



Tarot as a Counseling Language:

Core Meanings of the Cards

**by
Bradford Hatcher**

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Introduction

This book was written for a narrower range of readers than the much broader set of Tarot aficionados. As the title suggests, this will attempt to re-envision the study in a way that is specifically useful in counseling, and to better understand the core meanings of the cards in these terms. Since effective counseling assumes something akin to agency or self-directed behavior, the aspects of Tarot that concern fortune-telling or predicting the future will be dropped from this study. But the goal here is more ambitious than that. The Tarot, as a system of symbols or a symbolic language, has something to offer to an even more rigorous skeptical inquiry, almost in an anthropological sense, and certainly in a psychological one. It is a cognitive tool kit, and descriptive of an attitudinal skill set. There is little in print that is dedicated to such an approach. The intended reader here is an intelligent skeptic, with an unabridged set of critical thinking skills. This means that there will also be other casualties in this analysis, such as ‘new age’ metaphysics and fanciful misinterpretations of Jungian psychology. Number symbolism will remain, in some detail, but numerology will be dismissed. Religious symbolism and iconography, where not completely gratuitous, might be treated as symbolic of psychological processes rather than analogs of metaphysical realities. However, it is sincerely hoped that enough valuable information about the cards will be presented here that even readers pursuing more conventional approaches, and especially those writing their own books on the subject, can still come away from this thinking that their time here was well spent. One should not, however, expect this to be an easy read, and one might suspect the author of taking some delight in sending the reader to the dictionary. This is for the education, not entertainment, barring the occasional bit of dark humor.

Such a purging of the field, done for the sake of readers with more rigorous intellectual standards, may prove unpalatable to many, but this book is not written for market, or to profit from the gullible. Ergo, you may have noticed already that this book will not try to spare the sensitive feelings of the “true believer.” This is a technical term for someone who has personally identified with a belief or set of beliefs, such that any challenge to these beliefs, or mockery thereof, must be taken as a personal or existential threat, and defended against at all costs, even at the cost of foregoing any new input. There are a lot of these thin-skinned people studying Tarot. There are also a lot of relativists, who believe that all perspectives are valid. Many cannot even be told that two plus two does not equal five. It may be just as well that these people set this book down now. Even at the expense of sounding arrogant or patronizing, I don’t intend to hesitate to call something wrong. As an Aspie, tact is not a big priority. As a classical Cynic, I like my *parrhesia*. And as a Nietzschean, I like my swordplay. Having waded through more than 150 books in preparing this text, I’ve seen far too much nonsense, and I feel no duty to perpetuate any of that. I want to see the Tarot grow in respectability. I don’t want new age cooties. I feel an obligation to the future of Tarot as an evolving, open-source culture.

The Tarot presented here is simply a system of symbols that makes up an interesting language that’s useful in talking about attitudes and mental states. The approach for our purposes here is narrower than usual in a couple of ways, and sets aside a number of associations and structural dimensions that might be thought peripheral, extraneous or irrelevant. This might be done with a dismissive attitude. Many of these set-asides will have allies and champions who regard them as absolutely essential. Among the offended may be strict adherents to the Golden Dawn approach, to which this work adheres with at least some degree of fidelity. This is because it is asserted here that this

system contains errors: not a lot of errors, but a few in important places. It may well be asked where the qualifications are to make such corrections, or where the ancient authority lies. But this is merely a reluctance on the part of the author to continue such errors under the watchful eyes of skeptics, who are often armed with logic, and even common sense. It is important to understand that actions taken here are for the purposes stated here, and there is no way to stop anybody who wants to add any deletions back into their personal system.

It is also important to note that there will be ideas presented here, and mentioned in matter-of-fact tones, that sound suspiciously like mystical or even religious experiences. But skeptics ought not concern themselves overmuch, as these experiences are simply part of the inherited human *lebenswelt* and even good scientists can be subject to having them. No theories of objective reality will be constructed thereon. Wherever the word psychic is used, it refers to the subjective mental world and not to the paranormal. No mention will be made of how or whether the cards work. This will be left to the readers or their querents. It would be nice to approach this subject with the same intellectual rigor that is at last being seen in studies of Tarot history, at least as far as historical evidence allows, but standards of scholarship must necessarily be different for history than for meanings. Rigorous standards are simply not as applicable when the exercise is primarily creative. Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is the honest voice of the child who calls out in mid-parade: "Why is the Emperor naked?"

Mary Greer identifies 21 reading styles or ways to read Tarot cards (*21 Ways*, p. 271). Many of these are outside the purview of this book. Only a few of these approaches will fit the language model that is being explored here. Others remain important, however, as vehicles for subjective experience. In a reading, we want the cards to take us on journeys, to take us as far as necessary from any idea of consensual, central, or core meanings to get the information that we are looking for. In cultural studies and depth psychology we want to explore the symbolisms and mythologies in all of the rich detail that can be uncovered or extrapolated. The images of the cards, particularly those of the much older images of the Trumps, offer us enriching travels through the imagination. In magick, we want to invoke these cards and their meanings as entities and explore them from the inside as experiences, out to the edges of where they can take us and even beyond the known and expected. In pathworking, or imagining ourselves transitioning between symbols on a diagram such as the Tree of Life, we can further enrich, detail and, texture our metaphors. In meditation, we can make use of the cards as Tattwas or Kasinas. In spellworking, analogs of cards may be burned, immersed, altered or buried as charms. If superstitiously inclined, we can use them as talismans and amulets. We may bifurcate the methods by contrasting magickal and intuitive with rational and analytic. One of the primary distinctions in approaches concerns whether the meanings of the cards are expanding or contracting, diversifying or narrowing. When we are simply allowing the cards to take us places, by letting go of the mental reins, letting the symbols speak, freeing the imagination, and reading intuitively or pathworking, the potential meanings multiply. But even in the more expansive modes, consensually affirmed centers of meaning will offer us a known place from which to begin the wider journey.

Some approaches will require hyperbolic exaggeration, going over the top and getting carried away, all full of emotion and ecstasy. Magick seeks attainments, and mysticism, first-hand experiences. In spellworking, there is a role for hyperbole in raising magical energy through states of excitement. Meister Eckhart describes the invocation process simply: "When the Soul wants to experience something she throws out an image in front of her and then steps into it." Of course the common error

subsequent to doing this is in reifying the experience, thinking that first-hand experience is identical with objective knowledge, that the discoveries made in experience are in fact dimensions of reality. We mistake our interpretations for facts. And as humans, we tend to find exactly what we are predisposed to find by our expectations and insecurities. But an idea common to both the therapeutic and the intuitive approaches is that we can invoke our way into different states of mind using different symbols, images, or cards, and into a variety of attitudes, as though this array were some kind of cognitive tool kit or wardrobe. This aspect of the approach here is not entirely analytic or rational, although it does call for a rationally pragmatic notion of truth to assess the effect of the process. In counseling, this effect is often a change in maladaptive behavior. It's about what you do with the cards, not what they tell you to do, or what they do to you, or what they say will be done unto you. A word of caution, though, on spellcraft and the cards: each card has a wide range of meanings, including those seen by readers who read reversals. If you are casting a spell with a card, be sure to grasp the wider range of meanings. Magick loves irony, and irony will find you. Be careful what you wish for.

In ceremonial magick there is a distinction between evocation and invocation. In both cases, you're calling some force. In evocation, that something stays outside of you, and is confined to some area like a triangle, while you are protected by a magic circle. In invocation, you bring the force inside you while you both remain within the circle. Tarot cards should be understood in both of these ways as well. A card can be something objective and outside of you, maybe doing something to you, or offering a problem to be solved, or it can be internalized, as a personal experience or a skill to be used, or an attitude to adopt. Or, in the case of Pip cards, a third option might be that you internalize the number while the suit becomes your object or tool.

We will assume that you are not a never-ever level of beginner to the Tarot and that you already know at least few basic things about the subject. If you are a novice, some introductory reading is recommended first. This need not be book length. It can even be something as basic as the main Wikipedia article. There are also a number of other [links](#) to be found at my Hermetica site. Try browsing the first section for introductory material. Before going too far beyond this Introduction, there is also a 35-page pdf [Supplement](#) to this work. This contains a lot of excerpted material that is specific to working with the symbolism of the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes*, but this symbolic system also has a lot in common with Tarot and most of what is laid out here is also relevant to understanding the cards. You may, without great consequence, skip or fail to understand any of the portions that use the more technical Yijing terminology.

As for a general note on learning Tarot, we should note that beginner's books are a bad idea, given the way people learn and unlearn. People have a tendency to learn and accept things without a complete understanding of the implications of what it is they're learning. But once they believe the first thing they have read, they must then disbelieve the next half-dozen things that contradict it. This is in part called the sunk cost fallacy, and in part the fact that unlearning later is considerably more effort than learning in the first place, and there's also something of self-criticism in there that says they were foolish to allow an error to come live in their heads. Now the error has a long-term lease. These are the main reasons to build a basic knowledge of Tarot with the best materials we can find, and avoid beginners' books. We should challenge ourselves to do things well from the start, since we will be living with the results and they will be proportionate in quality to the effort invested. We don't want to build a real house on a Play Dough foundation. Start off with shortcuts and books for the lazy and you build on a crap foundation. Finally, no matter how creative you may want to get eventually, a solid foundation means taking fairly conservative approaches at first. We should

avoid anything too idiosyncratic. There's nothing wrong with artists expressing themselves and going nuts with the Tarot's potential to inspire. But Tarot is a language, and you want to begin with a dialect that most people understand, not one known to only a few, unless you want to live in some distant province.

Prediction and Divination

One of the more radical changes in a counseling approach is the move away from fortune-telling or predicting the future, and avoiding attempts to explain how the future might be known, or what mysterious forces are translated into the mechanics of drawing the cards. The assumption is that if counseling is to be effective, present directions in life need to change. Free will, or agency, or self-directed behavior, is brought into play. This also throws up a challenge to conventional wisdom by suggesting that no card should be regarded as inherently good or bad. There aren't any necessarily 'positive' or 'negative' outcomes or predictions, unless these words are understood without attached value judgments. Each card represents a lesson to be learned, sometimes after we needed to learn it, sometimes before. It is a positive skill to be used well or poorly. Sometimes what we already know needs to be negated. The card becomes information to be employed, perhaps in avoiding the very trouble that it might be a warning about. This might be regarded as the difference between fortune-telling and divining. We might accept that such an approach is still a form of divination if we can strip out the mumbo jumbo and regard the process as penetrating and elucidating some of the hidden dynamics of situations, activities of perception that are accomplished with nothing more supernatural than your ordinary human mind.

I see divine as a verb, not as an adjective. We divine to penetrate and understand appreciatively. Any atheist can still see an important place in life for a sense of sacredness, reverence, and gratitude. For me, Tarot is a language about psychological states, sort of a wardrobe of attitudes and approaches to life. Readings recommend tools of understanding with which to approach your question. There is nothing supernatural about it, but the natural is underestimated. Tarot simply uses native heuristics like pareidolia to get us closer to the subliminal, to places in the mind where consciousness can't go. In order to come up with the images, used like Rorschach-blots, to receive and reflect our projections, the inventors of divination systems have created finite sets of substitutes for seeing omens in the wild. We no longer have to wait to see lightning strike the steeple of a church to get our omens.

Meanwhile, on the far side of the question of freedom, we might have the skeptics raising their eyebrows and asking who here is really free to choose different courses for their lives. It may be that, for most people most of the time, the exercise of real freedom only happens on rare or special occasions, while the norm is almost fully predictable. We might point to the effectiveness of human political propaganda, advertising, and religion in herding the obedient and predictable masses at will, and with some degree of precision. Simple manipulation of fears and insecurities is effective enough to bypass most people's version of rational thought, and it seems an easy job to plant those fears and insecurities. This may be the challenge, in which case our divining here must concentrate on the rare and special occasions. It's the important decisions, when we are undergoing some stress consequent to previous choices, when we are most likely to seek out better counsel and acknowledge a need for better options. And it may be that the exposure in counseling to alternative directions in life might lead to a person's first true exercise of freedom of choice.

Rosengarten suggests Tarot cards offer the 'benefits of psychological insight and depth, without the baggage of affiliation that invariably accompanies any single set of beliefs... . Tarot operates on many levels of profound meaning from a purely non-

affiliated platform in the truest sense. Tarot makes accessible to awareness a full spectrum of psychological and spiritual possibilities with little preference for its user's qualification or beliefs.' (p. 5). Importantly, with all due respect, this is only a pack of cards. Querents might not get as defensive against a deck of cards as they might with a friend or counselor. This makes it easier to open up subjects for further inquiry. There is a sense of safety in this.

An Open Source Project

The lore of Tarot is full of mysteries and secrets. But we are at last permitted here to divulge the greatest of these: Tarot is the continuing effort of a bunch of men and women making stuff up, and then trying to find acceptance for the stuff they made up. Some stuff sticks in the culture, some doesn't, just like life in evolution. This confession was in no way authorized by the Secret Chiefs of the Brotherhood of Light. Tarot is simply an open source project, an ongoing effort that is several centuries old now. It has not descended to us in degraded form from some golden age of original perfection. It is an evolving human endeavor. For some reason, this mystery often appears to necessitate telling lies about its origin, or its current redaction, particularly lies about its antiquity or authorship. It is generous to think that many of these lies began as hunches that turned into delusions. Perhaps Nietzsche explained this best: "At bottom, it has been an aesthetic taste that has hindered man the most: it believed in the picturesque effect of truth. It demanded of the man of knowledge that he should produce a powerful effect on the imagination."

As we reach back through the known history of the cards, the designs get progressively more primitive and the commentators more foolish or deluded. It appears that assorted groups of noble families, enterprising artists, game makers and scholarly folk, versed in more than one of the many schools of learning that were reawakening in the Renaissance, decided to combine some ambient cultural symbols with resonant counterparts in Western Gnostic philosophies and the newfangled cards recently imported from the Middle East (which were themselves derived from Chinese cards), all in a book without a binding. This had promise as a game, and this helped insure longevity, diffusion across cultures and popularity. It is unknown how many cards were in the first decks, but over the years two discrete decks emerged, the original gaming pack of 52 cards and the later fortune-telling pack of 78 cards.

In a way, we are creating an artificial entity that is seemingly intelligent and moves through time gaining wisdom as it goes. It is an attempt to flesh out a skeletal pattern of organized meaning. It is not a static legacy. It crosses many cultural lines and integrates other disciplines into itself. It grows by accretion. It evolves spontaneously until cultural pressures are minimal to add something missing or eliminate something redundant, until it attracts less desire to change it, and arrives at a wieldy number of pieces for the mind to make use of. It will shed dead flesh now and then, and failed experiments. Sometimes a scribe will put the right eye where the left ear should be. Often a monk will leave off the genitals, or make them abnormally large. Given the ages involved, slips add up to slop and the work stands in need of some major revision, or even radical surgery. Growth by accretion has proven its value. Divergent thinking generates an excess of ideas until all of the needed ideas are present. Then it is time to re-converge and synthesize, cut out and leave behind the excess. Like evolution elsewhere, an experimental diversification is followed by selection for the fitness of forms to their niches. What works best tends to stay longest. This will be the spirit behind some of the negative thinking, the suggestions for corrections and emendations, seen here. And in a few places we might note a greater value in something that has at present been abandoned, such as an older version of one of the Trumps. But we will

generally want to study the system as it has evolved, or in the same direction in which it has been evolving. And there is no reason to allow outmoded ideas in Tarot to conflict with more modern ideas, particularly those of science. An open source project must be capable of learning.

Core Meanings

There's a dynamic tension in Tarot evolution that mirrors the evolution of life. People are always coming up with new ideas that may or may not survive. The value in "doing your own thing" parallels mutation. When that innovation is ignored or rejected by the larger Tarot community, we get the equivalent of selection. Nobody wants to mate with that mutant. We get some interesting art that way sometimes, but it goes no further as a widely-used new deck. Lots of experiments get way too far out to be viable, mostly because they don't pay enough attention to the core elements that are at the heart of what Tarot really is, or its basic genome. And every now and then we get major branchings, like the Marseilles, Golden Dawn, the Smith Pips, or the Crowley deck. These are like speciation events, where it becomes harder to share information between branches. We have a few species now, almost enough for a zoo, but some can still interbreed.

Basho, the 17th century poet, sounding a bit like Rumi, once wrote "Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought." When we don't, we move from having first-person experience to second and third person vicarious thrills. This holds a warning for both Tarot readers and designers of new decks. Let's say we're looking at one of Pixie's Pip images. Most of the people who write the Tarot books usually get their own reaction to the image, check it against a few others, and then write their own interpretation of what the card means. There is some very general agreement there, and a bunch of gray area. This accumulates into a body of accepted ideas, but most of the lore is just from riffing off of Pixie's pics. Very few seem to ask where Pixie was getting her inspiration. What was she looking into, and how did that influence what she tried to convey. Unless people go back to the same well she was drawing from, we get the equivalent of the Chinese Whispers or Telephone game, where something is whispered around the room and loses a bit of its original nature with each iteration. More of us should be retuning to the well Pixie drew from, and a big part of this was an understanding of what the number symbolized, what the suit meant, and how the two combine to form a new meaning, a whole that's more than the sum of its parts. The exact kind of flower in the background of the card, and what its color symbolizes, is a lot less important than that.

Each of the 78 cards has a huge range of meanings. You might think of each one as 1/78 of the human experience. By itself, that's too much information to be practical. When divining, we narrow that down two times: first by fitting the card into a specific position in a spread, and second, by asking it to focus its meanings on the specific question we ask. It's similar to doing research: we narrow the findings to the information we need by learning to look in the right places, and by learning to ask better questions. But this also suggests that we not start with too narrow a meaning for the individual cards, such as making the mistake of having only one favorite keyword for each card.

Verbatim memory or memorizing is too specific and not effective or flexible enough for reading. But we do need a gist memory or a gestalt, a sense of core meaning for each of the cards that both experience and several keywords can help you develop. Gist memory carries essential meanings rather than words or pictures, and yet can serve as a trigger for words and pictures from elsewhere in the brain. Many pull their meanings from the artist's pictures (and the artists personal symbolism), but this is closer to

reading the artist than reading the Tarot, so you want an artist who knows Tarot if you want to really do Tarot. We can look for core meanings in four places for each card. There remains a lot of work to be done here. The glosses of Tarot's vocabulary are still very fluid, and not at all standardized, and the language still has multiple dialects, some of which are mutually incomprehensible.

1) Images. The first source is the dimension of the image or picture, what the sense of it is, how it has evolved over the centuries, and in some places, where it perhaps should not have changed so much. There is a danger in getting overly fussy here: the little stick in his right hand has two branches because this symbolizes x, there are three bells on her toes because this symbolizes y. An excessively detailed description is little more than a detailed description of the Rorschach blot that is tickling our subconscious. We will not sweat these details. Probably the majority of decks within the range being studied here are inspired by the RWS designs, but most artists add their own details and flair. This stuff should be saved for when you are desperately fishing for peripheral meanings during a particular reading. The core will be in the overall impression, a picture that can be adequately described in the space of a couple of sentences. We will be looking more at the larger impressions, which may include figure, postures, and more universally seen accessories. This work, then, is not a companion to one particular deck. This approach is more useful with the Trumps because of their greater longevity and their evolutionary history. Depictions of the Court have some longer history as well.

It is problematic to rely primarily on the pictures on modern Pips. With the exception of a very old deck called the Sola-Busca Tarot, most Pip images began with Pamela Colman-Smith sketching her impressions of what the Golden Dawn symbols might look like if translated into lifelike vignettes. Most decks since, and most books interpreting them, are derived from this effort, now just over a century old. Many authors do little else but free-associate with their impressions of Smith's work, riffing endlessly on, and often in error, with no attention to or regard for the underlying symbolism of number and suit. Smith's work is brilliant, but the pictures still do not, or cannot, fully surround the core meanings, and many are subject to serious misinterpretation. Payne-Towler has another useful take on this issue: "Instead of being shown the formula that represents a certain natural law operating at a certain stage of the cycle in a distinct elemental realm, the Tarot reader encounters a cartoon of people enacting specific behavior and undergoing a particular emotional experience. This overemphasizes the sense of self in the situation, narrowing the possibilities of meaning and interpretation for that card." At the same time, attempts to return to the former direction by eliminating the vignettes, as with Crowley's deck, often become incomprehensibly abstract, or laden with inappropriate values from the attached narratives.

People get overly fussy about minor details and don't prioritize the importance of the symbols. Pixie's images have almost become canon, and it seems most deck artists feel compelled to reproduce some version of what she did. There's rebellion in the ranks against that, but not many other models to follow. That's just a work in progress, and lots of artists are loving the challenge, often in pretty idiosyncratic ways. Waite clearly drove most of the Trump imagery and his western religious imagery is obvious, offensive to some, and just wrong in places. And he's pompous and bombastic about it. He grasped next to nothing about the Pips and how their meanings are formed. The rest of the deck shows more of Pixie's creativity, at least beyond what she was able to glean from ideas suggested in the ambient Golden Dawn culture. Unfortunately, several RWS images are easily misinterpreted, which adds to the confusion. The energy of Eight expressing itself through the suit of Cups is a thousand times more important

than whether the hiker's staff is crooked or straight, or his cloak is yellow or brown. That's mostly the artist instead of Tarot, and your reaction to that is more of a reaction to the artist's idea, not to the core meaning of the card.

High resolution symbolic detail may easily tell us more about the idiosyncrasies of the artist than about the meanings of the cards themselves, although this may still be useful in contributing raw data to the pareidolia heuristic. There are plenty of books in print for those who need to go this route, especially Graham, Esselmont, etc. for the RWS. But only minimal or sufficient attention will be paid here to any of the images. Card descriptions will generally not take more than a couple of sentences. The intent is not to create a new deck or align with any particular deck. Suggested modifications are meant to live only in the mind or add to the mental gestalt more than the visual. The reader should simply be aware that many cards have several options. Core meanings should remain independent of the picture and useful with any deck. This particular attitude will have its detractors as it seems to assert a supremacy of conceptualization over imagery, and many would call Tarot essentially non-verbal and visual. Jorgensen asserts that it is "imaginative intensity which gives experiential content to otherwise content-less words." But who among us has not felt the heat of Mt. Doom on our face, just from reading a book without pictures? Once again, this approach is with specific respect to core meanings and linguistics.

2) Key Words. Each card represents an attempt to cover 1/78 of the human experience, each one a fairly broad field in itself. We cannot expect single names and words to cover this much terrain. It requires a number of terms even to surround the center of the territory. Core meanings are broad compared to everyday words and their definitions. Key words will be used a lot in the present work, but even though their number may be expanded, their range of meanings will be narrowed somewhat from the aggregated assignments of all the books in print. Narrowing may be seen as an attempt at defining the cards, but it is not that. Rosengarten (p. 17) offers a too-narrow-minded criticism of the process, calling such an attempt at standardization "abhorrent to the essential vitality and versatility of this intuitive art." This view is taken to the extreme in Lewis Carroll's *Looking-Glass*, "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all." But Alice is right. Words and ideas without some core level of consensual meaning will only render a language useless for anything other than babbling to oneself or for having private experiences. Tarot is a discipline that is shared by many others, and as such it needs at least some discipline, some constraint and resolution, and an agreed upon place for two or more minds to meet.

A core meaning is not a collection of key words, but a gestalt that emerges as a synergy from such a collection, like a sense of the gravitational attraction that holds those key words together in their orbits and relationships. In turn, this gestalt becomes a well for the intuition to draw from. If the Tarot is going to have any value as a language, one which we might use to communicate with each other, its vocabulary is going to need something to take the place of definition. Any useful language requires at least some consensus and standardization or it loses all use. Such a consensus, by definition, also needs to develop a following, which in turn suggests that we at least try to be traditional wherever that makes sense. The nature of the cards themselves suggests that definition is not what is called for. Their meanings cannot be circumscribed or delimited as the word definition implies. While each card covers a sort of territory within the greater realm of the experience of being human or alive, there is often considerable overlap, and often a card will have an implication that is

right in the middle of another card's home territory. For example, the Empress and the Queen of Pentacles have much in common. But you don't want to start out interpreting the Queen as a goddess or the Anima Mundi without first looking at her simply as a set of human personality traits perhaps made manifest in a flesh-and-blood, squeezable Earth Mama with potting soil under her fingernails. The narrowing that we do in no way means that we cannot go back out to the edges and margins of the meaning again. It merely starts us out on our quest somewhat closer to the center instead of in a foreign land. The core is an anchor in the midst of a general vicinity instead of the other side of the world. It also provides a more secure and reliable center for more personal accretions and extrapolations. And, of course, the cards also need to retain some ambiguity, stretchiness, even self-contradiction and paradox. A degree of vagueness is necessary for pareidolia to function properly.

A large number of decks present a single key word as a title, printed on the face of the card. While this practice might be attractive to a beginner, or otherwise one who thinks that understanding the cards is a matter of memorization, it is more of a hindrance than a help. While some of these names actually capture quite a bit of the range of a card's meaning (Dominion for the 2 of Wands, Enterprise for the Three of Wands, and Valor for the Seven of Wands), most titles don't even come close, and Crowley's Thoth deck is one of the worst offenders, especially in the higher-numbered Pips.

Old ideas of meaning and meaningful communication have fallen into disfavor of late, especially among the philosophers, academicians, deconstructionists and post-modernists. Sophists all. Of course this shows in the sense they fail to make, in the ugliness of their art and architecture, and in the nakedness of their emperors. We will just have to make bold to suggest that these fads won't last, and will never be regarded as classical ways of thinking. We will continue the discussion of key words as sources of core meanings when we get to the Language chapter and the section on Vocabulary.

3) A third source for core meanings will be referred to as the dimension of Component Ideas. They are the more elemental or 'atomic' ideas that combine into the 'molecules' of the 78 cards. These are more pronounced and obvious in the 56 Minor Arcana, the Court cards and the Pips, where each card is a product of either a Court Dignitary or a Number, together with a Suit. There are eighteen of these component dimensions in the Minors. Even in the more straightforward Trumps there will be components that have been put together to produce compound meanings. We will refer to this process here as 'portmanteau' analysis and this will be discussed at some length in the Language chapter in the Morphology section. This source is the least used and least understood of the four discussed here. Very few authors discuss these components in more than passing detail. It seems obvious to me that this dimension was well-used by Pamela Colman-Smith as she designed her Minors, yet this seems to be seldom taken into account by those describing her cards, or their clones. Most authors simply riff off her pictures. Crowley, in his Book of Thoth, probably used this tool more than anyone else, and showed its effectiveness in producing understanding.

4) A fourth source for core meanings is Correspondence, an expression of correlative thought. Degraded versions are sometimes referred to as magical thinking or argument from analogy. In this process, one system or extended analogy is overlaid onto another in such a way that there is asserted a resonant connection between corresponding elements. To stay on the more rational side of the spectrum, where correspondence is more creative than troublesome, requires an understanding that correspondence means to resonate with, and not is equal or equivalent to. The subject of Correspondences has its own chapter, following Historical Notes and Timeline.

There are core meanings to each card, with a range of perspectives and implications broader than the sum of their images, keywords, component ideas, and correspondences. Many will assert the cards just mean whatever you want them to mean. This is just relativistic bullshit, in line with the missteps of modern philosophy. But wide deviations from the norms still appear. The Tarot is an evolving language and an evolving consensus, but it does also take some “wrong” turns and it’s up to new authors to convince others that those turns were wrong. I might be working on trying to correct some of Waite’s wrong turns, or common misinterpretations of Pixie’s pictures, and a couple errors in Crowley’s correspondences, but those corrections have to propagate. That requires an ability to reason to others in a field where reason isn’t a top priority. We do what we can, I guess.

Symbols and Archetypes

It might surprise many Tarot aficionados to hear that the cards are NOT archetypes in any sense, and certainly not in the sense that Carl Jung used the term. In both the Tarot and the Yijing, the ideas of Jung are tossed around very casually, and with little to no comprehension. The main point, it seems, is in dropping a respected and famous name to try to secure some credibility. It has also led to some well-selling books being published. The collective unconscious might get the worst abuse, where new age writers might start with these two honest words and have them transformed into ‘universal consciousness’ within a sentence or two. You can even encounter the phrase ‘the collective unconscious of Western culture’ in the new age canon. “The unconscious is not a second personality with organized and centralized functions, but in all probability a decentralized congeries of psychic processes” (CW 9.1, p.278). Synchronicity gets its fair share of abuse as well, having been made into some kind of universal metaphysical law instead of a special class of coincidences. Here we are concerned with archetypes. Jung picked up an old word and redefined it. We can find the original idea and similar versions in Plato, Philo Judaeus, Irenaeus, the Corpus Hermetica, Dionysius the Areopagite and others. Earlier on, these rarified notions belonged to a purer world and transcended the world of flesh. They were thoughts in the mind of Deus or Zeus. Jung’s definition of archetype found its original roots in Platonic ideals, but he redeveloped the idea to mean something considerably different. Those who run with the idea in Tarot seem to be stuck back at Plato. Jung’s archetypes are cognitive processes, and not ideal precursors to things. They have a primitive role in re-cognition.

Jung tried to clarify what he meant: “The term ‘archetype’ is often misunderstood as meaning a certain definite mythological image or motif ... on the contrary, [it is] an inherited tendency [i.e., ability, potential] of the human mind to form representations of mythological motifs - representations that vary a great deal without losing their basic pattern... This inherited tendency is instinctive, like the specific impulse of nest-building, migration, etc. in birds. One finds these representation collectives practically everywhere, characterized by the same or similar motifs. They cannot be assigned to any particular time or region or race. They are without known origin, and they can reproduce themselves even where transmission through migration must be ruled out.” (CW 18: 523). In all of Jung’s collected works, we only find one sentence that he wrote about Tarot: “It also seems as if the set of pictures in the Tarot cards were distantly descended from the archetypes of transformation, a view that has been confirmed for me in a very enlightening lecture by Professor Bernoulli.” (CW, 9.1, p.38). Distantly descended. In a 1933 lecture, which isn’t found in his collected works, he also noted that the images are “symbols with which one plays, as the unconscious seems to play with its contents.” and they are “sort of archetypal ideas, of a

differentiated nature.” They are not in themselves archetypes. We do not inherit the idea of a blasted tower, especially when we are born into an indigenous nomadic tribe. The images may merely be common cultural elements, although many do derive from deeper inherited universals.

Jung did pretty well here, considering how many years it would be before neuroscience began to build some decent structure to support his ideas. A key word in Jung’s definition is inherited. This means genetic, and this in turn means neural structure and function, wetware cognitive processes, likely in combination with specific cocktails of endocrine secretions and neurotransmitters. Neither are archetypes a purely human phenomenon. They are also well-pronounced in primates and other social animals of high intelligence. We are probably looking at distinct processing modules in the brain giving us inherited neural predispositions to organize our memories of perceptions and behaviors around specific needs that we have as biological entities belonging to families and social groups.

It is perfectly logical that evolution would select and preserve our ability to recognize and catalog such characters as mothers, fathers, children, infants, siblings, alphas, allies, cowards, explorers, caregivers, elders, sages, rebels, thieves, spouses, lovers, bullies, heroes, sycophants, tricksters, challengers, fools, adoptees, cuckolds, and suckers; and such behavioral categories as praise, dominance, treachery, alliance, apology, seduction, flattery, deception, betrayal, obligation, gratitude, xenophobia, surrender, sacrifice, submission, commiseration, grooming, reconciliation, etc. Together these make up the apperceptive mass of our collective unconscious. As our lives progress, we will flesh out these predilections with our cumulative experience into coherent role models and behavioral protocols. Such archotyping is simple enough to encode genetically and also avoid confusing the great apes, elephants and dolphins who also seem to be born with them. Jung was pretty specific about these being universal across the species, and we might guess that this is due to their roots in earlier versions of *hominidae*. Cultural memes do not qualify. The Tower and the Devil cannot be archetypes if the San Bushmen of the Kalahari don’t have them. They also don’t have tens or swords. Jungian archetypes prepare or predispose us to perceive certain things, but ‘*nihil est in intellectu quod non ante fuerit in sensu*,’ there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses. Leibnitz later added “*nisi intellectus ipse*,” except the intellect itself. Both archotyping and the pareidolia heuristic would be parts of this original intellect. Ideas and ideals themselves are not inherited and the archetypes are not determined with respect to their final content. Their development is as idiosyncratic as their origin is universal.

The cards, accordingly, are symbols and symbolic clusters. They point their users to a reality that is not known in full. Helpfully, Cirlot claims that the essence of a true symbol “is its ability to express simultaneously the various aspects of the idea it represents.” They are multidimensional by this definition. Unlike a sign, a symbol never fully surrounds or defines the thing that it points to. Consequently, we are not going to be describing exactly what the symbols mean. We are simply taking numerous verbal snapshots from a number of different angles. The core meanings that we will be looking for are narrower than the full scope of implied meanings, but also much broader than linguistic definitions. And although the word may be difficult for the intuitive folk to use, they are conceptual as well. Languages like the Tarot and Yijing attempt to organize the dimensions of human experience into simple, diagrammable systems, such that these will fit onto one page. Since new words cannot be added, the meanings must expand until every experience can be pointed to by at least one card. But they don’t want to expand so much that they do not locate specific territories or types of experience. Each card is a lesser infinity, but it still has a locatable core.

The Cutting Room Floor

This section takes a quick look at some of the traditional dimensions of Tarot study that will be left behind here, and why. Wildly idiosyncratic decks, more expressions of artistic creativity than the fundamentals of Tarot, will not be considered here, even though some new ideas for specific cards may be proposed in descriptions of card images. The 52-card deck won't be discussed, as this is a separate system. Various gimmick decks won't be discussed. Neither will oracle cards. We are only looking at decks that hover around a common core language with a 78-word vocabulary. This will still range over a wide territory, from the Marseilles deck, through the RWS, to the Thoth, and we will try to see these as essentially the same system with some challenging variations in dialect.

Apophenia and Pareidolia

One important key to understanding the Tarot is in remembering that the cards, and therefore their sequences, were meant to be shuffled, not kept in any fixed order, and that they were meant to be readable as a coherent story no matter which order they happened to fall into. We can make a story out of any sequence of images by filling in the blank spaces between them. This property exploits two ancient processes of human cognition, or heuristics, ways of interpreting, or distilling meaning from experience. Apophenia is the experience or process of seeing patterns and connections in random or meaningless data. Common examples include hearing voices in white noise or seeing our own images projected onto dimensionless fields (ganzveld). Pareidolia is the experience or process whereby a vague, essentially random, but potentially suggestive stimulus is perceived as significant. This is often an image or sound. It is a subset of apophenia wherein there is at least a hint of form or structure in the initial stimulus. Common examples include seeing images in clouds, and the Man in the Moon. Aberrations of both processes are common in such mental disorders as schizophrenia and religion. But they are also evolved cognitive heuristics. They helped us to jump quickly to conclusions and actions long before we had reason and language, and they are still very much with us. Sometimes they still help us even better than reason and language. We might get the tiniest bit of an edge when the movement we see in the grass is really the tiger we imagine and not just the wind. Some skeptics have been known to harumph at this, and claim that these two phenomena are what most undermines the Tarot's credibility. But there is no reason to take this scornful a point of view, or apologize for it. The Tarot might instead be celebrated as a way to make use of these ancient mental functions, which act much more closely to the surface of the sub-conscious than reason and language can ever go.

The images that we connect with pareidolia might be snapshots in a dream sequence, dates on a calendar, letters of the alphabet, or numbers on a list. We can always find a way to make meaning where none really existed beforehand. We also have the ability to make our little strings of freshly connected images sound plausible to others. If we have the social magnetism, we can get our fellows to take our connections quite seriously, so that these become adopted and built into the thinking processes of our followers. Still, we need something that is better anchored, in something perhaps that science can see, if we are going to call our fabricated stories fundamentally meaningful. There is also such a thing as making too much meaning, seeing too much as being meaningfully connected. One of the best known manifestations of this is in clinical paranoia, which is distinct from the suspiciousness you feel when you aren't good friends with pot. Here, the universe gets all connected up in humanly meaningful ways, and there you are at the center of it, receiving special blessings from the Creator of the Universe, or some kind of persecution. All of those galaxies were placed up

there in the sky just to light your way badly at night. We shouldn't connect or make assumptions like this any more than we really need to. The astrologer might make a note here that there are no lines between the stars.

As with the Rorschach ink blots, we are able to begin and go quite a distance with just a hint of form. What we perceive are the projections that we make on this. Without any meanings, core or otherwise, the cards can at least serve us in this capacity. But we really want to start with less vagueness and ambiguity than this. We want the ink blots to better suggest your parents fighting, or trying to make you a new sister. The cards will stimulate our unconscious projections, but if the cards each have their own, somewhat narrower spectrum of meaning, they can then meet our projections halfway. Without some sort of inherent form, we have no information, only imagination, when we are supposed to be asking questions and getting at least a suggestion of answers. We therefore have reason to abandon the idea that the point of the cards is simply to start us off in any direction our hearts desire, unless of course we really are playing the Fool card.

Setting us up to work with pareidolia forces us to use our imagination and activate our intuition. It forces us to look at questions from new perspectives or points of view. And in a way, this is like hitting a "page refresh" button.

Number Symbolism versus Numerology

It seems that many Tarot authors can see no difference between number symbolism and numerology. But number symbolism is an observable fact. All around the world, human cultures and sub-cultures have associations of meanings with certain numbers taken as symbols. Further, there are separate symbols for cardinal numbers, which show quantity, and ordinal numbers which order things in a set, showing their rank or position. Both cardinal and ordinal numbers lend themselves to geometrical arrangements as well, offering ways to view what they symbolize or signify in patterns. They can also divide spectra of experience into set numbers of segments, as with scales in music. Many such patterns and scales are also cross-correlated with other symbolic systems. The nominal numbers, which merely name things, or arrange things temporarily in an *ad hoc* fashion, do not show quantity or rank, or quality, nor do they carry any inherent meaning. The number that you take from the machine to number your place in line is not meaningful in itself unless you are excessively superstitious. When you lined up with your classmates in alphabetical order, this did not tell anybody anything at all about your characteristics as a student or your character as a person.

Numerology concerns nominal numbers. At the base of nearly every numerological observation is a random number sequence, or an accident of arrival or assignment. Many people suspect divine and profound meaning in the sequence of the letters of the alphabet. This idea has been pronounced and influential in the WMT (Western Mystery Tradition) with the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, and in Islam with the Arabic. The idea that the sequence is meaningful has some of its beginnings in the belief that religious texts were authored by none other than the Creator, who would have used the letters as tools in pronouncing His Word, and who would never have kept a sloppy workbench. Along with this, we can consider that some cultures, like the Jews, had no independent method of writing numbers. Instead, like the Romans with their numerals, they used the letters of their alphabet to cipher with until the Arabs brought us the 'Arabic Numerals' from India. They gave the value of One to the letter Aleph, Two to Beth, and so on in alphabetical order. Then Yod through Tzaddi were given numbers 10 through 90, Qoph through Tau, 100 through 400, and the Final forms 500 through 900. But if we assume instead that the alphabet came down to us in random order, haphazardly through history, via the Proto-Sinaitic and Phoenician alphabets, then it is

not likely that the alphabet and these numbers somehow became mystically fused in their divine essence by this rather arbitrary later assignment. Meaning is an insertion after the fact into a random sequence.

A similar kind of original randomness also occurs in the basis of calendar dates. From a geocentric point of view, there are a few real and measurable points in time, that do not require any conceptual artifice or man-made geometry. These are the globe-circling dawn and sunset shadow lines, the phases of Luna, the solstices and equinoxes and their midpoints in the annual solar cycle, and the great 25,868-year clock that is the precession of the equinoxes. There are also time measurements based on frequencies of vibration in matter and other physical laws. Beyond these we have the man-made calendars, which are wholly unrelated to any of these phenomena. Starting points of clocks and calendars are pinned instead to arbitrary moments in time. A date is just a day until a number is assigned to it, but the day assigned to day one is an arbitrary selection. This is just some human calendar maker's decision and it's almost certainly not of cosmic importance. We add to the confusion by having months of random length. And these months are measured in decimal days, which rely on the accident that humans evolved with ten fingers. So now we have people telling us that we can add up the numbers of the letters of our names and the numbers on our calendars, and then add these numbers together, and reduce this to a single digit, and the result is supposed to be meaningful. We may have Papus to scold for bringing this into the Tarot. But somebody else would have let it in by the time the new age dawned.

The sequence of letters in an alphabet is merely the product or the bricolage of millennia of people just making stuff up. There is no observable structural or phonetic basis to the arrangement that bears a direct relationship to something meaningful. The assignment of a day and month and year number to a particular day in history is an arbitrary act unless there is some secure, original tie to a meaningful phenomenon related to time itself, such as a solstice or equinox. Any numerology which uses alphabet sequences or calendar dates constructs its entire edifice on top of arbitrary numbers and random sequences. And it only compounds the silliness to then add these numbers together and reduce them to single digits. It is not likely that any honestly gathered empirical findings are going to discover a meaningful order in such a system. It is far more likely that we will find a combination of pareidolia and cognitive bias pervading the investigative process. The only place that we will find the numerology of the Hebrew alphabet (called Gematria) to be truly meaningful is in deciphering Hebrew tracts expounding on the properties of Hebrew words based on Gematria. The real meaning ends there. The rest is imagination and the tricks that this can play.

Number symbolism is a different matter entirely. The study of the Ten Sephiroth of the Kabbalah is number symbolism, not numerology. See the links here in [Sections N and especially O](#) for more on number symbolism (with other sections you might find useful). Gail Fairfield's Choice Centered Tarot has a good sense of the ten numbers, and Paul Case's The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages has a useful section. But most Tarot authors are either confused in these matters or don't address them at all. I also get into the numbers in some depth below, and include Crowley's elegant approach verbatim. No system of number symbolism can be called universal, and several distinct systems exist: the meaning-set of numerology, for example, or that of the Pythagoreans, or of Jewish Hebrew Kabbalah. The Tarot has been developing its own for some centuries, in close connection with the (WMT's) Qabalah and its elaboration of the Kabbalah's Sephiroth. This will be retained, while large portions of the remaining WMT material is numerological and will be dropped from this study. Using the numbers of the received Trump sequence to help derive their meanings is

numerology rather than number symbolism. So is using the structurally meaningless sequence of the Hebrew alphabet to label or identify the 22 paths on the Tree of Life.

The Fool's Journey

The numbered sequence of the 22 Trumps, which has generally stabilized now as Zero through Twenty-One, with Strength preceding (and so switched with) Justice, is often narrated as the journey of the Fool as a Hero on a quest for individuation and fulfillment, a journey from ignorance to enlightenment. This story assumes that the sequence has an overall, deep structural meaning. Others have seen meanings in a 0+7+7+7 arrangement, where each set of seven trumps, in their given or received sequence, enters into a higher order of development. Still others have been able to tell a plausible story from an 11+11 configuration. One of the great virtues of the Tarot, however, is that the cards can be shuffled, and fall into any sequence, and still be made to tell an apparently meaningful story by making use of basic human cognitive heuristics that date to our early evolution as hominins. Our brains are structured to construct meaningful sequences out of even the most disconnected events, on the chance that what we hit upon might have survival value. This is also how we string together fairly random semi-conscious sequences of REM states into meaningful dreams sequences without any conscious effort. We will need to consider here that the development of the Trump sequence may simply have been based on the way the cards first fell, or the order of floats in a Renaissance parade.

There is one element to the structural Trump sequence that has developed meaning over the years, even though it may have started out as a half-arbitrary assignment. This is the part-sequential, part-geometrical division of the 22 Trumps into sets of 3, 7 and 12, based on the Kabbalistic ideas first set forth in the Sepher Yetzirah, circa 600 CE. This parsing is not fundamental to there being 22 Trumps in all, but it has provided some very useful contributions to the symbolism over the years by permitting the 22 Trumps to be closely associated with various Scales of Three, the Seven Planets of early Astrology, and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac with their Twelve associated Houses. This is the only analysis of the sequence of Trumps that will be explored here in any detail. The historical influence that this has had in the ongoing development of Trump meanings is the only real reason to pursue this inquiry. There is not an original connection that ties these ideas together at their roots, except as we can find human universals in the scales of three, seven and twelve. It should be noted before leaving the subject that the division of the Hebrew alphabet into Mothers, Doubles and Simplets, bears no relation or similarity at all to the more global disciplines of phonetics and phonosymbolism.

The numbers One or Ace through Ten are clearly an expression of number symbolism, and aren't really used in this tradition in a numerological way. These will be explored at some length in the Components section. Outside of this and the 3+7+12 set of scales, numbers will not be used. A couple of items of accidental meaning have been stumbled upon in the course of applying numerological sequences to the Trumps. Some have taken root in the historical development of Trump meanings, or at least have significant insights to offer, even if they are accidental. Most of these are taken from symbols associated with the characters of the Hebrew alphabet (and its forerunners), as they appear when this sequence is aligned with that of the Trumps. For example, Ayin, or Eye, as correlated with the Devil card, has things to suggest about the limitations of our vision and the things that we may be blind to. This also resonates with the theme of nearsightedness in the resonant Yijing Gua. These will be explored as they appear for each card, but there is no point in doing this systematically, since the

system itself has no underlying meaning. Pareidolia is sufficient to account for any insights discovered therein.

Over-Elaboration, Tautologies, and Mistaking Maps for Terrain

The human mind is a kind of terrain that as yet comes with no map that bears any geographical likeness to the terrain itself. The map is symbolic, so in ways it must be taken on its own terms, and because of this it can be a little too easy to get lost in the map without continually referring back to the reality it is supposed to represent. This will be repeated later: If a map of the psyche or symbolic language is to be useful in a real world, the orienting and interpretive grids that it superimposes onto reality will continue to hover pretty closely over that reality, instead of moving further away into multiple levels of abstraction on abstraction. As simple as these systems are, the permutations within the organizing system, which are separate from the individual symbols and ideas, can get extremely complex. These are the maps that our sojourners get lost in, believing there is more information there than in the contact with the world that the symbols are supposed to point to. The abstraction itself becomes a distraction, often a mindless one. Zhuangzi wrote: ‘To know when to stop is the highest attainment.’

Over-elaboration is a real problem in all of these symbolic languages. Newcomers and old-timers alike will get fascinated by all of the permutations and extrapolations of the structural system and wander away into ever-higher levels of remove, each thinking they might be onto something big, but almost always moving ever further from the point of having such a system in the first place. In logic, a tautology is a proposition that declares itself true by definition, in a format that isn't refutable. It is independent of verification or refutation because it exists only in its own world. This is not a world you want to get lost in, since it's only a hall of mirrors. The adventure becomes a maze rather than a journey. And where the map is in error, or is just an arbitrary depiction, all we really get is lost. The Kabbalah in particular has been made vastly more complicated and fussy than it needs to be. This is in part because adherents must keep going until they find all the meaning in the Tanakh and the Torah, which in fact contains mostly borrowed stories and myths, moralizings, vengeance fantasies and attempts to assert control over a froward and stiff-necked people who would rather worship Baal. They might have to keep wandering in that desert forever.

