Hermes was the messenger of Zeus (king of the gods) and bringer of knowledge to mankind. But there was another messenger of the gods, named Iris, who was the special messenger of Hera, Zeus' wife; and when she came to earth, her stairway was the rainbow. In this card, the flowers which grow beside the water are irises, symbolic of the rainbow, at once bridge from heaven to earth and earth to heaven, and a reminder of the covenant between God and Noah that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." This signifies that, looking backwards on death, we need never fear destruction again; the dissolution of old, outworn habits can be undertaken without the fear that water symbol of the unconscious) will ever again destroy all flesh (i.e., we can begin to confidently look forward to release from the world of phenomena without having to fear being engulfed by unconscious impulses). Physical and spiritual can mix together without either of them being destroyed.

This is a powerful and important card. It suggests "tempering" or further refinement of oneself, moderation in all things, and the establishment of a new equilibrium and purpose in life.

In its Reversed position, Temperance is indicative of disequilibrium brought about, perhaps, through a lack of moderation or refinement in one's life. This is not necessarily a bad sign, for such turmoil is a very necessary part of growth.

KEY 15 - THE DEVIL

Against a background of darkness, the Horned Goat of Mendes perches on his altar, his wings outspread. On his forehead, a pentagram reversed. His right hand is upraised, and in the palm, we see the sign of Saturn. In his left hand, he carries a torch. There is a ring attached to the altar, and from the ring, chains lead to a woman and a man. Both are naked, and red-headed, and each has horns and a tail. The woman's tail is tipped with grapes; the man's with flame.

This is the 15th Key, the Devil. Its number tells us, through mystical arithmetic ($\text{Card } 15 = 1 + 5 = \text{Card } 6, \text{ the Lovers}$), that this card is somehow concerned with the problem of choice between good and evil, while the darkness of the card tells us that the context of our choosing is one of

darkness or lack of knowledge. The Horned Goat of Mendes was a beast-god of lower Egypt, not important of himself; however, horns have always signified power, and often of a sexual kind; his wings are bats' wings, symbolic of the powers of darkness. The pentagram reversed is the sign of Satanism – a Christian perversion unrelated to Wicca – the choice of evil over good, impulse over understanding, short term gain and long term gain. The open palm of his raised right hand suggests that “what you see is what you get,” that there is no other reality beyond sensation. The specific sign which he makes with it, with the gap between the middle and ring fingers, identifies him with the “Black Magician,” since it calls down power from the spiritual world. The sign of Saturn on his palm reminds us of the law of limitation which form gives to life – the material world you can't take with you when you go. The torch he holds in his left hand symbolizes the sexual side of the unconscious, setting fire to the man in bondage before him. The red hair of the couple signifies their passionate nature, and the grapes which tip the woman's tail, symbolizing her fertility, reinforce this sexual theme.

If Death signifies destruction of the persona (i.e, the mask which a person displays to the world) , the Devil represents those aspects of one's own personality which he or she would prefer to see elsewhere and which are, therefore, most typically projected onto others or personified in some great evil being. Becoming acquainted with this dark angel within oneself is what Jung called “realization of the shadow”; and it is at the time of such acquaintance that the individual may also come to the further realization that the shadow is not necessarily always an opponent. The fact that this dark angel contains within itself the seemingly overwhelming power of one's more primitive impulses does not mean that the drive should always be repressed. It is probably just as much of a sin to inhibit impulses towards self-actualization, for example, as it is not to control one's impulses towards violence. And it is certainly not much more difficult to imagine situations in which it is wrong to repress impulses towards sex or aggression than it is to imagine situations in which it would be right to do so. Furthermore, it is usually just a “cop out” to cry “The Devil made me do it.” Maturity means accepting both the good and bad within oneself, and accepting them as being within oneself rather than projecting one or the other onto either God or the Devil.

This card, therefore, has traditionally been taken to mean evil, the subhuman, self-destructiveness, and bondage to the material world. Its deeper meaning, however, is that there are aspects of the questioner, or of the situation surrounding him or her, of which this individual has not allowed himself or herself to become aware. This makes for an oppressive situation, since unawareness blocks integration of these aspects into the personality and prevents the use of their tremendous energies for growth, with the result that the dark angel is forced to lead a life of its own, frequently in opposition to the higher good. The Devil, then, reminds us that “pride goeth before a fall” and that it is possible to be less prideful and more humble., and to accept responsibility for being just the way we are. After all, we are perfect – just perfectly human.

The message of the Devil Reversed is the removal of limitations to wholeness. More specifically, it represents the freedom which is afforded by acceptance of the limitations within oneself as a step towards becoming a fully integrated person.

KEY 16 - THE TOWER

Lightning strikes a grey tower, knocking its crown off and setting it aflame. A man and woman fall. She is dressed in blue and wears red slippers and a crown. He is dressed in blue, with a red cloak. Against a black background, and amongst the clouds, we see twenty-two golden drops, twelve on the left and ten on the right.

What is this square grey tower that raises heaven's ire? Is it indicative of violent social conflict as some suppose? Or ruin of the House of Life when evil has prevailed therein? Or is it downfall of the spirit which attempts to reach to God, baptism by fire, total destruction, divine fertilization of the tower of knowledge or a sudden glimpse of truth? Perhaps it is all of these, or perhaps none. Let us consider the symbols on the card.

The number of this card is symbolic of completion. Its four-times-four configuration reminds us of the tesseract, that four-dimensional object which bears the same relation to the cube that the cube does to the square – it takes us to a new dimension of understanding of reality that we could not have known before. Four is the number of consolidation of wholeness within the material world; four-times-four is the whole of wholeness, but still within the world of phenomena. Now, to grow beyond this point we have to seek the noumena (i.e., the world of the spirit) which is within, the world we know by intuition rather than the senses.

In the Tao te Ching, we read that “The five colours cause one's eyes to be blind. The five tones cause one's ears to be deaf. The five flavours cause one's palate to be spoiled.... For this reason, the sage is concerned with the belly [i.e., the spirit] and not the eyes [i.e., the senses].” This does not mean a rejection of the physical world but, rather, a rejection of superficialities in favour of enduring values. Sometimes this lesson is taught with blows, like the stroke of lightning that knocks the crown off this tower of worldly wisdom; and sometimes the enlightenment is more gently achieved. “A new monk approached Joshu with the following words: ‘I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me.’ Joshu asked him whether he had partaken of the lunchtime meal of rice porridge, and when the monk replied that he had just finished eating, Joshu said: ‘Then you had better wash your bowl.’ In that moment, the monk became enlightened.”