It's especially easy to get lost in over-elaborated systems in Yijing studies because the superstructure is binary enumeration. People take off following the properties of binary systems themselves, thinking that this must in fact be an exploration of the Yijing. This is the source of the DNA nonsense. Actually, the Yijing was written at a time before there was anything like yin-yang theory, and binary mathematics simply became an interpretive overlay that Chinese culture would have no real grasp of for another two thousand years. There were in fact structural elements and dimensions that were on the minds of the first authors, but these were few in number and simple to understand. They can be understood a little better with a binary overlay, but this does not make the mathematics fundamental to the creation of the book or its interpretation. Nevertheless, since the Han Dynasty, many centuries after the Yi was written, tens of thousands of volumes and lifetimes have been dedicated to snipe hunts in the world of Xiangshu, or Image-and-Number, usually leaving Yili, Meaning-and-Principle, the study of the meaning of the text, far behind.

The compulsion to go too far in extrapolating deductively from a simple cognitive system has been as active in Astrology as anywhere else. The permutations of inventable ideas exceed the scope of the human mind, as the great mounds of books on the subject will attest. This mass of available conjecture presents an ominous challenge

to the novice and threatens to preclude an understanding of the simplicity of the basic system. While the core of the system is rich enough in its symbolism to fill a long lifetime of study in depth, and only one level or two abstracted from the human psyche, impatience still rules, and students go wandering off into abstraction after abstraction, thinking there must be more to it. The answer must be in the decans, or in the asteroids, or in progressions. This approach may be called 'a mile wide and an inch deep.' Study time is far better spent in staying put and digging deeper into the mother lode. This requires patience, and humility.

All this is not to deny that we can't milk these expansions and digressions for ideas, but out in the farther fields of abstraction, this does rely more on pareidolia than any kind of fundamental or structural relevance. It becomes a question of a triage of sorts, of where best to spend our time. Someone who can give up the peripheral goose chases and snipe hunts can still follow the occasional lead that someone else has brought back in their otherwise empty sack.

Religion & Metaphysics

The 'Devil's Picture Book,' as the Tarot was sometimes known, developed in an era where the church was starting to lose its icy grip on culture. The Trumps arose shortly before Martin Luther made his move. For a long time there was some give-and-take in the Trump names and depictions, if not entirely to appease the Church, then at least to escape its wrath. The Devil card and the lightning-struck House of God or Tower were the last to join the deck. Gradually, most of the Christian iconography wandered away. Today, in most decks, only one vestigial instance of pure Christian iconography survives, in the Last Judgment card, depicting the angel Gabriel sounding his trumpet, and the dead with their families arising from their coffins to greet their just rewards. It is time for this image to go away too, because, to be blunt, the whole idea is childish and embarrassing. Others have proposed worthwhile alternatives, Crowley with his Aeon card, depicting a new era of will and decisiveness, and Robin Wood, depicting a Phoenix, in flames, and a skyclad woman. Both are several steps more evolved, and are also in better resonance with the Qabalistic attribution to Shin, the Hebrew Mother letter of Fire, and to Uranus, stolen here from the Fool, a corrected Astrological attribution made later here. The title Judgment, dropping the word Last, remains appropriate enough. It is also time to let go of any residual idea that the Ace of Cups is the Holy Grail. Even vagina is a better fit than that.

Many structural elements that organize the vocabularies of Kabbalah and Qabalah are repeatedly likened to diagrams of the mind or body or garments of JHVH and Adam Kadmon, who was made in this holy image. In the Yijing, the runaway Xiangshu or numerological systems became anatomies in their own way, or metaphysical models of the world and the patterns of circulation of its Qi and Jing. But the metaphysical structures that we project onto the universe can often tell us a lot more about ourselves than they tell us about the universe. Xenophanes suggested, "If oxen or horses or lions had hands to draw with ... they would make their gods' bodies in the same shape as their own." We take up our own psychic contents and project them onto some imagined cosmic mirror. As above, so below. In Qabalah's Tree of Life, this is the face of the Abyss, where Daath or Knowledge resides. Unknown to most, this is a reflective surface, and often all we see is our own egos, and its insecurities, turned upside down or inside out. But we still take these contents and set them on thrones in their assigned domains in the heavens and see them as Archons and Aeons, hypostases, deities and divine forces. With the right attitude, however, we can step back and take an anthropological approach and study these images as we would any myth for what they can tell us about their psyche of origin. Sometimes we may

have to re-invert the images, so that first causes become final causes, or ideas become derivatives of sense, or essences derived from existences. But while they may be nothing but reflections of human character, they still have things to tell us about this character.

Some elements of Kabbalah, those which have contributed to the development of card meanings in the Occult Tarot's formative years, will be kept, while others which added primarily to the complexity and confusion will be set aside. Notions of deity, even those outlying the Judeo-Christian tradition, are unnecessary here, even though states of mind that might otherwise be called religious, such as sacredness, reverence, forgiveness and gratitude, are best kept as part of the core repertoire of human cognition and attitudes. These do not require a deity. Rather than construct this on a platform of atheism, let's merely assert that the Tarot can be understood in its core without reference or resort to metaphysical or theological speculation. Here we are going to leave out the metaphysical belief and conjecture as unnecessary, and not even imbued with all that much wisdom in the first place. It can probably be asserted by now that the original point of religious and metaphysical belief was always ethics, and that it has always failed pretty badly at this. But the Tarot, too, can be seen as an ethic, and one that can survive being stripped of metaphysics and religion. This leaves it free to advise, without dogma, on the finer points of living a more optimized and self-directed life.

Tarot as a Language

The Language as System

Calling the Tarot a language is not using an analogy or metaphor. But Tarot does differ from languages like English in several respects. Together with its close cousins, notably Astrology, Qabalah, and Yijing, the vocabularies are tightly constrained and finite. They are typically limited to a hundred essential words or less, distributed within just a handful of categories or parts of speech. New words are rarely added, except when several are admitted at once as part of a new dimension expressed within a pattern. The meanings of words grow and expand by accretion of connotations, glosses, or key words. Unlike the English language, which proceeds from having a word for each thing, whose phonemics and morphology make little sense, whose logic is only dimly perceived through nearly subliminal grammar and syntax, these systematic mini-languages exhibit a crystalline patterning. All have superstructures that can be clearly diagrammed, with a clarity and economy such that both the superstructure and the elements of vocabulary will all fit nicely together on a single page or poster. Science develops the same sort of languages, like the ever-evolving standard model of subatomic entities, or the much better known periodic table of the elements. It is important that the whole system can be seen at a glance and held in the mind as a single image. This feature helps get us past linearity and permits a simultaneous access to all of the ideas involved, and this in turn is important wherever a contrast or choice between elements is wanted. The overall structure is a map to all of the parts at once.

These systems are abstract diagrams of the psychic or experiential world, attempts to map the mind's *terra incognita* in the distribution of its faculties and in its many layers. They are attempts to increase the regions of the internal world that are available to both perception and discussion. The discipline of psychology attempts the same. For all of its pride about being the study of cognitive behavior, it has always seemed to forget that it was itself a form of cognitive behavior, and ultimately a languaging behavior, a parsing and a taxonomy of the human experience. Its results were inescapably entangled with how it parsed the world into ideas and organized those ideas into systems and sub-systems. It also built most of its database on disappointing human behavior, but that's another subject. Despite its larger-scale incoherence, out of this we get useful little language subsystems, such as lists of defense mechanisms and cognitive biases. We also get classifications of psychological disorders that allow therapists to put the right pills into the right mouths, and fill out insurance forms consistently, although this contributes very little to long-term mental health solutions.

From the beginning, one of the primary functions of these languages was mnemonic. When a user looked at an idea, the language did not permit him to overlook the other members of its set. When a user forgot an idea, the other members of the set reminded him what it was. When a user's experience was too limited with one member of a set, the rules that were implicit in the overall set allowed him to fill in some blanks and holes by a process of interpolation. This was explicitly a real part of Tarot's early history, as it was associated with a mnemonic technique known as the art of memory, *ars memoria* or *ars memorativa*. This process also uses finite numbers of elements parsed into manageable sets, and spatially arranged to show interrelationships between sets and elements. The individual items are imagines agentes, or instrumental images. The overall structure of the Tarot is a just such a map to all of its parts, giving simultaneous access to multiple concepts for purposes of comparison or choice. The

Trumps were also a sort of memory training in cultural literacy: they were some of the first literal flash cards.

A Catalogue of Attitudes

In a systematic way, the Tarot has evolved as an attempt to enumerate the dimensions of experience with a finite vocabulary of symbols, in much the same way as chemistry seeks to configure the world with its periodic table. Its elements function as gravitational centers for orbiting meanings, or as organizational loci for sorting and filing experience and retrieving it with better ease. The Tarot is a sort of filing cabinet for the memory and open for the use of our imagination. And in therapy it can be used as a sort of 'catalog of attitudes,' an assortment of cognitive tools arrayed before us as optional accessories. In this context, freedom may be thought of as a function of the options that we are aware of, and this array makes it easier for us to make an informed selection.

These languages will be treated here in large part as working cognitive frameworks or models of the human psyche, attempts to lift this psyche out of its half-submerged state and hold it up for examination, to help us to point to this and that, or help us to choose between this and that optional state of mind. They both refer to and objectify subjective human experiences and feelings. Like the subsystems of psychology, they will be useful insofar as their insights can be applied to solving problems. This is frequently dependent on the aptitude and real-world savvy of the user. The deck can be thought of as 78 general types of experience, both states that we can feel ourselves occupying and states that we can occupy on purpose when faced with different kinds of situations. They might be objective lessons, some perhaps to be learned the hard way the first time around. If a person has a difficult time learning, then the next occurrence may be difficult as well, but if they are capable of learning, the experience or state can become a cognitive skill instead. An approach to Tarot that sees the cards as cognitive skills, or a technology of cognition, will make more sense for people who are able to learn from their experiences.

The Five of Cups suggests things that might be learned from experiences with loss and ingratitude, the Five of Swords, things that can be learned from overconfidence and betrayals of trust. Instead of thinking of the cards as predictions, we can try thinking of them as skill sets to keep close at hand. We have all opened big boxes of parts that say 'assembly required.' To assemble this product you will need a tube of glue, a hammer, a Phillips screwdriver, a medium-sized bandaid, and two glasses of wine. Our readings can be taken like this. These are the perceptual and cognitive tools that you will want to have close by. They are tools like psychological processes, attitudes, talents and cognitive skills. In the inner world they are learned stratagems, in the outer world they are experiences that are instructive of these stratagems. They are offered in a tidy array, like tools laid out on a good work bench. For those who can get past having their fortune told or future predicted, choices are offered that imply choices of outcome, and only failure to learn predicts bad luck. The idea of positive and negative meanings and reactions to the cards needs to be outgrown if the cards are to be useful aids to agency.

The 22 Trumps of the Occult Tarot are what the subcultures of the Western Mystery Tradition came up with when pressed to identify the 22 most important things to know on such a path. They are clusters of cultural ideas rather than archetypes, and flash-card reminders of important elements of this subculture's notion of literacy. They shifted around quite a bit in the earlier years. Virtues came and went, or (e.g. Prudence) simply got assimilated into other images (in this case, the Hermit). Where we find that

something important is missing, it is up to us authors to find the best place to insert it, because it is now against the system's internal rules to keep adding new cards.

Vocabulary, Definition and Connotation

Some system vocabularies start out with a preset or fixed number of items. Scales are the common example: divide the human experience into eight parts and see when you get. Then check out what that other culture over there did with the same assignment, see if the two solutions have anything in common, and then determine if that is instructive or not, whether it speaks of cultural differences or human universals. Other vocabularies evolve with no initial goal or end in sight. They may grow spontaneously until cultural pressures to add a missing item, or delete a superfluous item, and this results in at least a temporary stability. Then at some point they become fixed in number and even canonized there. Our calendars were developed like this. So were the different alphabets from our various cultures. The Trumps of the Tarot were yet another example, at least until the card games of Tarot found a fixed and established use for exactly 22 cards. It appears to have been a coincidence that this equaled the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Once the overall number found some stability, the meanings of the 22 individual Trumps, and some of their sequences, got shifted, tweaked and juggled around until they too found some stability. It is important to understand that the final 'plan' was not yet there at the beginning of the process. The Trumps found their way to their current order and number gradually, and even now things cannot be thought set in stone and proof against some new paradigm yet to be discovered or invented.

The term vocabulary will be used here to refer to the complete deck of 78 cards. The eighteen elements which constitute the component parts of the 56 Minor Arcana can be referred to as morphemes, discussed below. As stated, the vocabulary of this language is tightly constrained and finite. If there is to be any growth, barring the addition of a whole new subsystem to the language, this will need to occur by addition to the meanings of the individual words. Some of this accretion comes by way of associating, correlating or nesting other finite symbolic systems. Because these systems are used in divination, the universe of discourse for the languages we are discussing will be the full range of human experience, since this must embrace all sorts of questions ranging from matters of the heart to matters of leaky plumbing. While any gods out there might well disagree, from a human perspective this is practically infinite. As such, the individual items of vocabulary each have to do a whole lot of work or cover a very large territory of possible meanings, vastly more than any English words. These are like biomes in ecology rather than nations in political geography, in theory getting their organizing principles from characteristics that preexist in the human mind. Even jumping between more conventional languages like modern English and ancient Chinese produces interesting contrasts. The former has dozens of times the number of words, the latter has many times the number of possible meanings for each word. The former is more definitive and articulated, the latter more connotative and poetic. This is even more pronounced when the vocabulary drops to less than a hundred words. When a word or term carries many possible meanings it is called polysemous, and the phenomenon, polysemy.

Polysemy is much more apparent in these limited languages, and potential meanings for each of the cards can get pretty complicated. As with old Chinese, a word's meanings must be narrowed by the context in which it appears. In the Tarot, this narrowing is not done until after we have a sense of the broader range of meanings of each card, and then it happens in three ways: 1) we narrow the meaning by the question we ask, eliminating associations that have no bearing on the problem at hand; 2) we

narrow it further by the named position in which a card falls in a spread, a process discussed under grammar, below; and 3) we get tighter still within the context of the surrounding cards, which is also a part of the grammar discussed below. And we may add a 4) when we watch the reactions of a client for whom the cards are being read, reactions which guide the reader to a still more personalized meaning. Of course we are also looking at our own emotions in response or reaction to a card, sensing our own undercurrents. This is the intuitive part. While there are reasons to have core meanings for each of the cards to get us started somewhere close to the center of the mental or psychic territory that is the cards primary domain, we don't want to start out with too narrow an idea. We don't want a definition. But we also don't want to begin our search three domains over or half a world away.

Word meanings develop over time a little like a tree, branching out and self-pruning. Systematizers often take up this job of pruning. As with trees, vitality and longevity may be strengthened, not weakened, by this process. The cards began with very general ideas. In the Minor Arcana, they began with somebody's wild ass guess as to what it meant when component ideas like a number and a suit were put together. And many began only with notes from divination records. In the Trumps, they began with a nexus of cultural associations with the images and situations that were being represented. Whenever some contributor thought of a new key word which was remotely close to the area defined by a card's rough idea, the word attached itself to a growing body of associations. At some point there get to be sufficient accretions to sort them for some common themes, common denominators or clumping, and also to toss the more inane, extraneous or irrelevant assignments, the non sequiturs. This process is rather like studying the holes in a target made by a young archer to learn where he has been aiming; or like studying a bell curve to find a mean. Along another line of analogy, it is like pruning a fruit tree back to its most productive or fruitful branches. In this metaphor, note that it is fruitless to prune the tree down to one branch, much less down to the root. We want to maintain some of the learned diversity. Neither do we want to think we are defining a particular term. It has too much work to do to be limited like that. The words we attach are not meant to define a process any more than a person's name is meant to define the person. These names are meant to summon the character to help out with the chores. In this case the characters are psychological processes, attitudes, talents, and cognitive skills.

A Tarot card may be likened to a meaning magnet, or a neural net of associations, or a heading in a thesaurus. They can function as mnemonic devices, or nets for fishing the subliminal seas. When functioning at their best, a reader has only to look at a card in a context to begin the flow of a steady stream of ideas, with a spontaneity and ease akin to that of ordinary conversation. In fact, once core meanings or their gestalts or gists have been grasped, most of the work with the cards is preconscious or subconscious, down where a reader's personal associations are interconnected. The development of associations with each card is of course a personalized process. Some writers will assert that it is perfectly appropriate for this to be entirely personal or idiosyncratic, and that the cards should mean whatever a reader needs or wants them to mean. Of course this means that a reader can no longer communicate with other readers in a common language and that all their subsequent conversations with them become little more than dueling monologues, and any ideas we have about meanings and meaningful communication get deconstructed. These people can think what they want, but unless they are extremely influential, they will eventually wind up speaking to themselves in a special language that nobody else understands. They do not become part of the Tarot tradition or history. There are uses and reasons for classical

approaches, consensus, and traditions beyond simple pressures to conformity, and these should be respected.

We get our card meanings first from written sources and contemporaries, and then from our working notes and journals. Initially, we collect more ideas that we keep. Much of the initial collection will be in the form of key words, hopefully gathered from a number of sources instead of just one favorite book. We build on these, which makes it important for a beginner who aspires to ever be more than a beginner to look for higher quality sources. Typically when a reader looks at a page of key words for a card, their meanings will be all over the place, and will often contradict each other. The intent in the present work was to narrow this range of meanings into a smaller, tighter and relatively coherent whole, and then fill in some of the remaining blanks, interpolating between these narrower meanings. We wind up using both extrapolation and interpolation. In extrapolation we estimate what things are like beyond the original range of cases, based upon what we think the original range has taught us. We have to guess at what the rules are that lie beyond the known. Interpolation produces estimates between two known observations, as in finding word meanings between two known values. Two-point-six is an interpolation between two and three. Extrapolation is subject to much more uncertainty and a higher risk of producing meaningless results. Some key words will be repeated in collections for a number of different cards. Sometimes it is wise to eliminate the ideas that are just too general, but often these repeated words will have narrower applications that are very specific to the core meaning of a card, meaning they should be left in place with a note-to-self to look at a narrower gloss in a narrower context. In these languages, when used in counseling, you might find frequent use of ideas like deferred gratification, acceptance, adaptability, noble obligation, etc, all implied by several different cards.

An effort was made here to find some consensus on the things that have long been said about each particular card. Collecting the key words for use here, and this from a very large number of sources, was a little like looking for an archery bullseye in a wall from which the target had been removed, leaving only the holes to go by. There were clusters of hits to be found, and within those clusters were holes never made but ones that might have made sense. I tried to guess at what might have been the two innermost rings of the targets and use these to locate core meanings. But I also confess to having cherry-picked many of these hits according to some preconceived notions based on the constituent elements of the cards like number and suit, or preferred correspondence attributions. This was necessarily a creative process and not simply a statistical survey.

The Key Words sections here, a feature used throughout this work, will be a grab bag of these collected ideas. The only order is alphabetical. It is not recommended that these be memorized. Rather, the intent is to give the reader first a feel for the general meaning of the larger idea, and then a gestalt that ties the cluster together and also implies further meanings that infill the cluster or expand it only to round things out. The scope or breadth of these ideas is considerably narrower than those found elsewhere, in order to develop the gestalt more tightly around the core meaning. But within this narrower range there is a denser collection of information than found elsewhere. If you are taking a day to study each card (a highly recommended program) it might be a useful exercise to go through this section slowly, out loud, and try to stretch your mind to make a connection between each key word and the card or symbol in question. It is recommended to use more than one source for this exercise, and hopefully three or more, and all of these should come well-recommended by educated readers. It is critical for someone who wants to go anywhere useful with Tarot to start with best sources available and not build on a foundation that will soon need rebuilding. There is a lot of nonsense out there in print because there is money to be

made by writing for credulous and gullible people. It is advised to avoid books with beginner in the title. Also, the word 'master' is not used by real masters.

Morphology

Grammar is organized in two main dimensions: morphology and syntax. Morphology, the first half, is the study of the inflected forms of words. The Fifty-Six Minor Arcana are each a product of two factors, akin to molecular combinations of two atomic conceptions. Depending on how they are grouped, they fall into two or four general classes. The two classes are the Court cards and the Pip cards. The four are the Four Suits, each of which is represented by the four members of the Court and the ten Numbers. Few authors have truly analyzed the Minor Arcana from this perspective and many have simply abandoned their study to focus on the more straightforward Trumps. The bulk of ideas on the subject is the parroting of earlier writers' guesswork, or else making wild guesses at why Pamela Colman-Smith drew the pictures that she did. To really understand the Minors, some assembly is required. A grasp of the four Court, ten Numbers and four Suits is a must, but so is a grasp of their role in combination. Marc Edmond Jones, an astrologer, made use of the term portmanteau analysis, after Lewis Carroll's use of the term and its subsequent adoption in linguistics: "You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word."

In general, the Court and Numbers refer to the subjective aspects of experience, and the Suits to the means or the approaches by which the subjects interact with the objective world. In other words, the Court and Number portion of the cards tend to act as subject and the suits as predicate. However, the entire event depicted by a card can occur in either the inner or the outer world. Invocations and personal insights may stand as examples of the inner world events, evocations and predicted situations of the outer world events. In other words, and for example, on drawing the Seven of Swords, a reader may find himself feeling like a seven wielding swords, or feeling like a seven encountering a stimulating intellectual challenge, or faced with a Seven of Swords situation in a purely objective encounter. It should be clear that a familiarity with the first of these will help the reader with the second and third. Ultimately, each card is learned in its inner, interactive and outer world meanings. Those who simply use the cards to predict their futures tend to see these cards as solely objective encounters. This misses the opportunity to examine the card as a subjective dynamic in order to get a better understanding of the energies at play, to get a sense or feel of a situation as a first step in mastering it. At its core, the Five of Wands suggests an assertive force with some of the characteristics of Mars and Geburah acting through the element of Fire. Crowley explains, "The Five of Wands is therefore a personality; the nature of this is summed up in the Tarot by calling it Strife. This means that, if used passively in divination, one says, when it turns up, 'There is going to be a fight.' If used actively, it means that the proper course of conduct is to contend" (*BOT* 43). When viewing a card's vignette, then, one might ask, 'do you identify with the character shown or see this objectively as a lesson?' The therapeutic approach to a card will often require taking command of the subjective view first. Looking at the Eight of Swords, for example, may require taking the point of view of the men who tied that poor seductress up and left her alone to meditate while they went about their more pressing tasks. If that's what the picture is showing to you.

The Court cards are personae. At bottom, they delineate sixteen general personality types that are compounds of the four elements each with four aspects representing both stages of maturity and characteristics akin to further elemental expression. The Pip cards delineate forty classes of more objective situations and suggest personal

strategies for greeting them effectively. These will be explained in more detail in the Component Ideas chapter below.

Even the relatively simpler or more elemental Trumps have portmanteau elements in their construction. The 12 Trumps that are specifically associated with the signs of the Zodiac and their associated Houses are also compounds of the tenses and genders of quality and element. The Trumps associated with the Planets also carry implications of the signs of the Zodiac where those planets have their dignities and their weaknesses. Furthermore, the contributions of those correspondences from other systems that have contributed significantly to the evolution of core meanings of each card may now be considered as meanings embedded in the card in a portmanteau fashion. For example, the Magician card now carries portmanteau implications from both the astrological planet Mercury and the Qabalistic Sefira of Hod.

Syntax

Syntax is the other half of grammar and concerns the way words are put together into sentences, paragraphs and other larger structures that generate compound meanings. In general, the sentence in the Tarot begins with an individual card and the largest array of meanings that it carries from all of the symbolic implications of its image, its key word associations and the combination of its portmanteau elements. Next, this broad range of meanings is narrowed by the question that is being asked of the system. Then we narrow the meaning further by the constraints of the position that a card falls in within a larger spread. Then we glean information from the context of the surrounding cards. Finally, we track the reader's and/or querent's subjective reactions as clues and cues to where this inquiry is going.

We should look for meta-structural patterns in a reading. Cards can have more meaning when interconnected with other cards in their context, especially when they deal with similar or related themes. Imbalances in component dimensions are often a useful clue to the meaning of a reading. A strong predominance of a particular suit or the complete absence of a suit might be taken as significant. There may be a dominance or absence of Trumps that may be taken to indicate whether major forces are at play here or just lots of little details. One of the ten numbers might show up three or four times. A predominance or absence of a particular court persona may suggest levels of maturity or characteristics of investigation, such as whether to approach a situation with humility or with a sense of authority. A predominance of court cards might also suggest a lot of social activity.

Reversals

Methods of drawing the cards from the deck can vary widely between readers. This is personal preference. The biggest factor in selecting a method is determining whether or not the cards will be read differently if they happen to come up reversed or upside down in a spread. This is a significant component in many books and approaches. There are a number of problematic issues with this aspect of interpretation that have led to reversals and their interpretations being omitted in this present work. Reversed meanings will not be outlined here. Rather, they can be subsumed under the understanding of core meanings as broader spectra. In the first place, the method calls for a card to be viewed from two opposite sides, frequently either a positive or a negative side. The position here is that we should always be doing this anyway: we cannot really comprehend a card until we see it simultaneously from multiple angles. This does, however, remove a lot of the certainty that people want if they are predicting their future. The approach taken here is not that we are telling our fortunes, but rather, we are examining our choices or options. Secondly, among those who advocate the

importance of reading reversals, very few will suggest a method of beginning a shuffling of the deck with all of the cards upright, such that the method of shuffling allows some of the cards to become reversed as if in response to the question being asked. If this is going to be meaningful, the reader should find a way to begin with all cards in the deck upright and somehow jumble them in the process of shuffling them. They should also be restored between readings instead of accumulating randomness from previous readings. Authors who do not think to discuss this issue have not thought things through very well.

Mary Greer, in the *Complete Book of Tarot Reversals*, suggests that card meanings can be modified in reverse aspect by being: blocked, resisted; projected; delayed, difficult, unavailable; inner, unconscious, private; breaking through, overturning, refusing; be no or not; excessive, over- or under-compensating; misused or misdirected; retried, retracted, reviewed, reconsidered; or also understood in perspectives that are unconventional, shamanic, or humorous. Bunning adds that a card might still be in the early stages of its manifestation, or else past its prime and losing force and power, or blocked, restricted, incomplete, inappropriate, being denied, or only present in appearance.

Reversals may also be understood as analogous to Retrogradation in Astrology. This is an apparent backwards motion of planets through the Zodiac from the geocentric point of view. Sol and Luna are never retrograde, Venus and Mars only rarely. This might be said to turn a portion of a Planet's 'output' self-consciously inward, like a governor on an engine, intensifying the experience, but proportionately diminishing efficiency unless the information is put to effective use. Stationary planets are more reliably focused faculties. It is also said that a planetary force may be weakened, delayed, or reversed. People who are not comfortable with thinking often get very confused when Mercury goes retrograde. This can be a major problem for people who believe in Astrology, but has little effect on those who do not.

It's also important to note that those who dismiss or abandon reversals are also to some extent abandoning the cards as fortune-telling devices. Reversal provide more specificity in a reading, while reading without them sees the cards as providing more of a choice. Many of the more negative or contrary meanings associated with reversals will still be presented here for each card, but in a separate section entitled "Warnings and Reversals."

Paragraphs

While Astrology has a strict and unvarying paragraph structure in the natal horoscope, which is sometimes seen with an overlay of currently transiting planets, the paragraph structure in Tarot is extremely variable and is known as the Spread (sometimes called the Layout). This is the particular pattern in which the cards are laid out in response to a question or inquiry. The position of a card in a spread narrows its meaning down further, into a more useful part of speech with a specific function in its paragraph. There is no set or established pattern, although a few are commonly used. There are hundreds in print to choose from, and you can just make up your own. Different spreads are like different linguistic forms, like in poetry (haiku, limerick, sonnet), or interrogatives vs declaratives in sentences. The only real rule is that you ought to know both the overall pattern and the meaning of each of its positions before you ask a question and fill the spread with cards. The question that is asked before laying out the cards might be likened to the Rising Sign or Ascendant in Astrology. It sets the general theme or lens through which the reading is viewed, such as whether we are looking at matters of the heart or plumbing repairs.

The Tarot cards have gathered most of their cultural and philosophical momentum as a fortune-telling game or device, rather than as a vocabulary of psychological states. The general method used in fortune-telling is to draw a number of cards from a deck, placing each in a designated position within a preselected pattern. The meaning of each card is then combined with the designated meaning of the position, in much the same way as a Planet-in-a-Sign is combined with the meaning of a House in Astrology. In fact, the circle of the twelve Houses is one of the spread patterns commonly used in Tarot. But the fortune-telling and linguistic uses of the cards are not readily combined without doing some serious surgery on the notion of fortune. The way one looks at the spread patterns must change to accommodate an introduction of agency, creativity, choice and responsibility into the picture. The positions denoting 'the past' become convergent influences, and this includes what someone wants to make of their personal history. Those places denoting 'the future' become emerging opportunities subject to the consequences of our choices or decisions. Readings are done for the moment (although according to the Yijing, this moment can be six days wide, even if not very long). The other difference is that the readings become diagnostic of one's strengths and weak points in the various 'parts' of the psyche. They no longer predict the future: they predicate the predicaments of present potential. They will show where things are getting knotted up or where opportunities lie hidden.

The process of doing a Tarot reading might go something like this: a) Choose a pattern for the spread. Four are given below. Virtually any of the patterns and scales found in the Western Mystery Tradition can be good ones to use (like the 5-pointed Solomon's Seal, the six-pointed Shield of David, etc), including the scale of one for a simple answer to a simple question; b) Hold the deck quietly for several minutes while you are formulating a specific question or simply meditating on the moment. Towards the end of this period, flip through the deck, spending about a second looking at the face of each card. Straighten the deck and place it face down. c) Cut once, shuffle once, cut once shuffle once. d) Then, while holding the deck face down, draw out one card at a time. Wait until the fingers themselves seem to be drawn unequivocally to a specific card. Before drawing each card, recite the names or key words for the sequential position or part of the pattern into which the card will be placed. Place each card in its position, still face down. e) Turn all of the cards face up and read, or learn to read. It takes time to learn. Eventually a stream of consciousness will make its presence known and start to make sense. It will be of little use to try and identify or name this stream. These are four of the more commonly used spreads:

The Tree of Life Spread can be a recommended pattern for a psychological or diagnostic reading. It is not temporal. It looks at a querent's life synchronically and holistically. It portrays only a single moment of time, so a question should specify whether this omen is wrapping up a past situation, or diagramming a current state or event, or looking forward to a specified time ahead.

1. The Crown, Saturn as Deep Time, Duration, Point of Destiny
2. Wisdom, Uranus, Path of Power, Direction in Life
3. Understanding, Neptune, Field of Options, Opening Up
4. Mercy, Jupiter, Self-Image, Identity, Individuation
5. Strength, Mars, Drive, Motivation, Personal Power
6. Harmony, Sol, Attention, Health, Brio
7. Victory, Venus, Affection, Acquisitiveness, Want
8. Splendor, Mercury, Cognition, Organization, Strategies
9. The Foundation, Luna, Mnemonics, Basis, Adaptability

10. The Kingdom, Gaia, Sensation, Material Situation
11. Daath, Saturn, The Ego, Knowledge, Cognitive Bias

The Horoscope Spread is based on the 12 Houses of Astrology. This too depicts a single moment in time, so, as above, specify whether this omen is wrapping up a past situation or diagramming a current state or event, or looking forward to a specified time ahead.

1. Self and its constitution
2. Wealth and valuation
3. Education and familiarity
4. Home and security
5. Vitality and expressiveness
6. Usefulness and aptitude
7. Encounter and relationship
8. Resources and access
9. Extrapolation and reaching
10. Objective awareness of self
11. Goals and implementation
12. Finitude and coping

The Celtic Cross Spread. Although this is an old and classic spread, and the pattern or shape is fairly consistent, there is a lot of variety in which position has which name. There are always ten positions, which generally cover the following. It is suggested to Google this and pick a version that seems to make sense.

1. General environment, the atmosphere
2. Obstacles or contrary influences
3. Specific goals and highest ideals
4. Raw materials, momentum, tools
5. The current past, events resolved
6. The current future, coming attractions
7. Self's current posture or attitude
8. Resources within the home or family
9. Hopes and fears
10. What will come

The Magick Seven Spread. The shape of this diagram is the Magen David, the Shield of David, the six-pointed star with the center occupied by the seventh or outcome card. The first three items form the upright triangle. It doesn't really matter which card goes where as long as the reader knows which position has which name before the cards are pulled.

1. The Past
2. The Present
3. The Future
4. Energy Needed
5. Energy In The Air
6. Energy Opposed
7. The Outcome

Historical Notes and Timeline

A. E. Waite suggested that Tarot history is “largely of a negative kind ... the issues are cleared by the dissipation of reveries and gratuitous speculations expressed in terms of certitude.” (p.7). We can now, of course, dissipate some of Mr. Waite’s own reveries and speculations as well. To be perfectly honest, the first couple of centuries of conjecture on Tarot history are largely either lies or delusions, or a fuzzy combination of the two. Many lies and delusions became sincerely held beliefs. The several founders of the Occult Tarot were largely interested in ceremonial magick, so their extreme exaltation of the medium must have seemed quite appropriate to them, in order that this might carry them to the heights of ecstasy that they sought. But the whole history of religious and metaphysical soothsaying (meaning truth-telling) has always been fraught with hyperbole and blatant untruths asserted without evidence. It was not just the Jews and Chinese who lied about who wrote their holy books (the nice word is pseudepigraphy). P. Case makes a typical assertion when he uses words like “others ... should remember that we have very ancient authority for these attributions.” (Oracle 45). Ancient authority is just stuff that somebody made up a couple of centuries earlier. Thankfully, we now have had a sincere and fairly reliable tradition of scholarship tracking the history of the playing cards, with authors beginning well back into the 19th century. In the last several decades, some of this more rigorous spirit has rubbed off on Tarot historians and a much better picture of real Tarot history is now emerging. The annotated bibliography linked here has some praise for a few of these studies.

The Tarot was a child conceived at an orgy at the end of the dark ages. We are not sure who its real parents are. It seems to have developed as a spin-off of card games that used the older 52-card deck, with a fifth suit added, called Trumps, and four Queens added to an original royal court of twelve. This happened around 1440, although the deck didn’t approach its present content until around 1550 for the Minor Arcana and 1600 for the Trumps. The Tower and the Devil were late arrivals. The origins of the Tarot cards are lost in the obscurity of the dark ages. The earliest western references to playing cards (not Tarot) date from the 14th century. They first appeared in Spain, Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany and the Balkans by way of North Africa and the Middle East, carried by the Arabs. Credit or blame for the cards has been variously attributed to Jewish Kabbalists, Renaissance Qabalists, Sufis, Gypsies, ancient Egyptians, ancient Chinese, space aliens, ancient Atlanteans, Dervishes from Fez, Knights Templar, Albigensian Heretics, Priests of Serapis, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, Neoplatonists, Gnostics, Alchemists, Hermeticists, Neopythagoreans, and others. Its mysterious origins are also associated with medieval *ars memorativa*, the grail legend, lot books, and the early 15th century costume parades by Italian nobles playing out themes in Petrarch’s *I Trionfi* (penned from 1356-1374). All of the above schools (excepting the Atlanteans and space aliens) could have some claim to being the locus of a root of Tarot. And rightly so. The Tarot has sent roots into the mulch and compost of several ancient traditions, some more influential than others.

It is only in the most indirect sense that we can say Tarot evolved out of Egyptian or Alexandrian thought. The occult Tarot came late to the Western Mystery Tradition, but the game of Tarot as a spin-off from the 52 card deck antedated the arrival of Kabbalah and Hermeticism in Europe. Their influences were developed retroactively, as though roots were put down into this older material. This is not the same as saying that the Tarot is their direct descendant, evolution, or continuation. There is no doubt that Tarot picked up and incorporated some ancient streams of esoteric vocabulary and the systems that organized them, but this cannot honestly be called Tarot history unless the

Tarot already existed in some form. The Tarot is a growing event and an open-source project, with many participants, all of whom are allowed to create. It is an original product of medieval syncretism. Folks seem to want or need to believe that the Tarot started out finished and perfected, way back in the past, then got broken and dusty, and now we're on the verge of discovering the means to restore it to the original purity of its conception. They keep looking for the original keys, designs and meanings. When they fail to find these in history, they turn to misguided ideas of archetypes and Platonic forms that somehow preexist the material. There is no evidence whatsoever to support these points of view. The Tarot started out clumsily and awkwardly.

The Minor Arcana came first. The Mamluk cards, and perhaps other decks used in the games of Naibs, came to Spain in the 14th century from the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. They carried three members of the court: Malik, Na'ib Malik, and Thani Na'ib (King, Viceroy, and Deputy Viceroy). These became the King, Knight and Page. Being Arabic, under Islamic law, they had no human images. The Europeans added the four Queens and the depictions of the four noble personages. Arabs also brought the four suits: Jawkan, Tuman, Suyat (or Sujuf) and Darahim (polo-sticks, cups, swords and coins). Elsewhere, a Hindu deity, Ardhanarisvara, is depicted holding magical objects identical to the four Tarot suits, but we have no such depictions going back to more ancient dates. The Four Treasures of Ireland, being the Spear of Lug, the Cauldron of the Dagda, the Sword of Light of Nuada, and the Stone of Fal also closely replicate the symbols of the suits, but with no known historical connection. Can we now add Vikings to connect the British Isles to the Mid-East? The evolving Trumps were added in Italy, beginning, we think, with several decks originally prepared by Bonifacio Bembo's art studio for the noble house of Visconti. According to Dummett, their use was first documented in 1442 at the Court of Ferrara.

The superstructure of the Tarot was developed first. Once the fifth suit of trumps was added to the 40 Pips and the Court expanded from 12 to 16 cards, not much change was made to the metastructure. The meanings of the individual cards have taken a lot longer to evolve than the skeletal form. In fact, this part of the process may still be in its early stages. As mentioned in the Language section, the structure itself contributed much to the evolution of the meanings of both the individual cards and the more elemental symbols (Suit, Court and Number) out of which many meanings are made. It was not until the occult revival of the late nineteenth century that this began to occur in earnest. Although other streams of thought were involved, the central nexus of this revival was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an eclectic, quasi-Rosicrucian network. Developing a system of study and correspondences with the help of an earlier work, *The Dogma and Ritual of Transcendental Magic* (1856) by Eliphas Levi, the Golden Dawn gave rise to such noted commentators as Samuel Liddell Mathers, Arthur Edward Waite, Aleister Crowley and Paul Foster Case, an American. Outside of this network, only a few authors have made truly significant contributions to the field. Three early versions of this seminal Golden Dawn system are found as Book T in the *Equinox*, Vol 1-8, Book T as published by Israel Regardie, and in *Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot* by Robert Wang. This is online. But outside of assigning the cards some useful titles for later use as key words, Book T took the Golden Dawn down some pretty specious pathways. It introduced a revived set of astrological decans as an algorithm for the whole of the minors. These do a lot more confusing than enlightening. And it doesn't seem like Pamela Colman-Smith made much use of this book as inspiration for her deck.

For practical purposes, and so excluding the most prescient Sola-Busca Tarocchi, the tradition of depicting the 40 Pip cards with vignettes from life and imagination, instead of symbols arranged in geometric patterns, began in 1909 with Pamela Colman-Smith's

artwork, developed to accompany the work of A. E. Waite. In a fairly short time, these images have become almost canon, taken nearly as seriously as the images of the much older Trumps, and the majority of the several decks emerging each year are variations on the themes developed by Smith. The meanings associated with the Pip cards didn't really begin to develop in any coherent fashion until authors began trying to account for their meanings in terms of Smith's images. Now, in fact, a majority of mass market writers seem to look no farther than these images and riff endlessly on about them in developing their associations. This is an error. While the Smith images are impressively insightful, they still cannot carry the full implications of a card with its component dimensions of number and suit, and they are also subject to incorrect interpretations. Crowley and his minions are the most notable exceptions here, but these often involve the very opposite challenge of being either too abstract or having too limited real-life associations to the elemental symbols. They are also often overburdened with value judgments based on extracurricular associations.

Tarot Timeline

(the Chinese and Kabbalistic entries are discussed later in this work).

105 CE, Han Dynasty China, Cai Lun invents paper.

6th Century, actual dates unknown. Sepher Yetzirah, the Book of Formation, foundational document of Kabbalah, introduces the Ten Sephiroth, still unnamed, and the scale of 22 as 3+7+12.

618-907, Tang Dynasty China introduces paper currency, after which playing cards are thought to be modeled. Cards with no clear resemblance to modern decks may have been known in Korea and China perhaps as early as the 10th Century. Per Chatto, cards of some kind were invented in China around 1120 CE, in the reign of Seun-Ho, for one of the emperors concubines. Douglas questions this. Evolutions of this concept were introduced into Europe through the Islamic world during the last quarter of the 14th century. This may or may not have had important stops or branchings in India and Persia.

906-989, Five Dynasties, Chen Tuan produces the Wujitu.

1017-1073, Northern Song Dynasty, Zhou Dunyi produces the Taijitu.

1174, The Sepher Bahir or Book of Brightness, discusses the Sephiroth and speaks of a tree, but without any clear description.

1248-1323, Joseph Gikatilla's Sha'arei Ora or Portae Lucis (Gates of Light), refers to a tree, describing three triads on central pillar. Translated later by Riccius into Latin (1516).

1332-1367, some references suggest that playing cards were in use in Spain and beyond during these years. The 1332 reference (Taylor) asserts that King Alphonse of Leon and Castille prohibited their use. This is questionable. 1367 is a better-attested prohibition in Bern, Switzerland.

1360's-1370's, Mamluk Egyptian playing cards, with Islamic roots, introduced into Italy through North Africa and perhaps Moorish Spain, a 52-card deck, with three court folk (King, Emir, Wazir), but no human figures.

1370's, playing cards are mentioned as being prohibited in Spain, France, and Italy.

1374, Petrarch's *I Trionfi*, penned from 1356-1374, will become an inspiration for triumphal 15th century costume parades by Italian nobles.

1377, a Dominican friar named Johannes von Rheinfelden, writes "Tractatus de moribus et disciplina humane conversationis." Describes cards in a sermon. The date is suspect and may be 1372 (Kaplan V.1).

1379, Covelluzo, a chronicler, describes a game of cards introduced into Viterbo, "which came from the Saracens and was called Naibs" in Arabic.

15th Century, era of Triumph processions, of allegorical figures of virtues, costumes and floats. Gertrude Moakley advances the theory that this underpins at least many of the Trumps.

1419, Cristoforo Buondelmonti wrote of Egyptian hieroglyphica, sparking the European interest in the mysteries of Egypt.

1430's-1470's, Bonifacio Bembo's art studio produced the earliest known Tarot decks.

1438, the Greeks come to Italy to patch up Christianity at the Council of Ferrara, bringing some Kabbalistic materials.

1442, account books of D'Este court of Ferrara show a painter Sagramoro receiving money for the production of four *Trionfi* (Triumph or Trump) playing card decks. Trumps are created as 5th suit added to playing cards. Many writers assert incorrectly that the 52-card deck evolved from the 78. Rather, four court cards and 22 trumps were added to the 52.

1440's, *Trionfi* Tarot cards are created for the Italian Visconti family by Bonifacio Bembo's art studio. The Visconti-Sforza tarot decks c.1450 may be the best known and most influential on later card designs.

1440, a Platonic academy forms in Florence, dedicated to Neoplatonism, and also magia, a Christianized magic.

1453 Constantinople is invaded by Turks, trapping Eastern Orthodox delegates in Italy, and bringing the *Corpus Hermeticum* to Europe.

1460, Leonardo of Pistola, an Italian monk is exposed to the *Corpus Hermeticum* in Macedonia, and brought a Greek manuscript to Italy, translated by Ficino in 1463.

1463-1494, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, brought Kabbalah into the Western Mystery Tradition, but too late to be considered a Trump source.

1465-1470 Mantegna Arcana cards appear in Italy, a 50-card deck depicting essential cultural memes. It's structured in five ranks, designated by letters, expressed in ten steps, expressed in numbers, ascribed to Botticelli and Baldini. May show an influence from Lull and his 'ars combintoria.'

1487, the Mainz Fortune Telling Book uses the playing card deck, with no trumps.

1490, the first versions of the Marseilles stream of Tarot decks.

Late 15th Century, the Sola-Busca Tarocchi, shows the first full scenes on the Pip cards, not done again until Smith in 1909, except that Giacomo Recchi, 1820, has figures that appear on the Fours.

1500, The earliest list of the Major Arcana as we know it today is given in the Latin Manuscript Sermones de Ludo Cumalis. (See Kaplan).

1510-1581, Guillaume Postel translates the Sepher Yetzirah, Bahir and Zohar (1552) into Latin.

1516, the first known graphic illustration of the Tree of Life appears on the cover of Paul Ricci's translation of Joseph Gikatilla's Gates of Light, around the beginning of the Safed school of Kabbalah.

1522-1570, Moses Cordovero (Remak) published a graphic version of the Tree of Life.

1527, First recorded use of cards in divination, 'when in Merlini Cocai's verse drama Chaos del Triperuno, several nobles had their fortunes told with the cards.' (Kaplan V3Pxiv).

1534-1572, Isaac Luria, the Ari, published a graphic version of the Tree of Life. Ari's Tree of Life had paths that differed from Kircher's, published later. Luria revived Gnostic imagery in Kabbalistic terms.

1550, Minor Arcana are fairly standard (Dummett) except for the titles of Court nobility.

1600, The first sets of the Trumps with which we are now familiar. The Tower and the Devil, the last to join, were not in any Bembo collection, while Faith, Hope and Charity appeared in earlier decks.

1602-1680, Athanasius Kircher, per Moshe Idel, makes a linear assignment of letters to paths on the Tree of Life, in accord with a known Jewish tradition, but differing from that of the Ari and the Safed school of Kabbalah. Kircher published a depiction of the Tree of Life for the Europeans in 1652, based upon a 1625 version by Philippe d'Aquin.

1636-1689, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, wrote Kabbalah Denudata.

1660-1665, the Marseilles stream of Tarot decks achieved more of a standard form after Vivelle and Noblet Tarots are published. The most influential decks in the earlier days, and the cards known to de Geblin.

1725-1784, Court de Gebelin, 1781 *Le Monde Primitif*, V 8, section *Le Jeu des Tarots*, first notes what he thinks is a strong Egyptian tone in Tarot. He is the first to attribute Hebrew letters to the Trumps and first to use the term *Book of Thoth*.

1738-1791, Etellia, or Jean-Baptiste Alliette, in 1883, took the Egyptian Tarot association over the top and popularized it.

1781, Comte de Mellet's essay "Study on the Tarots," often included with de Gebelin's work, is significant for his explicit linking of the individual trumps with the individual Hebrew letters.

1767-1825, Antoine Fabre d'Olivet spearheaded a revival of Hebrew language studies, influencing Levi and Papus. Also led a revival of Neo-Pythagoreanism.

1771-1839, Eusebe Salverte, 1829, wrote *Des Sciences Occultes*. *Occult Sciences: The Philosophy of Magic, Prodigies and Apparent Miracles*, tr. into English 1846 by Anthony Todd Thomson.

1783-1858, Samuel Weller Singer, an historian of card games, introduced the Arabic origin theory.

1789, The first Tarot deck designed specifically for divination was Etteilla's *Grand Etteilla Tarot*, with predictions rather than titles in French and English. Predictions bear only a little resemblance to modern meanings.

1804-1886, Jean Alexandre Vaillant, in 1857, contributed convincingly to the erroneous association of the Tarot to the Gypsies, who were thought to be Egyptians.