Traditionally, the tower symbolizes elevation or ascent and, like the ladder and the rainbow, a pathway between heaven and the earth. The lightning is stylized, its form derived from the Qabala and symbolizing “the tenfold emanation of Life-power”, God's gift of illumination through destruction of the earthly citadel of “knowledge”, that ideological and conceptual tower in which we remain imprisoned in our own material world. The Taoists teach us that truth can not be spoken; and here we need God's help to confound our language, as at the Tower of Babel, so that we can learn to find the truth.

The man and woman both wear red and blue, the red symbolic of conscious and the blue symbolic of unconscious motives. The woman's crown suggests that the unconscious dominates their activities. They fall headlong because this sudden flash of spiritual illumination turns all

their ideas upside down – a scenario reminiscent of Jesus’ “Upsidedown Kingdom”. The black background tells us that they have been living in a world of darkness. The golden drops are “Yods,” the first letter of the Hebrew name of God. The twelve on the left recall the twelve apostles (as well as the twelve signs of the zodiac); the ten on the right recall the Tree of Life. Taken together, they represent the major Tarot trumps and their associated lessons.

The Tower, then, represents the overthrow of false knowledge, sometimes a painful experience, but one which is ultimately good.

The Tower Reversed suggests that the seeker may be blocked or inhibited in the achievement of his or her higher goals because (or to the extent that) he or she is unwilling to experience the pain of trying to revise an outmoded belief system.

KEY 17 - The Star

Against a backdrop of eight eight-pointed stars, a naked woman pours water from twin pitchers. One of the stars is much larger and brighter than the others. The woman’s left knee rests upon the land; her right foot stands upon the water. From the pitcher in her right hand, she pours into a pool; from the pitcher in her left hand, five streams flow upon the land. Flowers bloom, and a bird spreads its wings on the branch of a tree.

Seventeen is the number of this card. This is a highly spiritual number. By “mystical arithmetic,” it equates to eight (i.e., $17 = 1 + 7 = 8$), symbol of regeneration and of entrance into some new condition of the soul. In symbolism, it is represented by the eight-pointed “Star of Venus,” the sign of peace and love. In this card, the large bright star that shines among the others is also a symbol of the Supreme Spirit; and the seven smaller stars are her attendants, the planetary spheres. Together, they represent triumph over planetary influences. Then again, stars represent the angels, those heavenly influences which can guide our lives.

The woman expresses eternal youth and beauty, but not in any material sense. She is the embodiment of Sophia, Wisdom as Divine Madonna, giving birth to the spiritual man within the soul. The fluids which she pours are the Waters of Life, freely given. One stream stirs up the waters of the unconscious; the other nourishes the land, suggesting that the course of action will eventually be expressed outwardly as well as inwardly. And the five streams suggest that this life-force also modifies sensation and will lead to higher and better types of sensory experience. The flowers tell us that the sun is at work and that the soul, which is represented by the flowers is in a state of transition. The bird on the bush is the golden ibis, symbol of Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom whom the Greeks identified with Hermes, messenger and herald of the gods.

This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius (the water carrier), humankind’s finest hour. The twin pitchers which she carries remind us that when a symbol appears in duplicate in dreams or other unconscious material, it often presages the dawning of a new era within the psyche, the beginning of the transformation from narcissism to love of Self and unselfish love of others. The

new-to-consciousness psychic contents herald a time of “active seeing stillness” which accompanies the integration within the psyche of the unconscious and the conscious. It is an active seeing because it is linked to the imaginal vision of the unconscious, and it is an active stillness because it is only in stillness that it can see and be seen. Now, this may all sound pretty airy-fairy, but the integration of diverse aspects within the psyche is particularly important because it is only the truly whole person who can be wholly true to himself or herself, and as Shakespeare reminds us, “To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

In divination, this card, the Star, is considered to be most fortunate. It suggests the Great Mother pouring out her understanding to the extent that those below can benefit from it. It inspires with hope and a measure of illumination. It tells of the cleansing that is done through dipping into the waters of the unconscious and listening to the voice within. Prospects brighten, horizons widen, and life is renewed.

As you know, the stars only come out at night, when it is dark. And the darker it is, the brighter the stars may shine. There is a story of a man who went to visit a Zen master to learn from him all about Zen. Before beginning their lesson, the Master offered his guest a cup of tea; but when the man held out his cup, the master kept on pouring until the tea was overflowing onto the floor. The man cried out, “Stop, my cup already full!” “And that is just the problem we will have in trying to teach you about Zen,” replied the master. “First you will have to empty your mind, before I can begin to fill it with knowledge about Zen.” The message of the Star Reversed is much the same: Try to remember that your prospects will brighten with the Star but, just as with the stars, your life may have to be dark indeed before you can see them at their best.

KEY 18 - THE MOON

The moon looks down, and fifteen golden drops rain down between twin towers. A dog and a wolf are baying at the moon, while in the foreground, a crayfish arises from a pool. A path leads from the pool, across the meadow, between the towers, and over distant hills.

This is the eighteenth key, the Moon, one of the most enigmatic of the Tarot trumps. Why are the dog and wolf baying at the moon? And such a strange moon, at once a crescent and yet seemingly so full! And it shines with a brilliance we don't often find. In fact, it has sixteen chief and sixteen secondary rays. The sky is blue, and so are the distant hills, as if it were a moonlit night, or early morning in the spring.

According to Cheiro, eighteen is symbolic of materialism striving to destroy the spiritual side of nature, but surely that is no more than a misguided attempt to interpret this eighteenth Tarot trump. The number eighteen, by mystical arithmetic, equates to nine (i.e., $18 = 1 + 8 = 9$), the number not of striving but of attainment. But if attainment, what is attained? As you shall see, quite a bit!