1810-1875, Eliphas Levi, supported the Kabbalistic origin, popularized the Alef-Beth to Trump connection first noticed by Court de Gebelin, and established Tarot as a part of Renaissance Hermeticism. He placed the Fool with Shin and the Magician with Aleph.

1811-1877, Paul Christian, associated the 22 Trumps with an ancient Egyptian wall of initiation.

1848-1925, William Wynn Westcott, founded the Golden Dawn, obtained the 'Cypher Manuscript' in 1886, which correlated letters to paths and formed a major cornerstone for the Golden Dawn system.

1854-1918, Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers. 1888 Golden Dawn booklet *The Tarot: Its Occult Signification*. Tied the Pips to the Decans and the Hebrew letter Aleph to the Fool. Suggested that the 22 Trumps could be constructed, following their numerical order, into what he called a "connected sentence," leading eventually to the idea of the Fool's Journey once the Fool was placed at the beginning of the sequence. Mathers and the Golden Dawn popularized working from multiple magical or conceptual systems (nested analogies) instead of single grimoires. Rituals were interdisciplinary and crossed cultures.

1857-1942, Arthur E. Waite, published *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* in 1909.

1860-1943, Oswald Wirth, 1927 *The Tarot of the Magicians*. Deck description, Egyptian slant, trumps only, with original designs.

1860, the Fool joins the older 52-card deck as the Joker.

1861-1899, Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, in *Le Serpent de la Genese* (2 vols, 1891 & 1897). A French school, with a more mystical interpretation of the Tarot cards.

1865-1916, Papus (Gérard Encausse), 1892 *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, tries to develop meanings for the Pips. Included numerology & reduction to single digits.

1875-1948, Aleister Crowley, writes extensively on Tarot from 1912, and throughout his career, but doesn't publish *The Book of Thoth* until 1944.

1878-1951, Pamela Colman Smith, the commissioned artist for Waite's Tarot deck, first published by Rider in 1909. The Rider-Waite deck is referred to here as the Smith deck to give credit where due.

1884-1954, Paul Foster Case, 1975 *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*. Case is the first Tarotist to cite Jung's collective unconscious.

1888, Golden Dawn founded.

1909. Pamela Colman-Smith introduces vignettes for the Pips, original except for the 3 of Swords and the Ten of Wands (now Swords) from the Sola-Busca Tarocchi.

Correspondences

Correspondences, or the drawing of extended connections and correlations between separate systems of ideas, are the second foundation in the way that systems of occult linguistics and correlative thought are developed, following the initial cornerstones that are found within an original system's culture of origin. While they seldom demonstrate exact equivalences, these systems inform each other and in this way co-evolve. This is particularly relevant to the relationship between the Tarot and Hermetic Qabalah, which evolved roughly concurrently but had no historical connection at their beginning. Both, however, had put down roots into related cultural sources and therefore found it relatively easy to develop some common ground. The co-evolutionary relationship between Tarot and Astrology is also significant in an historical sense, although the best of this has come to Tarot by way of Hermetic Qabalah. More recently, fabricated connections between the Tarot and the Yijing or Book of Changes are now beginning to make contributions to our understanding of Tarot, but it is incorrect to declare any significant historical influence, with the possible exception of a Chinese origin to the Tree of Life diagram.

Correspondences might best be thought of as nested analogies, wherein one extended system of ideas, or symbolic language, is overlaid onto another, so that the individual parts seem to line up and can then be compared. This is frequently a stretch fit, since most systems come with their own unique infrastructures, requiring a translation of the super-structure as well as the component elements. And some will try to stretch the fit even further, for example, by trying to compare five items from one set to eight from another. The most useful point, hope, and purpose in doing such an exercise is to get two formerly separate systems to communicate, to mutually inform each other with an interdisciplinary cross-fertilization. We ask whether two particular symbols are each referring in their own way to the same phenomenon, and if so, what can this different perspective show us. So far in this description we are simply manipulating cognitive models to obtain a desired effect in the enhancement, enrichment, and deepening of ideas. Most practitioners in the mystic arts are not content to stop here and accept that this is all we are doing. Central to much of the 'magical' thinking about correspondences is that hidden connections underlie diverse phenomena that impress the mind with similar qualities and associations. Or, to take things a step further, things with similar forms are informed by same divine idea. In other words, they are suggesting something like fractal self-similarity, or asserting an instance of the Hermetic maxim 'as above, so below' instead of simple analogy.

It is often assumed that these underlying connections exist in a layer of reality that lies beneath the apparent, and that the discoveries we are making were there all along. This is not always the case. Certainly, if I can correlate the number Five with the planet Mars, the Sephiroth of Geburah or Severity, and the Yijing Bagua of Thunder, it is easy to see that there is a common thread here in their kinetic energy or force, and, in the anatomy of the psyche, with motive forces like muscle, emotions and drives. It is also significant that so many analogies and systems of symbols include a representative from this dimension of human experience. But there remains the question of the tangible reality of the formerly hidden connection. It is often a little too easy to lock systems together by assuming an underlying reality located in a Platonic world of ideas, instead of just noting comparisons for what they can contribute to our experience without making elaborate metaphysical assumptions. Still, we can hope that meaningful coincidences can lead us to discoveries of human psychological universals which express themselves in similar ways in different cultures.

Perhaps the single most important thing to remember about correspondence is that the word means to co-respond, to respond together or to resonate with. It does not mean that one thing is equal to or equivalent to another. We want to avoid conflating and confusing Five with Mars, and Geburah, and Thunder. Here in the Tarot we should bear in mind that Tzaddi is not the Star. These are simply ideas on loan from other systems. They are not appropriations into a single mega-system. Like our library books, we take what we need before we return them. Correspondences should never be equated. They are a call to look for properties held in common, and this is for the sake of a mutual enrichment. There is a big difference between correspondence, resonance, or ying in Chinese, and the sameness, identity or equality that is too often assumed. There is a big difference between Tipareth and Sol, and between Yesod and Luna, and there was no historical connection during the early years of Tarot. But if you take to studying the assignments, you are sure to expand your understanding of both sides. And of course there are common meanings: Sol and Tipareth each refer in their own way to the sentient center of our being, the synergy that comes from the harmonies of life, and Luna's Priestess and Yesod to the plasticity, or the fluid and sensitive chaos that allows us to emerge in the first place.

Eliphas Levi wrote that "Analogy was the sole dogma of the ancient magi. This dogma may indeed be called 'mediator,' for it is half scientific, half hypothetical; half reason, and half poetry." (Key, p. 13). To him, there were three laws: the law of will, a subtler but still material force; the law of astral light, a field or medium of energy that could carry information; and the law of correspondence, being a natural or inherent connectivity that allowed the nesting of analogies, not merely in mutually informative ways, but also in ways that could be called upon. Ring one bell and any resonant partner would also start to vibrate. The Golden Dawn later added the law of imagination, that mental imagery could be impressed upon the astral if it was produced, sustained and directed by the will. This fourth law completes the basic model of spellcraft. The function of the correspondences or nested analogies in this process allows a practitioner to gather psychic energy from a number of sources and stimuli. In ceremonial magick, for example, the practitioner draws excitement from several sensory sources, bells and chants for auditory, dance and gesture for kinesthetic, lights and diagrams for visual, incense and perfumes for olfactory, and so on. By intention or design, these sources are all attuned to the same 'vibration.' This is the basis of sympathetic magick, where sympathy means much the same as resonance or correspondence. For Cornelius Agrippa, this was a principle in all three forms of magic: natural, celestial (talismans bearing efficacious images), and ceremonial or high magic (rising on the planes, pathworking, like shamanic magic but with more articulated maps).

There are four large problems that we encounter in translational systems of correlative thought. The first stems from a failure to understand this simple principle: if we are going to draw complex lines of interconnection between two individual systems of symbols, the effort is going to be a lot more successful if we first understand a little of both systems individually. Then we can start knitting concepts together with some initial sense of the meanings they might share. In researching this book, I encountered half a dozen recent attempts to correlate the Tarot with the Book of Changes. But none were put together by authors with a working knowledge of the Yijing, in any language, least of all in Chinese. There were a couple of scattered but useful insights that I was able to make some use of here, most notably a handful of Crowley's, but for the most part the connections range from spurious to laughable. Hot little sister Dui might be connected to Mars instead of the far more obvious connection to Venus. The Mountain might be somehow be associated with the Sun, yet the authors of these systems just

can't see the meaninglessness of their links. The same thing has happened throughout the development of the Tarot, particularly in connections made to Kabbalah, Qabalah and Astrology. And some of these errors even follow upon confusions latent within their original systems. What I consider to be the major missteps will be catalogued below.

The second problem with correspondences concerns our cognitive skill sets (heuristics) known as pareidolia and apophenia, discussed briefly above. The Tarot is unique in that the elements of its vocabulary, the individual cards, are normally shuffled before they are used. They can appear in any of a practically infinite number of possible arrangements. Importantly, a good reader can string together a coherent and meaningful story from any of these sequences. For now, let's just go ahead and call them random sequences because this phenomenon will work when no question is asked of the oracle. Our minds evolved this cognitive skill over millions of years as primates. We can connect just about any given set of dots, though not always effortlessly, and sometimes with elaborate mental contortions. The thing is, we cannot assume that, because we have just told an interesting story, the random sequence of inspirational stimuli was inherently meaningful. And yet, the stories we tell about the sequence of letters in our randomly evolved alphabets are imagined to be discoveries about the inscrutable minds of our deities. In this we are far too clever for our own good. We can fail to distinguish meanings which preexist from those of our own *ad hoc* design.

The third problem is closely related to the over-elaboration and tautology discussed earlier. If a symbolic language is to be useful in the real world, the interpretive grid that it superimposes onto reality will continue to hover pretty closely over that reality, instead of moving further away with multiple levels of abstraction on abstraction. And as simple as these systems are, the permutations within the organizing system, that are separate from the individual symbols and ideas, can get extremely complex. These are the maps that sojourners get lost in, believing there is more information there than in the contact with the world that the symbols are supposed to point to. The abstraction itself will become a distraction, and often just a mindless one. Now, when two systems are put together for comparison and correlation, it is often done by people caught up in the layers of both abstract superstructures. Symbols are connected together without referring them each and both back to the reality they are supposed to point to. Errors are easily compounded when the reality check is abandoned for coincidence in loftier realms.

The fourth problem concerns the momentum that cumulative error develops in cultural transmission. Take, for example, some popular author who has committed a particularly egregious error in correlating a Trump card featuring a Lion with any other sign but Leo, or one with a Scales with any other sign but Libra. Individual students build their base of knowledge from the ground up like buildings, usually on a first-come, first-used basis, using the known materials currently available. This is called bricolage, and this process is often blameless because they are novices and cannot be assumed competent to avoid such errors by using good judgment from experience. It will take a level of maturity to begin a study with high standards. When the author of an erroneous system becomes influential, students following such a system will innocently incorporate errors into their curriculum, errors which are then almost permanently protected against unlearning by cognitive bias. These students would need to almost go back and start over, sometimes having to replace the very cornerstones of their structures. Over the centuries, identifiable streams of such transmitted errors can be identified almost like genetic mutations. Cognitive bias accounts for their persistence, and the most we can hope for is that awareness of such processes will give us incentive to make the needed efforts at correction. There is a surprisingly, even

shockingly, wide range of variation in such simple and foundational assignments of Suits to elements and Planets to the double letters. And not all of us have the benefits of an obsessive-compulsive disorder that finds both embarrassment and discomfort in this disgusting untidiness.

Kabbalah and Qabalah (gratuitous note: the accent is on the last syllable, 'lah)

Tarot has adopted ideas from the Kabbalah since Mathers and Levi, both directly and by way of the Western Mystery Tradition's transformation of Kabbalah into the Western European version that we refer to as Qabalah. Both the Kabbalah and the Qabalah came late to Tarot. This does not mean that it had little impact on the Tarot as it has evolved. But only portions of this contribution make adequate sense for our purposes here. The Jewish Kabbalists don't much care for this WMT development, being inclined to keeping the tradition ancient and pure throughout, as a long historical lineage that began with Abraham. They will be the last to acknowledge Kabbalah's relatively recent emergence in medieval Europe, excepting the c. 6th century pamphlet known as the *Sepher Yetzirah*.

The original Kabbalah was fairly restricted to the Jewish community and guarded as such. Despite having drawn heavily from global sources like Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and possibly even Song Dynasty Neo-confucianism, it tries to insist of the purity of its Jewish roots, and of course it lies a lot about its antiquity and authorship. Internally it might be best understood as both a mystical side of Judaism, which accepts evolution and reincarnation, and also an attempt to uncover every last bit of information hidden in the *Tanakh*, the Jewish redaction of the Old Testament as written in Hebrew. Externally it might be seen as an attempt to get this information whether it exists in source texts or not, using unconstrained interpretive techniques. Besides interpreting the *Tanakh* and the two Talmuds, the Kabbalah has several texts of its own, most notably the *Sepher Yetzirah* (c. 6th cent, Book of Formation), the *Sepher Bahir* (1174, the Book of Brightness), the *Sha'arei Ora* (13th cent, Gates of Light, by Rabbi Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla) and the *Sepher Zohar* (13th cent, the Book of Splendor, by Moses de Leon). In the 1500s, after the Jews were expelled from Spain, a major center of Kabbalistic learning arose in Safed and produced such notable lights as Moses Cordovero (Remak, 1522–1570) and Isaac Luria (the Ari, 1534-1572).

The *Sepher Yetzirah* initiated the structural metaphysics of the Kabbalah, introducing the Ten Sephiroth, successive ciphers of the creation similar to the emanations of Plotinus and the Archons and Aeons of the Gnostics. They remain unnamed and uncharacterized in this work, which runs for only a few pages. Then the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are discussed as instruments of the creation and divided into three groups, Mother, Double and Single letters. This threefold division is not based on any kind of rational phonetic analysis or phonosymbolism. Aleph, Mem and Shin are the Mothers and are universally correlated with Air, Water and Fire respectively. The Seven Double letters are referred among other things to the Seven Planets of Jewish and Chaldean astrology. These are not correlated one-on-one here, although many redactions attempted this in later centuries, with almost no agreement as to which paired with what (See Kaplan, *SY* 178). Nobody seems to have tried to adopt the only accepted planetary sequence in circulation at the time, the Ptolemaic order based on apparent duration of orbit. The Golden Dawn adopted their own set of assignments, which also disagrees with all of the others, including the Ptolemaic, but this has become too standardized in Tarot's evolution and has made far too many lasting contributions to Trump meanings and associations to ever disentangle the two. That's with one exception: the seven planets are placed in a rational Ptolemaic order in their assignment to the Sephiroth. There is more agreement with the Twelve Simple

Letters, particularly as they are correlated with the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, in the straightforward, 'found' sequence of the alphabet, from He as Aries to Qoph as Pisces.

The twenty-two letters of the alphabet have been assigned one-to-one correlations to the twenty-two Trumps of the Tarot. Variations exist, but the dominant one by far is the Golden Dawn's. This is a straightforward assignment of Aleph to the Fool through Tau to the World or Universe, with one switcheroo made so that Teth relates to Strength and Leo, and Lamed to Justice and Libra. Each of the 22 letters has primary and associated traditional symbols: Aleph is an Ox, Beth a house, Gimel a camel, etc. A lot of effort has been expended trying to assert an inherent relevance between these ancient symbols and the meanings of the Tarot Trumps, but for the most part this has only been an exercise in pareidolia, imagining connections between randomly paired objects. This exercise has, however, produced a handful of happy accidents that have made good contributions to the developing Trump meanings. He as a window, for example, suggests that the self of Aries and the First House is a unique point of view on the world.

If we wanted to assume that it was in fact the mind of JHVH that created the Hebrew alphabet and then with it authored both the Tanakh and the world, then it might be more plausible to assume that the sequence of the Hebrew letters was something more than random. But most thinking folk are not equipped with this presumption, and might be convinced of both the alphabet's randomness and even of its inferiority as an alphabet compared to a work of art like Sanskrit or the IPA. However, when we are asking why the alphabet became a full blown numerology, we need to understand that before the Jews adopted the Arabic numerals, all they had for numbers was an alphabetic notation. This was closer to decimal and considerably more elaborate than Roman numerals. But it did not lend, in a retroactive fashion, an inherent numerical meaning to the 22 letters of this alphabet. If the sequence of the Proto-Sinaitic-Phoenician-Hebrew alphabets developed at random, or as a simple bricolage, then all conceptual systems that rely on an assumption that this sequence is inherently meaningful must be viewed with suspicion. In short, the Hebrew alphabet's numerical sequence is merely numerology, not number symbolism. Its sequence remains random with regard to inherent meanings, and therefore all subsequent systems of correspondences that are based on the numerical values of Hebrew letters have no real semiotic or meaningful content. It is as though we assigned a letter of the alphabet to 22 attendees of a class based on their order of arrival, and later had the intuition that this alphabetical order of arrival told us things about the qualities of these attendees as human beings. It just doesn't work. We can still make up stories, however.

Twenty-two paths are said to connect the Sephiroth on the Tree of Life diagram. The routes of these appeared along with the diagram itself, and after only a few attempts at variation, settled into two alternatives, the Jewish and Hermetic. The Hermetic pattern, credited to Kircher, is the better established and regarded as canon in the West, but it's the more problematic of the two. The assignment of the twenty-two letters of the alphabet tried to follow the dictum 'and all are linked together' in SY VI-6, but this attempt completely ignored the very explicit description given in that same paragraph. It focused instead on the linear, numerical sequence of the alphabet, so important in Gematria, but sequentially random with respect to the alphabet's supposedly higher 3-7-12 arrangement, which is supposed to be geometrical and not linear. The European Qabalists have used this numerical sequence to assign the 22 Trumps to these 22 Paths, with no regard for whether the meanings of the Paths had any meaningful connection with the meanings of the Sephiroth that they connected. Because of this, the Golden Dawn 'pathworking' associations will be dismissed in this present work as nothing more than exercises in pareidolia, with no more inherent meaning than any random

reshuffling would produce. This does not suggest that pathworking will offer up no valuable experience, only that it is a bunch of hoey for pathworkers to suggest that you will blow fuses by exploring the wrong or unauthorized connections and violating some ancient authority. That one has an expected experience is not surprising. But this does not make the assignment correct. The Jewish Kabbalists, notably Cordovero and Luria, arrived at entirely different assignments of letters to the Tree, as well as a slightly different structure for the 22 connecting paths. It is important to understand in this context that the system of paths that was adopted by the Golden Dawn, together with its sequential assignment of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, is not the primary system developed and preferred by the Jewish Kabbalists. The Kabbalists insisted on holding somewhat truer to the Sepher Yetzirah's organization of the 22 into scales of three, seven and twelve. and made use of the fact that the paths as they drew them had 3 horizontal paths, seven vertical and twelve diagonal. So does the somewhat different path arrangement of Western Qabalah. These show more respect for geometries based on the 3-7-12 division of the alphabet, but still show little regard for path meanings as being relevant to the connected individual Sefhira meanings. See the end pages of this [appendix](#) on Astrology for related diagrams.

To put this in slightly different terms (because it is important to the present study): we can imagine ourselves traveling from any one Sefhira to any other and having, on that journey, the experience of any one of the Trumps. If this experience has been described to us beforehand, or even just named, our experience will likely have something in common with that of the person who described or named it. But this does not mean that the content of that experience is inherent in the path between those Sefhiroth. It has been imposed. In order for meaning to inhere in that path, the experience would begin with an experience of the meaning of the Sefhira of origin, and conclude with an experience of the Sefhira that is our destination. The 22 pathways of the Golden Dawn system fail to do this. They are simply, and rather mindlessly, based on an application of the numerological sequence of the Hebrew alphabet, no more than an arbitrary system of nominal enumeration, with an accidental sequence of letter order for its origin.

In short, with regard to the Hebrew alphabet and its relationship to the 22 Trumps, the real essence of the Kabbalah's contribution boils down to there being useable scales of three, seven and twelve to be explored within the set of 22 trumps. A Trump study will allow us to also examine related triads, heptads, duodecads. There may also be something to explore in the ratio of $22/7$, which has been associated with the mysterious number Pi since Archimedes, who also knew that this was only an imperfect approximation.

The Tree of Life, or *Otz Chayyim*, is a diagram that consists fundamentally of the Ten Sefhiroth, Spheres or Ciphers, arranged in a geometrical pattern in the 16th century. This pattern was first seen in 10th and 11th century China in the form of Chen Tuan's Wujiu and Zhou Duntì's Taijitu. Unless this was a remarkable evolutionary convergence or coincidence, the pattern would have come to Europe most likely by an Islamic route of transmission, perhaps following some Mongolian dissemination. There was certainly enough global communication by this time to permit such transmission. The Tree became the primary vehicle for describing the sequential ontological process by which the Divine created the World, a unique Jewish adaptation of Neoplatonic emanationism and Gnostic creation theory. This purports to describe how the infinite unmanifest might have become the finite manifest in ten stages of emanation. But it is not at all necessary to accept this metaphysical theory to find this arrangement and its sequence interesting and useful. The same sequence can also be seen in other fields, perhaps most strikingly describing the self-organization of energy systems of

increasing complexity at entropic energy gradients. Furthermore, the sequence can be reversed to chart the ascent of the created being 'back' into higher and simpler expressions of the divine. A strikingly precise example of this can be found in the Ten Ox Herding Pictures of Zen lore, which parallel and contribute to the Sephira meanings point by point.

The meanings of the Ten Sephiroth are absolutely indispensable to understanding the number symbolism that was developed in the WMT and Qabalah, which coevolved with our understanding of the forty Pip cards of the Tarot. These will be discussed at some necessary length in a section below on the Ten Numbers.

If the *Otz Chayyim* was adapted from the *Wujitu-Taijitu* tradition, little modification would have been required. The second sphere down in the Chinese version, a forerunner of the Yin-Yang symbol, would have been teased apart to show Chokmah and Binah as being separate. The Jews would have little use for the five central spheres being assigned to the Chinese Wu Xing or Five Phases, so these would have been re-tagged with the names of the Sephiroth Chesed through Hod. Beyond that, no imagination is required. The Chinese diagrams even had a circle for Daath.

Daath, Knowledge, the false Sephira, warrants a mention here. It signifies the problems of gnosis, point of view, and individual existence. It is located on the threshold of the Abyss between Binah and Chesed, where the Gnostic Sophia hung her veil. It is more apt to reflect what we want to see back to us than show us what the other side is like. It's the reason Buddha was an atheist: we see only what our finitude will allow us to see, or only what our suffering wants for relief. At the same time it represents the ability to cross the Abyss with our hearts still beating, if we can only get rid of most of our narcissism, delusion, and egotism, and accept our limitations and finitude.

The Kabbalistic idea of the [Four Worlds](#) or Olamot (Olam singular) has made a small contribution to our understanding of the Suits of the small cards. These are successive layers of condensation of the divine light during creation, which parallel the movement of the creative force moving down through the Sephiroth. Some believe that there are four interconnected Trees, with the Ten Sephiroth expressed in each world prior to descent into the next world down, making creation a forty-step process, rather than ten. While this is a classic case of overelaboration in a tautological reality, or getting lost in the map, it still offers a useful suggestion to look at each Sephira as it is expressed in each of four Worlds, and therefore a Qabalistic perspective on each Number as expressed in each Suit. The four Worlds are Atziluth (Emanation, Divine Will), Briah (Creation, Prima Materia), Yetzirah (Formation, Law) and Assiah (Material and its Activities). These parallel the Suits of Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, respectively, except for the fact that the Olamot are regarded as significantly more hierarchical, with the world of Atziluth being closer to Ein Sof, or the Unlimited, whereas the four Suits are closer to being regarded as coequals.

Astrology

Parts of astrology are integral to Tarot, others are potentially useful, but only when they work. But "to know when to stop is the highest attainment" (Zhuangzi), and few seem to grasp why to do this, and concentrate on core dimensions instead of peripherals, afterthoughts, extrapolations, anachronisms, and other apocrypha. I would guess about 75 percent of what you read on the subject in any non-selective collection of Tarot books is loaded with unexamined nonsense. For me, that nonsense especially includes the Golden Dawn's fascination with the 36 decans, which I see as distraction, accepted rather blindly by those who aren't well-versed in astrology.

In case it isn't obvious by now, the approach taken here to Astrology is also linguistic and does not assume that this discipline has or needs to have anything whatsoever to do with the stars, or with any influence of the physical planets. As a language, however, it is plenty interesting. Since the Symbols of Western Astrology are so important to understanding Occult Tarot, this Primer may be downloaded as an html document for easy reference. At the end are several reference diagrams that are pertinent to Astrology's coevolutionary relationship to both Tarot and Kabbalah.

From the Primer: "It isn't our purpose here to praise, study, or belittle the efforts of astrologers to justify this old tapestry as respectable science. Neither is whether, how, or why astrology 'works' of any concern, yet. This much we know: at least since history began, some form of astrology more complex than the simple measurement of time and season has accompanied every major civilization. During these millennia, human beings have subjected themselves to complex, confusing, and unnatural forms of psychological stress, leaving themselves in need of a way of looking at themselves (psychology) which did not yet exist. The prototypical psychologist, then called shaman, wizard, or priest, needed three things in order to deliver on his society's need for counseling: a) a science of his own to understand the machinery of the mind and its interface with its ecosystem, b) a simple language to use as a vehicle for delivering his observations, and 3) a powerful mystique to instill credulity (a more pressing need than credibility) in the minds of those in need of advice. Clearly, the most powerful and mysterious thing in the universe was the universe. And he had ready-made divisions of the grand scheme in the systems developed for timekeeping and agriculture. All he had to do was embed the notion 'as above, so below.' These needs constituted and still describe the context of astrology's youth. At least this was the need underlying the evolution of the system, even if it was rarely, if ever, perceived as such until recently. The significant point is that astrology has had thousands of years to adjust, adapt, or attune itself to our human needs, regardless of its metaphysical accuracy. It is foremost a language constructed for the purpose of guidance through times of doubt and stress. The credulous, however, continue to invest it with a much grander reality and mystique. But rather than use these arguments to refute astrology as science, the believer can still make use of the work here to further refine the basic concepts of the discipline for the purposes of more specific or rigorous testing.

Once again, the compulsion to go too far in extrapolating deductively from a simple cognitive system has been as active in astrology as anywhere else. We will attempt at least a partial remedy here by presenting, as concisely as possible, definitions of astrology's most fundamental concepts and operations. A thorough understanding of these is sufficient both to interpret a chart and to use the symbols outside of astrology's purview and contexts. Some aspects of both ancient and modern astrology won't be discussed here. The system of 36 Decans, adopted by the Golden Dawn to add a more mysterious patina of antiquity to its Occult Tarot, will be ignored as irrelevant, even to Tarot. We can go so far as to call it silly and offend some believers. The decans and their rulers make no sense at all as explanations for the meanings of the pips. If you can see them as meaningful, more power to you and your knack for pareidolia, but they just look like random nonsense to me. There is a far better alternative that's already built into the Western Mystery Tradition, and that's an association of Planets to Sephiroth, based on the formula of the Hexagram and also used a lot by the Golden Dawn and Crowley. The suit is simply the element the planet operates through. So the Seven of Swords would be Venus in Air signs, or Netzach in Yetzirah (the strategy of getting something you want). Progressions won't be discussed. Relative to other systems of correspondence, particularly to the Jewish Kabbalah and the West's Qabalah, some innovations from the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley will be

corrected, dropped, or otherwise altered. These two knew next to nothing about Uranus and Neptune back then, which I give to Chokmah and Binah respectively. Crowley's pairing of Saturn with Binah was just wrong. (So was his pairing of the Bagua Dui with anyone other than Venus). See Appendix One at the end.

Astrology is a language. The chart is a paragraph. A planet in a sign and a house is a complete sentence, which is connected to other sentences in a paragraph by aspects. Unlike English paragraphs, the sentences or clauses don't follow one another in a linear sequence, but relate to each other reciprocally and simultaneously as a gestalt. A second major difference between astrology and English is that its limited vocabulary of less than a hundred words is defined connotatively instead of denotatively: the concepts evoke and accrue meanings and key words around a core or key meaning which cannot be simply described with a single word. The four major parts of speech (planet, sign, house and aspect) and the rules for combining them constitute the language's grammar. This is not analogy or metaphor. Some may argue that such a purely linguistic approach divorces the "science" of astrology from the sky and places the responsibility and the purview of the science purely within the human psyche. It perhaps even suggests that the science is an invention and not a discovery. But there are no lines between the stars, and the sky is not divided. There are no twos, threes, fours or twelves up there. They are not needed or useful above - only below. The mesh of the net we have cast across the deep of the cosmos can only be drawn around make-believe fish.

The Planets are the subjects of the sentences and clauses. It may help to view them as verbs or gerunds instead of nouns. Ultimately, they are huge, complicated rocks in orbit around our star, upon which we projected our gods. Even in the beginning, these gods were part of ourselves, our "I" diffracted into a multiplicity of aspects. The planets in astrology symbolically divide an entity into functional parts, kinds of personal identity, dimensions of experience, potentials for action or modes of personal being (e.g. desiring, empowering, incorporating, etc.), and to some, these are parts of the soul.

The Signs of the zodiac are akin to adverbs, or more specifically, intransitive adverbial predicates. The twelve signs divide life's ways of behaving into twelve types or qualities of behaving, much as matter may be said to burn, ooze, blow, blow up, be boring, etc. As adverbs, they describe a planet-subject's propensities or preferences for ways to come into play (affectively, cognitively, behaviorally, etc) its *modus operandi*. This is the planet's how, its most comfortable means of expression, its recurrent character or its favorite feeling.

The Houses are akin to prepositional phrases (specifically, transitive prepositional predicates). These twelve divide life's objective realms into where's, twelve typical classes of contexts (e.g) selfhood, home, relationship, vocation, etc.). As prepositional predicates they describe a planet-subject's wont, propensity, or preference for certain situations, contexts, issues or places to manifest. They tend to be its favorite outlet or channel of expression. This does not mean that the planet will be successful in or adapt to these realms, only that the issues will tend to recur.

Three tenses are embedded in the meanings of both the twelve signs and the twelve houses. These are the three 'qualities.' Through the signs they are called cardinal, fixed and mutable, and through the houses, angular, succedent and cadent. These do not equate with our more familiar tenses of past, present and future except by a stretch fit. They are compounds of both synchronic (same time, left, right, and center) and diachronic (through time, past, present, and future) elements and are defined by a conglomerate of notions. The first tense tends to concentrate on origins, the second on present states and maintenance, and the third on changes wrought.

Four genders are also embedded in the meanings of both the signs and the houses. There are the four classical elements of fire, earth, air and water (in the zodiac order) and the four "Quadruplicities," unnamed, through the houses. Symbolic quadruplicities are nearly universal across human cultures, although specific assignments may vary. Among other things, these are Jung's four personality types, intuiting, sensing, thinking and feeling, in the order above.

The planets, or parts of the self, operating through the energy of a sign, in the realm of a house, form the complete but dependent clause of the paragraph. It still remains for us to weave these together into a whole paragraph.

The Aspects are akin to conjunctions (specifically, hypotactic interdependent modes) which work in both directions. They relate the dependent clauses one to the other, simultaneously and reciprocally in specific ways (e.g. cooperates with, at cross purposes to, etc.). Unaspected clauses should be viewed as paratactically conjoined (as by a semicolon), not really independent, since self is not really split into parts. The aspects thus describe the integration of experience within and among the various dimensions of selfhood. They may refer, for instance, to the way the mind relates to the heart. If the planets represent one's personal dynamics, then the aspects represent the biomechanics operative prior to personal output.

The Ascendant or rising sign ties the entire grid of of houses and points to a separately rotating wheel of the zodiac. This is astrology's equivalent of the theme sentence introducing a paragraph. It sets an interpretive tone for the entire gestalt. It's the equivalent of selecting and establishing a reference coordinate system in the language of analytic geometry.

Lastly, the paragraph is peppered with assorted forms of punctuation, interjections, modifiers, and complex logical loops. The most significant of these are discussed below in the contexts of the parts of speech to which they most apply.

The action of the seven classical Planets are first represented in the Tarot by the seven Trumps associated with the double letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the more recently discovered Uranus and Neptune with two of the Mother letters. Uranus is often associated with Air, Aleph and the Fool, but I wish to take a corrective action here and say this is a silly attribution and fails to understand the more serious character of Uranus. It conflates two very different kinds of unpredictability. This awakening, radical and revolutionary character is better represented by Fire, Shin and Judgment, despite the fact that Uranus was later given to Aquarius, an air sign. In making this change, we have bumped poor Pluto out of the picture (the poor, pitiful, moon-sized thing returns in symbolic form later). This leaves the Fool without an Astrological attribution, which might just suit him and his lack of specificity.

Secondarily, the Planets are correlated to the ten Numbers of the Pip cards. This comes by way of their association with the ten Sephiroth as overlain onto the Tree of Life. Again, see the diagrams at the end of the primer. This overlay was made by the Golden Dawn, and follows the Ptolemaic sequence up the Tree: Terra, Luna, Mercury, Venus, Sol, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. This works extremely well for Malkuth, Yesod, Hod, Netzach, Tipareth, Geburah and Chesed. However, contrary to Golden Dawn and Crowleyan assertions, it falls apart utterly when we try to associate Saturn with Binah, the Great Mother. It just doesn't work, despite the mental gymnastics they do about darkness. It just isn't right to darken the meaning of Binah so far in order to accommodate an incorrect assignment to Saturn. I would submit that the resonance is much stronger between Saturn and either Daath or Kether, depending on whether self is viewed from within self or *sub specie aeternitatis*. Bear in mind that Saturn was, until recently, the last of the Planets and so took on most of its meanings in relation to finitude, the ultimate limits that the mortal being is subject to. Binah as Understanding

and the Great Mother is more liberating than that. There is a Saturn that is a reflection of our fears projected onto the Abyss, which became Satan for some, and then there is the Saturn who is the Great One of the Night of Time, Kronos, father of the Olympian gods. This bold reassignment is further supported by the graphic hexagram used by the WMT, the six pointed star, Magen David or of Shield of David, fit onto the Tree of Life, with the center being Sol and Tipareth and the bottom being Luna and Yesod. Saturn then falls squarely on the sphere of Daath. This is shown graphically in the Numbers section below, and at the end of the Primer.

Moving Saturn away from Binah leaves us able to accommodate a much more rational assignment of the outer planet pair of Neptune and Uranus to the complementary spheres Binah and Chokmah, Understanding and Wisdom, Infinity Complexity and Infinite Order, Chaos and Cosmos, Field and Vector. This also accommodates a rational development of Bagua correspondences with Kun and Qian, Accepting and Creating, as discussed in the next section.

It should be noted here that the Planets, when viewed as agents or operatives in the activities represented by the Pips, are not really the subjective experiences they are when they appear as Trumps. The Pips are said to depict forces and circumstances, and are not said to depict subjective states. They are more objectified forces, having the character of the Planets, and they are narrowed even further in their scope by limitation to one of the four Suits or Elements. This does, however, point out a way to better understand each of the Pips by trying to subjectivize the experience. For example, one imagines being the force that overturns three of the five cups, or being the owners of the eight swords who tie that poor woman up.

The association of the Trumps to seven specific Planets in Astrology had limiting or narrowing effects on the meaning of the Trumps as well. In the most obvious of these, Jupiter was no longer the go-to association for the Emperor, Mars no longer for the Chariot, Luna no longer for the Moon. These cards began to take on fresher meanings that were more compatible with Aries, Cancer and Pisces respectively. At the same time, the planetary assignments bring a subjectivity to some of the Trumps that otherwise would only depict objective situations: Mars now adds a first person sense to the Tower, Jupiter to the Wheel, Saturn to the Universe, and here, Uranus to Judgment.

If we were coming into this subject cold, it might seem reasonable to assume that if there were a set of associations between the Trumps and the Signs of the Zodiac that one would start looking for Leo in a card depicting a Lion, for Libra in a card depicting the Scales, for Capricorn in a card depicting something Goatish, and for Aquarius in a card depicting a Water Bearer. Were we to make this assumption, we could start looking for systems of correspondences that concurred here, and begin dismissing authors who failed to make such obvious connections as 'not playing with a full deck.' There is a shocking amount of disagreement here, but there are systems which have hit upon all four of the above, which give us a place to begin. The Golden Dawn sect took the insight and forced the Trumps into a much better alignment with Astrological and Kabbalistic sequence by reversing Strength and Justice in their earlier sequence.

There is an additional discovery here that isn't often observed. As most may know, the Signs of the Zodiac have a natural affinity with specific Houses, in a sequence from Aries and the First House through Pisces and the Twelfth House. Now if you look closely at the traditional key words that accompany descriptions of the twelve Trumps that are assigned to the Zodiac, you will find that these words are actually encountered more frequently in the descriptions of the Houses to which these Signs have their most natural affinity. The Trumps that are now traditionally assigned to the Signs of the zodiac actually feel more like animated versions of the natural Houses of those Signs. Compare, for example, key words for the Moon card with those for Pisces and for the

Twelfth House. But the Trumps are not prepositional phrases in the language of the Tarot, like they are in Astrology. If we are going to make use of this, we need to look at the Trumps as subjects. Consequently, we might shift the association of these Trumps to the full expression of their dignity. So rather than simply use Aries for the Emperor, we can use Mars dignified in Aries in the First House.

The Signs also find much resonance in twelve of the sixteen Court cards, and these are sufficient to carry the personalities of the astrological Signs. There are two ways to go about this. The simplest and most straightforward uses the notion that both the Signs and the Court are portmanteaus of tense and gender, or a quality and an element. If we assign the tenses of cardinal, fixed and mutable to King, Prince and Queen and let the elements and suits be, then we have the King of Wands as Cardinal Fire or Aries, the Prince of Pentacles as Fixed Earth or Taurus, etc. Others make different assignments, but this is the set we'll use here.

The second method of assigning the Court to the Zodiac will be dismissed here as more systemic overelaboration. In order to bolster claims of great antiquity for the Tarot, early developers of the occult versions reached for an ancient and then-abandoned system of parsing the ecliptic into 36 slices called Decans or Decantes, three for each Sign of the zodiac. See also. This was an Egyptian system and antedated the Chaldean (Babylonian) simplification of 12 Signs. The Golden Dawn then assigned each of the Court to the third Decan of one sign and the first two of the next. This system is available elsewhere, both in books and online. It complicates and compromises the purity of the core conception of the Court. It's doubtful whether these complicated assignments have really been analyzed in any serious detail by someone competent in astrological interpretation. They seem to have merely been accepted on the authority of earlier authors.

The same overelaboration was done with 36 of the Pips cards. Each Decan was given a systematically, but otherwise arbitrarily, assigned Pip and planetary ruler. This provided an association of a Planet acting through a Sign, through which to elaborate divinatory meanings. Working backwards through this development, however, it is hard to see how this could possibly have been fundamental to the meanings of the cards in question. We can easily see how a connection might be drawn between Mars in a Fire Sign and the Five of Wands, since Mars is known to be appropriate to Geburah, the Fifth Sephira, and Wands represent Fire. But the Golden Dawn assignment to Saturn in Leo is lot more confusing. Similarly, the Queen of Cups, as the Watery or Mutable part of Water, would seem a natural fit to the zodiac Sign of Pisces or Mutable Water. Assignment to the last Decan of Gemini and the first two of Cancer makes no sense at all, at least to someone who knows the more straightforward language of Astrology. This was another needless and not very useful complication, and a feeble attempt to forge an antique patina for the cards.

Finally, the four Princesses or Pages were given by the Golden Dawn to four quadrants around the North pole. Crowley thought this made sense, but it never really did, and never had any practical use. In searching for an alternative, I happened to notice that the key words used consistently for the Princesses or Pages actually lined up pretty well with those used by astrologers for the Lunar North Node. This substitution has been made here, so that the Princess of Wands might get some meaningful contribution from observations of the North Node in Fire signs.

Yijing (I Ching)

Various attempts have been made in the last century to tie the Yijing into the Western Mystery Tradition's systems. Aleister Crowley took the early lead here. Significantly, he was able to tie the 16 Court cards to 16 of the Gua (Hexagrams) by analyzing them

as portmanteaus of the Yijing's representations of the four elements as four of the Bagua (Eight Trigrams) permuted amongst themselves. Elemental Fire was represented by Zhen or Thunder, Water by Dui or Wetland, Air by Xun or Penetrating Wind, and Earth by Gen or Mountain. So, for example, the watery expression of fire (Queen of Wands) would resonate with Wetland (Water) over Thunder (Fire), which is the Gua of Following, or Thunder in the Lake, suggesting responsiveness to a pulse, getting into the rhythm of things, going with the flow. Interestingly, when these 16 assignments are plotted onto the 8x8 graphic presentation of the Gua as a sequence of binary numbers (called the Xian Tian or Primal Heaven arrangement) the plot shows bilateral symmetry, a property which is characteristic of all of the Yijing's own structural dimensions. It remained to also tie the other four Bagua to the Elements. This works by also assigning Li or Flame to Fire, Kan or Water to Water, Tian or Heaven to Air and Kun or Earth to Earth. Karen Witter (source not known) agrees with this reiteration of the four elements in the eight Bagua. The first set of four, which Crowley identified, she called the attributional elements, and the latter set of four the archetypal elements. Her terminology is adopted here. These two sets are something like local and generalized versions of each of the elements. Gen or Mountain, for example, is local earth, while Kun or Earth is the broader conception of earthliness.

A Westerner might want to see Tian or Heaven as Fire, but the Chinese conception of Heaven is much different than the West's. Heaven is more of an intelligibility than an intelligence. In China the parents of the family of four are not Fire and Water, as they are in the West, but Heaven and Earth, or Air and Earth. as with the Greek Uranus and Gaia. Heaven is not a creator god who drives existence with his inscrutable purposes, but the intelligible clockworks of a natural order of being, or natural law. We should note that this is not always the case in Chinese folk religion. In China, the symbols of the Earth assumed most of the oceanic associations that were attributed in the West to Water, perhaps in part because the center of ancient Chinese civilization was found far inland and the great seas were a more remote experience. What we in the West call 'oceanic' experiences and symbolize with big water are taken up by the Zhouyi conception of a wide and fertile Earth. Interestingly, the Mawangdui text of the Zhouyi calls the Kun hexagram 'Chuan,' Stream, Water or Flow. Curious, too, is that the mare (depicted in this hexagram) is sacred to Neptune, her creator in Greek mythology. Remember that in these symbolic languages, the symbol is not what is being referred to: the symbol is only meant to evoke a state of mind. Not the finger, but the Moon.

Crowley also took a good run at associating the Bagua to eight of the ten Sephiroth of the Tree of Life, particularly as they are correlated to the seven Planets of Astrology. He succeeded well with six of them, but bungled two by relating Gen to Netzach or Venus, and Dui to Chesed or Jupiter. Anybody who knows Venus will correlate her instead with our flirty and saucy little sister Dui, leaving Gen to be represented by either Jupiter or Saturn. Actually, Gen is problematic because it has both of these aspects. As a force of equilibrium, equanimity, stability, and a higher, less-needy kind of love, this is Jovian or Jovian. As a force that stops us or brings us up short, it is Saturnian. Here we are using Gen as it resonates with Jupiter and giving Saturn a higher purpose. Such a system then makes possible a portmanteau analysis of the 40 Pip cards, if we take the upper Bagua or Trigram to represent the Suit (as a Predicate) and the lower to represent the Number (as a Subject).

Crowley's remaining Yijing assignments were sporadic, disordered, and weak, as were the efforts of several of the new age writers who have attempted the task by intuiting or channeling their assignments without any use of structure, or a good grasp of the core meanings of the Gua and the Bagua. Others, who have relied wholly on structure, have followed Crowley's lead and attempted to go further. Whitcomb does

not overreach, staying comfortably within Chinese tradition. Hulse makes an effort, but is hampered by Crowley's errors and missing information. Skinner has attempted a fuller interconnection, but has relied for his sources on apocryphal Han Dynasty numerology (Han Yiweishu), religious Daoist (Daojiao) metaphysical speculation and Feng Shui, most of which have completely abandoned the basic meanings of the Bagua in favor of endless structural speculation, all of which lie outside of the Yijing as its own tradition (called Yixue or Yi Studies). In this way, Skinner winds up doing too many silly things like assigning Water to Mercury, Mountain to the Sun and Wind to Jupiter. Without the attention due to inherent meanings of correlated elements there can be no resonance or correspondence, unless you are running on pure pareidolia, in which case you can connect anything.

What nobody else has seemed to have noticed with regard to a possible resonant (but still non-historical) connection between the Tarot and the Yijing is that if you add up the number of all of the Yijing's recognized diagrams you get $64 + 8 + 4 + 2 = 78$. The key is in understanding that 64 of these would have to be developed as portmanteaus of the Bagua in their inner (Zhen) and outer (Hui) positions, as we saw in Crowley's Court, and the remaining 14 would have to remain as simpler constructions, which lend themselves to Trumps. There is, of course, an inherent problem here in that the Trumps, Court, and Pips (as well as the Gua, Ba Gua, Xiang and Yao) would then lose any sense of their organizational hierarchy and all be set on a level field. Within such a system, the Tarot's own hierarchy would be held in abeyance, so that the Trumps, Court and Pips are at least temporarily peers. But, once again, we are not looking for exact equivalencies for two historically independent systems. We are simply looking for resonance, and for whatever information this can provide. When we superimpose more complex systems like Tarot, Astrology, Qabalah, and Yijing over each other, the very different meta-structural systems get bent or stretched a little. Elements of each language might have to change part of speech or some other property. Sentence structures will get altered. The most critical thing is that the individual or component elements resonate with each other, and in doing so, communicate some meanings back and forth. This is a lot easier when we get into smaller scales and simpler patterns, like four-armed mandalas, or the ten-sphere Tree of Life.

The Pips-to-Yijing correspondences were pretty straightforward for the Two's through the Nine's. The Bagua ties to the Sephiroth and the Planets were important keys to this arrangement, even more so after Crowley's two errors had been corrected. That is said with all due respect for what he did manage to accomplish. The four archetypal Bagua in the upper Hexagram position determined the Suit and the lower Bagua, eight of the ten Numbers. The Aces and Tens were more of a challenge. There were eight Gua left to assign to eight Pips. Eventually a rational explanation presented itself. The four Suits were given to the 'attributorial' Bagua in the upper position, leaving the lower Bagua to determine whether this was an Ace or a Ten. Since the Aces are of a somewhat neonatal character, just getting started in life, without much momentum, these were left to rest supported, but not powered, on Kun. The Tens, which are being driven to the limits of the element and beyond, were taken to be pushed to their extremes by sitting on top of Qian. This was the combination where the meanings seemed to resonate best, and they actually helped when translating the Chinese text.

Thankfully, one thing that these systems have in common is a portmanteau morphology and two-part symbols tend to predominate in the larger vocabulary. Even the signs of the zodiac are in part portmanteaus, of tense and gender, or quality and element. Following Crowley's lead, this formed a reliable system to work with. The system presented here is of recent invention, only in use since 1976. It might present a

challenge to someone who has already taken seriously one of the other systems in circulation, and it might even prove too much of a challenge for someone to unlearn the few Crowleyan assignments that have been altered here. The only claim to validity here is rational analysis and some decades of testing to justify this system. It was emphatically not given to anybody by the Ascended Masters of some White Light Brotherhood or any other ancient authority. This is, however, the first time that Tarot-to-Yijing assignments have been made by someone who has studied the Yijing in this kind of depth and translated it from the Chinese.

There is a lot more supplementary material available that pertains to both the Yijing and Tarot as symbol systems capable of correlation. This has been edited and assembled as a 35-page pdf document available here as a [Supplement](#).

Component Ideas in the Minor Arcana

The Four Suits

Dividing the world by four, as a conceptual exercise that yields what is called a Scale of Four, was probably done before the Greek Empedocles (c. 490-430 BCE), but his is our first surviving account. This quadruplicity is nearly universal in human cultures. It is best known in the west as the four Greek elements: fire, water, air and earth; in the realm of human experience as father, mother, son and daughter; in our need to grow food as summer, winter, spring and autumn; and in our need to remain oriented as south, north, east and west. As our cultures began to communicate, a lasting cross-fertilization began, with long lists of attributes accruing to these four groups of meanings. But often, due to cultural differences and to differing sets of shared associations, there is not a similar universality in what goes into each of the four categories. As such, there is no perfect system of translation between all of these culturally-based systems. Often there is at least one set that can be truly annoying. To make matters worse, people who originate new systems of conceptualization using Scales of Four are frequently less than careful, not fully informed, or not in full possession of reasoning skills. There is a surprising amount of disagreement among both early and current writers on the Tarot as to what corresponds with what. And much of this can even be called embarrassing. Crowley didn't make things any less confusing when he promoted his Knights into the older King's position, and then replaced the old Knights with Princes. Crowley's Knights assumed the old King's association with Fire (and Princes, Air), but many have reassigned non-Thoth Knights to Fire, and by default, Kings to Air. That said, the set of associations to the Four that is presented below is what I believe to be the best we can do. It is largely derived from the Golden Dawn system of attributions. In the Tarot, this means that Fire-Wands-Kings, Water-Cups-Queens, Air-Swords-Princes and Earth-Pentacles-Princesses will be correlated together. Yet departure from this system may or may not affect an author's interpretations of the Court cards, since in most cases it's doubtful that the author derived much meaning from these associations in the first place, despite claims to the contrary.

There are a few different ways to arrange the four, both linearly and geometrically. The first is as a family, the sequence in which more books than not are arranged (including this one). These are Father, Mother, Son and Daughter:

Fire-Wands-Kings-Father
Water-Cups-Queens-Mother
Air-Swords-Princes-Son
Earth-Pentacles-Princesses-Daughter

The second is the original Empedoclean order, by the increasing weight or density, as we move downward:

Fire-Wands-Kings-Father
Air-Swords-Princes-Son
Water-Cups-Queens-Mother
Earth-Pentacles-Princesses-Daughter

The third is the X-shaped geometry patterned on the fixed signs of the Zodiac. This is the arrangement of the Four Kerubs, as seen in the Wheel of Fortune and World Trumps of the Tarot, and also the appointments to the four lower points of the Pentagram:

Air-Swords-Aquarius-Man Water-Cups-Scorpio-Eagle
 Earth-Pentacles-Taurus-Bull Fire-Wands-Leo-Lion

The Four Suits divide our transactions between the inner and outer worlds, or the more objectively experienced inner world events, into four general classes or categories. Before going into each individually, here is an overall review:

Tarot:	Wands	Cups	Swords	Pentacles
	Kings	Queens	Princes	Princesses
Astrology	Fire	Water	Air	Earth
QBLH (1)	Atziluth	Briah	Yetzirah	Assiah
Olam (World)	Archetypal	Creative	Formative	Material
Aleph-Beth	Shin	Mem	Aleph	Tau
Yijing Bagua (2)	Li, Flame	Kan, Water	Qian, Heaven	Kun, Earth
	Zhen, Thunder	Dui, Wetland	Xun, Wind-Wood	Gen, Mountain
Yi Xiang (3)	Old Yang	Old Yin	Young Yang	Young Yin
Sphinx (4)	Velle To will	Audere To dare	Scire To know	Tacere To keep silence
Humors	Choleric	Sanguine	Melancholic	Phlegmatic
Jung	Intuiting	Feeling	Thinking	Sensing
Parts (5)	Spirit	Soul	Mind	Body
Jones (6)	Combustion	Saturation	Ingenuity	Diligence
Virtues (7)	Fortitude	Temperance	Justice	Prudence
Misc	Ardent	Sensitive	Elastic	Sensible
	Impulsive	Sympathetic	Correlative	Manifest
	Individual	Protean	Abstract	Physical
	Emanation	Transmission	Organization	Consolidation

Notes

- 1 The Four Worlds or Olamot are considerably more hierarchical in concept.
- 2 Karen Witter, from source unknown, has independently arrived at the same elemental correspondences and has named the upper row “archetypal elements” and the bottom row “attributional elements.” While I adopt little of her system beyond this, I will be adopting these two terms.
- 3 The Wu Xing or Five Phases of Chinese philosophy is a scale of Five and does not

correlate well with the Four. It also does not correlate with the Bagua, or eight trigrams, although people insist on trying.

4 P.F. Case mistakenly reverses dare and know. Technically, scire means something closer to knowing how. The Latin word scire is the root of the word science.

5 For associative purposes only, not a metaphysical model

6 Terms used by Marc Edmond Jones, an astrologer

7 Even though the Trump named Temperance is given to the Fire sign, Sagittarius.

Wands and Fire

(a.k.a. clubs, staves, rods, batons, scepters, etc)

The association of the suit of wands to the element of fire is probably the least intuitive of the four assignments. Part of the confusion comes from an old linking of the suits to medieval European social classes, wands to farmers (as earthy as they come), cups to clergy, swords to nobility and pentacles to merchants. Had the suits evolved in Europe this might have been more plausible. But they came from (or through) the Middle East, with the rest of the 52-card deck, where the original wands were polo sticks (jawkan), and polo was known as the sport of kings, and thus of the nobility. Some have tried to close the gap between wooden wands and fire by giving them green leaves and thus implying life force, elan vital, and even intent, and telos as innate direction. Yet it is not the green wood that burns well. We can also make wands into torches, or raise them to kindling temperature, where, given a little oxygen, they actually turn into fire. Fuel is just slowed-down light, trapped by photosynthesis, awaiting liberation. Sunlight that's been locked up or invested in cellulose is now getting free again as fire: that's how come it dances. As a handle, the rod transfers kinetic thrust to the point of the spear. And, of course, there is the magic wand, the spirit gun, which directs the energy or force of will. For non-wizards, they at least have a pointing function. As a symbol of stature or authority, the wand is a means to both author and authorize activity. And, obviously, Freud would be right here in suggesting that this wand is just an eager, erect phallus, representing the libido. But he might even see a lit cigar.

Persons and events signified by wands represent the entity as a metabolic process, a heat-generating being, an exothermic reaction, but in the process also generating the light of consciousness. This is driven from within by an excess, an impulse, a challenge, a heat demanding to be spent or dissipated. Wands evoke the challenge to will, to be more, to expand self. Wands are proactive and power is their issue. Both addiction to power and insensitive force represent its failure. In physics, power's measure is the rate of transformation of energy from one form into another. Ineffectiveness, no matter how forceful, is not power. Friction and resistance are not power. Note also that the lambent flame in the right place does more than searing heat in a wrong one. This suggests the need for a sensitivity or intelligence that is not inherent in flame but must be learned. A second cluster of lessons awaits in learning self-control and self-limitation. Done properly, the fiery metabolic process can miraculously transform even cheeseburgers into experience and wisdom.

This is more about spiritedness than spirit as a ghostly thing, like the spirit seen in a spirited horse. But it does carry the sensation of an autonomous entity existing prior to perception, feeling, thought and sensation, leading some to see a fundamental spirit. Others might sense an emergent process arising out of multiple sub-conscious activities. Intuition arises thus as well, out of simplifying cognitive modules deep in the brain, a pre-verbal intelligence that summarizes our experience and guesses proactively at our futures, without much conscious or linguistic involvement.

***Note:** the following section is a grab bag of key words, and a feature that will be used throughout this book. The only order is alphabetical. It is not recommended that these be memorized. Rather, the intent is to give you first a feel for the general meaning of the larger idea, and then a gestalt that ties the cluster together and implies further meanings that infill the cluster. The scope or breadth of these ideas is considerably narrower than those found elsewhere, in order to develop the gestalt more tightly*

around the core meaning. If you are taking a day to study each card (a highly recommended program) it might be a useful exercise to go through this section slowly, and out loud, and try to stretch your mind to make a connection between each key word and the card or symbol in question. This is good practice for reading the cards as well.

Key Words, Concepts and Phrases:

aggression, ambition, anger, animation, appetite, ardor, assertion, autonomy, being headstrong, bravery, career, compelling force, competition, confidence, consumption, courage, creative spirit, determination, distinction, drive, dynamics, effect, effluent or active side of emotion, emergence, energy, enterprise, expression, feedforward, fight, fire in the belly, glory, growth, heat, honor, identity, illumination, impatience, impulse, independence, individuality, individuation, initiation, initiative, innovation, intention, irrepressibility, jeito, kindling, knack, liberation, light, meaning, mobilizing, motive, motivation, motive force, originality, opportunism, optimism, passion, personal track or direction, pique, play, pluck, point of view, power to transform, pressure outward, presumption, pride, protection, purpose and divergence of purposes, pushing beyond the known, rashness, relevance, restlessness, self-actualization, self-direction, sense of self, sensing opportunities as fuel, spark, spontaneity, sport, stimulation, striving, struggle, talent, temper, transformative power, uniqueness, urgency, value, venturing, vigor, vitality, want, warmth, willing, willpower, winning, zeal, zest.

Correspondences:

The Astrological correspondence to the Fire signs (Aries, Leo and Sagittarius) is obvious and self-explanatory.

The Kabbalistic correspondence is to Atziluth (the Archetypal World). To a Platonist, this suggests a world of ideal forms which all of lesser existence must strive and fail to fulfill. For the existentialist it is the world of compelling possibilities, especially the ones too exciting to be left untried. For the Nietzschean it is the many-centered perspective on the world as Will to Power. It is more fundamental and powerful than ideas empty of content, which it creates to identify and manipulate its outlets and opportunities. It also suffers from confinement within (and enslavement to) these very ideas.

The Yijing Bagua-to-Suit correspondences have Li, Flame, in the upper position in eight places; and Zhen, Thunder, in the upper position for Aces and Tens (underpowered by Kun or overpowered by Qian). The Court Wands have Zhen, Thunder, in the lower position, with this energy expressing itself outwardly as one of the four “attributorial” elements. The Court assignments were developed by Aleister Crowley.

Cups and Water (a.k.a. hearts, chalices, coupes, etc)

This suit concerns our various juices, our tastes and our tears. Even the loftiest of our mental states are brewed up in stews, blended in cocktails of blood-borne endocrine secretions, pheromones, and neurotransmitters. This is the real *aqua permanens*, the holy water, and the soul. Persons and events signified by Cups represent the being as an endocrine system, a complex of chemical interactions and communications, glandular activity, endothermic reactions, desiring both balance and fresh stimulation. Even the altruism attributed to Cups and Water, the empathy, nurturing and love, relates back to our internal chemical status, and is ultimately hedonic. Water is our affect. Nearly all of our feelings are here, but only some of our emotions. When emotions drive us to action they belong more to Wands. The heart is moved towards feeling well or good, or simply much. Love is a trick life plays on us with dopamine, oxytocin and such. But it's a really good trick.

The symbol of the Cup, the holy receptacle, is overtly vulvar or vaginal, ready for seed, pleasuring, or both. It is worth pondering here that the cup is not the water. Water by itself is shapeless or protean. The Cup is the form or shape, the vessel of feeling. The containment or boundaries of feeling make context important. It gives the water place and specificity, it individualizes our feeling, makes life our story, our soul, our heart, and the sum of our states of mind. The cup also receives and carries our sustenance. It's a repository for experience, a way to remember and then a way to imagine or dream. It's also a cauldron of regeneration. Cups and water evoke the challenge to dare, to receive, to open up, to be fulfilled. This is easier to do when the being learns to remain on loving, reciprocal terms with the world. Because relationships are usually the driver of our most intense feelings, this is one of the main concerns of the suit of Cups. Fertility and creativity both mean the dissolving of our boundaries and forming successful combinations with the world, with others, and with our own isolated parts.

This suit refers to the affective side of cognition, less subject to control, except by choice of values. Affect is a fuzzier way of thinking but still a way of thinking. Feelings make decisions, but often with terms like always and never, unsullied by logic and reason. Feelings tell us to approach or avoid, like or not like. When we aren't careful about what we want, our feelings can hamper us with biases and resistances against new experience. Sentiments and resentments, reward and aversion circuits and structures, are more ancient than human thought and language. Our states are sourced from beneath the thresholds of awareness, especially in our temperaments and moods, so the thought is rarely critical. It is by our responses to new stimuli, referred to our memories for likenesses and precedents, that our past functions on our present, overcoming our inhibitions and painful memories, adapting to stressors, and defending boundaries, when we need to get life lived or things done. The Chinese word for heart (xin) also means mind, but it's in the sense of "do you mind? Do you care?" This is a Cup function, the Cup's form of sentience, the way our feelings think. They can make bad choices, but they also take us places that reason cannot. We live and learn much by these choices.

Key Words, Concepts and Phrases:

absorption, aesthetics, affect, affection, affective liquidity, afferent or inward-directed side of emotion, anxieties, appreciation, attachment, beauty, bliss, boundary sensitivity, brooding, care, changeableness, channeling, cleansing, comfort levels, compassion,

concavity, confluence, conjoining, connection to life, convergence, crucible, depression, desires, dissolution, dissolving, disturbance, dreams, ebbs, elation, emotional needs and security, empathy, emptiness, eros, escapism, fantasy, fears, feeling, flooding, flow, fluidity, fulfillment, fullness, glandular activity, happiness, heart, hope, imagination, incompleteness, inconstancy, insecurities, intensity, interconnection, irrationality, irritability, kindness, likes and dislikes, liquidity, longing, medium, memories, merging, mingling, mirroring, moodiness, narcissism, nurture, pleasure, premonitions, privateness, reaction, receptivity, reflection, refreshment, regret, relatedness, relationship, relaxation, resentment, responsiveness, rewards or their absence, romance, satisfaction or its absence, saturation, secrecy, self-containment, self-indulgence, sense of connection or lack, sense of depth, sensitivity, sentience, sentiment, serenity, shapelessness, sharing, social relationships, softening, solubility, solution, sorrow, steeping, subjectivity, subtle sensation, surface tension, surge, susceptibility, sympathy, touchiness, turbulence, union, vulnerability, yearnings.

Correspondences:

The Astrological correspondence to the Water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces) is obvious and self-explanatory.

The Kabbalistic correspondence is to Briah (the Creative World). This is a world of flux and change, the world which shapes itself in eddies and waves and along lines of least resistance, or "sensitive chaos." It isn't form or law until we name it so.

Sometimes called Akashic fluid, this hypostasis or substratum of ultimate stuff is analogously seen as akin to electromagnetic or gravitational fields, or as a plenum, or an ecosystem. It is always changing shape. And it is big, inexhaustibly big. It is pure possibility, within its own order and limits, and the mother of the world. Its power is to respond to what is, as it is, and become or help it become what it is not. It is creation, change, and the round river.

The Yijing Bagua-to-Suit correspondences have Kan, Water, in the upper position in eight places; and Dui, Wetland, in the upper position for Aces and Tens (underpowered by Kun or overpowered by Qian). The Court Cups have Dui, Wetland, in the lower position, with this energy expressing itself outwardly as one of the four "attributorial" elements.

Swords and Air

(a.k.a. spades, epees, blades, etc)

The Sword is several things: a weapon, a tool, an object of art, a shaving razor, an unflattering mirror, a surgeon's scalpel, a warning, or a word to the wise. Its nature is negation: it disconnects, it selects, it declares no, it ends things. It pokes holes in stuff. It puts space between what used to be one thing, and a thing cleaved thus shows us its insides or inner workings. It frequently points to problems and trouble. It's the critical mind. There are many in this field of study who judge this a bad thing, who haven't formed close friendships with their intellects, and might in fact like to do away with thinking altogether, and all judgments (but their own). Their intellects have not been kind or responsive to them. Swords will be more frightening to them because they imagine themselves on the pointy end instead of the hilt. This is why Swords are given such dire auspice in books on Tarot. But we will be taking a more positive approach to negativity here. The Sword can only disillusion in proportion to one's illusions. If we don't have correct thoughts we will have illusions in their stead. Problems are one thing to whiners, quite another to mathematicians: it's a question of attitude, of leaning into the problem instead of backing away. And while so many enjoy the benefits of diversification and subsequent evolution, this process would not have pleasant results at all without the little unpleasantness of natural selection. But a negative evaluation does not require ill will. A simple no, or a turning aside, will often suffice. Air has a pleasant side, as when we get fresh breaths, and there is a global linguistic tendency to have one word for both air or breath and spirit (vis. ruach, prana, qi, pneuma, and spiritus).

The Sword creates or identifies entities and identities with new words and edges. The air that enters the newly created space can even be likened to breath, the first breath of new beings. Air is the familiar medium for the vibratory phenomenon of communication (even if common to all states) and so has come to symbolize media itself, particularly language. The Sword is a symbol of the powers of abstraction, a distancing from the phenomenal world, dividing, if not to conquer, at least to utilize or to study. It means both stepping back and penetrating. It seeks out useful information and gathers intelligence, sometimes impersonally, and sometimes coldly. Persons and events signified by Swords represent the entity as a nervous system, an intelligence-gathering activity, a neuro-electrical network of what, how, when and where (but oftentimes stuck on why). Swords evoke the challenge to know how, to make life intelligible and live usefully. The violence attributed to Swords only occurs when thought grows rigid, as with religion and politics, or when life runs out of balance. Beyond this, the Swords are swordplay, mental and perceptual exercise, instrumentality, decisions and the details of their implementation, problem-solving behavior. Like Swords, words and ideas can be tools or weapons. Words and ideas, put into play before deeds, can mean less violence too, since ethics emerge from thoughtfulness.

A Sword has no force of its own: it's an instrument of enaction. While intellect is often associated with power used in problematic ways, we still need the critical mind in order to live well in the world, to use good judgment. Our body of knowledge is loaded with error, and the evolved human mind carries a formidable toolkit of anti-cognitive, self-deceptive processes. Swords are the primary tools of our vigilance here. We need good, sharp minds to grasp natural law, either to better obey it or to violate it with more promising, long-term impunity. With or without a creator, the world explored by science is scripture, and the patterns underlying material form deserve a respect that

borders on reverence. We need our challenging mindsets. Swords have points and are edged. This is how we get through error.

Swords can be applied to both ideas and stories, but stories contain strong Cups attributes as well. We have a need to learn and convey the meaning of things not just to the culture at large, but to cultures yet to evolve as well. Our culture has made grave errors, in part because our direction has not been adequately questioned and criticized. We have many things we need to sever from our thinking and from our lifestyles. We need cognizance of alternatives, knowledge of options, in the degree of detail that a reliable prediction of outcomes requires. Knowing our options permits changing our minds. If we do not evaluate some things as unworthy of existence, their unworthiness eventually saturates us. We need to set conditions and limits: there are dangers, problems and puzzles ahead.

Key Words, Concepts and Phrases:

abstraction, affliction, aloofness, amputation, analysis, artfulness, argument, articulation, artifact, belief, boundaries, calculation, categorization, choice, choosing, clarification, clarity, cleverness, cognition & recognition, coldness, communication, comparison, conceptualizing, conflict, constraints, contention, correction, criticism, cutting through, debate, decisiveness, decision, definition, delimitation, detachment, differences of opinion, differentiation, disagreement, discernment, discrimination, dissection, distance, distancing, disruption, disunity, divisiveness, dividing lines, division, edges, enforcement, error, evaluation, exactness, focus, formal operations, formulating, heuristics, ideation, ideology, illusion, incisiveness, information, insensitivity, instrumentality, intellect, intelligence, invention, judgment, knowledge, language, law, learning, limiting, logic, negation, objectivity, observation, Occam's razor, order, organization, pattern, pattern recognition, patterning, penetration, planning, pointing, polish, prediction, principle, problem solving, problems as puzzles, projection, propaganda, rationality, rationalizing, reason, reasons, referents and references, reflection, refraction, replication, resolution, resourcefulness, ruthlessness, science, selection, separation, seriousness, severing and severity, shaping, sharpening, sharpness, skill, speech, standards, stepping back, strategy, strife, structure, supervenience, tactics, taxonomies, techne and technique, thinking, thoughtful attention, tool use, transmission, troubles, vivisection, voice, wit.

Correspondences:

The Astrological correspondence to the Air signs (Gemini, Libra and Aquarius) is obvious and self-explanatory.

The Kabbalistic correspondence is to Yetzirah (the Formative World). This is the world of order and structure, the Vedantin adhyasa and nama rupa, imposed and impressed upon Briah. In space, it is boundary, pattern, form, figure-ground relations, dimension, number, etc. In time, it's continuity, repetition, maintenance, learning, self-organization, sequence, the diachronic evolution of form. It is thus, given limited wisdom or lack of perspective (which all finite beings have) the prelude to thing-hood. Yetzirah is divisive and articulated by nature - it must have or make some contrast. Both imply abstraction, distancing, reflection, choice, versatility and options.

The Yijing Bagua-to-Suit correspondences have Qian, Heaven, in the upper position in eight places; and Xun, Wind-Wood, in the upper position for Aces and Tens (underpowered by Kun or overpowered by Qian). The Court Swords have Xun, Wind-Wood, in the lower position, with this energy expressing itself outwardly as one of the four "attributional" elements.

Side note: vapor and tempered metal are both symbolic children of fire and water.

Pentacles and Earth

(a.k.a. diamonds, coins, discs, deniers, stones, etc)

The Pentacles and Earth stand in for the sensible world, for sensible folk, the material world, the world of slow, frozen, or viscous energy. These are the things with boundaries (perhaps carved by Swords), nouns, processes that are changing so slowly that they look like entities. The Pentacle is also many different things: the atom, the chief component in all larger structures, the cell, whether seed or egg, the crystal, be it tool or gem, a talisman to attract good things, or an amulet to repel bad things, and money to buy just about any things. Pentacles represent the entity as embodying a set of learned and embedded skills and behavior patterns, hierarchies of cells and selves, and any methods of acquiring, manipulating, and valuing that are needed to further the needs of this embodiment. Pentacles evoke a challenge to keep silence, to find what is needed and come to rest, to equilibrate, to acquire homeostasis, and invest any surplus in futures.

The otherworldly loathing of the things of this world does not belong to the Pentacles. There are good and useful senses of the word “materialism” that are lost in knee-jerk reactions to the word. Matter is only what you make of it. A doctrine of materialism does not automatically preclude an acknowledgement of consciousness or spirit as important dimensions of the world. It is not always a denial of the immaterial. It merely suggests that these are emergent processes and qualia, rather than fundamental properties and substances. That they might not be fundamental or original does not make them any less sacred to those who appreciate or revere them. To go other-worldly in this matter is to forsake what sustains us, what feeds us and brings us to life. The *prima materia* is not dead weight. The material is a living, productive, carbon-rich soil, and not merely dirt, a place for roots and seeds, and the ground of our being. The material is more like pǔ, the uncarved piece of wood in Daoism, than simple clay: it comes with an original grain or nature, or natural laws, to work with or against.

This suit began its career as diamonds and coins, then as coins worn as charms. It was the early occult Tarot authors who imbued them with more magic, de Geblin as talismans and Levi as Pentacles, objects charged with the five-pointed star, the seal of Solomon, with which to impress the great web, that makes the magic happen. Crowley made them into whirling discs, charged with angular momentum. This should remind us that coins are invested energy, resources, time, or labor, and this investment stores potential energy. They are storage for energy, fungible substitutes for the energy needed to do things, to be spent now or later, to meet our needs. They are not just the things that own us. The Pentacles call for realism, facts as givens or challenges.

It is, of course, naive realism to see hard facts only. The hardest and stillest stone we now know to be mostly space, charge, and movement. We don't want to reduce too much. Surfaces hide much mystery: just look at what others who claim to know us know of our inner lives. We learn to look closer. The energy in money, the pentacle in the coin, like the spark in the shell in Kabbalah, is redeemable tender for all debts public and private. Resources, as the word implies, can be sourced again and again. If not, they are really capital that is lost if not invested with wisdom.

Key Words, Concepts and Phrases:

ability, acquisition, actualization, amulet, applicability, assiduousness, attachments, barter, base, body, bones, brick and mortar, capital, cares, cautiousness, comfort, concern, concreteness, conservation, consolidation, construction, convention, corporeality, creation, density, dependability, diligence, domesticity, economy, effects,

embodiment, employment, enduring, establishment, evidence, facts, farming, finances, foundation, frugality, fruition, fruits of labor, fungibles, gravity, ground of emergence, groundedness, grounds for, harvest, indulgences, inertia, influence, inheritances, instinct, invested energy, investment, involvement, labor, lasting impressions, lasting itself, loss, making sense, management, manifestation, materialism, materiality, matter, medium of exchange, merchandise, method, mundanity, naive realism, needs, nouns as slow verbs, objective reality, obligation, occupation, opacity, ordinariness, ossification, outcomes, ownership, palpability, parsimony, particulars, patience, pattern of behavior, persistence, phenomenal world, place, possession, possessiveness, practicalities, practice, pragmatism, prima materia, productivity, profitability, proof, property, prosperity, prudence, quid pro quo, raw material, realism, realization, resources, results, rewards, routine, ruts, safety, seasons, security, seed, sensation, sense, sensibleness, shield, stability, stabilization, steadiness, stewardship, storage, stubbornness, support, sustenance, talisman, tangibles, tenure, things with boundaries, thoroughness, tokens, touch, trade, tradition, training, valuables, values, vested energy, wherewithal, work, worth.

Correspondences:

The Astrological correspondence to the Earth signs (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn) is obvious and self-explanatory.

The Kabbalistic correspondence is to Assiah (the Material World). This is the world of sensation and concern, the sensible world of making and doing, that which our perception perceives as hard facts, here or not here, and things bumping into each other, unable to occupy the same space. In this world even the lightning may be seen as a thing, as “it” flashes. The forms of Yetzirah are stuffed with Briah at the promptings of Atziluth. Assiah is only degraded insofar as perception conceives of slow-moving changes as independent or static. This world is concretion, being in and for itself, identity in a more stable sense, and inertial resistance to change.

The Yijing Bagua-to-Suit correspondences have Kun, Earth, in the upper position in eight places; and Gen, Mountain, in the upper position for Aces and Tens (underpowered by Kun or overpowered by Qian). The Court Pentacles have Gen, Mountain, in the lower position, with this energy expressing itself outwardly as one of the four “attributorial” elements.

The Court, or Four Dignitaries

Since the Court figures go by a number of names, depending on the decks and their narrators, we will have to adopt a single system here and leave it to you to translate. The Kings here appear in Crowley's deck as Knights. The Queens have always been Queens (at least since playing cards got to Europe). The Princes here are Waite's Knights. The Princesses here are Waite's Pages.

The four Court Dignitaries, Figura or Persona (King, Queen, Prince and Princess), also known as face or figure cards, are the subjective interpretations of the Scale of Four, assigned human personality traits and temperaments that are correlated with four of our social, political and familial functions. Like the Suits, the Court also correspond to fire, water, air and earth, as well as Jung's four psychological functions: intuiting, feeling, thinking and sensing (both sets in the order above). We have the four dignitaries from four different kingdoms as it were. With portmanteau morphology, the Court dignitary is the subject of the portmanteau and the Suit is the adverbial predicate (as well as naming the dignitary's skill set). The dignitaries will also reflect degrees of accumulated life experience or maturity, but with the understanding that there are appropriate levels of inexperience in the Princes and Princesses.

The Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley have made a 4x4 interpretive matrix out of these two scales, Court and Suit, which gives sixteen possible combinations, and they have derived an abundance of systematic and coherent meanings for the Court Cards using this matrix. One of their more successful devices has been to consider that there is an aspect of each element that behaves a little like each of the other elements in its outer expression. The inner character is the Suit, the outer expression (their term is 'part of') is the Dignitary. For example, there is a Watery 'part of' Fire: there are times when fire seems to behave like water, in its fluidity of motion and responsiveness to the currents around it, or simply the flow of heat and light. This part is associated with the Queen of Wands. The Fiery 'part of' Water, on the other hand, is seen when water releases its potential energy, as when the bottom drops out of the river and the water falls. This is water's readiness. This is associated with the King of Cups. And of course there is an Earthy 'part of' Earth, where the Earth is behaving exactly like it's supposed to behave, in the authenticity and stillness of the Princess of Pentacles.

When these cards appear in a reading, they are said to foreshadow social activity or influences, or to recommend preparation for this. Among various references to the Court, they are said to represent:

- social interactions, meetings, encounters and challenges
- specific people with these traits encountered in our lives
- character or psychological types, personalities or temperaments
- events impacting, influencing, or triggering a particular trait
- a stance, position, outlook, point of view, or attitude
- qualities or traits to recognize, nurture, or beware of
- levels of development, maturity, mastery or attainment
- parts or facets of our personality or parts of ourselves
- a particular or unique approach to life
- roles to be modeled or played

Correspondences:

Astrological: The first three Dignitaries (King, Queen and Prince) also relate to the three Qualities or the triplicities of Astrology's Zodiac: Cardinal, Mutable and Fixed respectively. As they combine with the corresponding Elements of the Tarot Suits, we get the portmanteaus for the twelve Signs. For example, the King of Wands would

resonate with Cardinal Fire or Aries, the Queen of Cups with Mutable Water or Pisces. These are best understood as Ascendants or Rising Signs, since they color our outlook on life. This is one of two systems used by the Golden Dawn. The other, assigning the Court Cards to the 36 Decans of the Zodiac, has been abandoned in the present work as peripheral and perhaps totally irrelevant to the core meanings. The fourth Dignitary, the Princess, has historically been assigned to the four directional quadrants around the north pole. This never made any sense. But if you compare the key words that have accumulated around the Princess cards to other concepts in Astrology, they look very much like those of the North Node or Dragon's Head, as this is expressed through the four Elements. And so, for example, the Princess of Wands may be examined here for any relationship she might have with the North Node in Fire Signs.

Kabbalah and Qabalah never did and don't really have much of a part to play in the development of Court meanings. Attempts have been made to cross reference the four Olamot or worlds with themselves, but this doesn't yield much of value.

Yijing: Aleister Crowley developed a system of correlations between sixteen of the Gua (Hexagrams) based upon the 4x4 matrix system, a portmanteau analysis using Bagua (Trigrams) in the lower (Zhen) and upper (Hui) positions of the Gua. The lower position or inner character was given to the Suit and the upper to the Court. Crowley only used half of the eight Bagua, the four "attributorial elements" Zhen-Thunder-Fire-Kings, Dui-Wetland-Water-Queens, Xun-Wind-Wood-Air-Princes and Gen-Mountain-Earth-Princesses. There is a structural perfection to this arrangement as well as a resonance in meaning: see Fig. 33 in the Dimensions chapter of my Book of Changes. See also the "Hui Gua" section for these four Bagua in the Xiao Gua chapter.

Other: There are other scales of Sixteen in systems outside of the Tarot. Best known is the MTBI or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is an exploitation of the combinatory possibilities of four binary pairs of human traits, to wit:

Attitudes: extraversion/introversion (E/I)

Functions: sensing/intuition (S/N) and thinking/feeling (T/F)

Lifestyle: judging/perception (J/P)

An INTJ, for example, would be an Introverted Intuitive with a Thinking and Judging inclination. Conflicting attempts have been made to correlate these sixteen possibilities with the Court Cards. These are binary, not quaternary functions, so any correlations would need to be based upon the binary axes of the Court cards. That would be either king-queen vs prince-princess (parents vs children) or king-prince vs queen-princess (m vs f); and wand-cups vs swords-pentacles, or wands-swords vs cups-pentacles among the Suits. We could make an attempt here for what it might have to offer, but it would not be central or a part of the development of core meanings.

The same is true for a similar scale from psychology, known as 16PF, or the Sixteen Personality Factors, specifically: Warmth, Reasoning, Emotional Stability, Dominance, Liveliness, Rule-Consciousness, Social Boldness, Sensitivity, Vigilance, Abstractedness, Privatness, Apprehension, Openness to Change, Self-Reliance, Perfectionism and Tension. While many of these 'pop' with individual Court Cards, any correlation is an exercise for another place and time.

Finally, there are three systems of divination that use a scale of 16 principles. Two are variants of an indigenous African divination system known as IFA. The third, developed in Western Hermeticism, is known as Geomancy, and uses 16 four-line figures with some similarities to the Yijing. These have undergone attempts at correlation with Tarot's Court Cards, but they remain outside the development of core meanings of the cards.

The Kings, or Crowley's Knights

Images: the Kings are traditionally pictured seated on thrones, holding the symbol of their element. Crowley mounted his on horseback, leading many to be confused about the Kings' association with Fire. Thrones are probably still the best, since the powers to command and delegate command are best represented here.

The four Kings show the power of the element in leading or initiating activity, to motivate or drive us. Although the King's is a power vested by the cumulative experience of a lifetime or a lineage, he doesn't always arrive by way of his ambition. He may inherit, succeed, or be called. Kings are quick to act or decide, but normally delegate the follow-through. Commanders can't be expected to do a lot of the labor. Actions may be swift and transient, but they are not always explosive or violent, as is often described. They are shown in command and generally in control of themselves. Each King has a major life lesson to master, one that is not guaranteed to him. For Wands it's impulse control, Cups, deferred gratification, Swords, adaptive thought, and Pentacles, the courage to risk in the right amount. All need to learn that true authority is the duty of authors, and this comes along with accountability for one's creations, or responsibility for one's domain and people. Given the mastery of their element, the wisdom of experience, and the knowledge that ultimately the throne is a place of service, their rule will be worthy. However, it must be remembered that to master their suit or element is not to transcend it. The King of Cups is no swordsman, the King of Wands no counselor. Since Kings don't always have people around with the guts to critique or contradict them, they will need to learn to self-regulate, to find or provide their own feedback. When truly grown up in attitude, they know that force of character and compelling example get more work done than force and compulsion. The key idea here is maturity, a lifetime spent in learning what needs to be learned for the job, a stock of affordances and a repertoire of perspectives or points of view. His fairness as king depends on his commitment to service to others instead of his own ambitions. He will compel his followers best by setting compelling examples instead of compelling their behavior.

Key Words:

achievement, arrogance, authority, autocracy, capability, chief, cogency, command, competence, confidence, control, decisiveness, direction, discrimination, dominion, driving force, edict, education, effectiveness, elder, example, experience, expertise, father figure, greatness, head man, honor, impetus, imposition, influence, initiative, judgment, last word, leader, learnedness, leadership by example, management, mandate, mastery, maturation, maturity, noblesse oblige, over-assurance, overconfidence, paternity and patronage, presence, prowess, respectability, right of rule, self-directedness, specifying, taking charge.

Correspondences:

Astrology: The Cardinal Signs of their Elements, Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn, understood as the Ascendant or Rising Sign.

Kabbalah and Qabalah: Not really applicable. But one might try looking around in the World of Atziluth for inspiration.

Yijing: Zhen, the Bagua or Trigram of Thunder in the upper (Hui) position, situated above the "attributinal" Bagua associated with the Suits.

The Queens

Images: the Queens are traditionally pictured seated on thrones, in the manner of the Kings, holding the symbol of their element.

The four Queens show the power of the element to receive, to welcome or accept new or external influences or changes. This is not the same thing as passivity, and that it might appear as passivity makes it dangerously easy to underestimate the Queen. By sanctioning change, by being willing to undergo transformation, by being ready to absorb or learn, she positions herself as supervisor and guide, while the whole world does the work. She conducts, and adds her style. She can influence without having to command. The Queen is more likely than the King or the Prince to experiment successfully with the applications, possibilities, permutations and ramifications of her element, going beyond its familiar scope. She discovers potentials that may not be so obvious. Her versatility or flexibility adapts her powers to new contexts and applications, extending her reach into broader fields. She is broader than the King and more experienced than the Prince. Her emphasis is on how the suit can interact with the world or be applied in different and unexpected ways. She may seem less results-oriented than the King, but she is able to consider new information or experience as result enough. What seems like generosity or altruism in lending her wealth, sharing good will, and spreading her resources around is really a function of her understanding that this is how to multiply her wealth, good will, and resources. Generally, she is nurturing, although the commonly misunderstood Queen of Swords is a special case, q.v. Her effects in the real world are more situational than absolute: she sets examples here and there, rather than making general decrees. Her influence on her environment, or the activity she promotes, is brought about by attractive forces like inspiration. She may be more interested in process than foreseen results. Her will may adapt to real-world circumstances. She will explore the permutations of an idea, transcending its original mold and limitations.

Key Words:

adaptability, alliances, applicabilities, applications, assistance, development, channeling, circulation, coalition, collaboration, conducting, confederation, contribution, cooperation, draw, encouragement, exchange, extrapolation, flexibility, fostering, fulfillment, help, helpfulness, incubation, influence, interaction, inspiration, interconnection, interpersonal management, joining, lure, nurture, participation, partnership, permutation, persuasion, provision, ramifications, relating, relationships, responsiveness, shared experience, sharing resources, support, supportiveness, synching up, transformation, transmission, understanding, unexpected applications, utility, variations on the theme, versatility.

Correspondences:

Astrology: The Mutable Signs of their Elements, Sagittarius, Pisces, Gemini and Virgo, understood as the Ascendant or Rising Sign.

Kabbalah and Qabalah: Not really applicable. But one might try looking around in the World of Briah for inspiration.

Yijing: Dui, the Bagua or Trigram of Wetlands in the upper (Hui) position, situated above the “attributinal” Bagua associated with the Suits.

The Princes, or Waite's Knights

Images: the Princes, Waite's Knights, are traditionally pictured on horseback, holding the symbol of their element. Crowley placed his in chariots. Both suggest that there are distances to be traveled, although the Prince of Pentacles might only be riding out to fix the fence or bring in strays.

The four Princes show the power of the element to explore and extend its reach, all while maintaining its original nature. This is the expanding life of the element. He is a hybrid of what he has been and what he will be, carrying out the element's development. Living and learning, and living to learn, developing real-world experience is imperative, as his future throne is not guaranteed. He prepares for maturity by collecting plenty of specific experiences and generalizing from them. His efforts at this are determined and concerted, committed to the processes of the suit, acting it out, finding its limits, finding out where the element no longer works, and thus learning from failure. He is ready to seize upon any opportunities consistent with his suit, gaining competence, skill, and, hopefully, self-confidence through trial and error. Like typical young men, job one is to find his boundaries, edges, and margins, and then push a little past them, just to be sure. He may seem to be in the business of excess. His approach asks questions like: how fast will it go? what am I capable of? what can I get away with? who says? He can seem an agent of the element rather than its master, just as teenage boys can seem like agents of testosterone. He is certainly the one of the Court most often in trouble or error, and sometimes thumbing his nose at natural selection. He has more warnings attached to his interpretations than the other three dignitaries. Yet he may be the truest to his suit's extended nature. Where the boundary is as distant as the farthest sources of fuel (Wands) or a virtually unlimited intellectual world (Swords), one might expect to see a lot of movement. The Prince of Pentacles is again a special case: all the movement described here is more circumscribed for him, and much of his exploration may be a reexamination of the known. While the Princess seeks the core of the Suit, the Prince will seek the circumference, learning the ways of the larger world, collecting the world's affordances, like animals sniff out their niche before settling in, filing away where food can be found and noting paths of escape.

Key Words:

adventure, ambit, ambition, amplification, beta testing, broadening, crossing boundaries, daring, dedication, determination, development, eagerness, education, errands, excess, expansion, expedition, experiment, exploitation, exploration, expression, extension, extrapolation, extremity, feedforward for feedback, field work, finding limits, getting educated, goals, intensity, journeyman, learning life's larger lessons, missions, movement, opportunism, overdoing, practice, precipitousness, prematurity, preoccupied, proving oneself, pushing envelopes, quarry, quest, reach, recklessness, reconnaissance, searching, spreading out, testing, testosterone, training, transformative experience, trial and error, unfinished business, zeal.

Correspondences:

Astrology: The Fixed Signs of their Elements, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius and Taurus, understood as the Ascendant or Rising Sign.

Kabbalah and Qabalah: Not really applicable. But one might try looking around in the World of Yetzirah for inspiration.

Yijing: Xun, the Bagua or Trigram of Wind-Wood in the upper (Hui) position, situated above the "attributational" Bagua associated with the Suits.

The Princesses, or Waite's Pages

Images: the Princesses, Waite's Pages, are traditionally pictured standing on open ground, proudly holding the symbol of their element. I like them best in bare feet, but that might just be my sickness talking. The Princess is sometimes said to suggest messages in readings, rather than people, or perhaps people simply bearing a message or news, and whose character or personality may be irrelevant.

The four Princesses show the power of the element in latent form, as potential to be developed or set free. She is far from mature, and she lacks the abilities which go with maturity, but she embodies the inherited gifts of her noble lineage. She is an amateur, in a place of learning, but the word amateur means she is loving her work, practicing for the future, cultivating her element-specific character, attending to developing her worth. Lacking arrogance and preconception, she brings a fresh perspective that might bring to light what the more sophisticated views have missed. She has nothing to prove yet, no need to defend a constructed self-image. It is job one to examine and learn the core of who she is, look into the heart of the suit, the deeper meanings of her element, her authentic and original nature, prior to the more complicated interactions with the real world, prior to entanglements with context. She will know what most and what best to stay true to. She grounds her study in the prerequisites. In developing the basic ideas, the essence, or essentials of her suit, she also learns which of the things that normally attach themselves might be unnecessary, the things that a more exhaustive study picks up with fewer questions. For example, the Princess of Cups might learn that wanting more of a feeling might not be that closely related to having or getting more of a feeling: it might be more effective simply to be grateful for what she has. The Princess is laying the foundations for her further growth, and getting the right cornerstones set in their proper positions will be key to a lasting structure. This is why someone beginning a study ought to take the most care in choosing the first rounds of their input, the most germane and respectable data, and not the cheap thing that is hawked to the novice. In a new area of study, the beginner who starts with high standards will find the extra effort well spent. There is an element of service in her behavior, but this is as much an internship or apprenticeship, to learn what she may one day ask of others should she become a queen.

Key Words:

appreciation, apprenticeship, attentiveness, basic education, beginner's mind, caring, catalysts, core curricula and experiences, crystallization, curiosity, dependence, discovery, distillation, elementary education, essence, essentials, formative development, fresh look, freshness, fundamentals, grounding, handmaiden, hidden talents, honesty, ingraining, innocence, innocents, input, interest, internal exploration, internalization, investigation, inwardness, learners, learning, loyalty, mindfulness, new ideas or news, novices, original nature, news or new information, parsimony, place of learning, premises, prerequisites, probation, probing, raw material, reflection, respect, self-cultivation, simplicity, sincerity, student, study, trial and error, unrealized potential.

Correspondences:

Astrology: The North Node or Dragon's Head through the Elements. This is sometimes associated with lessons to be learned, a faculty to be developed, and called 'a point of intake and integration.'

Kabbalah and Qabalah: Not really applicable. But one might try looking around in the

World of Assiah for inspiration, and particularly the associated idea of the Shekinah or indwelling presence.

Yijing: Gen, the Bagua or Trigram of Mountain, in the upper (Hui) position, situated above the “attributinal” Bagua associated with the Suits.

The Ten Numbers

Even though the Ten Numbers are involved in the developed meanings of more than half of the Tarot deck, few authors have tried to delineate their separate interpretations, or their roles in forming the card meanings. And of those who do, many forget the lessons learned the moment they go on to describe the individual cards. For example, an author might say that the Ace represents only the very tenderest beginnings of the element's expression, and then turn right around and say that the Ace of Wands is a very powerful card, bringing lots of force with it. This makes no sense. The Ace of Cups is not love, it's the readiness, openness, or worthiness for love. This section explores the symbolism and the core meanings of the Ten Numbers, specifically as they have developed in the Tarot. I have already tried to draw a clear distinction between Number Symbolism and Numerology, and explain why Numerology is not being considered here in any way.

The Numbers are subjective or personalized interpretations of the Scale of Ten, which have derived their meanings from a combination of sources. We spoke earlier about the morphology of portmanteau symbols, how subject and predicate, or upper and lower, or inner and outer had different parts to play in the overall card. Here the numbers are the more subjective component, the subject's or operator's side (like the lower or Zhen Bagua position in the Yijing's Gua), while the suit indicates the more objective side of things, the field of operation, the type of circumstances, and the tools to be used (like the upper or Hui Bagua position in the Yijing's Gua). However, this can still be read two different ways:

If a Pip card is thought to portray an objective occurrence, a worldly predicament, or something that is happening to or around the querent, the card will have a completely different meaning than times when the card is considered as be an attitude to be adopted. In the latter case, the reader will want to subjectively invoke or adopt the character indicated by the number and pick up the tools indicated by the suit. But in the former case, this might also be the most useful approach, since it offers a more personal and sympathetic understanding of the forces involved. Pamela Smith's Seven of Swords offers a good example of the difference. Most writers, it would seem, have a knee-jerk, moralistic overreaction to the image: "Oh my, this is dishonesty and betrayal. Shame on this person." But what Smith was in fact portraying was the simpler idea of stratagem, planning, in an amoral or a relativistic context, the Seven (out for Victory, as Netzach) employing Design (Swords). To internalize the card gives a much clearer picture of its meaning than simply reacting to the image.

There is another useful approach to understanding the ten Pip cards in each suit as progressions in both sequential directions. We can see, for example, a restabilization process in moving from the Five to the Six of Pentacles. We can see a partial remedy for the nightmares of the Nine of Swords in developing the restraint called for in the Eight of Swords (another much-misunderstood Smith image).

Throughout the early centuries of both playing cards and Tarot cards, there is not much evidence that the Ten Numbers used in the forty Pip cards were accorded any special significance or symbolism. These cards in both decks show similarities in geometrical arrangements of the suit symbols, but this is as likely a function of geometry itself and not some deeper archetypal structure. If there were any systematic assignment of numbers to meanings, some hidden lore passed slyly among the fortune tellers, this should show hints in a greater coherence in any early interpretive meanings. But it does not.

The earliest attempts to arrange meanings together with the Pip Numbers appear to belong to the Golden Dawn. And the first real hard evidence that somebody was

working with an interpretive algorithm was also the first systematic attempt to portray the Pips with realistic (if cartoon) vignettes, in the popular deck of Pamela Colman-Smith. It's a mystery to me where she got this, because I don't think that Waite fully understood her symbolism or its sophistication. It's important to try to get to her understanding because her deck is now canon, and the basis for well over half of the other new decks. Over the early decades of this Golden Dawn endeavor, a system of number symbolism that is unique to the Tarot (even distinct from the WMT or Western Hermeticism) began to take shape, with perhaps the most useful of the contributors being Aleister Crowley, and most particularly, in a short essay that he termed 'The Naples Arrangement.' This document is so seminal to the Tarot's evolved number symbolism that it is included here in its entirety following the table of correspondences below.

Pre-existing systems of numerical symbolism were clearly tapped, and fragments were incorporated here and there when convenient. We can see bits of the Pythagorean system, and also occasional flashes of the Archons and Aeons of the Gnostics and the Emanations of the Neoplatonists. The Jews followed the Gnostics and Neoplatonists in the early centuries of the current era with their own attempt at a Hermetic-type system: the very brief Book of Formation, the Sefer Yetzirah, somewhere around the 6th Century CE. This could be connected culturally to their mystical Shiur Komah tradition, and to both Hekhalot and Merkavah mysticism, but there is little of relevance in these to the Tarot, or even to Kabbalah. In the Sefer Yetzirah we are introduced to the Ten Sephiroth, Spheres that are Ciphers.