In the dawn of history, man did not have a mental language. The pictogram language of Cro-Magnon man consisted of pictures of visual events familiar to the artists, in contrast to our own writing which is primarily designed to tell the reader something which he does not already know. Midway between these two kinds of writing were the hieroglyphs, the term meaning “writing of the gods,” and the more widely used cuneiform writing with its wedge-shaped characters. Both are clumsy and ambiguous signs or symbols. The cuneiform alphabet, for example, made use of over 600 signs, some of which had as many as nine or ten different meanings.

Most of the cuneiform literature is in the form of receipts or inventories – that is, the subject matter was quite down-to-earth. But then an astounding change occurred. About 1200 B.C.E., the King of Assyria had a stone altar made that was dramatically different from anything that had preceded it in the history of the world. In the days of Hammurabi, for example, the king is pictured standing and listening intently to a very present God. Suddenly, in the carving on the face of this stone altar erected by the King of Assyria, the King is shown twice, first as he approaches the throne of his God, and then as he kneels before it, and the throne before which he kneels is empty. No king before in history is ever shown as kneeling; no scene before in history indicates an absent God.

In fact, it wasn't until about this time in history that language had evolved to the point where man could have a conversation with himself, and the gods began to withdraw from his company and to make their residence in heaven; and winged beings, angels (or genii as the Assyrians called them) began to appear as intermediaries or messengers between the absent gods and their forlorn followers. It was about this same time that Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and establishing a priesthood to Jehovah and a covenant with Him that He would be their God. According to Ravenscroft, the God with whom Moses established a covenant was magnificent but limited. He did not yet know the greater ‘sun god’ that was Christ. And yet, there were glimpses of that greater God even then, just as there are today. In this card, for example, the nascent moon holds a golden disk within its arms, a symbol of the Holy Grail, the Christ within the Godhead, God's love (the love that permeates the universe) made manifest here on earth.

The dog, the wolf, and the crayfish represent aspects of ourselves called forth by the power of the sun-moon which rains its blessings on the land. The path leads us onward. The card's divinatory meaning is clear: Respond to life with love, for it is love that wins the Grail.

When the Moon is upside-down, the seeker is frustrated in his or her desires, perhaps by the demands for attention placed on him or her by the practical, eternal world. It is important to remember, then, that one must first come to love oneself and meet one's own needs (not just “wants” but real “needs”) before one is truly free to love another.

KEY 19 - THE SUN

The Sun looks down on a naked child mounted on a white horse. Some of the rays of the sun are

straight and some are wavy.. The child wears a coronet of flowers and a feather in its hair, and carries a red banner. In the background is a walled garden in which bloom sunflowers. It appears that the child has left the garden and is riding onward.

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.... And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.... And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night..... And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

The adoration of the sun has been one of the earliest and most important forms of religious expression.. For most primitive societies, the sun was the highest of the gods. In ancient Egypt, it was regarded as a symbol of immortality because, although it died at dusk, it rose again each day at dawn; and the lotus, was considered symbolic of the sun-god, Ra, because it opened and closed with the sun. In Greek mythology, the king of the gods was Zeus, and he was god of the sky. The Romans called him Jupiter). It was his son and daughter, Apollo and Artemis, who were god and goddess of the greater and the lesser lights, the sun and moon.. Once, when Zeus had grown excessively petulant, his wife (Hera) and his brother (Poseidon) and Apollo led an abortive revolt against him, for which he punished Poseidon and Apollo by sending them as bond-servants to King Laomedon, for whom they built the city of Troy. Apollo, however, was never very temperate. Once, when his son, Asclepias the Physician, set out to resurrect a man whom Artemis had accidentally killed, Hades complained to Zeus and Zeus killed Asclepias with his thunderbolt; and in revenge, Apollo slew the Cyclopes, who had originally given Zeus the thunderbolt.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that the early Christians thought of Jesus as a solar deity: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear Witness of the Light.... He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God....”

Zen Buddhism distinguishes between eight classes of consciousness. The first five are our five senses; the sixth is intellect; the seventh is mind; and the eighth is universal consciousness. The first six levels are concerned with only the conscious mind only; the seventh and eighth involve both the conscious and unconscious. The latter is composed of four levels which might be termed imagery (meaningless), neurosis (if any), historic and symbolic imagery (such as we encounter in the Tarot), and self-realization (which may include nirvana). Activation of the fourth level of the unconscious is often experienced in a blinding flash of light. It is this illumination which is represented by Key 19, the Sun. The naked child is symbolic of spiritual rebirth; the flowers are symbolic of the impermanence of life; and the wall, the boundaries of the material world. The staff signifies power; and the red banner, action. The rays bespeak of heat

and light.

This card's meaning is as simple as the naked child – illumination, self-realization, innocence, activity, peace, love, and childlike joy.

When the Sun occurs in the Reversed position, it may be taken as an indication that the seeker is not as happy as the card would normally suggest. Perhaps the camel is not yet ready to pass through the eye of the needle.

KEY 20 - JUDGEMENT

An angel, from the midst of clouds, blows his trumpet; and men, women, and children arise from the tomb. The angel's hair is yellow, his wings are red, and his robe is blue. His horn is golden and supports a banner – a red cross on a white field. The caskets which have opened appear to be floating on the waters; and in the background, snowy peaks.

This is Judgement, the twentieth Tarot trump, also called The Final Judgement and the Resurrection of the Dead. The angel is that heavenly messenger, the archangel Gabriel. His wings are red to signify his passion; his robe is blue to signify devotion; the colour of his hair is symbolic of eternal light. With the vibrations of his trumpet, he calls us forth to eternal life. His banner is the white of purity; his cross, the red of blood. In this cross, nature and spirit, time and eternity meet in a new spiritual perception of life. Together, they symbolize the joining of all things in time. The colour of the risen souls is gray, symbolic of the new wisdom which accompanies transcendence of dualities. The waters are that eternal sea from which we spring. The mountains in the background remind us of the greater heights to be attained.

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” If you wish, you may see this all occurring in a land beyond the sky – if your greatest hope is for a home in heaven. But if you wish, you may see it in yourself – if you would rather find the kingdom within. The path was described by the Buddha, who taught that a knowledge of arising and passing away might be followed by a realization of the dreadfully wearisome nature of phenomena and a wish that it were gone; and this, in turn, might also pass away, to be replaced by an effortless knowledge of the world. It was also known to John of the Cross, who wrote at length on the Dark Night of the Soul which precedes the liberating joy of love.