The Sefer Yetzirah does not go far in defining what the Sephiroth are. It simply calls them the Voices of Belimah (Not-Anything) and assigns them to Spirit, Air, Water, Fire, Above, Below, Forward, Back, Right and Left. It stresses that there are 'Ten and not Nine, Ten and not Eleven' (SY 1:4), even though a bonus, eleventh Sephira (the singular form) called Daath, or Knowledge, would make its insistent appearance almost immediately and become fairly standard fare by the end of the 13th Century. This was never called a true Sephira, but more like the 'external aspect of Kether' (Scholem, p. 107). Subsequent writers have described the Ten as: divine emanations or hypostases, attributes or principles, steps or stages in the manifestation of divinity, crowns or potencies, planes or dimensions, energy transformers and energy transformations.

It is important not to confuse the ten Numbers that appear in the Pip cards with the Sephiroth themselves. In Crowley's terms, "Although (the Pips) are sympathetic with their Sephiroth origin, they are not identical, nor are they divine persons." (p.189). They describe the behavior characteristic of a Sephira without involving the deification or imputing a subjectivity other than the reader's own. At best, the limitation of a Sephiratic influence to one of the four elements diminishes it considerably. It loses not only the other three elements but the synergy between them as well. Crowley, however, tends to go too far in diminishing their character as he descends down the Tree, particularly below Tipareth (i.e. the 7s through 10s). He is unnecessarily negative about the descent of spirit into the sensual world, an uncharacteristic stance for such a naughty boy.

The Jewish mystical system appears to have gone underground until the 12th Century, reemerging with the work of Isaac the Blind (1160-1236) and the publication of the Book of Brightness or Sefer Bahir (1174). Here the Ten Sephiroth (and the 11th) began to get individual names. Most of the names which adhered best to the ideas were drawn from two passages in the Tanakh, where several characteristics of the deity are named. The passages, taken together, also suggest what would become the final numerical sequence of the ten. From the King James translation (my parentheses): Exodus 31:3 And I have filled him with the spirit (1) of God, in wisdom (2), and in

understanding (3), and in knowledge (Daath), and in all manner of workmanship (4-10) 1 Chronicles 29:11 Thine, O Lord is the greatness (4), and the power (5), and the glory (6), and the victory (7), and the majesty (8): for all (9) that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom (10), O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

The Bahir, and subsequent texts of what would become Kabbalah, begin to speak of a Tree whereon these Sephiroth might be configured, but none of the descriptions match the one to emerge graphically in the early 16th century. The first of these appears in a 1516 frontispiece of Paul Ricci's translation of Gikatilla's *Gates of Light*, around the beginning of the Safed school of Kabbalah. The primary authors of the Safed school, especially Moses Cordovero (Remak) (1522–1570), Isaac Luria (Ari) (1534–1572), and Chayyim Vital (1543-1620) were born shortly after this and published their own informative versions of the graphic, which was named the Otz Chayyim or Tree of Life. Scholem (*Kabbalah*, p. 106) suggests that the Tree of Life diagram dates from the 14th Century, but gives no citation. This may be a typo, as he is not inclined to the same exaggeration and pseudepigraphy as the 'true-believer' Kabbalists. Athanasius Kircher published a depiction of the Tree of Life for the Europeans in 1652, based upon a 1625 version by Philippe d'Aquin.

I have my own unproven hypothesis about the origin of the graphic Tree of Life: it derives directly from China, from a diagram offered by Chen Tuan (906-989), a Chinese Daoist, called the Wujitu, and then from an adaptation of this called the Taijitu by Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), a Chinese Neoconfucian. Their transmission to the West would not have been difficult, as this was also the route that paper, printing, and even the idea of playing cards also took, through India, the Middle East and into Europe. Wujitu means Diagram of the Ultimate Nothing and Taijitu means Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate. Both portray, in the second sphere down, a prototype of the Taijitu that we now associate with this term: the familiar Yin-Yang diagram. Aside from the renaming of some of the spheres related to the Wu Xing or Five Movements, all that needed to be done was to tease the second sphere into the two separate, component spheres (as Chokmah and Binah, or Wisdom and Understanding). Martin Zwick, in "Symbolic Structures as Systems: On the Near Isomorphism of Two Religious Systems" is the only other scholar I have seen to arrive at this. But see for yourself: Wujitu and Taijitu.

This Tree of Life, like the Yi's Primal arrangement, permits analysis of the ciphers or spheres geometrically, in interrelationship or dimensional pattern, as well as in various sequences, two of them major. The first sequence is ontological. From ideas numbered Zero through Ten, we track the evolution of being from no-thing-ness. Many think that this tracks the gradual degradation of spirit into matter. But a more interesting view foreshadows the development of systems theory, as simpler processes create functional and increasingly negentropic complexity. The second sequence is existential. From ideas numbered Ten through Zero, we track the evolution of a particular being as it blunders its way up a scaffolding or ladder of its own making, to explore the higher, simpler, and less egocentric realms of awareness. This is also the Kabbalistic process of redemptive repair of the world, or Tikkun. In this direction, Daath, Knowledge, plays a more important role as it becomes either a vehicle of transcendence or an agent of self-destruction as we cross the abyss of the ego, beneath which all we see are reflections of ourselves. In a fascinating cross-cultural convergence, the meaning of the ten Numbers as an upward progression from ten to one are almost perfectly captured in the ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen Buddhism.

Once the Tree of Life was established, the resulting geometry and sequence enabled an assignment of the Planets of Astrology to the Sephiroth. There existed at the time only one widely-accepted geometric arrangement for the Planets, this being the

Western Hexagram, the Magen David or Shield of David, and only one sequence, the Ptolemaic sequence of apparent periodic cycles, to wit:

	Saturn		Saturn, 29.5 Years
Mars		Jupiter	Jupiter, 11.86 Years
	Sol		Mars, 1.88 Years
Mercury		Venus	Sol, 1 Year
	Luna		Venus, 224 Days
			Mercury, 88 Days
			Luna, 27.32 Days
			Terra, 1 Day

Plotted onto the Tree of Life, the organization is obvious

	1 Kether			Saturn As Time	
3 Binah		2 Chokmah	Neptune Kun		Uranus Qian
	# Daath			Saturn Yang	
5 Geburah		4 Chesed	Mars Zhen		Jupiter Gen
	6 Tipareth			Sol Li	
8 Hod		7 Netzach	Mercury Xun		Venus Dui
	9 Yesod			Luna Kan	
	10 Malkuth (Kelipot)			Terra Yin (Pluto)	

The addition of the Planets to the Tree system allowed an immense cross-fertilization, out of which many peculiar creatures were spawned, as well as some very useful insights from added depth of field. We are not going to be enumerating angels or demons here, since for our purposes they don't exist. The Golden Dawn and Crowley both screwed up by placing Saturn with Binah. Saturn is just a lousy fit with both the 'Great Mother' and the 'Great Sea.' Further, the dichotomy between Wisdom and Understanding really needs to be captured by a pair of symmetrically contrasting Planets, a function which I think falls to the more recently understood Uranus and Neptune, representing Cosmos or Elegance and Chaos or Complexity. Finally, Saturn should be remembered as being the final planet, or the planet of finitude, for most of Astrology's long existence, and there are two points of view with regard to our finitude. One is from inside the skin (the organ 'ruled' by Saturn), the boundaries that we have learned not to cross, or the spankings we have received from existence, and the other is the big picture, the infinitesimal hominid, seen sub specie aeternitatis, at the

feet of the Great One of the Night of Time. Saturn in relation to Daath would be the former perspective, in relation to Kether, the latter. This relates nicely to Scholem's comment above: Daath can be seen as an external aspect of Kether.

I had to make some corrections to Crowley's work in correlating the Yi's Bagua to the Sephiroth. Crowley had Dui bound to Chesed and Jupiter, but really, to place Dui with anybody but Venus is just ludicrous. Little Sister's just gonna pout and break things. This leaves the only difficult assignment, Gen, to Chesed and Jupiter. The best way to make sense of this is to view Gen from two sides. The first is the spirit of equanimity and composure, and the higher love that this permits: having met our needs, we can move on to higher things. This is clearly Chesed and Jupiter. But Gen has a Saturnian aspect as well, as a force that stops us or turns us aside. Gen does not relate well to Chesed in this particular sense and this should be kept in mind. A little more on this shortly.

Table of Correspondences

* Indicates a departure from, or addition to, the Golden Dawn and Crowley systems

Tarot	Astrology	Qabalah	Yijing	Quality*
Ace	Saturn*	Kether, Crown	Yang, Active*	Kronos, Atman
2	Uranus*	Chokmah, Wisdom	Qian, Heaven	Cosmos, Elegance
3	Neptune*	Binah, Understanding	Kun, Earth	Chaos, Complexity
4	Jupiter	Chesed, Mercy	Gen, Mountain*	Agape, Eudaimonia
5	Mars	Geburah, Judgment	Zhen, Thunder	Andreia, Thelema
6	Sol	Tipareth, Beauty	Li, Flame	Genius
7	Venus	Netzach, Victory	Dui, Wetland*	Eros, Ananda
8	Mercury	Hod, Splendor	Xun, Wind-Wood	Logos, Chit
9	Luna	Yesod, Foundation	Kan, Water	Psyche, Sat
10	Terra, Pluto	Malkuth, Kingdom	Yin, Passive*	Soma

Note that there are also alternative names for the ten Sephirot, among them: 1) Rum Maalah, Inscrutable Height; 3) Marah, the Great Sea; 4) Gedulah, Greatness; 5) Pechad, Fear; Din, Judgment; 6) Kavod, Glory; Rahamim, Compassion; 7) Netzach is also Endurance; 9) Yesod Olam, Foundation of the World; Zaddik, Righteous One; Kol, All; and 10) Mamlakhah, Kingship; Atarah, Diadem; Shekinah, Indwelling Presence

The Naples Arrangement

From Aleister Crowley's Book of Thoth, pp. 13-16

The Qabalists expanded [the] idea of Nothing [Ain], and got a second kind of Nothing which they called 'Ain Soph,' 'Without Limit.' They then decided that in order to interpret this mere absence of any means of definition, it was necessary to postulate the Ain Soph Aur, 'Limitless Light.' By this they seem to have meant very much what the late Victorian men of science meant, or thought that they meant, by the Luminiferous Ether.

All this is evidently without form and void; these are abstract conditions, not positive ideas. The next step must be the idea of Position. One must formulate this thesis: If there is anything except Nothing, it must exist within this Boundless Light; within this Space; within this inconceivable Nothingness, which cannot exist as Nothing-ness, but

has to be conceived of as a Nothingness composed of the annihilation of two imaginary opposites. Thus appears The Point, which has 'neither parts nor magnitude, but only position.' But position does not mean anything at all unless there is something else, some other position with which it can be compared. One has to describe it. The only way to do this is to have another Point, and that means that one must invent the number Two, making possible The Line. But this Line does not really mean very much, because there is yet no measure of length. The limit of knowledge at this stage is that there are two things, in order to be able to talk about them at all. But one cannot say that they are near each other, or that they are far apart; one can only say that they are distant. In order to discriminate between them at all, there must be a third thing. We must have another point. One must invent The Surface; one must invent The Triangle. In doing this, incidentally, appears the whole of Plane Geometry. One can now say, 'A is nearer to B than A is to C.'

But, so far, there is no substance in any of these ideas. In fact there are no ideas at all except the idea of Distance and perhaps the idea of Between-ness, and of Angular Measurement; so that plane Geometry, which now exists in theory, is after all completely inchoate and incoherent. There has been no approach at all to the conception of a really existing thing. No more has been done than to make definitions, all in a purely ideal and imaginary world.

Now then comes The Abyss. One cannot go any further into the ideal. The next step must be the Actual- at least, an approach to the Actual. There are three points, but there is no idea of where any one of them is. A fourth point is essential, and this formulates the idea of matter.

The Point, the Line, the Plane. The fourth point, unless it should happen to lie in the plane, gives The Solid. If one wants to know the position of any point, one must define it by the use of three co-ordinate axes. It is so many feet from the North wall, and so many feet from the East wall, and so many feet from the floor.

Thus there has been developed from Nothingness a Something which can be said to exist. One has arrived at the idea of Matter. But this existence is exceedingly tenuous, for the only property of any given point is its position in relation to certain other points; no change is possible; nothing can happen. One is therefore compelled, in the analysis of known Reality, to postulate a fifth positive idea, which is that of Motion.

This implies the idea of Time, for only through Motion, and in Time, can any event happen. Without this change and sequence, nothing can be the object of sense.

There is now possible a concrete idea of the Point; and, at last it is a point which can be self-conscious, because it can have a Past, Present and Future. It is able to define itself in terms of the previous ideas. Here is the number Six, the centre of the system: self-conscious, capable of experience.

At this stage it is convenient to turn away for a moment from the strictly Qabalistic symbolism. The doctrine of the next three numbers (to some minds at least) is not very clearly expressed. One must look to the Vedanta system for a more lucid interpretation of the numbers 7, 8 and 9 although they correspond very closely with the Qabalistic ideas. In the Hindu analysis of existence the Rishis (sages) postulate three qualities: Sat, the Essence of Being itself; Chit, Thought, or Intellection; and Ananda (usually translated Bliss), the pleasure experienced by Being in the course of events. This ecstasy is evidently the exciting cause of the mobility of existence. It explains the assumption of imperfection on the part of Perfection. The Absolute would be Nothing, would remain in the condition of Nothingness; therefore, in order to be conscious of its possibilities and to enjoy them, it must explore these possibilities

These ideas of Being, Thought and Bliss constitute the minimum possible qualities which a Point must possess if it is to have a real sensible experience of itself. These

correspond to the numbers 9, 8 and 7. The first idea of reality, as known by the mind, is therefore to conceive of the Point as built up of these previous nine successive developments from Zero. Here then at last is the number Ten.

In other words, to describe Reality in the form of Knowledge, one must postulate these ten successive ideas. In the Qabalah, they are called 'Sephiroth', which means 'Numbers.' As will be seen later, each number has a significance of its own; each corresponds with all phenomena in such a way that their arrangement in the Tree of Life ... is a map of the Universe. These ten numbers are represented in the Tarot by the forty small cards.

Crowley also offered a summarized version later in his Book of Thoth:

61=0.

61 +146=0 as Undefined (Space).

61 +146+207=0 as basis of Possible Vibration.

1. The Point: Positive yet indefinable,
2. The Point: Distinguishable from 1 other.
3. The Point: Defined by relation to 2 others.

The Abyss-between Ideal and Actual.

4. The Point: Defined by 3 co-ordinates: Matter.

5. Motion (time) ... for only through Motion and in Time can events occur.

6. The Point: now self-conscious, because able to define itself in terms of above.

7. The Point's Idea of Bliss (Ananda).

8. The Point's Idea of Thought (Chit).

9. The Point's Idea of Being (Sat).

10. The Point's Idea of Itself fulfilled in its complement, as determined by 7, 8 and 9.

Ace

The four Aces postulate a pure conception of each element and suit, but not their full manifestation, not the elements themselves, but their seeds or their DNA analogues. They are more of an implication of the suit's possibilities. Only the prerequisites, the necessary and sufficient conditions, have been met, but now that there is this opportunity, the opportunity itself may act as a cause. Capacity or emptiness can be a kind of power of its own, as the two Janus meanings of the word capacity imply. Aces can represent the awakening or rebirth of an elemental faculty in a person, or the positing of this faculty as an aim, focus, or center of reference. They become the root force of the element, and the narrowing of the plenum of all possibility to something specific and real. They suggest attending to beginnings, the consolidation of an initial position, and the setting of preliminary goals, to be modified by further developments. It is by no means certain that this new thing has any future, or any purpose in being. It may be too soon to say where it might want to go. It might be pluripotent, like an undifferentiated stem cell, still full of possibility. It might just be a raw stimulus, drawing our momentary attention, to develop as we see fit. In many systems of mystical thought, the point of a being's emergence remains throughout the evolution of the being as its point of contact or unity with the divine, an idea that is close to the Hindu Atman. It is not a perfect unity but an emergence from a unity that might point the way back, like water emerging from a fountainhead. It is thus a being's highest ideal or goal when it wants to get its divinity back. Another way to get a sense of the Ace is to cast your memory way back into early childhood and recall the first time you consciously noticed: "Whoa, I'm alive! This is how I feel! This is My thought! I'm touching My thing!" This dawning of our awareness, this emerging property or faculty, is the Ace.

Aces are often referred to as a gift, which recalls David Viscott's (1993) oft-misquoted and misattributed claim: "The purpose of life is to discover your gift. The work of life is to develop it. The meaning of life is to give your gift away." Our approach to new beginnings will often say what will become of them. This may be a new opportunity, or one just newly noticed. We can't see where it's going yet, and we're not sure if it has any future. This is where we come in, to make it so.

The Number One connotes both beginnings and unity. A single point is not sufficient to create dimension, but it is dimension's prerequisite. A point posited forms the center of a reference or coordinate system, the sine qua non of position in space and time. With no external reference it only be grasped from within, in outward motion or emanation: its only direction is outward. In Kabbalah, the emergence of Kether may be likened to a rupture in nothingness, a pneumatic phenomenon, a hole in the void, as if torn open by a spark or an utterance, through which the potential for being emerges. It is analogous to telophase in mitosis, but is close to parthenogenesis as well. Old Egypt knew this creation out of 'nothing' as the god Ptah, the opener.

Scales, models or analogs of the One are telophasic in character (the One sprouting a bud) or in some other way they identify, idealize or even deify the interface between self and other as a conjunctive process.

Key Words:

aperture, arising, aspiration, availability, basic quality, birth, center, conception, creation, discovery, emanation, emergence, epiphany, essence, eureka moment, false starts, focal point, focus, formative period, fountainhead, fresh take, germination, gift, herald, highest hypothesis, ideals, incentive, inception, initiation, integrity, lead, new challenge, newness, news, nucleus, opening, opportunity, origin, originality, point of contact, point of entry, positing, postulate, potential, preconditions fulfilled, presence, promise, prototype, readiness, rebirth, revelation, root cause, source, spark, starting up, stimulus, stirring, suggestion, threshold, trial, trial run, undertaking, the unmanifest.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Depending on one's perspective, the One can be represented either by Daath, Knowledge, or Kether, the Crown; the Hidden Intelligence, the inscrutable light, the first motion, the breath of that which is not. The point in space and time allowing a thing to begin, a positing, Ehye or Eheieh (I Will Be), coming into being.

The Soul: Yechidah, spirit. Color: White; Commandment: No other gods

Astrology: Saturn (Shabbathai), Cronus, Saturn and Kronos, Time. The first functional limitation. Self as a difference or remainder, the universe minus the not-self, self defined in terms of the other, in terms of what it isn't. Life at the boundary.

Yijing: Yang as the first spark of light or life. Bagua Kun, in the lower or Zhen position, providing only the most basic support for the four attributional Bagua. "Work on the basis, one's foundation and premises, broadening, getting context correct, being in the right place." From my Book of Changes, Xiao Xiang chapter, V1-464.

Oxherding Pictures: Back in the world with gift-giving hands

Quality: Kronos, Time's window of opportunity for an entity; Atman

2 - Two

The four Twos speak to a recognition, creation, union, or reconciliation of contrasting elements. Where two opposites are mutually exclusive, such as at one of life's crossroads, they advise a commitment to the path chosen. Twos avow and affirm one or both halves. Many Tarot authors start with the idea of opposition as antagonism and go no further, but the duality here is not that black-and-white, and the Smith cards they are attempting to account for do not portray a conflict either. There are many kinds of dichotomy besides conflicted opposition, some preferable even to the kind seen in the Yin-Yang diagram. A second element may give direction or contrast. The twos in the Tarot are inclined to either a directional vector model, points earlier and later in space and time, or to a model portraying the dynamic interplay of opposites that eventually creates something more than the sum of the parts, a symbiotic relationship leading into synergy. There are moving parts to mesh or integrate.

Simplistic dualisms often ignore a wealth of grey area and involve the logical fallacy of the excluded middle, or *tertium non datur* (no third given). There are many types, and simple minds conflate them: us is to them as good is to evil as man is to woman as self is to other as superior is to inferior as white is to colored: this doesn't work and it causes a lot of trouble. These dichotomies, and others, like figure-ground relationships, absence-presence spectra, syzygies, non-synergetic complements, and inimical win-lose battles may root their meanings here in two-ness, but these meanings are not generally the rule in Tarot unless one is locked into an overly simplistic mindset.

What the Twos do not do is look around, to see themselves objectively from outside. The two's Wisdom may know precisely where to go and what to do there, but to know other points of view, or to know the value to be found in the more crooked paths, wants the Understanding of the threes. The Twos are more linear than that, although such understanding may yet emerge as the two combine. Insight might find unexpected solutions by rearranging the two pieces of the puzzle.

The Number Two is an elongation of the point in space or time, stretching the point, connecting the dots. Two connotes both linearity and choice. Two points define a line, the first dimension. A vector is formed in the track or movement of the point, like an arrow. Such movement also allows for a simple comparison of before and after. The notion of competing with ourselves for a personal best is an example. When encountering the 'same' self elsewhere on a continuum, we can start to measure our development. We can objectify a little, attach names and values, and make our choices accordingly. While two points don't have an external reference point, they can at least reflect each other. Such reflection and comparison can still indicate or suggest a value judgment, such as when good opposes evil, or wisdom, stupidity.

Scales, models or analogs of the Two are classified above in a number of forms, and the type should be known before operations are performed. Once again, in Tarot we are primarily looking at directional vectors, such as competing with yesterday's self instead of an enemy, or else the productive integration of component parts.

Key Words:

admixture, affirmation, agreement, alternation, alternatives, ambivalence, antagonism, balance, bias, binaries, bisociation (Koestler), blending opposites, choice, complement, coordination, counterclaim, coexistence, combination, complements, compromise, confirmation, continuance, continuation, continuity, continuum, contrast, cooperation, coordination, coupling, crossroads, decision, determination, developing, dichotomies, difference, direction, divergence, division, duality, duet, duplicity, duration, dyadics, extension, extenuation, integration, intention, interaction, interdependence, joining, mirroring, negotiating, opposition, pairing, partnership, polarity, polarization, prospect, purpose, purposefulness, radius, reach, reciprocation, reconciliation, reflection, reinforcement, relationship, repetition, resolve, spectrum, symbiosis, teamwork, telos, unfolding, vacillation, vector.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Chokmah, Wisdom, the Radiant Intelligence, the Great Stimulator, the Second Glory, locus of the primordial idea, Abba (the great father), the first power of conscious intellect within Creation, uncovering the deeper truth.

The Soul: Chia, the life force or will; Color: Commandment: No name in vain

Astrology: Uranus, the Heavens, Inspiration, Originality. Self as a path through Cosmos, the intelligible universe, a place where powers meet for a time, as a knot or nexus. Large-scale transformation from a simple action in the right place and time. Suddenness or discontinuity in life as a function of the distance of self from its path of power, its lack of attunement.

Yijing: Bagua Qian, Creating (Tian, Heaven) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. "A powerful driving force, or meaning, in need of expression. This can overwhelm inadequate tools of expression." VI-485.

Oxherding Pictures: Reaching the source

Quality: Cosmos, Elegance, simple expressions or formulations of natural law

3 - Three

The four Threes present an inclination to branch outward or explore new options. Their theme is growth, expansion, or extension. The three is the child of two, the offspring or spinoff, expanding into family, joining something larger than itself, or perhaps the result of a choice or decision. At times the threes suggest joining with others, widening the circle and multiplying connections. We can go beyond reflective loops. We can rise above opposition this way: left wing and right wing, same chicken, or dragon. Threes can help us jump to the higher levels of integration. This is the first multidimensionality, and the first possibility of pattern beyond simple repetition.

A third point gets us outside of the line, to view things from different angles, to adopt alternative points of view. The plane or field lets us explore sideways, to go places where linear thinking cannot. It forms a matrix. We can see more interaction. We see alternatives to what the linear view tells us is true. It is not as effective as the two in getting specific things done, unless better ways are found that make up for the time and energy spent. Three is associated with expanded understanding, seeing more than one side, knowing things from different angles, at times with the compassion that comes from borrowing another's perspective. This gives us other options, and thus the freedom to choose among them that we lacked before we widened our view. It is thus related to liberty.

While three points define a plane or field, they may also be seen as the smallest number of points able to form or enclose a figure. The three also symbolizes support, as three legs make a stable stool, and as triangles are used to make structural trusses.

Threes have a mystical aspect: we are heaven or the cosmos seeking to know itself, or life itself seeking to reconnect with itself. Even some real and skeptical scientists think this. This broadening into the world implies an underlying sanction, since diversification is the way of evolution itself. If we see nature as sacred, then movement into the bigger picture is already consecrated or blessed.

The Number Three connotes both breadth and option. Three points define a plane, the second dimension. Potential direction expands infinitely when moving from line to plane: the path becomes a field. When the third point is interposed between the first two, we can add an interface between opposing entities, or a fulcrum to balance them. Or we can add present to past and future. With the third point elsewhere, off the line, we have alternate points of view, points of reference, or new perspectives. We can compare experiences and choose more wisely. perhaps going more ways than one. Understanding is knowing from different angles. The higher human adaptations to the sphere of this number will tend to be mystics more than avatars, less prone to vector-driven purposes in life, more apt to acknowledge relativity: to know that yes, this is true, but so is that.

Scales, models or analogs of the Three tend to divide into two groups: synchronic (happening at the same time) and diachronic (happening over time). The first places a mediating influence or fulcrum between two opposites, as the Hindu or Vedic Guna Sattwas, between Rajas and Tamas, or as Laozi placed Qi between Yin and Yang in his only mention of those two words. The second places some version of presence between past and future, the Vedantin Brahma, between Vishnu and Shiva, for example, or fixed, between cardinal and mutable in the tenses Astrology, or insight, between hindsight and foresight.

Key Words:

acknowledgement, addition, affiliation, alternatives, arbitration, branching outward, breadth, broadening, complexity, complication, confusion, cooperation, context, dendritic forms, differentiating, diffusion, divergence, diversification, elaboration, emergence, evolution, expansion, expression, extension, fertilization, flanking, fulcrum, getting a larger picture, group activity, growth, interaction, latitude, liberty, matrix, mediation, multiplication, multiplicity, new factors, offspring, options, outreach, overextension, overview, perspective, progression, prospect, ramifications, reconciliation, reference, side effects, spinoffs, spreading out, synergy, synthesis, tolerance, understanding, unfolding, variation, versatility, widening.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Binah, Understanding, the Sanctifying Intelligence, Ima (the Great Mother), matrix of nurture. Understanding as standing under, as supporting of the world, relating to beings from within, with compassion or sympathy.

The Soul: Neshamah; Color: Black; Commandment: Remember the Sabbath

Astrology: Neptune, the Sea, the Deep, Compassion, Confusion. Reference feeling within greater environments, life, region, world. Self as a wake through Chaos, the mysterious universe, a place where impressions are left writ in water. Processes of universalization, dissolution and embrace. The edge of measurability, failure of definition and fact. Ocean and Gaia in the blood. The doors of perception, the mystic's reality.

Yijing: Bagua Kun, Accepting (Tu, Earth) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. The Bagua of Earth in early China takes on many of the West's oceanic associations. Ancient China was an inland culture and these feelings, such as embrace or unity, adopted the more familiar symbolism of the good Earth. "Work on the basis, one's foundation and premises, broadening, getting context correct, being in the right place." VI-464.

Oxherding Pictures: Both Ox and self transcended

Quality: Chaos, Complexity, natural laws apply but outcomes are indeterminate

4 - Four

The four Fours suggest stabilization, equilibrium, stillness, and a time to rest or re-evaluate. Priorities are sorted during this pause, the superfluous is shed and personal domain is reorganized into a coherent, realizable, and perhaps more portable whole. The fours are resistant to change, whether bodies are at rest or in motion. This gives them a temporary reliability to counterbalance the trouble caused by their inertia.

Jung's four personality functions fit this model, as do the four elements of the Greeks. The elements make up the constituent parts of all manifest entities. To be fair to the Greeks, the conception of element was a little broader than that of our present day. The four were also dynamic processes and states of both matter (plasma, gas, liquid, solid) and change.

In the Qabalah, the fourth Sephira down has crossed what is called the Abyss, between idea and actuality, though it is still abstracted from time. Getting 'it' together and keeping 'it' from wandering off (or succumbing to entropy) is the task of this sphere. It is the mound-builder on top of his mound, the demiurge, king of the hill, on terra firma at last, or on his last terra firma if he's planning on going beyond. He's feeling expansive, good, and generous. The mountain's payments of debt are its scree and talus slopes, its homage to a long-term equilibrium and stability, in the broadening of its base. This is Nietzsche's Bestowing Virtue, to overflow is not to lose: giving is part of the process of having, and even its point. Abraham Maslow's idea of 'being motivation' fits here too: this follows 'deficiency motivation' after needs have been met. The Fours can be a little full of themselves, being self-contained and self-sustaining. But because the universe operates on principles other than negative entropy, the status of all things is temporary. We simply use what we can before it all comes apart. We fix and settle things until that no longer works. Stability and order are temporary states.

The Number Four connotes both substance and stability. Four points will define the simplest solid, the tetrahedron. This is the first we see of existence in three-dimensional space, the possibility of physical structure. Note here that the cross-section of a line is a point; that of a plane, a line; that of a solid, a plane. By extension, a solid would be a cross-section taken through a still higher dimension: space-time. An object, a solid, entity, thing, or noun, is still an abstraction, a thing taken out of time and time's processes of creation and destruction. The appearances of endurance, permanence, perfection, or even stability, are an illusion created by our limitation in time. And yet these appearances are the cornerstones of our reality, of which there are usually four. In construction, square often means true.

Scales, models or analogs of the Four can follow a 2x2 matrix formula $(a+b)^2 = a^2 + b^2 + ab + ba$, where 'a' is a father or yang principle and 'b' a mother or yin principle, 'ab' the male offspring and 'ba' the female. But there is a hierarchy in this model that doesn't exist in all scales of four. There is also the compass or four-directions model, the four seasons or the medicine wheel. Where there is no mother and father or higher and lower: each of the four has its own intrinsic sovereignty. The wheel orients in space and time.

Key Words:

accumulation, achievement, actuality, arrangement, assumptions, boundaries, cohesion, completeness, comprehension, concretion, confirmation, conformation, congealing, consistency, consolidation, construction, delimitation, depth, durability, embodiment, enclosure, endurance, equilibrium, establishment, extension, fixation, foothold, formation, formative period, foundation, framework, holdfast, holding, honesty, immobility, incorporation, inertia, limits, manifestation, materiality, measurement, models, optimization, outcome, perfection as illusion, physicality, plateau, poise, possession, practicality, predictability, prototype, realism, realization, reification, rest stop, restoration, scaffolding, security, self-containment, settlement, solidification, stability, stabilization, stagnation, standstill, stasis, stationary period, steadfastness, steadiness, stillness, stop, structure, substance, tangibility, tenacity, three-dimensional space, validation.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Chesed, Mercy, or Gedulah, Greatness; the Settled, Measuring, Arresting, or Cohesive Intelligence; magnanimity, equanimity, beneficence

The Soul: Ruach (Part); Color: Blue. Commandment: Honor father and mother

Astrology: Jupiter (Tzedek), the Greater Benefic, magnanimity, equanimity, the higher powers of grace, majesty and command, being on top, self defined from within in positive terms, as the sum of one's identities.

Yijing: Bagua Gen, Stillness (Shan, Mountain) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. Associations of Gen are generally limited to the more positive or upbeat aspects of Gen, the security to be generous; stillness, centeredness, or embodiment, and less applicable to its function as resistance, stubbornness, etc., although these more negative functions do apply well to the fours as mass, inertia, and resistance to change. "Finding security and stability at this point in time, patience, equilibrium, self-possession and restraint with matters at hand." V1-467. We have already noted that Gen has a Saturnian aspect as well, an obstructive function, but that that part doesn't work with this correspondence.

Oxherding Pictures: The Ox Transcended

Quality: Agape, the Higher Love; Eudaimonia, Flourishing

5 - Five

The four Fives are challenges to stability found in the Fours. Emphatic, destabilizing, and cogent, the Fives are often seen as violent, upsetting, disturbing, or stressful when change is not a conscious choice, or the most attractive option. They demand adaptation and adjustment. We will now discuss in a little more detail the Struggle for Existence. The feedback we get here might even be none of our doing or karma: only some things truly happen for a reason. But any information we get from forces that do not support our present direction can still be adopted as lessons in life. Our own resistance to change is often the biggest part of the problem. Sometimes our challenges are best taken up as challenges to our understanding, because this new information might just be the negative entropy that restores order and stability, until next time.

Theologians came up with the idea that their god was absolutely perfect. This meant that he couldn't change. He was already in the perfect place, therefore he couldn't move. He already knew everything, and therefore he couldn't learn. This shows in his writing. Perfection has nothing to do with this world or the next. Anything that wants to stand still gets abused. Adaptation is the name of the game. With the Fives, motion catches up. The rough edges get knocked off. The stable thing gets tested, gets taken sideways and aback, gets bent out of shape, gets refined, gets selected out and substituted, replaced by something better adapted to the movement around it. Someone testing a new product should not whine when it breaks: they should simply learn and make the needed changes. Survival of the fittest means adaptive fitness. It refers to the creature best fit, not to the mightiest bully.

Vigorous, vital, kinetic and assertive describe the feelings of the Fives from within. More than any other number, the Fives will change meaning depending upon whether the subjects identify subjectively with the character or force of the number, or they regard themselves as on the receiving end of an external power or agency, getting pushed or knocked around. The optimum approach to the Fives is therefore to side with the powers in play, or at least to make use of their momentum or inertia. Then we have growth and learning opportunities. This is not the place to play victim. Resourcefulness and resilience are needed here.

The Number Five connotes motion, momentum and power. The next dimension is time, change, and the forces of evolution that include selection and extinction. Fives are kindest as a feedforward process, like the first fetal kick at the uterine wall or the urgency driving the sprout into the daylight. Matter in motion through time undergoes change. This contains information and often re-formation. The logistical uses of feedback are functions of numbers or spheres more complex, but the process of adaptation starts here. Fives possessed of kinetic energy or fearlessness can be blind to both advantage and danger. Thus, Fives are normally strength or force, and not power, until they can learn to become more sensitive to the world around them and its opportunities.

Scales, models or analogs of the Five fall into two general categories: the first models dynamic balance: this is the mandala or medicine wheel, the four directions joined by a center. In the East, the axis is the ever-imperturbable Buddha at the motionless center of the wheel. The second models a dynamic imbalance, deliberate change. Its form is the pentagram, or the Seal of Solomon, the four elements topped by quintessence (the Fifth Essence) or spirit. This is the point of the star that gets aimed up or down. This is used in spellcraft to effect change. In China we have the dynamic Wu Xing or Five Phases.

Key Words:

activity, adaptation, adjustments, adversity, agitation, alteration, being affected, breakout, challenge, change, conflict, confrontation, constraint, coping, corrective force, crisis, critique, deconstruction, destabilization, discomfort, discontinuity, dislocation, disorder, disquiet, disruption, disturbance, doing, drive, dynamics, erratic behavior, excitement, fear, fluctuation, friction, imbalance, impact, improvisation, inconsistency, inconstancy, instability, justice, karma, kinetics, loss, mobilization, movement, novelty, obstacle, pain, partial loss, process, radical adjustment, reaction, reformatory period, regrouping, release, restlessness, rigor, robustness, setback, severity, shakeout, shakeup, something extra, strength, stress, struggle, surprise, terror, test, transition, trial, troubles, uncertainty, unexpectedness, unpredictability, upset, variation, versatility, vigor, violation, vitality.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Geburah or Din, Judgment, or Pechad, Fear; the Radical Intelligence, Rigor, Strength, Severity, Justice, the warrior king, eliminator of the useless.

The Soul: Ruach (Part); Color: Red; Commandment: Do not kill

Astrology: Mars (Mardim), War, drive, rushing force, kinetic energy, movement, power, heat, dominance, upset, force of character, the struggle for survival.

Yijing: Bagua Zhen, Arousal (Lei, Thunder; Dong, Movement) in the lower or Zhen position, with the four archetypal Bagua above. Moving things along, shaking things up. "Being driven from within by motives, appetites, natural inclinations: the will to live and advance the intentions." V1-476.

Oxherding Pictures: Riding the Ox home

Quality: Andreaia, Courage; Thelema, Will; character and tests thereof

6 - Six

The four Sixes depict self or entity as interconnected with a larger context, interacting with a greater whole, with special reference to the state of things right now. Boundaries are just permeable enough to allow inputs and outputs, and the formation of a stabilized organization. Sixes are a dynamic arrangement, integrating experience into the structures of being. While reflective self-awareness comes a little later, attention and awareness are here. The deeper self is an energy burning system, not a static thing, with basic drives for wholeness, maintenance, health, and identity. What it imagines itself to be is usually extraneous to this. Energy learns, when given a suitable place, so light learns. Life is what light has learned to do over billions of years. Life is a system that develops negative entropy, the noble fight against the heat death, and homeostasis, feeding and growing on otherwise-wasted starlight. Our awareness is not metaphorically light: it's the same sunlight trapped photosynthetically by the food we just ate, getting metabolically burned, except that the energy is organized a bit better now. Now

it's on its way again, back into the night, but if we pay attention, we can make it do some useful stuff before it goes too far out.

Six, particularly as informed by the Sephira Tipareth, is said to mediate between the physical and the divine. Metaphorically, this is to live in two worlds at once: the darker world of causes and sources of fuel, out of which we emerged, and the brighter world of our emergent experience, called *qualia*, the things that didn't exist before life learned to make them, like blue, happiness, purpose, and consciousness. We are the flame that does this, the center of the spirit, and its witness. Spirit is not some transparent thing that came from elsewhere to cloak itself in meat. As a verb, it isn't some thing that you have: it's something you do, something you use, or else lose. It's also not something that you can do yesterday or tomorrow, so the four Sixes will speak to what is at hand, the context of our development, the work we can do right now. That's where the light is shining.

The number Six connotes both illumination and harmony. Being, or each being, comes to sense itself here as itself, and embedded in a context. As a sequel to the Five, Six is the self-organization subsequent to a dynamic interaction with context. Feedback was the consequence of motion. Beings learn to attend to this by developing sentience, awakening or lighting up. We learn rhythm and patternment. Then feedforward done for the sake of feedback becomes an intelligence-gathering activity: life lives to learn. Interaction with the other, harmonizing with the world, becomes the process by which the being illuminates what it means to say 'I am.' Self is a place where energy cycles back on itself and gets knotted up for a while. We fuel first, then feel the kind fires of sunlight transformed. We are not yet binding time: abstraction comes later. We are cutting across it in one vast, moving moment, perhaps one of our making, perhaps one which blinds us to the birth and death of our sun. Ah, but the glory for now. *Fiat lux*: it's a thing of beauty.

Scales, models or analogs of the Six fall into a few classes: The Hexagram, Magen David, or Shield of David, depicts the harmonious interaction of faculties as intersecting triangles. Integrating fire and water, ups and downs, this is the closest image the West has to the Eastern Taijitu. It is used in the mystic arts to invoke intense subjective experience (not to evoke or conjure). There are also six directions to point, six sides to a cube and 'flower of life' geometries, but these are not used in Tarot. Neither is the

six-line Gua of the Yijing, which describes a moving moment, with each line being in part a place in time or a phase in a longer process of change.

Key Words:

appreciation, arising, attention, awareness, balance, beauty, beginning of awareness, centrality, character, coherence, completeness, comprehension, consciousness, context, continuity, cooperation, coordination, culmination, cycling energy, dynamic equilibrium, elegance, emergence, equilibration, equilibrium, exchange, exposure, feedforward and feedback, harmonizing, harmony restored, healing, heartiness, illumination, individuality, individuation, integration, interaction, interconnection, interfacing, mediation, meshing, moment, momentousness, negative entropy, organism, organization, presence, radiance and radiation, rebalancing, rebirth, reconciliation, recovery, reintegration, reorganization, resolution, resonance, responsive adaptation, restabilizing, righting, self-correction, self-organization, self-repair, sentience, spiritedness, symmetry, systemic evolution and organization, systemization, wholeness.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Tipareth, Beauty, or Kavod, Glory, or Rahamim, Compassion; the Mediating Intelligence, harmony, balance, integration, agreement, resonance

The Soul: Ruach (Center); Color: Yellow; Commandment: No graven image

Astrology: Sol (Shemesh) the Sun, life, sentience, the inner light, the sense of being alive, the spark within or elan vital, health, awareness, consciousness.

Yijing: Bagua Li, Arising (Huo, Flame) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. Li is both the convergence of factors that bring us to the present and the divergent radiation of evolutionary progress from here. "Organizing the light within, the identity, according to clarity, values and visions, to perform the next transformation." V1-479.

Oxherding Pictures: Taming the Ox

Quality: Genius, brilliance, the living, self-organized flame.

7 - Seven

The four Sevens portray a lack of contentment, a perceived lack of content, which drives beings onward: appetite and appetitive behavior, hunger and thirst, desire or want and its fulfillment, and the being's quest for personal success, thriving, or victory. Survival is only the beginning of these personal goals. The Sevens want much more and this involves the learning of more effective stratagems, often by way of trial and failed experiment, attempts to succeed driven more by affect than reason. What works and what doesn't are there to be learned, perhaps the hard way, until easier ways can be found. Sevens can exploit the environment, or adapt to it, or do both and still do no damage.

The Sevens are largely about Self and how it gets what it wants. Self-ishness only gets its bad name from when it gets done poorly. Self-interest, they say, is often enlightened. With self-assertion we explore the envelope of the possible. With self-directed activity we can follow our adopted purposes. Self-defense is an unquestioned right. But figuring out who we are to begin with is more than sometimes a challenge, since most of us are little more than a shifting coalition and vote of an unstable cluster of alternative selves. And amidst this confusion, our needs and our wants, and the 'needs' that we are told we must satisfy, get conflated. Both pleasure and happiness follow us, or fail us, depending on how well we learn the meaning of enough. And enough, in its turn, is a function of both our tastes and our capacity for gratitude.

The key ability to satisfying desire, or locating reliable sources of emotional value, is having a good attitude. This is conquest, and victory. This doesn't require acceptance as it's often understood. Acceptance is not the same thing as approval. To accept what is, for what it is, doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't change it. It's fine to imagine things being different and wanting them to be different: we just need to accept what we have to begin with if we want to deal in facts instead of fantasy. The movement of self to actualize or win, the struggle to improve ourselves, and even having the incorrectly-maligned sense that our self-esteem and self-love should be earned or conditional, suggest that we take life personally. All of the Sevens are in search of a winning strategy (Netzach as Victory). If the Seven of Cups is to succeed, it will take charge of the power to assign value, to self-determine what is important, and not waste energy running between this and that. The Seven of Swords has a mental plan. He's calculating an effective move. Now a bunch in the enemy camp will have to fight without their swords.

The number Seven connotes our desires and their fulfillment. With the number Six we evolved a conscious being. The first consequence of this awareness is the being's drive to remain in existence: it likes being here, despite any unpleasantness. It's a pro-creative urge, even an urgency. It's difficult to stop at homeostasis: it will ask that its lot keep improving. It wants to stimulate itself by rubbing against good stuff. It wants both struggle and peace. Only the human is hell-bent on the former: he tells himself to seek things he cannot have, or things painful to get, or even that pain is worth seeking. Some worship their martyrs, the ultimate masochists. Buddha pinned much of our misery on craving, aversion, and ignorance, three of the Seven's more notorious traits. But there is a place for wanting more, pushing limits and boundaries, and really, to extinguish desire when a little control and a few adjustments could make life just wonderful, seems a bit extreme. So we challenge the harmony of the Six with the Seven, and just hope for a more satisfied version some day. We go for it instead of waiting for it.

Scales, models or analogs of the Seven are largely mythological, and deal with gain and loss, and magical thinking: a lucky god for each day of the week, lucky sevens, seven angels for seven ills, seven hells for them, seven heavens for us. The hexagram used for invocation has six points plus Sol at its center, rounding out the seven classical Planets (and Archons) that are really just the seven human parts of our psyche.

Key Words:

accretion, acquisitiveness, affection, appetite, approach, approval, attachment, attraction, attractive force, bait, calculating, challenge, choice, conquest, consent, craving, desire, discontent, drive, eagerness, effort, embracing, Epicureanism, experiment, exploitation, exploration, fitness, gaining, finding your way, grasping, growth, hedonic treadmill, hedonics, hedonism, hunger, importance, inclination, incompleteness, individuality, ingenuity, initiative, inner motive, intensity and intention, kama, longing, losing to good effect, love, lust, magical thinking, managing for objectives, motivations, need, overreaching, passion, permission, pleasure, pluck, possession, preference, quid pro quo, rankable values, ravening, risk, rite of passage, satisfaction, seduction, self-interest, self-serving, sensuality, subjectivity, success, taking chances, taste, temptation, testing, thirst, trying, valuation, victory, volition, wanting more.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Netzach, Victory or Endurance, the Hidden or Occult Intelligence; Triumph, desire fulfilled, enduring the turbulence, conquest with feeling

The Soul: Ruach (Part); Color: Green; Commandment: Do not not covet

Astrology: Venus (Nogah), Love, external splendor, in the beholder's eyes, attraction, hedonics, aesthetics, desire, motivated love, acquisitiveness.

Yijing: Bagua Dui, Satisfaction (Ze, Wetland) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. "Sustaining joy by meeting the present wants with present resources, taking care of real needs before moving on." V1-482.

Oxherding Pictures: Catching the ox

Quality: Eros, Ananda (Bliss)

8 - Eight

The four Eights show problem-solving behavior, employing intelligence, foresight, logistics, and knowledge, brought and carried forth from both first-hand experience and the culture at large. We learn the rules of survival, self-maintenance, and self-repair, and then we learn how to get more. The organism moves through its environment exploiting this for what it needs and wants. It learns to understand boundaries, or what can and cannot be done. Having its wits about it frequently helps, and having a plan, on occasion. With luck it learns to autocorrect before other forces of correction have to come from outside to bring or restore order.

Familiarity with similar situations can be a help or a hindrance: the mind does not always jump to the right conclusions. The cognitive skill sets we use don't always have the full set of tools. More often than not, unlearning is missing, the acknowledgement of error that leads to corrections in thinking. Also, without proper care, one's methods of reading the world can be at least as consuming as the problem to be solved. Evaluation is ongoing, and one can seldom predict when a higher order of thinking might pop up and answer all questions at hand.

Like their patron deity, Mercury, the Eights like to move between levels or planes of existence, carrying information back and forth, playing messenger between mind and practicalities, and when it's not too confusing, between cognition and affect. This last one is often the hardest, but head and heart do not need to fight. Communication assumes common ground and shared meaning, even between the levels and planes, so metaphors and analogies, symbols and signs are often the language to translate.

The Eights show a functioning system, adapting and stabilizing over time, processing the feedback from self-directed activity, healing when damaged or hurt, discovering the characteristic rhythms of life, and learning to foretell the future a little. Sevens learn to live, then to live and learn; Eights live in order to learn to live without getting in trouble.