This secret of eternal life was also charted by the wisest man of all, by Solomon in Song; “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.... My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.... I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone... I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.... I charge

you, Oh daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick with love”; and from the bridegroom, “How beautiful are thy feet.... Oh prince’s daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.... Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.... How fair and how pleasant art thou, Oh love, for delights!” And the twain, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.. if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned [i.e., it would be counted as nothing].” Solomon is writing about love!

But you might well ask what all this has to do with Judgement. The answer is at hand: “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? .. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another anymore; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. I know... that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, thou walkest not charitably if thou eatest. Therefore destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

Among interpreters of the Tarot, Aleister Crowley held a unique position. A member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, he at one time enjoyed the reputation of being the wickedest man in the world. An egotist and hedonist, he took as his motto the Rabelaisian dictum: “And it hurt no one, do what thou wilt.” And yet, there is a curious parallel between this pronouncement of this “Great Beast,” as he was called, and the much less dramatic words of St. Paul. Both recognize that societal norms are the basis for many of our judgements about what is right and what is wrong, and that societal norms are not always the best basis for making a decision. A better basis? Is it based on love?

The significance of this card, then, is liberation (within the context of love) accompanied by the resolution of opposition. It suggests that the seeker come to terms with the past, as a stage in moving beyond it.

Judgement Reversed suggests the need to overcome some hesitation on the part of the seeker about coming to terms with his or her past – perhaps some guilt about past behaviour or failure to accept responsibility for the things which he or she has done (e.g., willful pride as evidenced by thoughts such as “my sins, mistakes, etc. are so great that they could not possibly be forgiven.”).

KEY 21 - THE WORLD

A lady, surrounded by a laurel wreath and dancing in the sky. She is wrapped in purple, and in each hand, she holds a wand. At top and bottom, the wreath which frames her is bound in red, with a ribbon wound around in the form of a lemniscate. At the four corners, in the clouds, the tetramorphs: a man, an eagle, a lion, and an ox.

The lady is said to represent the immortal, central Self, cosmic consciousness, the goal of life, the divine spirit, nirvana, eternal bliss. The wreath is the wreath of attainment, the crown and the glory. Its shape suggests the zero, and the cosmic egg. The ribbons in the form of the lemniscate suggest that the goal attained is not the end, but at once eternal and open to the effects of eternity.

The tetramorphs are taken from the vision of Ezekiel and are symbolic of the four planes of manifestation, i.e., they are symbolic of the various aspects of the physical/spiritual world. In the Revelation of St. John the Divine, they are referred to as “the four beasts” round about the throne of God, which “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” In Christian symbolism, they represent the four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Jewish mysticism, they represent the four letters of the name of God: Yod, Heh, Vau, Heh. Other representative “fours” are given below:

Archangels	Gabriel	Raphael	Michael	Uriel
Virtues	Fortitude	Temperance	Justice	Prudence
Elements	Fire	Water	Air	Earth
Spirits	Salamanders	Undines	Sylphs	Gnomes (or Elves)
Suits	Wands	Cups	Swords	Pentacles
Court Cards	Kings	Queens	Knights	Pages
Cause/Effect	Activity	Passivity	Balance	Manifestation
Functions	Feeling	Intuiting	Thinking	Perceiving
Temperaments	Choleric	Melancholic	Sanguine	Phlegmatic
Directions	East	South	West	North
Seasons	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Phases of the Moon	Waxing	Full	Waning	New

Just as the World, the final message of the Tarot trumps, signals achievement of the goal of life, completion and triumph, nirvana, immortality, the end of an era (or aeon) and the beginning of another, the World Reversed may be taken to indicate some reluctance to accept the fact that, even when one’s goals have finally having attained, there is still more work to be done. In a more general sense, then, the World Reversed indicates a certain lack of vision, inertia, stubbornness, and resistance to change – this in spite of the fact that, even in its Reversed position, the World is a sign of blessing and a sign of grace.

WANDS

ACE

A glowing hand emerges from a cloud, holding a stout wand or club. It is a right hand, and the wand is bursting into bloom. In the background, we can see a castle or a fortress on a hill.

This is a card of active (i.e., from the fact that the wand is held in the right hand) energy (i.e., inferred from the aureole or glow surrounding the hand). That the wand is bursting into bloom is

symbolic of the energy involved, and of the passion for life which this card represents. The fortress in the background reminds us that this card is also symbolic of fortitude, a characteristic of the working class.

This is the Ace of Wands. Its divinatory meaning is as follows: a gift of energy and enterprise, passion for living and loving, the beginning of one's fortune, and the fortitude which ensures success.

The Ace of Wands Reversed is symbolic of the phoenix rising (or risen) from the ashes of the fire of dreams.

TWO

From atop a wall, a man looks out between two wands, over land and sea. With his left hand, he grasps the higher wand; and in his right hand, he holds a globe. On the surface, he appears to be in comfortable circumstances. On the battlement, there appears a cross composed of lilies and of roses.

This is the Two of Wands, symbolic of the limitations of associations. It is as if this man has experienced some worldly success and now finds that he is no longer as free to go his own way as he once was. The world he holds in the palm of his hand has turned out to be unexpectedly small.

The cross on the battlement is symbolic of both purity and passion, both of an unconscious, feminine kind. Thus, the card also speaks of worrisome mistakes in life, and a beginning realization of the value of adventures which lie closer to home.

When the Two of Wands is reversed, it serves as a reminder that success is always more limiting than failure.

THREE

A figure stands at the crest of a hill, overlooking a sea on which three ships set sail. Adventure is in the making, but he remains behind; his primary commitment is to things at hand. Now, he has to trust to the fates that his potential for achievement is realized. The world holds more conquests in its store, but it is important to maintain a primary' commitment to old relationships even as we seek to establish the new.

This card is also a card of reconciliation – in this case, inner experience provides the guidance through which the active (signified by the red of his outer garment) and the passive sides of his nature (signified by the blue of his inner robe) may be reconciled, and their separate forces

restrained (as indicated by the green of the cape thrown over his left shoulder) and utilized.

The Three of Wands Reversed is symbolic of achievement within the world, and perfection within the self.

FOUR

In the foreground, a bower hung with flowers; and in the background, several figures coming out of a walled city, with bouquets in their hands. In general, walled cities remind us of the restraints placed on us by our associations with the others in our lives. The figures shown here, then, are entering a new era, by leaving sanctuary behind. They are open to new experience which call them from the past.

This card is a card of Harvest Home, a reminder that we should be thankful for what we have; but it also speaks of the tyranny of feeling, the reluctant acknowledgement we sometimes make of the ambivalence we feel about the relationships we have established in the past.

The Four of Wands Reversed is a reminder that relationships are a gentle prison and that, to be successful, home affairs are as demanding of time as any others.

FIVE

Five active youths engage in imitation conflict. In ancient times, these five youths (like the five petals of a rose) danced around a sixth, whose symbolic death (and later resurrection) formed the climax of their dance. In England, this sacred dance was called Ring-Around-A-Rosy, and the last phrase of the dancers chant, "We all fall down," referred to the inescapable behest of death, a necessary prelude to any resurrection.

This is the Five of Wands. It is a card which is pregnant with meaning: religiously, it refers to "the Dewdrop in the Rose," i.e., Christ within the body of Mary; while sexually, it refers to the "Jewel in the Lotus," i.e., the jewel of the male within the lotus of the female. It is a card of imitation, contention, light conflict and, perhaps, some loss. It is also a card significant for communication and diplomacy, and a warning that impulses can lead one into danger.

In its reversed position, it reminds us that struggles sometimes lead to gain as well as loss. "The little death," after all, was once another name for climax.

SIX

A horseman wears a laurel wreath upon his head and carries a staff upon which is tied another laurel wreath. His horse is white, and its livery is green. Its bridle is decorated with those tiny flames, the yod. He is accompanied by several footmen who also carry staves.

This is the Six of Wands, a card of victory, practical and mundane victory. It shows a person who has learned to trust in self. By implication, it suggests accomplishment and the possibility of change.

In its reversed position, it suggests consideration of other fields to conquer.

SEVEN

A young man holds the field against all comers as if, having made himself king-of-the-castle, he must now defend his “realm” against the rest.

This is the Seven of Wands, a card which signifies the need for achievement; a skilful exchange; and valour on that inner field of battle, the psyche (and possibly, the psychic) – and it warns us that the exercise of power requires sustained effort, skill and courage.

The Seven of Wands Reversed reminds us of the responsibilities of success.

EIGHT

Eights wands are pointing down, as if they have been flying through the air and are nearing the end of their journey. In the background, we see a countryside of rolling hills, and a quiet river.

This is the Eight of Wands. It typically signifies initiative, a journey, and completion, although it may indicate either progress or progression.

This card has also been taken to indicate “a dark young lady” and, in time, the arrows of love. When it is reversed, however, the seeker is advised to continue to seek perfection, at least for the time being.

NINE

A bloodied but unbent warrior leans upon his stave. In the background are eight other staves in orderly array.

This is the Nine of Wands. It signifies fighting for oneself, and victory after opposition. It has also been taken to mean marriage which, in some way, is associated with money.

Reversed, it suggests adjournment until a better day.

TEN

A figure, bowed with the weight of the ten staves which he or she is carrying, appears to be leaving the field for home.

This is the Ten of Wands, a card interesting for its wisdom in the daily world. It signifies the oppression of success and reminds us of our all too human tendency to overestimate the importance of "things."

When the Ten of Wands is reversed, it calls for discussion. Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate goals or return to fundamentals.

PAGE

A young person stands expectantly, as if ready to proclaim. He or she is dressed in finery. The decorations on his garment are salamanders (or elves), symbolic of his energy and fire. He is the Page of Wands and, as a Page, a messenger or envoy. A volatile young man, he signifies the beginning of some pursuit or enterprise (enter-prize).

The Page of Wands Reversed heralds a faithful friend. It is also said to indicate freedom from pressures (perhaps because a friend is someone with whom you can just be yourself).

KNIGHT

His livery is yellow, and decorated with salamanders, both symbolic of his energy or fire. Like the knight, himself, his horse is rampant.

This is the Knight of Wands, representative of eagerness and perhaps misdirection, and a reminder that impulsiveness in relationships with others can lead to alienation. All in all, this is a card of disturbing influences, although not all bad.

Reversed, it means an invitation to change, perhaps to travel or perhaps only to move, to show some movement, or to change position.

QUEEN

A queen sits enthroned on a lion throne. In her right hand, she holds a wand; in her left, she holds a sunflower. Her gown is yellow, and her cloak is grey. In the foreground sits a cat, a rather wild black cat.

She is the Queen of Wands, a mature woman of great energy, much of it as yet unexpressed. She is symbolic of appreciation of aspiration. A magnanimous lady, she is in a position to be helpful.

The Queen of Wands Reversed represents unconscious sexual energy expressed as warmth and benevolence, but with the witch's capacity for cruelty and destructiveness if not treated with all due respect.

KING

The King of Wands is a solar king,. He is a man of fire, as shown by the salamander in the foreground and the salamanders and lions on his throne. He is mature, a man of fortitude and strength. He is austere. He bears his responsibilities well. And he is a helpful man, but mainly in his area of expertise, which is the realm of passion.

There is a certain justified pride in his bearing. But the salamander appears to think that it is larger than it is. After all, the ouroboros (i.e., the dragon or the serpent devouring its own tail, symbolic of the eternal round of time) was more than a spirit of the fire, regardless of how energetic it might be. Nevertheless., the card signifies responsibility and honesty, and a desire to help as best one can.

The King of Wands Reversed represents the power which stems from worldly knowledge and the active exercise of energetic nature.

CUPS

ACE

A shining hand emerges from a cloud holding a golden cup from which five streams flow to the waters below. Water lilies adorn the waters. A dove, bearing in its beak a cross-marked Host, descends toward the cup. Twenty- six drops fall upon the waters.