The number Eight connotes both information and order, understanding systems and components, especially mental. With the Sevens, the being developed a will to survive, and then some, and set out, with lots of feeling, to get what it needed and then what it wanted. Reason was not always its companion. Mistakes were made. With the Eights, what has been learned is applied. Cooler heads seek to prevail, now that they have it all figured out (ha). The mind tries to make life a bit of a science, to predict a behavior's outcomes, that the same mistakes might not be made twice. It shares its information and draws from culture's precedents. It invented human language in order to do this. The stuff that knowhow is made of takes little space and is easily accumulated and stored. Retrieval is somewhat harder: one needs the magic words. But when this is done correctly, we have plenty of tools for making good decisions, solving puzzles, and predicting the future, or at least anticipating the consequences of our actions. The greatest challenge here comes from learning the wrong thing first, then taking hints that this is the case, and then admitting and correcting the error or flawed information. Unlearning is very much harder than learning.

Scales, models or analogs of the Eight fall into two categories. The first, of seasons, cycles, and circles, uses the Eight to orient us both in space (compass points) and in time (seasons, beginnings and midpoints), helping us to predict where we are. The second ogdoad, the first cube or two cubed, uses eight concepts to map the dimensions of mind, the Yi's Bagua, for example, which also correlate with time of day and seasons. Both categories imply a sense of roundedness, completeness, order, regularity,

and symmetry. This include Hermetic systems in general, The Gnostic ogdoad was a firmament above the seven heavens where divine wisdom dwells.

Key Words:

abstraction, acumen, adaptation, adjustment, advice, ambivalence, analysis, applicability, appraisal, aptitude, aptness, articulation, assessment, attunement, calculation, capability, ciphering, clarification, classification, cleverness, clues, cognition, communication, consideration, control, correspondence, craft, culture, data, data processing, decision, design, discernment, dissection, divination, evaluation, facts, formulation, information, insightfulness, intelligence, knack, knowhow, learning and unlearning, literacy, making connections, meanings, measure, measurement, media, mediation, medium of exchange, metacognition, negotiation, ongoing re-evaluation, optimization, ordering, organizing, pattern recognition, patterning, plasticity, prediction, prescription, prioritization, problem solving ability, rationality, reading, readjustment, reasoning, rebalancing, reciprocation, recognition, recursion, reevaluation, regulation, regularity, remedies, repeatability, repertoire, representation, rhythm, rules, savvy, schema, Spencerian or Darwinian fitness, structure, study, supervenience, systemization, talent.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Hod, Splendor, Glory or Elegance, the Perfect or Clear Intelligence, the order in the world, the network of the masters, the mechanics of perception.

The Soul: Ruach (Part); Color: Orange; Commandment: Bear no false witness

Astrology: Mercury (Kokhab), Intelligence, perception and communication, information and networking, discernment, assessment, repertoire, familiarity, analysis, method of inquiry, logistics, problem solving, nimbleness, subtlety

Yijing: Bagua Xun, Adaptation (Feng, Wind and Mu, Wood) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. "Using one's wits in self-organization to cope with the external, rethinking and altering the postulates as needed." VI-473.

Oxherding Pictures: Perceiving the ox

Quality: Logos, Chit (Cognition)

9 – Nine

The four Nines show the ways we greet the world's reluctance to match the Eights in intelligibility. This is the world as it is, with all of its unseen forces and interconnections, a world that's unavailable to the senses and naive realism. This world just won't stand still, although things may seem resolved and complete. Nines include all that might one day be known about the world that isn't known yet, the magic that isn't distinguishable from science. Mutability and flexibility are required of the faculties, if life isn't to be just blind manipulation of the unintelligible. The possibilities seem an endless plenum and sentient beings are best off ready with many contingency options. Here are the formative powers which continue to form when no one is watching. Here is most mystery. Here is the ground of being that sustains us. Here is the solid oak table made of the vast spaces in atoms, moving slowly toward the junk yard or bonfire. It's the world where shamans pull hidden strings to make things change on the other side of the island, like the moon tugs at our animal souls. And of self in this world of flux and change, we're little, temporary tangles in the web, eddies in the undercurrents. We are not separate, we have never been, we are rooted in this fertile and unknown stuff. It is our bottomless foundation, and it isn't terra firma. It's clouds of gas forming planets, and fish crawling out of the sea, and us turning back to sign our names in this liquid, on behalf of its author. We are confused. Most run to the known and predicted. Some try to keep learning.

This huge unknown we're in is what upholds us. We can choose to blunder ignorantly through it, seeing no further than the opaque pages of scripture, or we can get humble and keep on adapting to a fluid existence. Every being that ever went extinct was once a stable organization within a changing niche. The learning that will continue to learn will build on a moving, dynamic platform. The smugness and the complacency of knowledge and answers are for the short-lived beings. Where completion is thought to be a lasting conclusion, it tends to become ironically so. Better than perfection is synchronization with the rhythms of life. The Nines must maintain systemic resilience to maintain their viability, and keep changing to maintain their completeness. Our foundations must be dynamic, like building footings in seismic zones.

The number Nine points to both subliminal and semi-conscious aspects of existence, the primordial roots from which the psyche emerges, and the rest of nature as well. This is all that we do not know of the world, supporting us from below. Subsequent to the Eight, the being has become a fully-developed living system, acting like nature itself, with little conscious effort or thought, newly equipped to survive and self-regulate as it negotiates its way through the known world. The being evolved and learned to adapt to its niche. The challenge now with the Nines is with the word "known." If change were not the rule, we could wrap it all up here and at least call things complete, if not concluded. But now the niche itself is known to be always changing, demanding our resilience. Perfection is delusion. Changes are powered by necessity. Even the rules and natural laws that tend to form with the Eights may have to adapt. Beings may need to accept the shaping forces applied to them.

Scales, models or analogs of the Nine, the end of the digits, are fairly difficult to find, but the recipe for one is obvious: the scale of three, inbred to form a matrix. It might model aspects of the human mind, as the Enneagram typology models personality. The Nine Muses, the daughters of Memory, enumerate our creative gifts.

There are now only nine astrological planets and lights, rounding out the parts of our Psyche.

Key Words:

accumulation, adaptation, adjustment, alteration, amenability, assimilation, attainment, baseline, basis, buffering, change, compatibility, completion, compliance, conformance, consequences, contingency, correction, culmination, evaluation, evolution, feasibility, flexibility, flow, fluctuation, fluidity, flux, footing, fulfillment, homeostasis, impression, instinct, integration, long-term viability, maintenance, matrix, maturation, modification, necessity, nimbleness, ongoingness, permutation, plasticity, plenum, pliancy, progression, reconciliation, reconsideration, recovery, regeneration, relearning, renewal, resilience, resourcefulness, responsiveness, restoration, revision, sensitive chaos, subconsciousness, subliminal forces, substratum, subtleties, sufficiency, summation, true sustainability, undercurrents, underpinning, unlearning, variation, versatility, viability, vulnerability.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Yesod, Foundation, the Pure or Purified Intelligence, the web of necessity, the vision of the machinery of the universe, the storehouse of all forces, the energy of integration, the plenum beyond the obvious.

The Soul: Nefesh, astral mind; Color: Purple; Commandment: No adultery

Astrology: Luna (Levanah), the subliminal, responsiveness, assimilation, sensitivity to impression, apperceptive mass and perceptual inertia

Yijing: Bagua Kan, Exposure (Shui, Water and Xian, Risk) in the lower or Zhen position with the four archetypal Bagua above. "Changing ones's shape in confronting exigencies of a situation, especially emotionally, responding with fluidity." V1-470.

Oxherding Pictures: Discovering the hoofprints

Quality: Psyche, Sat (Being)

10 - Ten

The four Tens depict the extremes of life in the world we sense, in the world known to us through naive realism, where the table is a solid and we ourselves are important. They are ways to encounter, respond to, or otherwise cope with a super-abundance of the element in question. This excess might be cumulative over time or encountered suddenly. An over-fullness of development, a culmination, or a completion, now begs for change, a refocusing of attention and effort, out of the broader perspective which comes from satiety or exhausted effort.

The Western traditions have their weird fascination with completion as perfection, and an unchanging eternity as a thing to be desired. The prospects of senescence are often countered with talk of ideal realms and afterlives. But completion is an impermanent state and only mocks the pretentiousness of perfect and eternal. Perfection is already past the tipping point for long-term stability, already a step too far. To seek the final arrangement is not the way to find meaning in a world where everything changes and dies. This is rather a question of what to do with the momentum of change and the breakdown of the newly outmoded: what have we learned and what can we do with that? What can we take with us when we go? To attempt preservation is to lose that. It's interesting that the loss of Pluto as the Planet who would rule this underworld has been greeted with such resistance, but this parallels and illustrates what happens with the Tens. It's hard to let go.

The Tens of Wands and Swords, the more 'masculine' suits, are generally depicted as more aggressively excessive than the Cups and Pentacles. Collapse of the effort is more immanent, discontinuous, and dire, and recovery more radical. Cups and Pentacles come to a gentler conclusion and often imply a handoff of the effort to a new generation to carry it forward. Cups and pentacles are less handicapped by thought, and so can be more surprised by the passage of time. But all four suits transition to something new and different.

The Tens suggest a pause for looking around, a rethinking of continued progress on this particular path, a way to carry the lessons learned forward, and apply them to other pursuits in other directions, especially beyond the present moment. This is a refreshing of purpose, not necessarily a great loss, a restart in the next dimension, a new chapter, perhaps with a big plot twist. That completion is impermanent, or perfection a transient state, is no tragedy except to the insecure or deluded. It's easier to change the insecurity or delusion than it is to change the whole of reality. None of this, however, means that this fleeting moment cannot at times be savored. The naive reality is after all, the world we spend most of our time in. It's stagnation, and the subsequent disappointments that we need to manage. It's on us to find life's meaning in a world where everything changes and dies. We usually succeed temporarily, if you call that success.

The number Ten connotes both completion and the full materialization of the element. This is the endpoint of creation, where it is often assumed that the divine is finished with its work. Throughout the Piscean Age it has been the fashion to malign the world while praising the beyond. To lowlanders, rocks are nouns or things: they don't move or change much. Highlanders see more verbs, rocks moving, if slowly, changing and multiplying. The material world is a process, as spirit is a process. The point is, matter has wrongly been made a scapegoat for our ills. The Qabalists say that even deity regrets going this far, that our earth and mother are now too far from heaven. We can at least say, as existentialists, that our notion of heaven is too far from our earth: the two are joined at our feet, whether we're down in a pit or up on a

mountain. But going too far (or needing to stop in time) is the Tarot meaning, so that the process and progress of the Suit must either end now, or begin with something new, or else be passed to the next generation.

Scales, models or analogs of the Ten rely heavily on the accident that humans evolved with ten fingers. But because that was all we got, it became the symbol for having a full set of something. The ten Sephiroth of both Kabbalah and Qabalah have had much to do with the evolution of the Pip meanings, along with bits of Astrology, Yijing and less elaborate systems that have been brought in as correlates. The venerated Pythagorean Tetractys (1+2+3+4) has had some indirect effects. The Ten Stems of Chinese lore have had no influence.

Key Words:

accumulation, anticlimax, attrition, climax, closure, collapse, completion, conclusion, consequence, consummation, critical mass, culmination, cumulative consequences, decline, denouement, departure, descent, end of a chapter, cycle, era, phase, or process, ephemerality, exaggeration, exhaustion, expiration, extremity, finale, finality, follow through, force majeure, fulfillment, institution, intemperance, legacy, limit, maximum, metamorphosis, metanoia, mortality, moving on, natural conclusion, obsolescence, outcome, overabundance, overdoing, overextension, overkill, overload, overshoot, overreach, paradigm crash, past perfect, peak, realignment, rebirth, recycling, results emerge, refocusing, responsibilities, rethinking, reversal, samvega, satiety, senescence, surcharge, surfeit, terminus, tipping point, transformation, transition to the new.

Correspondences:

Kabbalah: Malkuth, the Kingdom; Mamalkhah, Kingship; Atarah, Diadem; or Shekinah, the Indwelling Presence, the Cohabiting Glory, or Kallah, the Bride; the Resplendent Intelligence; the world as altar, earth as heaven's bride

The Soul: Guph, animal soul; Color: Earth tones; Commandment: No stealing

Astrology: Terra, Gaia, Home. Ironically, it's the materialists who tend to think its alive. Pluto, were it still a planet, as lord of the underworld, would be lord of the Kabbalistic sparks within the shells, the Kelipot Nogah, wanting redemption, repair, or Tikkun.

Yijing: Yin as accepting or responsive. Bagua Qian, Creating (Tian, Heaven) in the lower or Zhen position with the four attributional Bagua above, each overwhelmed by their own excessive development or progress. "A powerful driving force, or meaning, in need of expression. This can overwhelm inadequate tools of expression." V1-485.

Oxherding Pictures: Search for the Ox

Quality: Soma, embodiment, of the body. "You did not come into this world, you came out of it, like a wave comes out of the ocean. You are not a stranger here." Alan watts. (A little plug for emergence in a world of hungry ghosts)

Wands

Ace of Wands

Root of the Powers of Fire

Readiness, Enthusiasm, Willingness, Quickening

Image: Root of the Powers of Fire. A roughly phallus-shaped torch is held forth by a hand emerging from the bottom of the card. This need not be an angelic hand issuing from heaven or another dimension, but consider that a magic wand requires consecration or dedication to a higher purpose, or else it's just a stick or any old penis. See descriptions of the alternative depictions of this tool where the Suit of Wands is discussed.

This is our primordial energy, our life force, or *elan vital*, the drivenness of individual beings, 'natural as opposed to invoked force,' awareness and other things that life can make from metabolic heat. By analogy with the fire triangle, heat, fuel and oxygen must all be supplied to create or sustain a flame: fill in the parts of the analogy. Oxygen, for instance, might be exposure, or it might be the literal molecule that allows metabolism. The buildup to this moment might be regarded as fuel. And note that a new flame will need tending, unless it emerges in a flammable or explosive context, or else it might die out. The process may still be a little endothermic, requiring more input to reach a kindling point. Learning how to light up is a task the Ace shares with the Princess, but she is a little further along in the learning process. The force may feel like a creative pressure or urge, pressure wanting expression, a pioneering spirit, a challenge that calls to action, empowerment, and carping the diem. Note that it's pressure in the blood that holds the phallus erect. This is either a call for or a source of courage and self-encouragement, a new source or energy or motivation, a getting fired up, an excitement, or an enthusiasm. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 16, Readiness or Enthusiasm, a building charge of energy. This is called a responsive movement, stimulated, rather than purely self-initiated.

This signals a starting point or new beginning, a personal enkindling or quickening; a new personal project, such as living life more vividly, or raising mindfulness, or fulfilling a drive. It might be a new identity or role, a new or renewed sense of purpose, a new interest or stimulus, a new passion ignited or kindled, a new torch to carry, or just something worth getting excited about. We may be discovering a personal potential or undeveloped gift still to be realized, still more promising than actual, perhaps not yet a source of dynamic energy, but needing more input or nurture, a flame in need of fanning. This may still be a general drive that needs to be narrowed or specified to get real. It may be that the raw energy is already there but its use or outlet is still undefined. A new state of mind has received a majority vote of the selves that one is made up of. There is nothing quite like novelty for piquing our interest or awareness and bringing our selves together. This is called will, but it's not yet will until it's in motion, so it's actually more would now than will, more like a willingness looking for its chance.

This could also be an unblocking, or a opportunity at last to act, starting with finding the right place and time, a moving forward for which one has been ready for some time. There may also be a rhythm that one first needs to synch up with, or some other way to overcome inertia and capture momentum. Or it could refer to the renewal of a source gone dormant, the fanning of old embers and sparks, the revitalization or

reinvigoration of a state that we have known and learned we could lose. The past might be regarded here as fuel.

Key Words:

arising, arousal, aspiration, assent, attunement, avidity, awakening, beginning, boner, brio, cause, confidence, consonance, creation, drama, drive, eagerness, encouragement, enkindling, enlivening, enthusiasm, exaggeration, excitement, exhilaration, exuberance, fire starter, ignition, illumination, impulse, incitement, initiation, initiative, innovation, inspiration, intent, intention, interest, invigoration, forwardness, ignition or its failure, kindling, libido, liveliness, love of life, novelty, origin, originality, pique, potency and potential, preparedness, principle, promise, quickening, readiness, rekindling, rousing, rush, source, spark, starting, stimulation, stimulus, stirring, surprise, thrust, urge and urgency, vigor, virility, vitality, want, willingness.

Warnings and Reversals:

apathy, boredom, complacency, delay, demotivation, depression, dispiritedness, doubt, embarrassment, enterprise is cancelled, erectile dysfunction's attitudinal equivalent, impatience, indolence, impotence, inertia, false start, flash in the pan, frustration, pointlessness, self-indulgence, timidity.

Components:

Ace plus Wands. The beginning of a dynamic process, an opportunity for energy to do work, which is the definition of power once the work is being done. Capacity, a measure of emptiness, is also the capacity or power to do work.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Saturn in Fire Signs and Houses (GD: 0° Aries). Issues of dignity, identity, individuation, initiative, managing the inhibitions, reserve, self-esteem, self-expression, urgency, willingness.

Qabalah: Kether in Atziluth. Opening up a new point of view, positing a new sense of identity.

Yijing: Gua 16, Yu, Readiness, Enthusiasm, Willingness. Da Xiang: Kun (Ace) below, Zhen (Wands) above; "Thunder comes from the earth with energy. Readiness. The early sovereigns composed music to celebrate merit, enthusiastically offering this to the highest divinity." The joyful noise. Preparedness to move. The Tuan Zhuan glosses Yu as shùn dòng, responsive movement. Dance is even implied in Yu's etymology, specifically the inclination of elephants to move to human music. "Worthwhile to establish delegates and mobilize the reserves." Response in the direction the world already seems to want to go.

Two of Wands

Dominion, Domain, Nobility, Valuing

Image: A man of strong economic or social presence stands at a battlement or parapet surveying his world and its boundaries from a commanding vantage, holding a longstaff and an orbed scepter. A more gnarled staff stands alone. The battlements might be regarded a defining wall, between what we are and what we are not. The territory already claimed goes up to here, where the other, with its possibilities, begins.

Human is as human does. Poets will say something different, philosophers too, but they largely describe their own fantasies. We adapt or fail to adapt by our actions, and this is how we become what we are. Such a definition denies us our greatest human hypocrisy. The Two of Wands is about knowing who we are, what we want, and how we enact our choices. It's the development of our identity and purpose, and then about how we take responsibility or ownership of the world around us, however big or small that world may be. Given the clarity of direction that the wisdom of the Two can develop, a deeply personal path or calling, we can claim the right to create the world we live in, sometimes on a grand scale, but easily on our own. This takes the courage to change the things we can. Of course the platitude says we should try to change only ourselves. But this is our choice: "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes." It is knowing who we are that tells us what to do. The rules are simple then: be true.

Dominion is probably the best single word for this card, and it is commonly used here. It comes from the Latin *domus*, meaning home. It refers to our own domain, what we claim as our own turf and purview, what we are ultimately responsible for, what we are lord or *domine* of, what we are able to dominate, and what is within our rights to domesticate. We are not required to take charge of anything, not even ourselves. This helps to explain why the world is run by a hive mind. Some of us would change this. And some of us who would will only make things worse. But the character of this card is to apply directed energy to further the good, to make the world a more habitable place, and perhaps to give something back to the world. The counterpart in the Yijing is Gua 14, Big Domain or Possession in Great Measure, enrichment, treasuring, which needs little explanation. The Chinese speak of *wu wei*, not doing or inaction, as a value for living, but the kind of doing (*wei*) that is not being done means 'acting' in the sense of playing a specified role that is far too frequently sideways to our original nature. And this in its turn tends to emerge from inferior wisdom about what we need and want, and what it means to have. The truly noble can 'have' as much just holding a pilgrim's staff: the greatest power is in the power to assign a value to things, and a high value to evaluation and reevaluation themselves. It's the appreciative and the grateful who are rich. This is knowing what you have and what you want or need, all sorted by their value to your life. Of course, the truly noble will also own their mistakes, or own the consequences of their actions.

As we search for our identity, the empowerment of knowing ourselves, we look first for a continuity in time. We prioritize around this identity. We try for a binding alliance of the many parts of ourselves, a unity that is our integrity, an integer or an undivided wholeness. We compile a self out of the sum of our values, starting with likes and dislikes. We seek to own ourselves, and to own up to our errors, then responsibly alter who made them. So continuity is one thing and discontinuing error another. We are not just the line we like to draw between only our shiniest moments. Delegating tasks and influencing others will do little outside of the world we can manage, and what we cannot demonstrate or exemplify will not be adopted. We can manage this only by walking the talk. In short: be excellent.

Key Words:

affirmation, affluence, ambition, appropriation, *areté*, aspiration, assets, assumption, attainment, authority, avowal, being lord, boldness, calling, cause, choice, claiming, clear position, command, confidence, confirmation, containment, convergence, conviction, counting of blessings, dedication, determination, directed will, direction, electives, emboldenment, endowment, enrichment, entitlement, exaltation, excellence, futurity, gratitude, higher purpose, identity and identification, intent, intention, license, nobility, overseeing, ownership, owning up, owning your life, personal power, pride, principles, privilege, purpose, resolve, responsibility, revaluation of value, rights, rule, sovereignty, summoning, taking charge, taking control, taking hold, taking title, taking responsibility, validation, valuation, value, wealth, wherewithal, will, worth.

Warnings and Reversals:

arrogance in arrogation, blind ambition, conflicted sense of identity, disappointing success, domination, domineering, greed, haste, ingratitude, linearity of purpose, loss of will, mismanaged claims, obstinacy, opposition from others, overweening ambition and pride, recklessness, shamelessness.

Components:

Two plus Wands. The directing of energy towards an aim, or the focusing of a dynamic force according to a chosen purpose or want, and also the forces converging behind that choice. Avowal of purpose or direction. Crowley says, “energy initiating a current of force.” There is not a lot of circumspection, reflection, or reviewing of options here: it’s closer to knowing than knowledge.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Uranus in Fire Signs and Houses. Issues of autonomy and autocracy in decisions to change the world, the courage to change the things we can, taking responsibility outside of ourselves, sense of personal purpose or higher purpose.

Qabalah: Chokmah in Atziluth. Wisdom in action, setting forth principles and establishing precedents.

Yijing: Gua 14, Da You, Big Domain, Possession in Great Measure, Great Havings. Da Xiang: Qian (2) below, Li (Wands) above; “Flame in heaven above. Big domain. The young noble suppresses the bad and promotes the good, accepting heaven’s terms and higher laws.” Endowments, dominion, enrichment, laying claim, wealth of experience, owning one’s power to assign, rearrange and revise values. “Supreme fulfillment.” Where we learn to make our own values we command our own enrichment.

Three of Wands

Enterprise, Expansion, Liberty, Character

Image: A merchant stands on a promontory overlooking a harbor, leaning on one of three staffs, watching the boats of one of his ventures set sail toward horizons that lie beyond his domain. He may have two absent partners. A rising sun should be featured. The direction is outward bound. It's a new enterprise, day, era, or adventure.

The energetics of the Three of Wands is the launching of a new venture, the opening up of a young system to multiple new inputs, enriching stimulation, where adding seems more like multiplication. It's an energy gradient for living systems to feed on. The circulation of energy scrubs, clarifies, and organizes the system (or the self) through which it flows. As it does, so it becomes new and applied information. Things working themselves out tend to learn and follow their natural inclinations. As input is broadened, so is the effect. While positive feedback is not always to be desired, motion builds on motion here, and enrichment on enrichment. We learn best by doing, and the lessons learned just seem to work themselves out without micromanagement.

A new or growing enterprise may under way. Business and commerce can be understood both literally and metaphorically here. What is suggested and even recommended (and in the corresponding Yijing Gua) is free market economics, free trade, open-door policy, classical liberalism, loosened external constraints, and the invisible hand. But lest there be confusion, this is absolutely distinct from modern corporate capitalism, where the laws, trade agreements, subsidies, and governments are purchased on the cheap and enacted to serve a top heavy and stratified economy. This is a far less corrupt, more dignified approach to business: expanding horizons, exploring possibilities, exploiting opportunities, growing in vision and influence, and simply responding to demand with supply. There is no reason that this cannot be accompanied by conscience, which is normally a casualty of unfair interference and the artificial manipulation of market signals relating to supply and demand. But expansion doesn't necessarily mean growth, and growth in finite systems isn't always a positive thing. It's often better to substitute development, improvement, or refinement.

Free minds are the close analogs of free markets. They will capitalize, by way of broad-mindedness, on the free speech and inquiry in the marketplace of ideas. They thrive on sunshine and openness. The free exercise of liberty is by far best teacher we have. As we work out our chosen destinies, we learn to be accountable for our actions, and we unlearn the worth of blaming others. We learn from the risks we are willing to take. We can learn not to touch the stove or the fan in theory, but the freedom to touch might lead us to learn it indelibly. Legal prohibition only drives behavior underground and into the shadows, to organize crime. The censorship and distortion of information diminishes our understanding of reality. Sunshine, fresh air, and transparency are, for the most part, only unfriendly to pathogens. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 35, Advance or Progress, and uses the rising sun, or daylighting, for its central metaphor. It refers to the free circulation of free energy, both its liberation and its capture.

The analogies and their benefits extend to the commerce in interpersonal energy, to social activity, and to the learning of moral and ethical behavior. This is the card's common association with character and virtue as a fiery or Wands force. With tolerance, we live and learn to let live. Right is the reciprocal and the complement of duty: my right to speak my mind is also my duty to let you speak yours. We learn this by interacting and exercising our freedoms, not by being told by a leader, preacher, or book. Full accountability means that we are responsible for how this world runs and that people get the government they deserve. Our world is not the sum of all of our

actions: it's the sum of each of our actions. The fire and the sovereignty is in the individual. The expansive or extensive thrust of the Three helps to make this contagious. Victims must learn to unite and take down their own bullies all by themselves, and until that day, the bully will rule. But permission sometimes must be taken, not merely begged for. Energy needs to risk itself to learn and understand, as either the air or the wings must be moving before a bird can change its course, or as a boat must be in motion before its rudder will work.

Key Words:

adventure, assent, assistance, availability, branching out, broadening, character, circulation, collaboration, commerce, connections, cooperative endeavor, development, disclosure, discovery, diversification, emergence, emerging, energy gradient, enterprise, events unfolding, evolution, expanding horizons, expansion, expediting, expedition, experimentation, exploration, expression, extension, extrapolation, free trade, generosity, glasnost, growth, interaction, largesse, liberality, liberty, license, loosened constraints, networking, new horizons, open-mindedness, openness, opportunities, opportunism, options, outgrowth, outgoingness, outreach, overture, project taking off, progress, progression, projection, promotion, prospect, realization of hope, speculation, systemic self-organization, thriving, tolerance, trade, transparency, undertaking, validation, venture, virtue, virtus, vision.

Warnings and Reversals:

bringing something to light proves disgusting, clinging to old ways and darker times, failure of nerve, fear of risk, fear of being first, grandiosity, hyperbole, opacity, overconfidence, parasitism, refusal to pardon the past, secrecy, setback, trouble with partners.

Components:

Three plus Wands. Exposure to broader choices or alternatives of behavior and their consequences. Allowing a greater flow of energy to teach or instruct, in the sense of growing structure for understanding. Exploring and experimenting.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Neptune in Fire Signs and Houses. Opening up into energy, learning by doing, venturing, reaching out, generosity that earns rewards, speculation, experiment, collaborating in efforts.

Qabalah: Binah in Atziluth. Growing understanding by reaching into a broader world of involvement and experience.

Yijing: Gua 35, Jin, Expansion, Progress, Advance. Da Xiang: Kun (3) below, Li (Wands) above; Sunrise. "The light rises over the earth. Expansion. The young noble naturally radiates clarity of character." De, as character or virtue, offers a good understanding for both the Gua and the Card. "The prosperous lord uses grants of horses to breed a multitude and by the light of a day three times grants audience." Enterprise, free markets, circulation, disclosure, liberty, improvement, thawing, opening up, generosity, permission.

Four of Wands

Nichemanship, Accommodation, Caravansarai, Integrity

Image: A wayfarer arrives at a place where the wayward can rest, an open-air canopy, a temporary structure, already containing a fire and three other nomads who all seem to hail from different cultures. Four walking staffs are seen. The mood seems celebratory, even with fungible celebrants. The day's last task is to enter and make himself at home. Many decks feature a celebration of sorts, and perhaps even a marriage, but this is only a moment in time, when things hold relatively still, not a lasting state of affairs like a marriage would be. This a stay at the inn in the midst of a longer journey. The day will pass, but it's one that may be remembered.

There is an inherent tension between the organizing, constructive, and consolidating processes of the Fours and the disorganizing, restless, and dynamic energy of the fiery Wands. This is resolvable, however, in the idea that stability and structure here are only temporary, dynamic, and ad hoc, or ad interim. This is stability in motion, security on the move, dynamic equilibrium. There is only one provision here: the stability of fire is in its sources of fuel. A self-sustaining system needs only to feed. But if all it does is consume then it cannot maintain its place or its welcome. It takes care to stay longer than this. A home base may also be a formula or standard for living, an ethic, a reliable attitude, or an adaptable sense of identity, in which case the entire journey can be both home and destination. Otherwise, the term completion may simply be ironic, and wherever you go, there you are.

Who we genuinely and fundamentally are can be altered by experience, and we want that if we are living well. Continuity is more important in life than consistency. Stability exists, but in an ever-changing form, and a tolerable continuity is conditional and contingent upon getting along with our context. If we enter this present context correctly, we at least have a place to rest for a while and things might hold fairly still for a time. Identity is constrained for now by place, as the fire is by a pit or a hearth, with a stock of fuel close by. The Wands that form the gate in Smith's deck signify something more like a party or a weekend event. I would use the term caravansarai, a stable place for the travelers who are constantly streaming through it. Feeling at home here becomes a simple matter of tact and good manners, but better still if you can tell a good story. While we adapt ourselves to our niche here, we still want a niche in which we can be ourselves. Self-management is advised. The sacred fire, the eternal flame, the controlled burn: all of these want to have some maintenance included in their budgets.

The idea of 'completion' is frequently mentioned along with this card, but a functional arrangement or working configuration captures the notion much better. This includes having a functional personality and a working identity. We are meeting the conditions of our place, but not assuming that we will remain the same when the context changes. We are only completing what needs to be done for now. We are able to know and respect the place we are in, to know the place on its own terms, to fit in and still be ourselves, to remain self-reliant but tactful, politic, polite, and thankful enough to obtain any help that we need. Nothing is really done or complete here, except that we have now put more days, descensos, and milestones behind us. This may be no more than a state or stage of attainment, prior to moving on.

Also relevant to the card is the stability that we carry with us through the fire and the changes, how we stay recognizable to ourselves while we are evolving and adapting to our circumstances, how well we hold ourselves up and hold ourselves together. This is our integrity. In order to remain both consistent enough and adaptable, we will want to

travel lightly, as it's easier to hold it together when we have less baggage to manage: a little luggage maybe, or a small carry on, or maybe a bug-out bag. Perhaps a tent instead of a building. The corresponding Gua in the Yijing is The Wanderer. One prepares with a few well-chosen and highly portable tools, such as our wits, tact, credit, self-rule, a likable attitude, or a useful one, and working notions of what is necessary and sufficient: just the essentials, a simple standard or formula for living. It's also easier to get out of tight spots this way. The ease and comfort with which we move through the world, our sense of at-home-ness, is a function of our adaptability, or our nichemanship, our tactics of intrusion, and our capacity for diplomacy. This gives us a more dynamic version of the Four's stability. The goal is to not be a stranger. For the sake of avoiding unpleasant surprises, we want to be trusted for the reliability of our character. It helps when a good repute or reference precedes us. The presumption of innocence and benefit of the doubt help preserve us. These will make negotiating mutually acceptable arrangements easier, even with strangers. As Bob Dylan put it, "to live outside the law you must be honest." This preserves us a more reliable freedom.

Key Words:

accessibility, accommodation, ad hoc, ad interim, amenability, approach, arrangements, arrival, availing oneself, caravanserai, chameleon, comfort zone, completion, conditions, context dependence, controlled burn, diplomacy, encampment, entering, fitting in, functionality, gateway, genius loci, guest etiquette, halfway home, harvest home, haven, holiday, homeostasis, improvisation, inn, integrity, interlude, intermission, local activity, marked occasion, meeting place, meetness, milestones, minimalism, nichemanship, passages, portability, protection, provision, pushing limits, recharge, refueling, refuge, repast, repose, respite, rest after labor, rest stop, resting place, reward, rite of passage, sabbatical, safe house, security on the fly, settlement, shelter, sponsorship, stability in context, stable period, steadiness, stopover, stopping point, suitability, tact, temporary completion, time off, trust building, welcome.

Warnings and Reversals:

arrogance as 'not asking' (*rogare*), baggage, botched entry, estrangement, freedom is not independence, friction, inconsideration, inconveniences, ineffectiveness, insecurity, insensitivity, intrusiveness, quarrels, rudeness, suspicion from strangers, tactlessness, thoughtlessness.

Components:

Four plus Wands. The packaging of a fire can only be accomplished with a modest and well-controlled burn, as this is done in a lantern, pit, or hearth. We want to combine a stable identity with an intensity of experience that can change our identity in fundamental ways. It's a compromise here: more movement than the Fours want, and less than what Wands would stir up.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Jupiter in Fire Signs and Houses. A self-image or identity that seeks the genuine thing, first-hand and up close. This can mean getting one's precious self out of the way, adapting, and playing a different part to meet the experience on its own terms and turf. This is the Jupiter who turned himself into a bull or a swan to get his needs met. More especially, it's the Unknown God, the Jupiter who went door-to-door with his pal Mercury, disguised as vagabonds, to see the true nature and character of his people.

Qabalah: Chesed in Atziluth. "Establishment of the work with tact and gentleness." (here Crowley attributes this to the influence of Venus, but a higher love is an attribute of Jupiter as well, particularly agape, and certainly of Chesed as beneficence)

Yijing: Gua 56, The Wanderer. Da Xiang: Gen (4) below, Li (Wands) above; "Atop the mountain is a flame. The wanderer. The young noble is lucid and prudent about the function of sanctions and thus avoids prolonged legal process." Making oneself at home, but only on a temporary basis, the tactics of intrusion, diplomacy. "With modest fulfillment, the wanderer persists. Promising." Unencumbered by wealth, the ad hoc life, living without a net, traveling light.

Five of Wands

Strife, Struggle, Competition, Assertiveness

Image: The RWS deck and most of its clones show 5 people armed with staffs and involved in a melee or free-for-all. It's unclear whether this is in sport or in earnest, but the competition seems fierce. In either case, much of the energy spent here is self-cancelling, and nobody is questioning whether this is worth the effort. A card could also depict a slightly older gentleman defending himself with his staff against four similarly armed assailants, having already disarmed one, and now stepping towards the second while watching a third.

Darwin began: "We will now discuss in a little more detail the Struggle for Existence." The core meaning of the Five of Wands is as straightforward as the Four was complex, although the Five will tend to make more of a mess of things on the back end. The force for change, or kinetic energy of the Five is expressed here through the element of Fire. Something is likely to get moved around or altered. The basic idea is that change is the rule. It can be temporarily resisted, but often this will make the needed adjustments more abrupt, radical, and even violent, the longer that change is resisted or stresses allowed to build up. It's like plate tectonics: better ten little quakes than a major disaster. But the notion of pent-up emotions or hostilities can also offer a false, self-fulfilling, 'hydraulic' model of things, demanding a catharsis or venting before more useful solutions are tried. While the Tarot images show interpersonal competitions and conflicts being worked out more violently or aggressively, this will not always be the case. Our worthy opponent could as easily be a disobedient part of ourselves, or anything else that might get us piqued, heated up, riled up, vexed, annoyed, or enraged. Sometimes it's just an excuse to blow off some steam. It's a good idea simply to let the images of interpersonal conflict here stand in as a metaphor for energetic divergence in general.

Crowley's account of two ways to view this card, cited earlier, bears repeating: "The Five of Wands is therefore a personality; the nature of this is summed up in the Tarot by calling it Strife. This means that, if used passively in divination, one says, when it turns up, 'There is going to be a fight.' If used actively, it means that the proper course of conduct is to contend" (*BOT 43*).

Although straightforward diplomacy is probably not an option here, there are usually alternatives to violence, even in self-defense. Raging against the rock that jumped out and stubbed your toe is almost always a bad idea. The martial arts can provide a pretty good model for non-violence. The best defensive move might be using your feet to walk away. An Aikido or Jujitsu approach might move directly into the center of the situation's gravity and take control from there, simply helping the opponent to fall down. The kinetic energy here might be redirected or reapplied. Often aggression is just a substitute for confidence. If clarity and cooler heads can prevail at all, someone might think to ask if there really is a right and wrong here. We can often put cards on table and tell the truth and work it out, or we can resort to law and legal force, and even save ourselves some jail time thereby. Sometimes the exercise of this right to legal recourse is even a duty, even when the police power or system of justice is known to be corrupt. Rashness can be even blinder than this. This situation usually becomes intolerable after a time, and demands satisfaction or resolution, or that an obstacle be removed,

Authors will often suggest that this is only play, or a friendly competition, and this is sometimes the case. Both of these, of course, go way back, beyond even our life in the African trees. Just watch the young cats play-fight. Thought is a latecomer here. And it

isn't always just preparation to battle for mates or territory, or for driving the intolerable and the insufferable out of our tribe and our niche. The Five of Wands is also vigorous effort for its own sake, for the simple pleasure in exercising power or force, for flexing some muscle, for the dopamine, for good health, and for learning more about life. Whether in sport or in earnest, our mock combat teaches agility, decisiveness, ingenuity, focus, and fair play. These games are analogs of real world affairs that go far beyond the more heated engagements. They even have something to add to quiet walks in the woods.

And, naturally, this can mean what it seems like it means: a true test and rite of passage, one played for keeps and even for survival, an incident calling for extreme self-assertiveness and exertion, an emphatic contradiction, or non-acceptance, of things as they are. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 21, Biting Through, which describes the use of emphatic, corrective action. Violations of due order, forces at odds and cross-purposes to what we know is a better way, unjust and illegal challenges to our sovereignty or our safety, being put or set upon: all of these might demand emphatic action or force. We know in ourselves that forward motion often has repercussions, especially if we fail to process the feedback we get. But sometimes it falls to us to be the repercussion or be the feedback for others. We may have an opportunity here to offer some good information to bad actors and actions and answer a challenge with appropriate force, asserting what is right. But where it's information we offer, there are good arguments for starting first with clarity, instead of wrath or rage. Clarity is still the best hope for an effective solution, even if diplomacy is out of the question.

Key Words:

affront, aggressiveness, agitation, assertiveness, burning need, censure, challenge, check, clash, cogency, combativeness, competition, competitiveness, conflict, confrontation, confusion, contention, contradiction, crime, crisis, criticism, crossed purposes, defense, destabilization, disagreement, disarray, discord, disobedience, disorder, disorganization, dispute, dissent, divergence, divided opinions asserted, dynamic paralysis, dysfunction, effort, emphasis, emphatic force, enforcement, excitement, execution, ferocity, fight, friction, hassles, heated tempers, hotheadedness, interruption, intervention, intolerance, irritation, judgment, litigation, nuisance, obstacle, offense, opponents, pugnacity, punishment, purgation, quarrel, rashness, retaliation, retribution, rivalry, roughhousing, self-assertion, self-defense, serious play, shakeup, sparring, sport, strain, strength, stress, strife, struggle, taking action, territorialism, tests, trials, trouble, uncertainty, unrest, upheaval, upset, violation, violence.

Warnings and Reversals:

acrimony, blowup, confusion, contradiction, dangerous combat, deadly or lethal force, defensiveness, exertion, frustration, hypercomplexity, indecisiveness, ineffectiveness, infighting, legal problems, lex talionis, litigation, panic, rage, rashness, recklessness, squabbling, training is overly structured, violence, wrath.

Components:

Five plus Wands. Forces for stabilization allow pressure for change to build. The pressure releases suddenly, with force out of proportion to that of steady change, breaking out of the Four's confines. A backlog of change catches up quickly, structures are challenged and defended, the changes test the status quo,

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mars in Fire Signs and Houses. Mars is good with fire, maybe too good. It's an inclination to act dynamically, with assurance and vigor. Self-assertion does not need to be offensive, aggressive or violent, and the absence of these is often a measure of real assurance and strength, even in a warrior.

Qabalah: Geburah in Atziluth. Breaking out of the stability and confines of the Four and Chesed, the balance swings from peace towards force, from love towards judgment. Stability has led to a backlog of change, now being remedied at a pace faster than gradual change would have moved.

Yijing: Gua 21, Shi He, Biting Through, Decisive Action. Da Xiang: Zhen (5) below, Li (Wands) above; "Thunder and lightning bite through. The early sovereigns clarified penalties when declaring the laws." Emphatic judgment, teeth, consequences that bite, culpability, incisiveness, enforcement, eradication, execution, criminal law, termination, trenchancy. "Satisfaction. Worthwhile to execute justice."

Six of Wands

Individuation, Distinction, Achievement, Moment

Image: The RWS deck depicts a mounted hero in a triumphal parade, sporting a laurel wreath, with staff bearing men alongside him on foot. This is a moment of celebration for a victory. Alternative: Five recently retired militiamen have built a bonfire out of their fighting staves while a sixth and final member of their party has just arrived to add his own fuel, end all doubts and celebrate. The last to arrive appears to be welcomed with high praise, and sports a victor's wreath.

The Six of Wands is an identity centered on the moment, on how things stand right now. This has its potential for transformation, but is not now looking either forward or back. The moment being savored is a summation of everything that brought us here. Recall that the light that now burns in the brain was sunlight not long ago, captured by our food and prey. We are right in between where it has been and where it is going. Contrary to what most want to believe, consciousness is conditioned, a dependent arising from earlier versions of fuel, a continuum of different forms of expression that has learned to become self-aware. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 30, Arising or the Clinging, the flame reflecting on itself, between the fuel it has been and the light it is re-becoming. The Gua, a doubling of the Bagua Li, combines the meanings of both convergence and emergence. Li being symbolized by an eye, our vision is important here. If we look more closely at the word re-spect, we can see it means 'look again.'

Understanding the progression beyond the Five of Wands is essential to grasping the development of the Six. The Five upset the stability of the Four. The Six is the response to the lessons learned from this disequilibrium. Things move back into balance with a new and stronger sense of identity, continuity, and stability. This is a more resilient organization. It has been tested. A crisis or a struggle has now been overcome. Time has shown us things, informed us about ourselves. This is the basis for a number of the card's associations, such as victory after strife, gain after uncertainty, resolution of difficulties, conquest over troubles, and the triumph or triumphal parade portrayed in the Smith deck. We emerge both victorious and better informed. It is like a graduation or commencement, a valediction. We are distinguished by our recent past and by the special role we played there. We dress ourselves up in our finest true colors.

This is a culmination of the past, before resuming our journey. The moment carries the momentum forward into a different context or present. It imports the past into the future. Everything leads up to what we know now. It's a good time for review and assessment, to sum or wrap things up. We know ourselves better after these trials and tests, with a better sense of which senses of self to keep and which to let go. Competence has been tested and credit where due is now given. Externally, we are what we've accomplished or done. There is no hypocrisy in this form of self-definition. Human is as human does. There are lessons in care and respect for what brought us here, the ingredients of our current moment. It is said that, on top of all that's past, we "stand on the shoulders of giants." This applies to the current status of human culture and civilization as well. We may have earned our triumphal parade here, the momentousness of it all, and the enhanced reputation that may help us to move things along. But where we abandon, disregard, or disrespect our sources, we lose our momentum as well.

The moment now becomes self-aware, unburdened now by an incomplete past with its doubts about the future. These questions are answered now. Now it's understanding how we got here that informs us of where to go next. The past is prologue, mere preparation, and food for the flames. It's a moment where much can be changed. We

are able to use lessons from the past and apply them to a future. We are so good at this that it all seems part of a great and mysterious plan. One of the most vapid and meretricious platitudes out says that “everything happens for a reason.” Nietzsche counters this with “a loss rarely remains a loss for an hour.” Life is opportunistic and will find ways to turn the past to its advantage, making random events and accidents seem purposed. Decisions made now can be based on current predictions of what has already happened, on what has been tried and found true. Goals are resolved and reset with new and better data.

Sometimes the books will suggest that unwanted things have also been learned, and this is more central to the meaning of the card than it's given credit for. We know ourselves better after a trial or test. We may have learned about parts of ourselves not worth keeping. The recognition here is deserved, but not all of it is good. It may be that we have proven ourselves to be useless, inferior, inadequate, or incompetent. We may have achieved only failure. We may be in need of correction. It's the downside of honest acknowledgement, but it's what has been proven here, what we've learned of how we got here, that can tell us how best to move on. If at first you don't succeed, try doing it right next time.

Key Words:

acclaim, achievement, acknowledgments due, actualization, after-the-facts, appearances, apperception, appreciation, arising, arrival, articulation, attainment, attention, between times, clarity, climax, coherence, coming together, conditioned arising, consequence, consummation, convergence, culmination, departure, distinction, emanation, emergence, emphasis, equilibrium restored, exaltation, glory, human is as human does, identity, illumination, import, indebtedness, individuation, instance, lessons learned, moment, momentousness, momentum, outcome, past as prologue, past perfect tense, pinnacle, precedent, presence, procession, promotion, proof, qualification, radiation, realization, recognition, reconciliation, reflection, resolution, respect, restabilization, results of feedback, revelation, review, reward, sentence, significance, situation sorted, taking stock, triumph, true colors, unfolding, victory, vindication, wrapping things up, zenith.

Warnings and Reversals:

comeuppance, the culmination could be of failure, disconnectedness, disrespect, earned failure, exposed fraud, inconclusive gain, indefinite delay, insolence, lessons not learned, repeating history, looking back moaning or gloating, losing touch with one's sources and opportunities, missing out on the transformation, narcissism, postponement, proven incompetence.

Components:

Six plus Wands. Energy interacting with context develops new information that helps to organize and restabilize the system after the upset of the Fives. Order emerges from the chaos with the processing of feedback, and sentence emerges from order. The system begins to self-regulate.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sol in Fire Signs and Houses. An identity centered on self as awareness of a self, the continuity that remains as thoughts and feelings come and go. The 'I am' experiences, with emphasis on the moment or context in time, the stream of the moving moment, the river yes, the same river never..

Qabalalah: Tipareth in Atziluth. Following Geburah, an energized Tipareth becomes the

reassembly or restabilization of self with new information or lessons learned. The entity is tested, tried and gradually trued.

Yijing: Gua 30, Li, Arising, The Clinging, Radiance. Da Xiang: Li (6) below, Li (Wands) above; “The light appears twice. Arising. The mature human being is continuous in clarifying and illuminating into the four directions.” There is a dual focus in this Gua: on the conditions which bring us up to the present, what we depend on or adhere to, such as our sources of fuel and the past we are working out, and on where we are going next, our next departure, how we will differ henceforth. This is conditioned or dependent arising. “Meriting persistence. Fulfillment. Attend to the cow. Promising.” The advice to ‘attend to the cow’ means to honor our sources or fuel if we want to remain continuous. Line six is especially apt.

Seven of Wands

Valor, Individuality, Disparity, Diversity

Image: A lone man, with longstaff in hand, defends himself against six unseen assailants. He occupies the higher ground in the skirmish and so he has a small, initial advantage, or defensible position, in addition to the stimulating challenge of facing down these odds. Most versions of this card are RWS clones, and many bear the apt title Valor. Much is often made of the character's mismatched shoes. We can only guess that Pixie wanted to convey a hurry or urgency to take up this position.

The evolution from the Six to the Seven of Wands is from sentient entity to the newly self-conscious self, from individuation to individuality, and from being tested to doing the testing. Now more importance is attached to the difference between the inner and outer, and the needs and wants of the inner begin to take greater precedence. Drives for self-actualization, to be more, to win or succeed, kick in. Self-ishness get its bad name from people doing it poorly, so others lose in the process, but this need not be the case. When effective, this helps to move evolution along.

When we are separate we each have our own points of view, relative to the others. This diversity is analogous to each of our eyes seeing a different picture. It's because of this difference that we perceive depth so well. Linguistic coincidence or not, the biodiversity in an ecosystem contributes heavily to the depth of its resilience. It is worthwhile all around to maintain individual differences and to celebrate the outstanding. Standing one's ground is central to the meaning of this card. Pride has the same public relations problem as selfishness. It's often a big error, but it isn't really a sin. When it comes to feeling proud of being what we are, keeping this in context is best. It's fine to enjoy your blue ribbon on the weightlifting team, but it's not an Olympic gold medal. And even the gold medalist can't compete with a dumb, half-crippled ox when pulling a loaded cart. Sometimes it takes pride, or at least a strong sense of honor, to resist the social pressures that work against articulating our own special version of character. To maintain our personal growth we sometimes need to build on little successes and be extra wary of what failure can do to our spirit. We may need to pick our battles more carefully, to be more tactful and tactical, and to compromise against the best we can be, just to hang onto some self esteem and respect. This is stress, and sometimes we need to emphasize ourselves just to stress our urgency. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 38, Estrangement or Opposition, which examines personal divergence from others, and from the norms, as a necessary component of needed diversity. We see the world in greater depth because our eyes give our brains two different pictures. To all be the same is not a good thing. A lack of diversity contributes little to the whole and its resilience.

Standing out from our background, distinguishing ourselves from our context, is the root of the word existence. When we look at the life evolving around us, we note that diversity is the norm, not the exception. Convergence and conformity are more common within separate species, as they seem to try to hold themselves together: the mating dance is done in a very particular way or you don't get to breed. Some humans require the right wristwatch or shoes before mating. Nevertheless, even within the species, diversity is the measure of depth and resilience, the ability to adapt to changes. This requires more than the fashions of watch and shoes changing yearly. We owe an allegiance and loyalty to ourselves, but this is a biological imperative that's seen in varying strengths. Being only yourself is a struggle in a conformist society, so that the Seven of Wands is often seen as a struggle or battle. We do have plenty of cattle among us. Daring to differ, even begging to differ, wants some sense of purpose and a fighting

spirit. This does not require having or making enemies. A pursuit and succession of personal bests can be enough of a target or goal. And regardless of how very special we are, there are always a few companions worth choosing for their ability to confront us, correct us, or challenge the way we see things, other eyeballs with other points of view.

The majority can be as much of a tyrant as any individual despot. It's against this mob rule and peer pressure that we claim our sovereign rights as persons. The herd that is more than half of our numbers will vote these rights away at the first opportunity. It takes every bit of our feistiness and vigilance to resist. As the RWS card depicts, we take a stand, stand our ground, stand up for ourselves, holding our own, or we fall. And we need a vantage position, like a home-field advantage, a little moral high ground, some sense of inviolable and inalienable rights, from rights of self-defense to rights of self-expression.

If it harm none, we also include the right to be wrong. Being wrong is nothing to be proud of. We might want to double-check on this possibility. Being true to yourself might be a mistake if your true self happens to be an asshole. Firmness of purpose, conviction and fighting spirit are not in themselves the virtue here. We might recall Nietzsche's words: "but what convinces us is not necessarily true: it is merely convincing. A note for asses." Lest we be absolute, a little flexibility is sometimes in order. Even admitting some pressure from peers might help to validate their own rights to self-expression, and the rights of like-minded minorities.

Key Words:

against the odds, aloneness, articulation, asserting identity, battle, boldness, bravery, challenge, commitment, confronting a challenge, conviction, courage, daring, defiance, determination, disparity, dissent, dissociation, dissonance, divergence, diversity, emphasis, fearlessness, feistiness, fighting spirit, finding strength, heroics, high ground, holding your own, honor, idiosyncrasy, incongruity, independence, individualism, individuality, intrepidity, loyalty to self, maintaining position, non-conformity, oddness, odds, overcoming, perseverance, persistence, personhood, perspectivism, picking your battles, pluck, polarization, pride, proving oneself, resistance, resolve, self-assertion, self-defense, self-determination, sovereignty, specialness, standing out, standing your ground, staying true, steadfastness, stereopsis or retinal disparity, sticking out, stress, stubbornness, surmounting, taking a stand, tenacity, tension, uniqueness, upholding personal principles, valor.

Warnings and Reversals:

alienation, anxiety, being overwhelmed, being wrong, convictions that can't learn, discord, hyperdefensiveness, embarrassment, defeat, giving up, hesitation, intimidation, isolation, lack of objectivity, overconfidence, overreach, overreaction, peer pressure, self-doubt, selling out, surrender, tyranny of the majority, unearned self-esteem, vainglory, vulnerabilities.

Components:

Seven plus Wands. The sense of personal identity seeking enhancement and vivification. Wanting to shine on our own terms, whether for inner confidence and courage or for outward honor and praise that can be taken personally.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Venus in Fire Signs and Houses. Desires to develop a strong sense of identity, to stand out, to be self-assured, or self-loving, whether deserving or not.

Ardent and inclined to take things personally, seeking beauty, glory, drama, and honor. Actualizing the sense of self.

Qabalah: Netzach in Atziluth. The will to be victorious as an entity, to feel success, to will success into existence, to be pleased with personal attainments, to meet needs and wants well.

Yijing: Gua 38, Kui, Estrangement, Opposition, Disparity. Da Xiang: Dui (7) below, Li (Wands) above; “The flame rises, the lake descends. Estrangement. The young noble associates, and yet is unique.” Polarization, diversity, distinctiveness, oddness, individual nature as divergent; unique points of view, to squint disbelievingly. “In ordinary matters, promising.” To maintain self-esteem, we pick our battles and don’t overreach. Crowley suggests the card means “victory in small and unimportant things.”

Eight of Wands

Direction, Trajectory, Projection, Objectives

Image: Eight javelins are seen in flight, now on the downward trajectory of a ballistic arc, maintaining an alignment that suggests there must have been a coordinated aim and an unseen but common target in a previous time, but not long ago. The aim or intention set might be clearer with a larger frame or window.

Most books will speak most of this card in terms of swiftness and speed. The RWS deck set a standard for portrayals of javelins, spears, staffs, or arrows, all traveling at what seems to be great velocity. Both the association with the planet Mercury and the energy of the fiery Wands would seem to support this meaning. But this is only one of several attributes of more central meanings. Closer to the core, the idea behind the picture is that all eight items seem to share a common aim in their trajectory. The action of launching them had direction, method, purpose, or design behind it. Because of this they are going towards the same destination. Choices have already been made and decisions enacted. The projectiles have gone ballistic, but this word is poorly understood. An object that has gone ballistic is no longer under any force of acceleration: it's coasting, acted on now only by gravity, windage, and drag. What set the projectile in motion has already done its job and the time to make big choices and mid-course corrections may be past. This was according to an aim or a plan, something that is now working itself out. It's now up to the idea or the design to prove its own worth or viability. In the Hermetic view of magick, an imaginary version of what needs doing is done in advance, signaling the intention, sending a message to the future, and if the plan belongs there, the world will get the idea. The spell has already been cast. But this is just another way of saying that design precedes implementation.

This card implies a developed mental ability that is applied to living in the world, and knowing something of our own capabilities, so that we can predict our effects. With the Seven of Wands we learned some things about who we are and what we are capable of. With the Eight, we can now apply that knowledge to improving our context, niche, or world, so that life can be more predictably trouble-free or pleasant. We have creative designs on the world. We are looking ahead and trying to solve our problems in advance. From our present position in what is going to be the past, it's difficult to micromanage these affairs. What needs doing now has largely been done in advance. We can only try to cover our contingencies, and allow for range and windage. Expertise can only take us so far here. While events may not be entirely out of our hands now, the best laid plans might still need to adapt to unseen realities. Fussing and meddling might only interfere. We will need some patience: the ballistic arc is also a learning curve. "A screaming came across the sky."

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 50, The Cauldron, which also speaks of change by design, with a focus on the alchemy of creating or nourishing a better and nobler society. Results are not seen immediately here either. Once the spell is cast, one has to let it go or fly. The ceremonial food offering here models a kind of social engineering, nourishing our culture in specific ways to optimize cultural outcomes. We have an instrumentality mentality, and the recipe is our formula. This is explicitly an analogy: wind and wood below (8s), symbols of adaptive intelligence, feed the creative flames (Wands) above. We nourish and inspire others by doing what we do best and thus setting a good example. We honor the potential in our raw materials. We manifest our best visions. We set our standards high. In looking this far ahead, we also seek to become better ancestors, worthier founding fathers and mothers. What is cooking in the pot is a consecrated or dedicated offering. In the Western Mystery Tradition, this

giving our best, this excellence by design, is the alchemy termed “the Great Work of the Transformation of Mankind.” It’s doing what we can for our evolution. In the words of the Great Ones, “Be excellent to each other.”

The point is ensuring that we are better prepared for tomorrow than we have been in the past, that we continue to develop our life skills. There is the implication in the RWS card, in the association with Mercury, and in the Cauldron, that this is a joint or concerted effort, an alignment of aim and purpose, a cultural endeavor that necessitates networking, communication and cooperation. Forces are drawn into alignment, priorities are adopted by prior agreement, goals and objectives are shared. The root of the word communication means to make common, to spread the idea around. Alternatively, his card may also refer to the exercise of mental agility (*cittamannata* and *cittapagunnata* in Buddhism).

Key Words:

activation, administration, aiming true, alignment of aims and forces, ambition, analogy, application, arrangement, aspiration, awaiting results, coordinated effort, dedicated effort, demonstration, design, directed activity or motion, directing change, direction, directives, discharge, dispatch, dream, efficiency, execution of intent, expediency, experiment, focus, formulation, forward thinking, future orientation, game plan, goals, guidance, guidelines, implementation, initiatives, instrumentality, intention, master plan, means, missiles, missions, missives, objectives, orientation, parallel efforts, planning, positive action, pragmatism, projections and projects, promotion of idea, proposition, purpose, purposeful action, reach, refinement, spellcraft, study, sublimation, sudden progress, swiftness, targets, trajectory, vectors, visionaries, visions being realized.

Warnings and Reversals:

denial of preconditions, discord, dispute, dissipation, failure to allow for conditions, haste, impetuosity, loss of control, magical thinking in the pejorative sense, micromanagement, misalignment, overextension, too-rapid advancement, visions based on wishful thinking.

Components:

Eight plus Wands. Thought is not abstract here: it has energy. It’s design with a purpose, applied intelligence, design that has no reality until it’s implemented. Conjecture and hypothesis do not make theory. They can’t stand alone until they are tested or verified. Networking is energetic here.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mercury in Fire Signs and Houses. Knowledge is communicated by example and application, not by abstraction. Ideas and idealisms are acted out, demonstrated, implemented.

Qabalah: Hod in Atziluth. Order moves towards implementation, and good order will implement itself, without micromanagement. The world is seeded with the idea and the viable idea grows.

Yijing: Gua 50, The Cauldron, Alchemy. Da Xiang: Xun (8) below, Li (Wands) above; “Over the wood is a flame. The cauldron. The young noble applies principles of positioning to manifest higher purpose.” Applied heat, consecrated or dedicated offerings. Dedicated change, science as art, alchemy, the great work of transformation. “The most promising offering.” The nourishment of ability, excellence by design, instrumentality, social engineering, creation of a higher culture.

Nine of Wands

Suspense, Vigilance, Alertness, Unfinished Business

Image: The RWS deck shows an already embattled guardian, standing stalwart and resolute in front of a cache of spare staves as if expecting some more of the unexpected. This could also be depicted as a wanderer with his staff greeting eight similarly armed guards at a pass gate or outpost, seeking permission to pass. Permission does not appear to be a foregone conclusion. These are lethally-armed men defending an imaginary line. He has come a long way, evidenced by a bandaged head and foreign attire. There are suggestions of more trials to come. He must pick his battles well, but some may not be avoidable and he still has far to go. Discretion here is as useful as valor.

This card depicts an ongoing, dynamic interaction with the environment, at a point midway through what appears to be a series of challenges. In other words, life on Earth. But what is portrayed here is not one of our more relaxing or boring moments. There is an air of unsettledness here: things are not in a stable state or in their proper place and the tension is dynamic. There is an energy in this displacement that's analogous to potential energy in physics. When we are at a distance from where we need or want to be, we can use this as a sort of motive or driving force. A tension between what is and what must be will move things along towards a more equilibrated state, as though driven from behind by what lies ahead. We are drawn or pulled along. Necessity can be used as a drive as well as an excuse. That things are not right yet need not be a bad thing.

The Nine of Wands will demand a greater perspective and warn against shortsighted or precipitous action. We are likely to have long-term goals that short-term demands and pressures just won't respect, but we need to combine the two, reconciling our distant aims with our current necessities, and this is best done in ways wherein one will help the other. Of course there is great wisdom in attending to present circumstances, especially when failure can threaten our further progress. Details of the longer course may be in doubt and distractions may need to be dealt with. There will be obstacles to our progress that were not in our plan. To remember the longer-term goals and objectives will help us to measure or optimize our response. As we make our mid-course maneuvers and corrections, we try to make even accidents and setbacks serve our longer ends.

In the systems model of our Tarot number symbolism, the Eights, combined with the learning that we have done, give us an ability to predict the future a little, at least in an environment that isn't hostile to our theories, or too much changed from the one we are familiar with. But Nines show one of the problems we have with adaptation: that niches change as well, especially when we are on the move, with miles to go before we sleep. The system we have developed needs to learn resilience for this, and self-repair. As Alan Watts suggested, there is wisdom in insecurity. It's a good time to stay alert and alive, living as we do in interesting times. And if we are to stay alert, we will need to hold some strength in reserve, grab some second winds, and pace ourselves for the longer run. We don't all need to live right on the edge or in danger. But at least when things are dynamic, we can draw strength from outside or within and do our responding with some of the fire we carry in ourselves. We don't need our fortunes told to us.

The narrowness of our behavioral options is a function of the size of our world. The specialists' options are narrowed. Fitness is how and where we fit in, and tiny niches need a less generalized fitness. Our contexts can be made larger, both in space and in time. We increase our behavioral options by remembering more of the length of our

journey and the distances yet to be traveled. We keep our minds stretched out in this way, giving us room to sort our options. We think on the fly, ex temp and ad hoc. Our expectations of difficulty cannot be allowed to be overwhelming: they must be seen as a challenge. The problem is seen as a thing to be solved, something like an intelligence test, if we want the cheese at the end of all this amazement. Problems are for solving.

We are a bit like Odysseus here, making his long journey home, meeting the needs of the moment, losing sight on occasion, getting past Circe and the Siren songs. But we have to get through the journey and kill us some suitors, or the epic will never get written or sung. P.F. Case saw this in this card, where he suggested a ‘danger of violence in foreign places’ in the course of our long journeys. This energy of displacement that demands so much vigilance, while motivating us at the same time, in represented in the Yijing by Gua 64, Not Yet Across or Before Completion, the ironically named final chapter of the book. It has the same advice to stay on your toes and alert as long as you’re this far from home. It depicts a young fox crossing a half-frozen stream, an exemplar of care and vigilance in the animal kingdom.

Key Words:

adaptability, adventure, alertness, anticipation, apprehension, attentiveness, carrying on, cautiousness, character development, circumspection, dauntlessness, determination, discernment, discipline, displacement, drawing on reserves, dynamic tension, endurance, fidelity, fitness, going the distance, guardedness, heedfulness, insecurity, intermediate stages, involvement, long-term goals under short-term threat, maintaining priorities, meeting necessities, mid-course corrections, no rest, outpost, perseverance (with a longer view than that of the 7 of Wands), persistence, precaution, presence of mind, readiness, remembrance of scales, renewed commitment, resilience, resolve, resourcefulness, responsiveness, self-reliance, separation, stamina, strength in reserve, strength of purpose, suspense, suspicion, tenacity, tension, the thick of it, threshold, transition, uncertainty, unfinished business, vigil, vigilance, wariness, watchfulness.

Warnings and Reversals:

adversity, barriers, carelessness, complacency, defensiveness misplaced, delays, energy depleted, fatigue, forgetting where you are, hurdles, ignorance, linearity, obstinacy, overconfidence, presumption, problems, rigidity, running battles, shortsightedness, stubbornness, stress, trapped far from home.

Components:

Nine plus Wands. Every moment we live through is a wrapping up of all things past and an opening up to potential for changes. With respect to ideas of completion, this is the most we can expect from this world. If we want to maintain a sense of accomplishment, we need to keep on adapting, to be ready to hold or defend our gains.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Luna in Fire Signs and Houses. A readiness to respond to circumstances actively or energetically, proactive responsiveness. Alertness and self-reliance in exigent situations, being present to experience, adaptability that will seize what advantages it can.

Qabalah: Yesod in Atziluth. The dynamic energy of a universe in flux can be tapped as an energy source even where it seems to be problematic. This is the world we are given, what we have to live in. With the right approach we can sail upwind.

Yijing: Gua 64, Wei Ji, Not Yet Across, Before Completion. Da Xiang: Kan (9) below, Li (Wands) above; “The flame is positioned on top of the water. Not yet complete. The

young noble is heedful and discerning so that things remain straightforward.” State of transition, unfinished business. “Fulfillment. The little fox is almost across the half-frozen stream. To soak one’s tail is not a direction with merit.” Determination, concentration and energy. Not being in the right place yet is a source of incentive and potential energy.

Ten of Wands

Efficacy, Perseverance, Demands, Overcommitment

Image: A man staggers forward, overburdened, bent over by the weight of ten heavy, unbundled staves, which also obstruct his view. He may be on the verge of losing his grip, but the suggestion is that he is nearly to his goal. Even in his slow progress, he stumbles past a rope and a potential travois. But he fails to see the possibilities. Force is one way to do this, but it implies expending energy against resistance or inertia. The alternative path to power is to expend less energy by finding a way around the resistance or inertia. Sometimes this is called sensitivity, sometimes intelligence. Smith took her idea for this card directly from the Ten of Swords in the late-15th-century Sola-Busca deck, the only deck before hers to use vignettes to portray the Pips.

This card depicts the burden of ill-regulated force, force that is in need of something a little extra. We have come to the limits of what we can do with raw energy, or with what we can do with our individual identity, or with ourselves as currently estimated. Our project, which might be perfectly noble and worthy, might have become an obsession. The word per-severance means making it through severity, but this is not a virtue in itself. Making it through to success has more value, and getting things of value done is the virtue. In a headstrong, headlong way, we might be compromising the effort itself, with the threat of hitting a wall, or of burnout, or at least of wasting a great deal of energy on ineffective, inept, or outmoded methods. If we are stiff-necked, locked-on, and obstinate enough, it might still be possible to push through to the end here, but as costs go up, the benefit ratio plummets. Diminishing returns compromise success. Expenditures should help, not be a burden. There should be enough energy left for better ideas.

A need for prioritization is a useful way to see this. Power is measured in terms of efficacy. In physics, power is the rate at which energy changes form to do work. It's a rate, not a quantity of force spent, the rate at which work gets accomplished. It's defined by effect or outcome, not by the energy spent on stress and strain. To the extent that a task is difficult, it isn't power being felt, but resistance. This is a hint to find a path of less resistance, an approach with better leverage, or a way to delegate. Might needs right. It's not the amount of effort expended but the elegance of the outcome. The reward will not be proportionate to the struggle but to the intelligent application of energy. Doing things the hard way, taking on challenges without thinking things through, might get things done, but it isn't power. Efficacy or efficiency is not a complete substitute for vigor or force, but they make a good team. Power incorporates both energy and wisdom. It learns to do more with less. Laziness, they say, is the father of invention. A little more discovery is needed here.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 34, Big and Strong or Power of the Great, shows a billy goat or ram butting a hedge, and recommends a pause to rest and look around, in case there might be a better way through or around. This is like moving towards the axle of the wheel, where the motion is least. The most effective pace might include pausing to rest and reconnoiter, to look at the problem as being more like a puzzle, to use one's head in loftier ways than as a bludgeon. There is an adage in Zen that suggests: "You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day, unless you are too busy; then you should sit for an hour." This is a good adage to use here. A better way is likely unseen due to current effort and a narrowness of focus. Meta-solutions require an overview of the problem. Too linear a direction can even find us blocked or thwarted by inanimate objects that should not be expected to cooperate.

The Ten of Wands may suggest finding a different mode now, one that uses elements other than fire, a need to start using other faculties, rethinking the elemental components of the effort. The need for this sort of transition is typical for the Tens. We've run out of things that energy alone can do well. In particular, new inputs might be sensory or informative, ways to find a more optimum path from this place: feeling in Cups, thought in Swords, and practicalities in Pentacles. Insight is sometimes defined as a dynamic reorganization of the perceptual field, getting a new perspective or scale. Looking can hinder seeing. In Permaculture there is a principle about spending information before spending energy. Intense focus misses the peripheral view which may hold better options.

Lastly, there may be issues of personal achievement here, and a sense that to delegate any parts of the task deprives us of satisfactions. We might not be assuming too much, or laboring under some delusions. This might not be a form of self-sacrifice or martyrdom, but perhaps this question should at least be asked, to help us explain why we turn down offers of help.

Key Words:

action, assertion, big responsibilities, burden, butting heads, challenge, circumspection, compulsion, constancy, cost-benefit analysis, demands, determination, diminishing returns, doggedness, drivenness, effectiveness, efficacy, efficiency, effort, endurance, exertion, exhaustion, extremity of effort, forging ahead, heroic effort, implementation, ineffectiveness, inefficiency, inflexibility, insistence, linearity, narrow aims, obsession, oppressiveness, out of depth, overbearing, overburden, overcommitment, overdoing, overextension, overload, overshoot, overwhelm, ox or bull mind, performance, power, predicament, preoccupation, pressure, purpose without planning, purposefulness, pushing through, reassessment, single-mindedness, stamina, strain, stress, striving, stubbornness, surcharge, tenacity, thoroughness, travail, tunnel vision, unproductive behavior, vigor, wanting out right now, willfulness.

Warnings and Reversals:

blind force, blinders, burnout, butt-headedness, can't say no, counterproductive behavior, excessive effort or force, exhaustion, failure of imagination, failure to delegate, fixation, impatience, importunity, ineffectiveness, inefficiency, laboring under a delusion, lack of vision, obsession, obstinacy, overestimation, outdated approach, preoccupation, stress, stubbornness, the last straw, traps, tunnel vision, tyranny.

Components:

Ten plus Wands. Inertia as resistance to change, but the inertia here is in both the subject and the object, and something has to give. We have reached the limit of what fire can do for us. Force might need to turn to finesse for assistance.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pluto in Fire Signs and Houses. We know that Pluto is not a planet, but it's a symbol. Concern for taking individual identity, personal development, and expressions of power as far as we can, to leave our mark on the world that survives us. Qabalah: Malkuth in Atziluth. The maximum expression of the original idea and spirit, where it ends and becomes something else, having seen how far it can go and unable to go any further, at least in its original form.

Yijing: Gua 34, Da Zhuang, Big and Strong, Power of the Great. Da Xiang: Qian (10) below, Zhen (Wands) above; "Thunder in the sky above. Big and strong. The young

noble will not take a step without respect.” The need for force to pause and understand what it is doing if it seeks to be effective. “Worthwhile to persist.” Line 3 and others: “The billy goat butts the hedge, entangling his horns.” The head-on approach fails to see the options.

Princess of Wands

Princess of the Shining Flame, Rose of the Palace of Fire
Endowment, Identity, Appetite, Purposefulness

Image: A staff, with leaves, and slightly taller than the character is held erect with both hands and admired. Alternatively, a young princess tends a burnt offering at a sacrificial altar, turning the beast with her wand so that its tip has caught fire. She samples the meat to get it right, not sacrilegiously, for hers are a people of fire: divinity is within, but wanting out. Alternatively, she could be carrying a torch into a place that clearly shows promise of discovery. The Knapp-Hall deck has an insightful image of the Princess (as Page) planting a wand in the ground, as a tree cutting, looking ahead to later in her life. She is sometimes portrayed delivering news or messages, as announcements or proclamations.

Each Princess has a fundamental project in personal development. For the Princess of Wands, it's the discovery of who she is and what she seems born to do best. This is intimately connected to what excites her or whets her appetite. We create our purpose out of our inclinations. The search is for her gifts, her passions or her calling, and she finds them in the things that ignite her or bring her most fully to life. As the earthy part of fire, she is fuel and the search for fuel. This concerns the getting and using of appropriate combustibles. It's only an illusion that fuel is something other than energy that's awaiting liberation. Fuel is locked-up light, and not less light. And it's moving slowly enough now that we can think about what to do with it. Fuel can also be helpful information, just waiting to be discovered in the things that interest us, or things that help us to flourish or thrive. When things go right, we learn to be attracted to the right combustible substance.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 27, Hungry Mouth or Corners of the Mouth, develops the same fuel metaphor as a question of diet and nutrition, explicitly including our cultural sustenance and carefulness for the words that we use and expose ourselves to. We build ourselves out of these resources, and the light we give back comes from here. We learn a right dependence on such sources. The food metaphor also means learning how to hunger effectively, to feed real hungers instead of becoming all appetite and hungering after things we are told to need. Back when it was legal to experiment on human babies, one batch was given a free choice of diet, twenty little bowls to pick from, with no praise or scolding for choices. It wasn't long until their little baby bodies told them what they needed. We just need to learn to heed our original natures and hungers. We can then ask something like this of public education: what could take something as insatiably hungry as a young human mind and make it lose its appetite for learning? Being told to stop playing around? Serious learning will follow from a perception of personal relevance. The value of deferred gratification will become clear enough in time. Teaching discipline is relatively irrelevant to a real education. Making students hungry is far more useful, catching them on fire, helping them find the on-switch or driving purpose.

The Princess of Wands is on the lookout for sources of nourishment and inspiration that come the closest to what she discovers of her nature. She is a bit of a huntress here, wanting direction or prey, to feed what she wants to be or become. She might try on extra identities, or mistake valid experiences for valid realities. While she may seem endlessly curious and experimental in search of experiences that light her up, she is not looking to digress or wander too far from who she is at heart. Given a choice, she would likely prefer to burn steadily, with reliable enthusiasms, rather than flicker and sputter as excitements come and go. Nonetheless, burning is still about liberation from

the solid state of things. She wants a charge, motive power, and arousal, and that could even mean wanting some drama in her life. In fact, drama, theatrics, role playing, and trying on new identities might become important stimuli. “From a little spark may burst a flame” Dante. Thus she may also experiment with different cognitive and affective states and their sources.

Sometimes the flame will take on the nature of the fuel that it consumes, so that it pays to learn the right appetites. Hence the phrase from cybernetics: garbage in, garbage out. The noble character wants real substance to burn, consistent resources to feed a reliable flame. This suggests developing some care early on for higher quality sources, which might be inconsistent with a still-underdeveloped sense of identity or purpose. Without knowing what is relevant to what, it might be hard to choose an interest other than by how this lights us up, or an even more superficial appeal. It’s by trial and error that we discover what empowers us. For this reason we need to be free to make errors. This is a search for personal purpose, something rewarding to do with our lives, our real wants. Which of the two wolves do we feed? Higher purpose, a life serving forces greater than ourselves, comes later than this, if it even comes at all.

Key Words:

anticipation, appetite, ardor, arousal, avidity, challenge, character, choosing an interest, core, curiosity, diet, earnestness, education, encouragement, endowment, enthusiasm, excitability, excitement, experiment, exploration, food, fuel, gifts, heart, heartiness, hungers, huntress of power, identity, individuality, inspiration, interest, intrinsic nature, kindling, lighting up, meaning, metabolism, motivations, novelty, nutrition, opportunism, palate, passion, personal discovery, personal growth, potential energy, procurement, predilection, prospects, provision, purpose, recourse, relevance, reliable sourcing, resource, resourcefulness, right dependence, self-betterment, self-discovery, sampling, sources, specialness, specialty, standards, stimulation, stirrings, subsistence, substance, sustenance, talent, temper, temperament, trying out sources, what we feed on, wonder, yearning, zeal.

Warnings and Reversals:

adopting weak values, bad information or intelligence, disinterestedness, embellishment, fad diets, false premises, fickleness, getting excited in error, ignition failure, fickleness, impatience, inconsistency, indecision, omnivorousness, randomness in diet, reluctance, restlessness, rumor, subverted appetite, tedium, trust betrayed.

Components:

The Earthy part of Fire. Sources of metabolic nourishment and heat. Fuel, food, kindling, raw material. Wants grounded, consistent or reliable sources of energy. The “chemical attraction of the combustible substance” (Crowley).

Correspondences:

Astrology: Caput Draconis in Fire Signs and Houses. A basic drive to learn who we are, what we want and what sets us on fire. Seeking our core identity, lessons that are not extraneous to our original nature.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 27, Yi, Hungry Mouth, Corners of the Mouth. Da Xiang: Zhen (Wands) below, Gen (Princess) above; “Beneath the mountain is thunder. Hungry mouth. The young noble is careful with words and expressions and moderate in drinking and eating.” Meeting needs, self-reliance, diet, selecting input for output. “Persistence is promising. Study the hungers, from searching to feeding.” Fostering health and

strength of character. Choices of menus, not just choices from the menu. Good taste.
Starving the false and nourishing the true.

Prince of Wands

Prince of the Chariot of Fire
Adventure, Exploration, Circulation, Mission

Image: A young prince sets out from home on horseback, bearing his staff high. With clothes still fresh and his horse still prancing, he crosses the stream bounding his familiar turf. His haste is of youthful exuberance. He is not on a warlike mission, but he could unhorse you with his staff if you stood in his way. His task is to transform what he can of the world into personal experience, to build a curriculum vitae.

The Prince of Wands is the quintessential man on fire. He is normally depicted on a mission or journey, and moving quickly, as though having much ground yet to cover. Our knight errant is on multiple adventures, more of a treasure hunt than a specific quest. As a prince, he is an emissary. He is exploring realms over which he may one day be lord or statesman. These are lands far afield from the palace. He needs to import knowledge of the unfamiliar, since information is also access to the energy he will one day be using to rule his domain. His gain here can be had in two ways: the first is in what he brings home, even if only wisdom or experience. A second kind of gain increases his alertness to the signals. This may have a tendency to magnify or exaggerate the importance of his experience. Exposure to the distant and strange will alert him to signs that others don't notice. Lest this all go to his head, he should remember that the point of his future dominion is service to his domain and his people.

As discussed for the princes in general, his task is to explore out to the boundaries of his home realm, and a little beyond, just to be sure. This can mean going too far, which is perhaps what youth is for as well. He might learn that when fire grabs indiscriminately at fuel, it tends to draw the firefighters. But the elsewhere and the beyond cannot and should not be resisted. Such boundless energy is often out of bounds just by definition. For the element of fire, we need to go where the fuel is, to the fresh and novel experience. While the exploration may express an abundance of energy, this is not really activity for its own sake. The point is personal growth, recognized or not. Castaneda might call him a hunter of power (like the Princess), and power must move around to meet its opportunities. He may act quickly to seize chances and press others into his service, sometimes seeming thoughtless or blunt. He may need lots of refueling. And he may have trouble resting until he is halfway burned out.

The Prince is exploring his options and choices by first-hand expedition, instead of by letters or schooling. This is not to say that hearing a good story cannot be a first-hand experience. And look at all that Alexander the Great learned in school. But this is a matriculation into the school of hard knocks. He is learning the reins with actual horses, not his hobby horses. Multiple points of view are learned from multiple points of vantage, by going there and doing that. Foreign devils may become human beings. His options, when grown, will be many, like the wardrobe of a theater, because he will have to play many parts, even while being himself. And lots of the costumes he finds may not get used but once. Much will be abandoned or forgotten. Steadiness and follow through not his strong suit.

The Prince gets lots of lively adjectives, starting with ardent and energetic. Hurried is often the case, impulsive and excitable too. Hasty and impetuous might be too often true. Although these are different words, peremptory and preemptive might both apply here. There are also words like upbeat, outgoing, and exuberant, for when he is doing it right. He is seen as ready to go or to act right now, like a rescue worker or a first responder on call. Thus moving quickly is not always hasty: it's merely responsive. He may seem to be led by opportunities rather than led from within, and this can some-

times look like being misguided. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 42, Increasing, reaching out to take what we can of what the world is offering, broadening life experience, and receiving generously.

He may be inclined to not think things through, and therefore be subjected to risk and surprise. Going to where the action is often means acting on incomplete information, in order to get there at all. If he knew all about what he was exploring, it would not be the unknown and it might not keep him excited. This doesn't mean he needs to reinvent fire, however: he can still watch for cues and clues left by other young princes before him. Of course it's true that a clearly marked mission might make his success more probable, but those are for those he will one day assign missions to.

Key Words:

abandon, advance, adventure, affordances, alertness, alternatives, ambition, amplification, augmenting, boldly going, challenge, circulation, clues and cues, collecting stories, curiosity, daring, departure, discovery, drama, eagerness, emigration, energetics, envoy, exaggeration, expanded horizons, expansion, expedition, exploits, exploration, extension, exteriorization, exuberance, farther frontiers, feedforward for feedback, fervor, getting experienced, going far afield, hazarding, hurry, impulse, impulsiveness, individuation, insistence, intensity, invitations, journey, knight errant, learning multiple points of view, learning to appreciate, leverage, on a mission, opportunism, options, the path perilous, Phaeton, promptings, promptness, prospects, quest, responsiveness, restlessness, roles and costumes, seeking novelty, self-development, suddenness, taking advantage, the unknown, treasure hunt, unending journey, urgency and urges, transit, variation, venturing, vistas, wanderlust, wildfire, windfall.

Warnings and Reversals:

attention deficit, burnout, crossing a hard line, discontinuity, distractedness, distraction, doldrums (a place without fuel), doubtlessness, dreamer, excesses, exploitation, fantasy, flightiness, going nowhere fast, going too far, hot temper, impatience, impetuosity, impulsiveness, interruption, irresponsibility, overextension, precipitate action, premature ambition, rashness, scatteredness, trespass, unexpected changes.

Components:

The Airy part of Fire. The gaseous fluidity of fire, as seen in the flame dancing across the log, hunting up the flammable gases. Movement to where the fuel or ignition is. More of a wildfire than a controlled burn, changing quickly, but the heat output is still steady.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Leo Ascending, as the Fixed Fire sign, Ruler: Sol. Abundant energy, the relentless Sun, sport and play. Exteriorization, release from self-containment, internal pressure to be more in order to burn more or give more. Exuberance, drama, enthusiasm, excessiveness, exaggeration.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 42, Yi, Increasing, Increase. Da Xiang: Zhen (Wands) below, Xun (Prince) above; "The wind and the thunder. Increasing. The young noble, when seeing the good, as a rule, makes improvements; when having transgressed, as a rule, makes corrections." Receiving generously, taking well, using the gifts, blessings to count. Extension, diversification, broadening, enrichment, enhancements, windfalls, gifts.

“Worthwhile to have somewhere to go. Worthwhile to cross the great stream.” A world of information and experience is out there for the taking.

Queen of Wands

Queen of the Thrones of Flame

Concert, Empowerment, Versatility, Tracking

Image: An attractive queen, seated on a throne and holding a staff, leans forward with a look composed of curiosity, enthusiasm, and skepticism, as if wanting to be persuaded to support a good business, cultural, or art proposal. A sunflower suggests tropism, a spontaneous turning towards light and energy, and a black cat, familiarity.

The Queen of Wands might sense a meaningfulness inherent in her experiences that transcends that of the individual actors and favors interrelationship. Consequently, her interest is in circulating the fire, in sharing experience and projects, and in developing a sense of a greater identity with multiple living parts. She gets her work done by enlisting help and engaging her subjects. She may wait a short while to give her consent to these experiences and projects, to have some assurance of their meaning or worth. She is noble and has her standards. She is an independent or liberated sort, but she has a peculiar form of self-directedness that takes direction from the world around her. She will take on the energy of what moves her. She is able to change who she truly is without pretending. She knows the importance of synergy. Her identity is inextricable from her participation in life and she can even become the cause she supports. She will take guidance, but in an opportunistic way. She will take the lead, but in a way that obeys natural law, follows the movements of the world around her, and takes direction from an ethical compass. Being human, she may be deceived on occasion or be subject to charismatic actors. Too little pre-selection for the worth of an endeavor might lead to overextension, or dabbling. If a habit is made of this, the wrong kind of cynicism develops.

She is attractive, magnetic, and approachable when her standards can be met. She can be a good sponsor or underwriter, if the pitch for the cause is persuasive enough. She needs to be both drawn and invited to participate in a project, then in turn, she can draw upon and invite some considerable resources into the work. Once excited into motion she can move with some authority, but what may appear to be an intuitive decisiveness and spontaneity is in actuality an alert sense of adaptive responsiveness. She is not reticent or shy. The Yijing counterpart, Gua 17, Following, develops the contrast between following willingly or willfully and following blindly or passively. The image is thunder in the lake, the pulse in the blood, the rhythm of things, to be sensed and moved along with. This Queen follows like a tracker, or even a bounty hunter. She tracks what is going on in her world. Ultimately she is more of a finder than a seeker. She is aware of where she is going and her pursuits are purposeful. It takes courage to be like this. She is not the type of lady to stay down, or in the kitchen. As a companion, she is a well-trained *hetaera*, self-assured and self-possessed. Nobility follows her loyally, wherever she might choose to go. Her sympathies are a resonance with the world.

The Queen of Wands is proactively adaptive, practicing fitness by intent, taking fitness in the Spencerian or Darwinian sense of a skillful versatility. She can change who she is without pretending, and what she wants has no need to be constant. That's just a regular, feminine thing, but it helps her to move with the energy that's in circulation. She can best maintain concentration if the object of her focus is moving. While the Prince wanted to explore the extents of his realm of experience, the Queen wants the permutations of its applicability, to try the wisdom out and spread the experience around, to experiment and permute, to hybridize the elements of her culture. She is an artist herself in some way, and she supports the arts. To persuade her, one

gets her enthused instead of convinced. She is genuinely interested in others, passionate when inspired, and generous for a good cause. But she is not selfless, and she might require much persuasion in terms of enlightened self-interest, even if hers is a larger idea of self that includes her whole realm. She still likes to be at the center of the hive. It's those noble standards again. Her love and respect might be somewhat conditioned on worth, but the genuine thing is required. She is a friend of higher culture.

She likes to be involved, whether this be down deep in the work, in the rhythms and the composition, or above it like a conductor, coordinating the parts of the effort. Whether as active ingredient or catalyst, she likes being close to the heart and the pulse of things, ever ambitious to maximize throughput, so that benefits are shared or spread around.

Key Words:

accessibility, accord, adaptable identity, advocate, alliance, approval, assent, assistance, attending, attraction, attunement, cahoots, channel, charity, charm, clues, circulation, coalition, collaboration, colorfulness, communitarian, compassion, concert, concord, conduit, confidence, connectedness, connections, consent, consideration, contagion, contribution, daring, discovery, empowerment, endowment, enthusiasm, experiment, facilitator, flame spread, huntress, incentive, interest, interrelation, involvement, leading from behind, liveliness, magnetism, participation, passion, patroness, persuasion, pulse, pursuit, rabble rousing, resourcefulness, responsiveness, self-assurance, sharing, sincerity, sponsorship, sympathy, synchronization, taking part, tracking, transmission, tropism, underwriter, versatility, vibrancy, warmth, willingness.

Warnings and Reversals:

capitulation, codependency, cynicism overgrown, distrustful, too easily deceived, fickle, golden opportunity slips by, impatience with the opposition, inner confidence needs external stimulation, instability, mistrust based on experience, overcommitted with enthusiasms, recklessness, shallowness, stubbornness in error, volatility.

Components:

The Watery part of Fire. The fluidity and the dance of fire's movement and circulation, apparently spontaneous and chaotic, but in obedience to natural law. The colorfulness of experience. The spreading out or contagion of flame.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sagittarius Ascending, as the Mutable Fire sign, Ruler: Jupiter. Curious and exploratory, outgoing, broadening horizons of action and experimentation. Generous and charitable with higher good in mind. Enjoys being influential and inspirational, moving and colorful.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 17, Sui, Following, Adapting. Da Xiang: Zhen (Wands) below, Dui (Queen) above; "Within the pool there is thunder. Following. The young noble, approaching nightfall, goes indoors for refreshment and relaxation." Thunder in the lake is a pulse to be taken up or be moved with. "Following. Most fulfilling. Worthwhile to be dedicated, not a mistake." Distinctions are drawn between willfully or willingly following, tracking for example, and blindly following, without a sense of self-direction.

King of Wands

Lord of the Flame and the Lightning, King of the Spirits of Fire
Independence, Maturity, Self-Possession, Sovereignty

Image: A fiery-eyed king is seated on his throne with his power staff in hand, granting the reader audience. He seems intensely calm, attentive, fully present, and self-assured, and at the same time, animated and passionate. He is just as eager to support a worthy cause as to put an end to a bad one. He is open minded and will hear you out, as long as you're making sense, and if you can stay succinct and on point. You can see power in his stillness.

The King of Wands is the Prince all grown up and seasoned now, and come home to stay more put. His time as a prince on the move has served him well, as he built a broad understanding out of narrow, specific lessons. He likes having his lessons already learned, and might even know he's not done with this yet. He now sees several sides of an issue, which helps when serving as judge. What wisdom this life has taught him has begun to look like intuitive wisdom, but despite all that life itself has learned and passed through the genes, one is not born a sage or an elder. The identity that we evolve is confirmed, or scaled back, and polished by experience until it seems second nature. Sometimes we are even made stronger by what has failed to destroy us. The King should know his mind fairly well by now, and that his own best interest is the same as his domain's. Empowering his people also serves him well. One of his more challenging lessons is learning to learn second-hand. The fact that none are allowed by right to tell him what to do doesn't obscure the fact that it's most embarrassing to make public mistakes that could have been avoided. It's not always right to read the instructions or ask for directions, but reading the signs that say when we ought to is often a useful skill. So the King has lived and learned, with much beneath and behind him now, and this is what has become of him, with his choices based on his precedents. But he is now capable of truly original ideas and plans, seeming to arise out of intuition.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 51, Arousal, emphasizes the development of maturity and self-possession. These give us a mastery over our impulses, and particularly, our tendency to react to a stimulus instead of responding. We learn what starts and startles us. This is a King we have here, or a natural aristocrat, an alpha male, born to lead, a hunter of power who can turn nearly any situation to his advantage. He knows when and how to act when others only cower. Taking charge is what he does. When provoked, he is swift to respond, without the predictability of a reflex. High energy is his element, and this is his version of grace. As such, it serves him well to know the difference between action and reaction, between response and reflex, between impetus and impetuosity, between impulse and impulsiveness. If he needs just a moment for this, he can take it: this is the wiser side of deliberate. And if he seems composed and dispassionate, just be aware that control is not the end of his passion.

Having viable visions are best, and this means keeping one's eyes on the road ahead. Being headstrong works best when the head in question holds senses and reason. Being independent works best when we can independently seek out the help that we need, or delegate those tasks that it makes little sense for us to do by ourselves. Self-starters will function best when they know the right place to start from. A great leader will want to be surrounded by talent, even by those with more skill than his own. To be proactive and autonomous is not about not seeking feedback or counsel. Conviction and firmness are traits to be much admired, except when we are deluded or wrong. The flexibility we need in this case is our lifelong education. It isn't vacillating, flip-flopping, or waffling.

And it takes a lot of nobility and dignity to do this, to back up and think twice. When you can't still learn, it's maladaptive. This is when pride makes us fools.

It takes a lot to learn competence, more than most people have. Another of the great alpha challenges is how to bring out the best in the betas, something good in the gammas, and anything at all in the deltas. But frustration must be seen as reaction for an alpha who would be a good leader. He cannot be impatient with the slow-moving folk or bothered by the slow-witted. And there is really only one great way to compel them: to lead by compelling example. And with regard to authority, that is a thing for authors, not readers.

Key Words:

ability under stress, adept, ambition, aplomb, arousal, assertion, assurance, authority, autocracy, autonomy, clout, cogency, command, compelling example, competence, composure, confidence, conviction, decisiveness, demands, dignity, dominance, drive, effectiveness, empowerment, executive, exemplar, experience, fierceness, fire with purpose, firmness, grasp, grip, immediacy, impetus, impulse control, independence, initiative, integrity, invigoration, leadership by example, mandate, mastery, maturity, motivation, nobility, patriarch, poise, principle, probity, quickening, resolve, response ability, responsibility, sangfroid, self-directedness, self-discipline, self-mastery, self-possession, self-starting, sovereignty, spiritedness, starting, suddenness, taking charge, virility, volitional maturity, willfulness.

Warnings and Reversals:

aggression, arrogance, arrogation, authoritarianism, autocracy, blind impulse, bravado, despotism, egomania, excessive principle, exaggeration, false start, harsh criticism, imposition, impatience, impulsiveness, insensitivity, intolerance, overconfidence, overly-opinioned, overreaction, rashness, ruthlessness, stubbornness, tactlessness, tunnel vision, tyranny, weak follow through.

Components:

The Fiery part of Fire. Lightning and thunder, the fiery expression of fire, a short-lived burst of powerful energy. The Golden Dawn stressed the action in the short term, or the fleetingness of this character's influence, but simple and single acts can have ongoing and lasting effects and repercussions that we must take responsibility to manage.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Aries Ascending, as the Cardinal Fire sign, Ruler: Mars. Characterized by independence, ambition, assertion, aggression, decisiveness. Self-motivated, headstrong, competitive. Short attention span, so not great with follow-through, but also not inclined to hold resentments.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 51, Zhen, Arousal, the Arousing, Shock. Da Xiang: Zhen (Wands) below, Zhen (King) above; "Resounding thunder. Arousal. The young noble uses fear and alarm to adjust and examine." Learning from repercussions. "Shock brings fear and alarm, and mirthful words and echoing laughter. The thunder startles for a hundred li around. But do not let drop the ladle of sacred wine." Life experience brings increasing self-mastery. We live and learn. Impulse control and the development of response over reaction.

Cups

Ace of Cups

Root of the Powers of Water

Openness, Worthiness, Availability, Security

Image: A chalice, in a man's hand, is tipped slightly towards the viewer, exposing a cup half filled with what might be water, wine, or blood. There is a suggestion in this shape of the human female pudenda. Many cards and authors imply that the cup is the holy grail and would depict it as ornate. If you wish to use this image of a sacrament here, see 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade' and choose wisely. But we don't need this magic pretend blood to commune with the sacred. We merely need to be open, sincere, and worthy. An alternative image could depict a cup that's just beginning to be filled in a Japanese tea ceremony.