This card, the Ace of Cups, is symbolic of happiness and love, the second foundation of life. The fact that the cup is offered from the left hand suggests that the energy involved is passive and receptive. The dove is symbolic of peace, and the wafer represents the Holy Spirit at work in the

world. The five streams which flow from the cup represent the five senses and the twenty-six drops are symbolic of the Tetragrammaton, the wholly unspeakable name of God and the central organizing principle of the world.

This card heralds happiness and gifts and love.

Reversed, this card signifies the gift of love, nourishment for the soul.

TWO

On an open plain in a country setting, a young man and woman pledge each other, below what appears to be the winged head of a lion surmounted on a caduceus, the serpent-entwined staff of Hermes/Mercury. Both wear an undergarment of white; however, where his shirt is many-coloured, hers is blue. His head is wreathed in flowers, and hers is wreathed in leaves.

This is the Two of Cups, symbolic of the pledging of friendship and perhaps the beginning of a romance. The caduceus is a symbol of right conduct, the exercise of power with wisdom; the winged lion's head reveals the direction of development of their relationship – their sexual power is sublimated in the interest of each other. As a consequence, this card heralds a loving partnership in which the diverse qualities of each participant are blended in the creation of something neither could conceive alone.

When this card is reversed, it is indicative of that love which is known as agape, a sense of community with others, sensitivity to their needs, and the charity which gives joy, beauty, and illumination to human life.

THREE

Three graceful ladies in celebration, their cups raised on high. They wear garlands in their hair, and one can be seen to have harvested the bounty which grows about their feet.

This is the Three of Cups, symbolic of shared experiences (in good times as in bad), a gift from a friend, and the generation of joy.

Reversed, it suggests spiritual gifts, and the conclusion of a matter to the satisfaction of all those concerned.

FOUR

A young person sits beneath a tree. He (or she) is dressed in red and blue and green. His arms and legs are crossed, and he appears to be looking at three cups sitting on the ground in front of him, oblivious to a fourth offered by a hand emerging from a cloud.

This card, the Four of Cups, suggests passivity, apathy, sadness, and dissatisfaction with accomplishments so far removed from what one might wish, resulting in or accompanied by a decline from grace.

Perhaps this young person's contemplation of his or her situation will result in a re-alignment of priorities, suppression of some of his or her desires, or even achievement of a new sense of equilibrium, for when this card is reversed, it is said to mean improvements in the home.

FIVE

A black-robed figure stands with head bowed before a stream. On the ground in front of him, three cups lie overturned. Two others stand behind his back. In the background, there is a bridge which spans the stream and leads to a small keep or holding.

This is the Five of Cups, a card of acceptance, and of letting go. The apparent sadness of the figure suggests that he or she is overcome with loss, not realizing that, while three are gone, still two are left. The stream in the background is representative of change (and, hence, of loss) but the bridge which leads over it reminds us of the love we have to keep.

Reversed, it is a card of invitation and determination (i.e., invitation to a whole new world, and determination to take one's place in it).

SIX

The Six of Cups depicts two little people in a medieval courtyard. The larger person holds one of six cups filled with flowers. It is a reminder of the Golden Age of childhood, a card of happy memories, sweet dreams, and the beginning of a steady gain.

Reversed, it is said to signify a special date, and perhaps a romance.

SEVEN

A figure sees a vision in which are seven cups filled with fantastic images ranging from adventure (a castle, like the one in Disney's Adventureland), wealth (jewels), victory (a wreath),

and terror (a dragon) to a smiling face (perhaps symbolic of contentment).

When the Seven of Cups is reversed, it suggests a special insight into oneself and the world.

EIGHT

A red-cloaked figure walks away, as if turning his back on eight cups in the foreground. A river wends its way across rough ground. Serene in the sky above, the moon looks down. It is a “grail” moon, the disk of the full moon held in the arms of the crescent moon.

This is the Eight of Cups. It represents success abandoned, the turning away from a situation which has not only brought happiness but continues to do so. Moving on, but not just moving on. The time has come to leave this time behind and to undertake a journey in search of self. No regrets should be felt for the treasures left behind, which others now may share.

The Eight of Cups Reversed: Time to seek the greater good.

NINE

A substantial burgher sits with arms crossed in front of a blue-draped table on which stand nine cups. He represents the world of simple pleasures and the most profound kind of happy superficiality. His wishes are fulfilled. In the Gypsy tradition, he symbolizes both contentment and someone who is thinking of you.

When the Nine of Cups is reversed, it signifies loyalty to oneself and others.

TEN

A man and woman stand together, with arms upraised, watching a rainbow which ten cups are arched across the sky. A boy and girl are dancing. In the background, we can see a cottage, trees, and a flowing stream.

This is the Ten of Cups. It is a card of earthly bliss, a fairyland of peace and happiness known to mythology as the Mountain of Venus (mons veneris). Its divinatory meaning for the seeker is that your salvation lies in love, and your lot in life is joy.

When this card is reversed, we are advised to seek wisdom with respect to present riches.

PAGE

The Page of Cups is represented by a rich young man, holding a cup which contains a fish. His shirt is decorated with flowers, possibly waterlilies. He looks at the fish, and the fish looks back. Nothing disturbs his contemplation, or that of the fish.

All pages have a student quality, and the theme of water in this card suggests that this young person is seeking to develop his intuitive abilities, and looking to the fish (representative of the fruits of the imagination) for messages from within (i.e., from his own psyche). As a young person, he heralds the beginning of a quest.

Reversed, its meaning is that wisdom is to be found within.

KNIGHT

A white horse, bearing a knight, emerges from a wasteland and approaches a river, beyond which we can see heights arising, and trees. The knight is dressed in armour which is decorated with a fish motif. There are wings on his heels, and wings on his helmet. He is carrying a golden cup.

This is the Knight of Cups, a wanderer of the wasteland, and a spiritual person. He brings a proposition, an invitation to love.

When the Knight of Cups is reversed, it suggests one haunted by a vision, and perhaps searching for one's own true love.

QUEEN

She is truly the Queen of Cups, this fair and friendly lady who sits enthroned by the side of the sea. Her robe is clasped with a seashell, and it flows downward to the sea; her throne is decorated with merchildren – she feels an affinity with the sea.

The cup which she holds is a chalice beyond compare, golden and set with precious stones. It is surmounted by a cross and worshipped by angels. She is a lady of purity and power, of which she is all unaware. In divinatory readings, she is indicative of the disciplining of desire.

Reversed, she suggests the gift of vision

KING

The King of Cups is enthroned in the midst of the sea; and behind him we can see a fish jumping, and a ship at sail. He is the Fisher King, guardian of the Grail, that symbol of man's most holy quest. He is a man of destiny, an ageless figure of power and force, and a protector of the poor. Like the sea itself, he represents an almost irresistible inner strength which can be called on in time of need.

When this card is reversed, it is a reminder that accomplishments come not through striving or contending, but through receptivity to the powers of the unconscious.

SWORDS

ACE

A shining hand emerges from a cloud bearing a sword around which are six golden drops. The point of the sword is encircled by a crown; and from the crown are hung a branch of olive and a branch of palm.

This is the Ace of Swords, the first card of nobility and justice. It represents triumph, but triumph by means of force of will.

In divinatory readings, this card has also been taken to be indicative of the risk of pregnancy which follows from an affair. While seemingly contrary to the other meanings of this card, there is actually a fairly close connection between these seemingly diverse readings. In general, the suit of swords symbolizes our illusions about life; that one can win, that there is justice, or that life is full of pain and sorrow. All is ethereal, all is illusion.

Reversed, it represents the gift (or curse) of intellect – for by intellect we find the truth, but by intellect we also lead ourselves astray.

TWO

A hoodwinked figure sits in front of a lake. His or her arms are crossed, and in each hand she holds a sword. But there is a new moon in the heavens. This is the Two of Swords, symbolic of the holding in of emotions, conformity, constriction and the avoidance of risk.

Reversed, it indicates equipoise (a mind held in suspense) and fear of learning more about oneself.

THREE

The Three of Swords is represented by a heart which has been pierced by three swords. It is indicative of necessary destruction and of the necessity of accepting sorrow.

When the Three of Swords is reversed, one is admonished to bow to the inevitable, and to try to avoid quarrels.

FOUR

A figure lies at rest, as if upon a tomb. There is one sword engraved beneath him and three on the wall above his head.

This is the Four of Swords, symbolic of withdrawal, retreat, rest from strife, and healing.

This card, reversed, is indicative of insight and private knowledge. It advises circumspection and indicates the need to weigh advice well.

FIVE

Clouds skud across the sky. Figures in defeat. Sorrow for the losers and satisfaction for the winner who collects the spoils (i.e., the swords).

This is the Five of Swords, symbolic of possession of the field, and feelings of defeat.

In divinatory readings, its meaning also includes the leaven of malice and the possibility that gossip may harm our fondest dreams. However, this was not thought of as necessarily bad – not all dreams ought to see the light of day.

When this card is reversed, it represents passive endurance, the courage to accept the inevitability of Fate.

SIX

A man punts a boat for the farther shore. The boat contains two passengers, perhaps a mother and a child. Six swords are planted firmly in the bottom of the boat.

This is the Six of Swords. It represents transition, a journey by water or by air. The troubles which it portends are minor, mishaps rather than catastrophes.

Reversed, it indicates passage from difficulties to more of the same.

SEVEN

Pavilions are planted in an open field, and seven swords. A knave steals away with five.

This is the Seven of Swords. It represents jealousy and anxiety, and harm worked in secret. It also suggests that craftiness can lead to gain, but that it is likely to be unstable gain.

Reversed, it represents (the difficult task of) taking action against forces which are hidden from sight.

EIGHT

In the background, a castle on a hill; and in the foreground, a woman bound and blindfolded on a watery field in which have been planted eight swords.

This is the eight of swords, symbolic of oppression and mystification and indecision.

When the Eight of Swords is reversed, it signifies duration vile but temporary: "Take time to wait out bad times."

NINE

The Nine of Swords. Nine swords across a wall; and in the foreground, a figure sits up in bed and covers its face with its hands. The coverlet on the bed is decorated with roses and with the signs of the zodiac.

A sorrowful letter and a place of sorrows. Mental pain. In divinatory readings, this card is also representative of aestheticism and martyrdom. There is a desire for change, but assertion may be necessary in order to bring it about.

Reversed, it reminds us that martyrdom is often martyr-dumb.

TEN

A figure lies on the sand. He is partially covered by a red blanket. And he is thoroughly dead – there are ten swords sticking in his back.

This is the Ten of Swords, symbolic at once of reason run mad and of the end of delusion. There is delay and worry and affliction.

When this card is reversed, we are advised not to over-react to problems which may (or may not) present.

PAGE

On a windy summit, a young man with a sword. His boots are red, but his shirt is mauve. His tendency is all to action, but wisdom tells him to rise above conflict.

This is the Page of Swords. It represents subtlety and vigilance, and a certain detachment from the affairs of others.

When the Page of Swords is reversed, it signifies nobility of spirit, the ability to rise above...

KNIGHT

The Knight of Swords is the prototypical hero of romantic chivalry, riding at full tilt into battle with sword upraised. Perhaps, like Don Quixote, he is tilting at windmills. Certainly, he represents enmity and the destruction of one's enemies. In divinatory readings, he sometimes also represents a dominant stranger.

Reversed: Bravery breasts the savage storm.

QUEEN

The Queen of Swords is a lady of the clouds. Her throne is a throne of air – of angels and butterflies.. She wears a cloak of blue, decorated with clouds. In her right hand, she holds a sword upraised.

She is a lady of sorrows and of loss; and yet, she is perceptive. She sees beyond the present to a better time ahead..

When the Queen of Swords is reversed, it suggests that, even in the present, loss is not without

its gain.

KING

A royal personage sits enthroned with sword upraised. This is the King of Swords. His achievements come from thought. He has a piercing eye. He is a judge of character. But he rules with an iron hand, and not with the heart. Consequently, in divinatory readings, he often represents a trust betrayed. “The quality of mercy is not strained.. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. ’T is mightiest of the mightiest: it becomes the throned monarch better than his crown; His sceptre shows the force of temporal power... But mercy is above this sceptred sway, it is enthroned in the hearts of kings, it is an attribute of God himself; And earthly power doth then show likest God’s when mercy seasons justice.” – It is a lesson to be learned by more than kings.

The King of Swords Reversed is not an altogether happy card.. It tends to signify chaos in the name of Order, like a justice system run by lawyers. On the other hand, it can also represent maturity of judgement which may, however, need to be tempered with patience and compassion and kindness.

PENTACLES

ACE

A shining hand emerges from a cloud bearing a golden disk or pentacle on which is inscribed a five-pointed star. In the foreground, we see lilies and a path; and in the background, mountain peaks can be seen through a bower of roses.. This is the Ace of Pentacles, symbolic of “the gift of earth”: security, prosperity, the material world. In divinatory readings, this card suggests that good advice will lead to gain.

Within the context of this card, however, “the gift of earth” also had the connotation of “earthy” in the sense of sensual, the pleasures that can come from carnal or worldly things..

And yet, there is another meaning to this card, which can be seen in its Reversed position. The lilies in the foreground are symbolic of purity, while the roses are symbolic of passion; and the mountains in the background speak of higher goals. In this sense, the card reminds us that the earth has its own magic and that we should never despise the things of this world, for they too can help us along the Way.

TWO

A juggler dancing with two pentacles which are joined by an endless cord of green. In the background, two ships a-sail on a roiling wave.

This is the Two of Pentacles, indicative of embroilment in juggling the affairs of life. The seeker is advised to seek cooperation before taking action.

Reversed, it reminds us that opposition is an illusion, all forms are but different representations of the same thing, nothing remains the same, and there is an eternal harmony in change.

THREE

An artisan at work, perhaps in a monastery. He is watched by two figures, one of whom is a monk while the other is the architect. The arches which he is constructing are decorated with three pentacles above a rose.

This is the Three of Pentacles, symbolic of work and of work as a symbol of Spiritual development.

In divinatory readings, this card has been taken as counsel that the seeker seek to gain respect, perhaps through the good work which he or she can learn to do.

Reversed, this card is symbolic of the Divine (in the symbol of the Trinity) within humanity (represented by the pentacle) , and possibly of the humanity within the Divine.

FOUR

A crowned figure sits alone in front of a city or town. He (or she) hugs a pentacle. There are two more beneath his feet and one upon his crown.

This is the Four of Pentacles. It represents prudence with finances, and the pursuit of earthly power. The seeker, however, is admonished against avarice as a means of attaining security. As the saying goes, "The great way is not difficult to he who has no preferences."

Reversed, it symbolizes respect for the establishment, and the freedom which such structure gives.

FIVE

The Five of Pentacles is a very rich card.. It shows the crippled and the poor trudging through the snow past a stained glass window decorated with five pentacles. On one level, it represents failed sanctuary and material loss. It has also been taken to mean spending for pleasure, and monetary anxiety.

When the Five of Pentacles is reversed, it signifies spiritual renewal.

SIX

“A figure in the guise of a merchant” tallies the yield and distributes money to the poor. This is the Six of Pentacles, representative of the rewards of prudence and giving what one comfortably can. And yet, it had another, meaning: Since ancient times, charity has been seen as a feminine quality cognate with “caress,” i.e., suggesting the giving of sexual favours to those held dear; venal and venial (i.e., pertaining to Venus, and forgivable) veneration as opposed to venal sins.

When this card is reversed, it signifies giving all one can.

SEVEN

A man leans upon his hoe and watches while his vineyard grows. He is impatient, but impotent to change the rate of growth. Like the Arabian mystics who longed for the Mahdi (one sent by the moon) to come and restore their desert to fertility, he

Interestingly, the Seven of Pentacles Reversed is taken to mean independent success

EIGHT

An artisan at work in stone. The emblems which he has carved are on display. He works alone at his bench; a town is in the background.

This is the Eight of Pentacles. It represents craftsmanship: discipline and skill, prudence, harmony. Interestingly, it has also been taken to mean false vanity, such as being proud of poverty.

Reversed, it signifies an appreciation of the good (or goods) in life.

NINE

A rich personage in his or her vineyard, with hooded falcon on wrist. This is the Nine of Pentacles, symbolic of accomplishment and enjoyment of the good things in life; “loving acceptance of life’s tangible reality.”

When the Nine of Pentacles is reversed, it suggests a time of speculation, with discernment, and the knowledge of more than meets the eye.

TEN

People, perhaps a family, gathered at an arch, perhaps the entrance to their home. In the foreground, richly clothed, sits a patriarch, with two small dogs. A child clasps its mother’s hand. The air is alive with pentacles arranged in the form of the Tree of Life.

This is the Ten of Pentacles, symbolic of the good life. It speaks of family and of the great gain which can come from mutual support.

Reversed, it admonishes us to enjoy the good life.

PAGE

A young person looks from the land to a pentacle which hovers at the tips of his outstretched fingers. His shirt is brown and his tunic is green, as if to reflect the fields in which he stands. He stands in bounteous lands. He is the Page of Pentacles, the beginning of the culmination of a way of life.

In divinatory readings, he also carries a number of other meanings: he is a messenger, a man in uniform, and a representative of scholarship applied to financial management.

The Page of Pentacles Reversed signifies the desire for learning, particularly “the wisdom of the ages.”

KNIGHT

The Knight of Pentacles sits astride a solid black horse. In his gloved right hand, he holds a pentacle. He is a stolid man, simple, practical, and respectable. He signifies truth, honour, patience, and determination.

Reversed, this card represents a helpful stranger, responsible and trustworthy.

QUEEN

The Queen of Pentacles is a complex lady, as complex as her card. She sits enthroned amidst the beauty of the fields, framed by roses. A rabbit skips across in front of her feet. Her robe is red; her mantle, green. She seems to contemplate her pentacle.

She is a dark woman, and generous; and she may bestow of her material success; but she is a moody woman and has the potential to be harmful as well. She requires the honesty which only those who trust themselves can give

Reversed, she represents love of life and greatness of soul, but she can be a demanding lady.

KING

The King of Pentacles is a man of the earth, slow to anger but implacable when aroused. He is a capable manager who has attained a full measure of material success, a good man from whom to accept advice.

Reversed, the King of Pentacles represents the enjoyment of the successes of life.