As discussed in the introduction to the Suits, the Cup is not the water. The Ace of Cups is not affect, feeling, or emotion. It is our readiness for these, the place we have made for them, and our worthiness, or our sense of worthiness, as well. Without this, the liquid is just a spill. The card speaks to the process of opening up, to how we make room within ourselves for authentic and heartfelt experiences with others, or opening to our own inner lives, or to the natural world. This is what starts the flow. It's our readiness to both give and receive, to respond to gifts, to meet someone new, to acknowledge a muse, to let ourselves be stirred. This is about precursors or preconditions to genuine feeling.

Muju wrote: "An inquisitive professor once visited Nan-In to pay his respects, but he could hardly bring himself to stop talking. Nan-In served him tea, pouring the cup full and not stopping. 'It is overfull,' cried the professor, 'no more will go in!' 'Like this cup,' said Nan-In, 'you are full of your opinions and speculations. I cannot show you Zen unless you first empty your cup.'"

Just like at home in the kitchen, we want to put our fresh beverage into a clean, empty cup. Cleanliness here is emotional clarity, a freedom from any of the undesirable residue from our past experience, from our residual sentiments and resentments. Just about any sentiment is legitimate once: it's when we pummel ourselves with the same emotions over and over again that we jam up our opportunities for fresh experience that respects what we are facing. Several authors list fulfillment as a meaning for this card, but it isn't, yet. The meaning is closer to full-empty-ment, not being so full of ourselves that we cannot make room for the fullness we want from the world. This emptiness is capacity: a capacity for enjoyment, for love, for rewarding experience, for receiving new gifts and blessings, for feeling and emotion in general. The Ace of Cups represents a new new sensitivity, or a sensitization, a readiness to feel. The analog in the plant kingdom, of course, is the open flower, ready for pollination.

The astrological correlation of this card to Saturn in Water signs underscores the big challenges we have in relaxing our inhibitions and opening ourselves up. While someone with this configuration might be said to define themselves in terms of their sensitivity or their capacity to feel, this same sensitivity can also lead to damage, overexposure, and subsequent desensitization. Our capacity for openness is a function of our wounds as well as our wants. The fear of our being hurt again, mistrust from having our trust betrayed, self-doubts that are often deserved because of our bone-headed mistakes, all of these can shut down our willingness to receive the new. Saturn 'rules' the skin, the metaphorical boundary where we receive our wounds. But there is

nothing in the rules that says that the part of our identity that is symbolically represented by Saturn needs to play the victim or martyr. If we are to succeed in life, this part of us needs to learn mastery of these fears and doubts, to learn the worth of vulnerability and to keep coming back for more. We are not, however, avoiding that old definition of insanity here: we make different mistakes next time.

Security and insecurity are also the primary theme of the Yijing counterpart, Gua 45, Collectedness or Gathering Together. The vessel here is the reservoir or pond, raised above the earth, requiring that its banks be maintained so that the water doesn't leak out. There is also an emphasis in the text of the social aspects of security, how we congregate wanting connection, and attain comfort levels in our safe environments and sanctuaries, allowing us to open up. There is much crying and sighing depicted in the Yijing's text. We prepare the place for our water and fulfillment follows when we are ready. We seem to like a little insurance beforehand.

The Ace of Cups can be related to four exalted states of sentient awareness described in Buddhism as the *Brahmaviharas* or Abodes of Brahma. These largely concern our better social relationships, which tend to dominate our affective states. *Metta* is loving-kindness or good will; *karuna* is compassion or sympathy, but not fellow-suffering; *mudita* is a sympathetic gladness in the well-being or success of another; and *upekkha* is equilibrium or equanimity. At least four more pertinent states can be added here: *khama*, forgiveness; *katannuta*, gratitude or thankfulness; *garava*, reverence, deep respect or a sense of the sacred; and *khanti*, patience. All eight of these states show an openness of the heart, or a readiness to accept, that characterizes this card.

Key Words:

acceptance, appreciation, afference, assurance, attunement, availability, care, caution, cheerfulness, cleansing, collectedness, communion, confidence, connecting, consecration, contentment, convocation, disponsibilité, enjoyment, esteem, faith, fertility, forgiving, fountainhead, gift, gratitude, emotional healing, invitation, longing, open heart, opening up, openness, overflow, permission, preparation, preparedness, purification, readiness, receiving, receptacle, receptivity, renewal, reservoir, responsiveness, risk, sacrament, sanction, sanctity, securing, security, seeking fulfillment, sensitivity, sensitization, sincerity, softening, surrounding, susceptibility, tenderness, threshold, trust, upwelling, vulnerability, welcoming, wellness, willingness, worthiness.

Warnings and Reversals:

anhedonia, anxiety, blocked emotion, closed off, craving, false heart, fearfulness, forced joy, full of oneself, guilt, half-heartedness, insecurity, mistrust, negative self-image, numbness, rancor, repression, resentment (re-sentiment), self-abasement, self-doubt, self-loathing, shame, sterility, suppression, unearned sense of self-worth.

Components:

Ace plus Cups. Readiness to open up within and into the world of affect, to give reign to the feelings and emotions, and the comfort level needed to do this. Work on precursors to feeling, finding the source or wellspring of love or other genuine feeling.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Saturn in Water Signs and Houses. Issues related to opening up the feelings, sensitivity and sensitization. We can define ourselves as a feeling being if wounds and traumas don't lead to emotional shut down.

Qabalah: Kether in Briah. The fountainhead or source of sentience, opening up the heart, understanding with feeling, readiness to feel and for expression of feeling.

Yijing: Gua 45, Cui, Collectedness, Gathering Together. Da Xiang: Kun (Ace) below, Dui (Cups) above; “The pond is raised above the earth. Collectedness. The young noble puts aside weapons and instruments, guarding against unreadiness.” An elevated pond requires embankments, shoring up, and maintenance to hold the water. Security, freedom from insecurities, preparedness, readiness, sanctuary. “Fulfillment. The sovereign approaches his temple. Rewarding to encounter a mature human being, making an offering. Worthwhile to be dedicated. To offer great sacrifices is promising. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go.” There is much weeping and emotion in some of line texts. Pulling and holding yourself together. Composure, dignity. Congregating with others for comfort.

Two of Cups

Avowal, Promise, Intention, Affirmation

Image: A young couple, facing each other with intense-but-loving eye contact, toast to a chosen future together. The scene is one of promise, avowal, and depth of commitment, out of a foresighted present into a chosen future. Its persistence is in large part a function of the original sincerity of their avowals. Salud. They are usually seen toasting this future together beneath the Caduceus of Hermes. That much makes sense. There is a sanctity to these vows, even though any implied contract here may have been negotiated with some quid pro quo. The necessity of capping this Caduceus with a winged lion's head isn't as clear, and might even be dismissed as gratuitous.

While nearly everybody who writes about this card speaks first of the love between two people (or an avowal of continued love), we need to remember that this card can as easily pop up in questions about business or broken plumbing. The vignette in the RWS deck obscures a far more general meaning, much as it does in the Trump of the Lovers. Recall that the Two is a stretching of the point, giving it a direction, a line, or a vector, or a contrast between earlier and later states, and that Cups represent affective states, shaped feelings or emotions. This card, then, is about making feelings last and go somewhere on purpose, an emotional connection either with a person or with a hoped-for result, changing, if possible, only for the better. The couple exchanging vows is one very good exemplar of this core meaning, but it's not the only one, and even here, Crowley's phrase "love under will" or love with some direction to it, is more to the point than simply love. It's feeling or attractive force joined with purpose and permission. This is honest and conscious love, something elective, or chosen, not something fallen into. This is not a case of "the heart wants what it wants and can't help it."

It's water's nature to fluctuate, often making the maintenance or even continuity of an affective state something of a challenge. While many will argue that since ups and downs are necessary, each to contrast the other, then they must be experienced in equal intensity and duration. But this is platitude, and suffering is not necessary to happiness. Neither does happiness require an attachment to something more stable. It's often simply a matter of setting aside our complaints and deciding what we want, combined with a sense of gratitude for whatever we have at the moment, and patience with the pace of the rest of the parade. To make a feeling or emotion last in an unchanging way is perhaps a little deluded, but we might think of this as a stream that we can make more steady and reliable with better intentions and attitudes. Any extended feelings will have to come to terms with the changes that time has to offer.

Besides duration and intensity, we also have choices of quality. We want worthy and meaningful states, hearts full of respect and appreciation, love and trust, comfort and enthusiasm. It's OK to be conditional here, to set conditions like these. We want to grow into a future where such states come more often and stay longer. And we want to have the times that lie between these to show some improvement as well. We tend to think of our feelings and emotions as things that happen to us. Many somehow think it's inauthentic to show some self-control or management here. Comes love, nothing can be done? That's largely a way of fooling ourselves, particularly into proceeding with extramarital affairs.

The vector that should be our greatest concern here is between our present and future selves. How much quality and worth do we wish to prepare for, and are we ready to work on the values we need to attract ourselves in the better directions. The Yijing counterpart, Gua 05, Anticipation or Waiting, concentrates on the things we might do

while waiting for our real lives to begin, on maximizing the meanwhile, which will eventually include all of our moments. It will take more work than wishing to have the fullest life, and the work needs something to want. We could make better use of our emptiness here by not filling up on random experience. We may want to guard some gates and even lock some doors. Being reconciled or resigned to host any strange thing that comes our way is a big part of our emotional confusion, and the main reason we get knocked so far sideways when we at last cross the path that we should have been on.

Lastly, there is the great challenge of doing all of this work with someone else as a partner. Life has evolved some useful tricks to help get us started here, like oxytocin and dopamine, to blind us to each other's flaws and faults for a sufficient amount of time, until it's too late to just walk away. We have until these begin to wear off to have built a more lasting foundation, not just with promises and vows, but with meaning and sincerity, common ground and purpose, trust and support, sacrifice and conciliation. These must be enough to challenge and defy all reason. This is in hope of something more than sum of the parts, why two or more are gathered.

Key Words:

affection, affective intention, affinity, affirmation, agreement, anticipation, aspiration, assumption, attraction, avowal, balance, basis of trust, bond, commitment, communion, conciliation, confidence, confirmation, connection, consecration, constancy, cooperation, coupling, covenant, declaration, dedication, determined states, devotedness, devotion, earnestness, elective affinities, encounter, endurance, engagement, equal partnership, exchange, expectancy, hope, intention, long-term commitment, love, love under will, loyalty, mutuality, oath, pact, patience, pledge, predetermination, presentiment, promise, promising a future, prospect, purpose, reciprocity, recognition of an equal, reconciliation, reflection, relationship, resolve, respect, right intention, sincerity, standards for feelings, steadfastness, steady stream, support, surety, sympathy, tests of time, toast (*na zdorovie, salud*), troth, trust, upholding an oath, validation, valuing, vow, intelligence applied to feeling, work of love.

Warnings and Reversals:

affect at cross-purposes, betrayal, breach of promise, broken trust, denial, dissonance, distraction, doubt, estrangement, falseness, fickleness, impatience, infidelity, intolerance, misdirection, misunderstanding, seduction, troubled relationship, unenlightened self-interest,

Components:

Two plus Cups. Giving a focus or direction to affect. Giving an aim or a higher purpose to feeling and emotion. Taking responsibility for feeling and intending a higher quality, elevating the standards. Being true, staying true.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Uranus in Water Signs and Houses. Uranus, as a path of power and higher purpose, has its reputation for radical discontinuity because most people come at theirs sideways instead of in alignment. They get knocked sideways. Uranus in Water elevates feeling and emotion as guides worthy of persistence and consistency, an avowal to hold true. Epicurean standards in pleasure and happiness (eudaemonia).

Qabalah: Chokmah in Briah. Wisdom or intelligence applied to the world that always

flows and changes. Staying a course. Seeking direction from what sensitivity tells us and reinforcing that with assent.

Yijing: Gua 05, Xu, Anticipation, Waiting. Da Xiang: Qian (2) below, Kan (Cups) above; “The clouds rise into the sky. Anticipation. The young noble takes refreshment and sustenance with peace of mind and cheer.” The clouds rise into the sky. The satisfactions of needs and wants are delayed, pushed back to some future time, leaving the challenge of maximizing the meanwhile, maintaining a useful attitude or worthwhile, though temporary, substitutes. “Be true. Honor fulfillment. Persistence is timely. Worthwhile to cross the great stream.” Crossing a stream is best done before the floods come.

Three of Cups

Affiliation, Community, Commonality, Confluence

Image: Three women, in festive attire and mood, celebrate their friendship in the midst of a garden, toasting with cups held high. This could be a harvest celebration. The RWS image appears borrowed from Sandro Botticelli's Three Graces, or Charities (Thaleia, Aglaia, and Euphrosyne) but they are given cups. A modification might show three races here: black, white and Asian.

The Three of Cups is first of all the sharing of fellow feeling, and particularly between related individuals (however distantly) on common ground. This is our extended family, which only for the wisest and most understanding among us includes all of life on Earth. This is our fraternity, or sorority, our in-group, of whatever size. It's where our feelings feel belonging. Thought and judgment, planning and artifice, rules and regulations are all still relatively absent here. Effective spontaneity is the only conditionality. Holding is done with the open hand. When we do impose order on top of this, it seems diminished. Clearly, the larger the group, the more the intimate social affections are challenged and the more trust will give way to precaution. As such, most of our human clubs and conventions are limited or parochial in scale, and define themselves at least in part by the kind of folk they are not. We cut ourselves off in this way from the fuller effects of this card, but at least within the circles we draw we get to know a liberality of feeling and get a taste of what we could be in a better world.

The Yijing's counterpart, Gua 08, Belonging or Holding Together, depicts water spread out over the earth, with the water being naturally or spontaneously drawn to the lowest or humblest place. This anticipates the Daojia image of confluence: the hundred tributary streams paying tribute or making contributions to the humblest state. There is neither structure nor force involved here in all of this movement. This is simply gravity and water's surface tension, and might be likened to the cohesive tendencies of familial and familiar relationships. And it might also be applied to holding social institutions together without need of excessive artifice. We emphasize what the Lakota Sioux call in prayer: *mitakuye oyasin*, all our relations.

The standards of quality we have here are organic and spontaneous. We are following our bliss and our hearts, guided by attraction, but there is a real hazard here in being too unconditional with our affections and falling in with the wrong crowd, of adopting and being adopted by what might be called inferior people. Commonness and commonality, even averageness or normalcy, can drag us down to our lowest common denominators. Common ground, origin, interest, or cause is a low standard, not a high one, an inclusive principle, not a noble cause. There is more to the big picture than what like minds can agree on. This should be remembered when we want to turn the human norm into a god or political leader. It flies in the face of the painful half of evolution on earth, the half that makes sure it all works: selection. Our interrelatedness has a big place in the life of enlightened and sentient beings, but ultimately the highest and best use of our humility is still, paradoxically, to elevate ourselves.

Transcending the person, getting beyond the person, or getting over the person, may be regarded as one of the main goals here. Transpersonal psychology is concerned with expanding the sense of identity beyond the individual and embracing greater realities, the human family, the web of life, the starry cosmos evolving to study itself, and exploring our more distant horizons, from the depths of experienced time up to the higher orders of trans-human awareness. But having the experience that proves to you once and for all that 'we are all one and interconnected' is not a spiritual attainment, nor is it seeing the whole of reality. It is merely a little piece of firm ground to stand on

and another experience to explore. It's a place to get started, and not the final goal of understanding. We gather with our kin and kindred to learn a little kind-ness. And cease for a while from struggle.

So this is a place to begin, not an end to our journey. The benefits of community are sweeping: sharing a sense of belonging with others, supportive friends and environments, a sense of fitness to our place and acceptance, without critique, a sense of life proceeding as it should, thankfulness, welcome, comfort, enjoyment, home, and celebration. Few experiences are more damaging to us than having our trust betrayed and this spares us much of that and offers the healing force of an overflow of affection. We just need to remember the hazards as well: the loss of the outside that is being excluded, forgetting that the mind of a group is a fiction, and the loss of the personal center that's the ultimate source of all mind and all sovereignty.

Key Words:

abundance, affiliation, affinity, alliance, assemblage, assimilation, association, being drawn or attracted, belonging, bounty, braided affect, brotherhood, camaraderie, caring, celebration, circulation, coherence, cohesion, comfort, common ground, commonality, communion, community, compassion, compatibility, concord, concourse, confluence, congress, connection, consolation, contribution, convergence, conviviality, cooperation, draw, embrace, enjoyment, familiarity, family, flow, fraternity and sorority, friendship, fulfillment, gathering, grace period, graciousness, happiness, home, hospitality, idealism, identification, immersion, inclusion, interrelations, joining, like-mindedness, magnetism, merging, mutuality, naturalness, nurture, openness, overflow, peers, *philia*, pleasure, plenty, the Rainbow Gathering and its warriors, reassurance, reconciliation, relatedness, reunion, sharing, sisterhood, sociability, society, solace, spontaneity, spreading, sympathy, union, welcome, wholeness.

Warnings and Reversals:

betrayal, codependency, compromise, cultural pollution from poor selection, dilution, escapism, extenuation, forced affiliation or connection, group think, in-group bias, incompatibility, indulgence, lack of appreciation, loss of center within the group, misidentification, misplaced belonging, out-group prejudice, overindulgence, peer pressure, selflessness abused, shallow or superficial relations, unconditionality in excess, wrong crowd.

Components:

Three plus Cups. Understanding as opening up and feeling interconnected, sharing and communing with others. Emotional clarification and acceptance.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Neptune in Water Signs and Houses. Trends towards organic society, issues of belonging, family, commonality, merging and identification. Transpersonal psychology and consciousness.

Qabalah: Binah in Briah. Understanding, interconnectedness and matriarchal values in a fluid and transpersonal world, creative interaction with others beyond selfish interests.

Yijing: Gua 08, Bi, Belonging, Holding Together, Union. Da Xiang: Kun (3) below, Kan (Cups) above; "Across the earth there is water. Belonging. The early sovereigns established the numerous realms to make kinsmen of all of the leaders." Gathering on common ground. Confluence, union, affiliation, association, mutuality. "Promising. For a first consultation, supreme and enduring commitment. Not a mistake. Wanting

peace, approach directly. The late are the unfortunate ones.” Affinities are spontaneous and natural. A failure to come together suggests that the potential connection might not have been there after all if it took so much time to think it through or wait for invitations.

Four of Cups

Impasse, Distraction, Processing, Reevaluation

Image: A young man sits by a tree, his posture a little defensive, seeming to dream of being elsewhere, and also perhaps regretting being here. With three drained, upside-down cups by his side he stares vacantly into a fourth, full cup, offering fresher refreshments, but he shows no inclination to reach for it. His body language indicates his being closed off. What has happened is not what he wanted. The new cup resembles the Ace. The offer seems better than his attitude towards it, but appearances may be deceiving.

The Four of Cups shares a difficulty with the Four of Wands: the nature of the Four is to seek composure or composition, to develop structure and stable identity, but operating through a fluid element keeps changing all of that. Affect is ephemeral. A sort of dynamic equilibrium needs to be found, but without the complex skill sets and tools that come with the lessons of the higher numbers. We think we know where we're going, then realize halfway there that we really want something different, or that 'there' is not what we thought it might be, or even that 'there' was all in our head all along. We have an affective attainment or satisfaction that soon feels empty, stagnant, or sour. We discover that feelings and emotions are fluid and compromise our stability, or else they keep on going with some kind of inertia when we need to change our directions. They are not always responsive to the equally dynamic realities of living. Water is a fluid and here it flows nowhere. Simple adaptability simply isn't enough. Just when we get our attitude readjusted, the thing we've just adjusted to changes.

The subject in the RWS deck is pausing to reassess, reevaluate, or reexamine what has brought him to this pass, or impasse. It's easy to imagine that the cups were full of wine and that our subject is rethinking everything and abstaining for now. And then we might continue the analogy and imagine that he is moving towards recovery and working his fourth (!) step, 'making a searching and fearless moral inventory.' In any event, this sort of personal reassessment is a core meaning of this card. The counterpart in the Yijing, Gua 39, is Impasse or Obstruction, and depicts coming to a place where further progress is blocked and some sort of detour, bypass, or emotional resilience will be required. The text speaks specifically to a temporary halt to one's progress in order to work on one's character, a revision of either one's identity or one's purpose. Sherlock Holmes might call these 'three-pipe problems.' But you know he would make the most of it, and that is the real key here: we make new contacts and see new possibilities when we pause to look around us, to ponder or reexamine where we are going. We might be complaining of a detour which could turn out to be a much richer experience than meeting our original goals. Plan B stands for Better plan, at least when Plan A has failed.

One of the common subtitles for this card is blended pleasure, an obscure joining of words that might mean pleasure mixed with confusion, doubt, perplexity, discomfort, or anxiety. Or it could mean ambivalence, or vacillation. The astrological correlate of Jupiter in Water signs means a sense of self that wants to identify with feeling and emotion. This can be good when affect agrees with a pleasant reality or even if it simply remains fairly stable. But when feelings are challenged or challenging, so is this sense of self. One gets confused, rather than simply sensing confusion. Such an unpleasantness can be taken too seriously, or too personally. To feel like a success, one might need to reestablish the goals in terms of attainability: baby steps, taken one day at a time.

The worst approach here is to sulk and pout, to fester inside, to get stuck in emotional feedback loops, to be self-absorbed in a self-limiting self, to take the pity pot for a throne, to see change as upset, to be unresponsive, all in order to have some constancy to the feelings. Such spells take time to break, while the world moves even further on. And time in such moods is always always and never, never just for a moment. So what if this is the end of a path or of one chapter of life? It's the plot twists that keep it interesting. A good mystery should take a convoluted route. Routines become ruts and entrenchments. Habits turn into addictions. Things arise, things pass away. It's our readiness in need of renewal.

On the positive side of things, this card can be used as an emotional skill set. Variety of experience expands and extends the range of what we can identify with, of who and what we can be, provided that we learn to not cling to favorite states. We can keep the attitude going while plans, goals, and directions are changing or even reversing. Our fearless and searching inventory becomes a catalog of attitudes, from which to pick and choose. We are detoured but not deterred. We can look for new opportunities that are sideways from where we were going. On the less obvious positive side, disillusionment means being stripped of our illusions, disenchantment, freed from enchantments, and disappointment, informed that our appointments need tuning. We rediscover our broader selves and find the paths not yet seen. The best of our feelings need refreshing: from time to time is good, but continuously is much better.

Key Words:

ambivalence, anticlimax, bewilderment, blind alley, brooding, change of direction, change of heart, complications, composure, confusion, contrarities, dead end, dead stop, deadlock, dealing, delay, detour, dilemma, discomfort, discontent, dissatisfaction, distraction, diversion, doldrums, doubt, drawback, emotional inertia, equivocation, hanging on, hindrance, impasse, impediment, inconvenience, interrupted plans or routine, introspection, moral inventory, misgivings, off track, opportunity overlooked, path unseen, pause, perplexity, pondering, predicament, preoccupation, presence of mind, processing, quandary, reassessment, rebooting, reconsideration, re-contextualizing, re-envisioning, reevaluation, reformulation, regrouping, reorientation, reset, rest stop, restlessness, review, revision, rumination, satiety, scruples, self-reflection, soul searching, stagnation, stasis, stationary period, surfeit, stalemate, uncertainty, unmade mind, withdrawal.

Warnings and Reversals:

annoyance, apathy, aversion, bitterness, boredom, complaint, disconsolation, discontent, discouragement, disgust, disillusionment, ennui, frustration, inflexible moods, ingratitude, jadedness, lethargy, petulance, pity pot, pouting, re-sentiment, self-indulgence, staleness, stagnation, stuck in the past, sulking, sullenness, surfeit, unmade mind, weariness.

Components:

Four plus Cups. Seeking composure or composition, to develop a structure and a stable identity, but operating through a fluid element that undermines stability. Feelings need to keep moving and changing. Identifying with these creates problems with a stable sense of identity. Wave forms and eddies permit stable shapes in an ever-changing medium, but they cannot hold onto the medium and must let this pass through.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Jupiter in Water Signs and Houses. An inclination to identify self with what

self is feeling, and to try to hold faith and confidence there. Good to expand and explore when the feelings go many places, but one must learn resilience, to choose between states, or else to avoid the unpleasant feelings, which is much harder.

Qabalah: Chesed in Briah. Mercy and equanimity in the vast wealth of a changing world, developing and securing the ability to embrace the richness of it all.

Yijing: Gua 39, Jian, Impasse, Obstruction; Da Xiang: Gen (4) below, Kan (Cups) above; “Over the mountain is water. Impasse. The young noble turns bodily around to work on character.” Water over the mountain means storms in the highlands. The pass is closed, the journey is literally at an impasse. At least a day to kill, or maybe to live. “Worthwhile west to south. not worthwhile east to north. Rewarding to encounter a mature human being. Persistence is opportune.” The character Jian also means having trouble with the feet in going forward, which suggests a parallel with the English word scruples, derived from the Latin for a pebble in one’s sandal or shoe. The meaning of both is pausing to correct things.

Five of Cups

Disappointment, Retrenchment, Rallying, Salvage

Image: A disconsolate man in a hooded black cape stands with his head bowed amidst five wine goblets, three of which have been overturned. That's more than half-emptied. Crying over spilt wine, he pays no attention to the two full goblets remaining, to which his back is turned. His ingratitude with what remains risks the loss of this as well. This is disappointment, but not not yet disillusionment, since he still has illusions.

As the word emotion implies, we draw energy for motion from affective states. We use them as a motive or motivating force. We also have inherited an evolved inclination to feel loss more acutely than we feel gain: loss hurts us more than gain pleases us. Along with this, we have a disinclination to feel content with an emotionally neutral status quo. This is why crisis mode, upset, and stress are such normal states, and a part of why people like to play the victim. Affective adaptation is being forced upon us here. We suffer because it drives us, no matter that it drives us insane. We mistake intensity for meaning or power and fuel up on our resentments and losses. Force can be dramatic, but it isn't power. As naive, irrational, and unintelligent as our feelings and emotions can be, there is still good guidance to be had here. But we cannot mistake them for who we are. We are born to dissatisfaction. When we have enough to eat, then we still don't have enough friends. When we have enough friends, then the color of paint on the house is all wrong. These are sometimes referred to as low, high, and meta-grumbles. We behave as though we have a right and entitlement to everything going our way. Ingratitude often becomes our normal state of mind.

Emotions and perspective are almost opposites. Emotions pull us out of both moment and context and into themselves. It always takes some time to process and sort them, but meanwhile, our reason and judgment are hijacked and gone. They can leave us naive and destabilized, overwhelmed and maladapted, and still we regard them as sacred somehow. We can even lose such priorities as living preferred over dying, or longevity over quick burnout. The multi-stage process of grieving a loss is fairly well understood, and we can expedite this, as long as this is not rushed, pushed, or forced. Feelings are somewhat more present than emotions, but these are not as much of a Five of Cups problem as they are a way to point the way out. We need to feel like there remains something more, beyond the setbacks, troubles, and clouds over our judgment. We need to find some reason to pull ourselves out of our pits. Beyond some early point to all this, our suffering is voluntary.

There is much information to process here. When we are disappointed, we can ask ourselves what went wrong in making those appointments. When we are disillusioned, we can reexamine our illusions. When we find ourselves disenchanted, we can look at who cast those enchantments. Things didn't work out as promised, planned, or predicted, but we can't use our failed expectations to judge or measure the world. The world is change, and powers beyond our own. It's our job to find our own way to survive. Unlike disillusionment, maybe our discouragement still wants to discover some new source of courage, just not in an inflated sense of the power we wield or the luck we deserve. We still look to external circumstance, but we take Castaneda's advice by 'using all the event.' Naturally, here, we look to the two cups remaining. The three were nothing more than the high costs of living in the real world, like cutting a check for the rent or the mortgage. Or dues. Or tuition. Or an offering. Or the rainy day write off. It doesn't hurt us to feel a little dissatisfied, though it still helps to remember that needs are more secure than desires. Hunger is good: it feeds us. In the end, it's ingratitude that kills us. We are lucky to have the two cups remaining. Realism is the

best position to take here, reorienting to a changed reality, and acceptance of the losses. But this is not the same as approving of the losses.

What we have lost is a number of unhatched chickens, all painstakingly counted. We have to reclaim what remains. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 03, Rallying or Difficult Beginnings, we rally with and around what remains, despite our initial difficulties, and fight for the higher priorities, with all of the energy that the Fives and the Thunder can offer. Since these are Cups, we might have some challenging issues with appeals made strictly to reason. We need to sense or find our most urgent needs, outside of this narrow context and inside the bigger picture. We have to see this greater perspective as relevant here and now, and turn the urgency into an urge. We can draw off some force for this project from where it is currently being wasted: letting go can be an empowerment. We might not even need to calm down, which is not a good fit for the fives anyway. We just want to get redirected and make ourselves more effective and less maladapted. We say 'bygones,' suck it up, snap out of it, rub some dirt on it, grunt, and move on. Nor do we need to play the victim before we can ask for some help.

Key Words:

alliances needed, bottoming out, brooding, bygones, comeback, concentration, coping, crisis, crisis management, crisis mode, cutting losses, destabilization, disappointment, disruption, dissatisfaction, distress, disturbance, *dukkha*, emotional distraction, ephemeral affect, facing the facts, facing the music, fallback position, focus, frustration, getting a grip, grieving process, hypersensitivity, inflammation, letting go, loss in pleasure, mishap, muster, need for objectivity, partial loss, pessimism, plan B, prioritizing, pulling it back together, rallying, readjustment, realignment, rebounding, recalculation, reclaiming, recovering, re-empowerment, regrouping, reinstatement, rescue, resilience, retrenchment, salvaging, settling, snapping back, snapping out of it, sorting it out, sucking it up, taking stock, triage, upset.

Warnings and Reversals:

attachment, bereavement, bitterness, clinging, clouded judgment, denial, despair, dwelling on troubles, emotional hijacking and loops, exaggeration, fretting, gloom, grief, ingratitude, lament, melodrama, moping, narrow focus, overreaction, overreliance on external circumstance, paralysis, partial loss made worse, pity pot, remorse, resentment, self-fulfilling pessimism, sense of entitlement, slough of despond, sulking, vain regret, victim mentality, wallowing.

Components:

Five plus Cups. A forceful energy is applied to or through an element that's at its best when it's at peace. This can lead to much splashing and spilling, be this milk, water, wine, or tears. Some time must be taken to settle down and recover, to gather wits and helpers. All change will cost something.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mars in Water Signs and Houses. Inclined to use feeling and emotion as a source of motivation and fuel. Can regard emotion for its own sake, or for the sake of motion. Having less fulfillment might be perceived as less drive, so the intensity of dissatisfaction might be drawn upon instead.

Qabalah: Geburah in Briah. A disequilibrating force is introduced to calm seas, resulting in storminess and stress. But storms only bring climate back into balance by dissipating accumulated energy. They would not exist without a built-up gradient or differential, a backlog of change.

Yijing: Gua 03, Zhun, Rallying, Difficulty at the Beginning. Da Xiang: Zhen (5) below, Kan (Cups) above; “Clouds and thunder. Rallying. The young noble sorts warp from weft.” Clouds and thunder: a heavy storm descends on a tender plant that’s trying to establish itself. There is a sense of urgency to be tapped here, offering more promise than self-indulgence can. A rite of passage. “Supreme fulfillment. Worthwhile to be persistent. Not at all useful to have somewhere to go. Worthwhile to enlist delegates.” A need to forget expectations and focus on present realities. The rainy day write-off. Get help by enlisting others and other points of view. No use or need to play the victim.

Six of Cups

Culmination, *Eudaimonia*, Presence, Persistence of Memory

Image: The RWS deck shows two children playing in an idyllic, old-country garden setting, and six cups with a flower in each. An adult is in the background. These may also be inner children, perhaps drawn from memory. Alternatively, a family of six, two grandparents, two parents and two children, join in a toast around a happy family table. The focus is on the children, who are giggling to each other while toasting. Everything is in place and the terms and conditions for happiness appear to be satisfied. Barbara Walker suggests that our archetypal primordial golden age of giants was grownups all around us as kids.

The Six of Cups brings us up to the present day, where, ready or not, all of the past is completed, and completed prologue. The core meaning is This Moment Now, one of appreciation and deep reflection on what has brought us here. We are cumulative beings, a culmination of prior influences. Now we are in a moment well-earned, where nothing more needs be done for a while. Humanly good and decent days are portrayed here. The terms and conditions for our happiness are satisfied. There is well-being and feeling well. Or this is a memory of such a moment, brought forward into the present. It's good to look back and review, as long as we aren't desperate to be where we're not. Kierkegaard said that "life can only be understood backwards, although it must be lived forwards." This is a time for that understanding.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 63, Already Across, speaks of a present which is now just about perfect, where all of the parts have found their proper place and it's time for some final or finishing touches, and tying off of loose ends. This is the culmination of a long project or past, but time neither stops nor slows down, and any relative permanence to this pleasant tableau might as well be forgotten. Incompleteness is what drives us, and calls in the energy needed. So with the dynamic just about spent, it's time to prepare to do maintenance, against no less of a foe than the heat death of the universe. There are diminishing returns here. Seeing forward is facing decay. Even temporary permanence will only be won by an anticlimactic, uphill fight against unrelenting entropy. Still, our duty is to enjoy things while they last, and if we can be wise, to be grateful even as our favorite things are slipping away.

It is fashionable among the 'spiritual' folk to advise living this life in the present, but there is a point to having our memories, as well as our predictions. We can't really be here now for long, and it takes a bit of conceit to think we can be here now at all. At the very least we can add some breadth and depth to even our shortest moments. We bring the inertia of our pasts to all of our perceptions. This is called apperception, our wealth of experience brought to bear on the present, together with our cognitive errors and Bly's 'long bag we drag behind us.' Consciousness of the past informs our present emotional situations, and affect has inertia aplenty. We face our current problems with the way we remember our pasts. It helps to have some awareness of what we are doing. If we want to move forward, we won't be over-idealizing the past or longing to recreate it. We still want life to keep getting better than what we've had before.

Vonnegut wrote "And I asked myself about the present. How wide it was, how deep it was. And how much was mine to keep." In a way, we live to collect good recollections, stockpiling emotional snapshots, special moments to take along with us through time, even though most memories are destined to fade or get misremembered. We try to freeze them for later use, especially the flashes of perfection. It's the job of storyteller and poet to turn the world into memories, and those back into tales. The goddess of Memory was the mother of the Muses. Goethe's Faust both risks and does it

all for a single moment of happiness worth freezing in time. We can often count the best of our moments, and the ones that are close to perfection are usually not all that numerous. We keep these in special places in ourselves. We can keep our lost loved ones alive in this way as well. There is much to be praised in bringing the past along. There are problems when we measure our current moments against our most-shining ones, and when we think the person at the center of those is the only one who we truly are. And there are problems in being so fond of ‘back there’ that we cannot face today. But we need to bring the things that we’ve learned along with us if we want any worthwhile kind of tomorrow. And good memories show they are worth making more of, even for older folks.

The past is not really finished or perfect. The degree of our memory informs our present awareness and actions. We use what we learn and bring with us in order to better ourselves. The past brought to present helps to choose better futures, and we have all our various pasts to choose from. But even memories can keep on growing. The neural structures of memory are plastic. Each time we bring something up, we add the present to it. If we bring a thing up as resentment, we make our bad feelings just a little bit worse before we put them back. If we bring a thing up in an atmosphere of fondness, kindness, understanding, or forgiveness, we can file it back away with a little less of an unpleasant charge. There is no rule that forbids our rewriting of personal history, in non-delusional ways, updating ourselves, upgrading ourselves in the process.

Key Words:

afterthought, anticlimax, appendix, apperception, attainment, attractions of the past, awareness, between times, childhood past, climax, completion, contentment, continuity, culmination, emotional snapshots, enjoyment, epilogue, *eudaimonia*, felt perfection, hindsight, home environment, inner child, innocence, joy, maintenance, memento, memories, memory as stimulus, mnemonics, moment, momentousness, moments relived, nostalgia, perfection, persistence of memory, presence of mind, realization, reawakening, recall, recognition, recollection, reconsideration, rediscovery, reenchantment, reflection, remembrance, reminders, reminding, reminiscence, renewal, residuum, retrospective, resurrection, reunion, reverie, review, revising, revisiting, saudade, simpler times, time-binding, uses of retrospection, well-being.

Warnings and Reversals:

backing up into the future, chasing the dragon, cherry-picking our moments for identity, clinging to the past, coming events, getting stuck in memory, grieving, indecision, living in or for the past, pink clouds, pining, PTSD, regression, regret, remorse, resentment, sentimentality, unacceptable present, unrealistic desires, unresolved issues, vanity, wishful thinking.

Components:

Six plus Cups. Out of developing organization sentience arises, the ability to be present and aware, although not yet in a self-conscious way. We are ongoing culminations. This has a feeling of being brought here by all we have been through, and of having arrived. J.M. Storm wrote, “We remember the things that make us feel.” We mark our personal significance best with the water element.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sol in Water Signs and Houses. Wanting to identify ourselves by our feelings and emotions, or by what we are capable of feeling and emoting. We are the

taking of things personally. Our identity reflects our subjective responses, our desires, enjoyments, passions.

Qabalah: Tipareth in Briah. The integration and harmonization of the system of self is experienced subjectively and personally, as a responsiveness or felt interaction. Emphasis on identity as a sensitivity. Feeling present, being here.

Yijing: Gua 63, Ji Ji, Already Across, After Completion. Da Xiang: Li (6) below, Kan (Cups) above; "Water positioned over the flame. Already complete. The young noble contemplates sorrows and thus prepares to maintain against them." Achieving order or perfection, follow up and follow through. Anticlimax, denouement, finish, winding down, maintenance. "Fulfillment is minor. But rewarding to persist. At the beginning, promise. By the end, disorder." Issues of issues of past and perfection. Final steps of the crossing, preparing to look back.

Seven of Cups

Taste, Choice, Gratification, Allocation

Image: The RWS deck portrays a man from behind, appearing by body language to be full of wonderment, looking enchanted by a gallery of delights spread out before him, displayed in cups as icons of varying forms of pleasure. It's a version of the kid in the candy store. The image asks the question of whether the subject will choose wisely or indiscriminately. Will the heart just want what it wants, period? Will he get lost in the options? Alternatively, a young, well-dressed man sits alone at a table, on which are set seven goblets of wine, some red and some white. He has finished one goblet and happily signals goodbye to the rest.

The Seven of Cups is about the learning of our limits in the pursuit of what we desire, but since this learning is so often done so poorly, the card is often said to foreshadow either frivolity, or an inability to defer gratification, or excessiveness and its subsequent regret. The excess and regret are the consequence of poor choices, but not the core meaning of the card, which is wanting to feel good, or better, or well, in the sense of healthy, or well in the sense of skillfully. This is the self-interest of the Seven pursued with the feeling and emotion of the Cups. We want to explore our possibilities, see what the options are, see what we can get away with, or see how far we can go. How full or fulfilled can we feel? Of course we want it all, and right now too, if we can have that. We want to feel alive, so we do things for the sake of feeling itself. At bottom, we are experimenting with our own neurochemistry, with go-to ingredients like dopamine and oxytocin.

Since feelings are so little inclined to listen to reason, the learning process here will require some experience. Except for the sense of satiety, limits and self-restraint are not an inherent or inherited part of our seeking. They must be learned. The suit of Cups lacks judgment, so the cost of our unrestrained desire needs to be felt and processed. It's not logical to think that we are born ready to say no to something pleasant that's free for the asking or taking. But there is often too much available that we can want successfully, and wanting gets out of control. We have no native immunity to promises and temptations. And then the advertisers get to have their say and have their way and people start to want useless and frivolous things, and want them right now, or else feel inferior to their peers. Many people will even do crimes so they don't have to wait. But it's just not good selfishness to destroy, dissipate, or profane the self. The degeneration of our wanting into wantonness is selling ourselves into slavery, the original meaning of addiction. Even when we don't go this far, we risk getting lost in the options, approach this or approach that, an ambivalence that threatens to spread us 'a mile wide and an inch deep.' We give up the magic for empty mystique, and deeper study for sound bites, so we don't need to miss out on the next distraction. In Arabic they call this *ghafla*, a soul-emptying, mindless distraction. We become emotional gluttons starving for real nourishment.

Emotions aren't a way of thinking critically, and feeling is only a kind of discernment that sometimes could use some rational help. We hope that we will have the sense, in the literal sense, to learn to pick and choose wisely, to develop good taste and high standards, without resorting to rules or authority figures. But we do need to explore and sample some of life's variety. We hope we can learn priorities and boundaries. Among the great variety of feelings and experiences set out on this table of life, the better choices do not preclude sensuality, eroticism, intoxication, gusto, or zest. It's only a matter of getting things experienced in the right proportion, a middle path, and a golden mean. So we simply look at our options with an eye to narrowing these

down, selecting personal desires according to what we value the most, and maybe even to what we have carefully chosen to value, to what is relevant to our own evolution. Perhaps we can even order their pursuit according to our own 'hierarchy of needs,' that we might meet these and be free to move on.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 60, Jie, Boundaries or Limitation, begins by depicting a broad flood of affect in need of viable channels. We need the water, the feeling, but we want it where it will do us some good. We gradually learn to pace and limit ourselves, to defer gratification, to know our measure. Pleasures might be transient and successes not retained, but they are as necessary to mental health as food, which isn't retained either. As long as we need this we might as well be gourmets about it. There is much clucking and tsk-ing and wagging of fingers around this issue of pleasure, usually by those you would not want to have for role models. The whole subject of pleasure-seeking behavior stirs up almost as much cultural, social, and religious nonsense as the subject of death. So many of us live in fear of both living and dying.

The word *hedonics* ought to be a real word, for the study of pleasure-seeking behavior. Hedonism, the philosophy that states that pleasure can be a good guide to right living, is actually a broad spectrum, and its higher-frequency end can make a lot of good sense. Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius all spoke up for good taste in pleasure, with caution, selection, discernment, and values. It was the also the first philosophy rooted in natural history. They also wrote about atoms. Lucretius wrote of evolution and natural selection. But they remain best known for saying that our joys and sorrows are our most reliable guides to the beneficial and the harmful, for suggesting great care in selecting for worthwhile pleasures. This is not the same as saying that pleasure should be our pursuit, any more than we should drive for the sake of the speedometer reading. We refine our desires and defer the shortsighted self-gratification. Their highest standard of happiness, called *eudaimonia*, wasn't considered a neutral, anhedonic, or apathetic state, but a positive form of pleasure. Yet happiness itself is not the best pursuit: it's an indication of living rightly, of pursuing the best in life, but it's only favored by chance, and not guaranteed to good behavior.

Key Words:

abridgment, agency, allocation, allowance, apportionment, appraisal, boundaries, brio, budgeting, choice, constraint, decisions, deferred or delayed gratification, delight, desire, determination, discernment, discretion, distinction, enjoyment, emotional intelligence, Epicureanism, eros, ethical measure, *eudaimonia*, evaluation, fulfillment, gratification, gusto, happiness, hedonism, hunger, indulgence, limitation, liveliness, measure, measured steps, middle way or path, moderation, pacing, passion, pleasure, preference, priorities, profusion, proliferated options, proportion, prudence, quota, ratio, rationality, rationing, relish, resolution, restraint, satisfaction, savor, selection, selectivity, self-discipline, self-interest, self-limitation, self-regulation, self-respect, specificity, surfeit, taste, terms, transient success, triage, value management, verve, zest.

Warnings and Reversals:

addiction, arbitrary wants, confusing want and need, cravenness, debauchery, delusion, dissipation, dreamery, emotional gluttony, false hopes, foolish whims, glut, gluttony, greed, immoderation, impatience, imprudence, incontinence, indiscriminate wanting, intemperance, lack of restraint, licentiousness, lust, overextension, overindulgence, self-delusion, self-indulgence, shortcuts to pleasure, superficiality, *tanha*, temptation, wishful thinking.

Components:

Seven plus Cups. Self-seeking in the world of feeling and emotion, hedonism in its full spectrum from debauchery to Epicureanism. Learning our limits and boundaries by way of satisfying our desires and experiencing the consequences. Meeting needs, then wants.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Venus in Water Signs and Houses. Life will be about exploring to the end of sensitivity and desire, maintaining a sense of sensation, and feeling good or well. Sentience is the draw and the guide. Will be limited by personal capacity as well as the environment.

Qabalah: Netzach in Briah. Personal conquest and victory, or simply success, assessed in terms of its sense of rightness or feeling that movement is responding as it should.

Yijing: Gua 60, Jie, Boundaries, Limitation. Da Xiang: Dui (7) below, Kan (Cups) above; “Over the pond there is water. Boundaries. The young noble regulates numbers and measures and weighs the merits of action.” Too much water to fully contain, requiring a channel. The necessity for boundaries and limits. “Fulfillment. Bitter limitations do not invite commitment.” An emphasis on proceeding with growth, but in a well-paced and self-regulated way, as bamboo grows one section at a time.

Eight of Cups

Provision, Accessibility, Resource, Refreshment

Image: A solitary, robed figure has turned his back on an old well and now crosses a footbridge to begin or continue a journey under a waning moon. On the rim of the well sit eight full cups. The arrangement of cups is unbalanced, incomplete, but good enough. The cups will not chase the wanderer, nor will the well, but he knows where to find them. Maybe the job is simply done, maybe done well, and things are set up now for later. But for now, he's been here and done this, and it's time to move on. To remain here would mean diminishing returns. Ordinarity and habituation are motive forces. So it's on to more exciting things to drain the excitement from.

The Eight of Cups hones in on the complicated relationship between head and heart, thinking and feeling, reason and emotion, or cognition and affect. The point of view with the Eights is mental. We learn a lot from the things the heart gets us into. And even the head knows that too much restraint on the feelings will keep us from the experiences that allow us to learn so much. Ultimately the head is more interested in feeling's past tense, on getting it all sorted out afterwards, although it knows at least dimly that this may require having a deeply authentic experience in the first place. The mind wants the ability to call on past experiences when needed, from a safe and unobtrusive distance away, so there is a focus on getting the experience behind us, where it can be better understood. Affective affordances are found and set aside, but encoded for later access. Nietzsche wrote in his last notebook: "One does not get over a passion by representing it. Rather, it is over when one is able to represent it." We have what we need from this experience for now. The RWS card is a depiction of leaving some feelings behind us and preparing to move on. While this may be an abandonment, it is not a disavowal or a repudiation. It's neutrality instead of negation. We haven't scorched any earth, burned any bridges, or poisoned any wells. As Anonymous wrote, "Sometimes you just have to be done. Not mad, not upset. Just done." The previous effort was simply a preparation for a greater freedom. With a new perspective we now have freedom towards, not just freedom from.

There is a side of this that has some big drawbacks. With having it all figured out, with the problem now solved, we may think that our abstract summarization was all that we needed to learn. Where the mind has been and what it has done becomes 'been there, done that.' Experience has now been encoded and emptied of its present emotional content. We spoke with someone for a couple of minutes a couple of years ago and now claim to 'know' this person. The mystic experience? Oh, I've had one of those, now I'm awake. The past loses its feeling, texture, and depth. Transience is the rule, of course, and we cannot take everything with us. We have to mine the whole time for a handful of moments, and this is all we can carry, unless we want to end the journey now and dwell right here. We sometimes have to take things for granted to make any progress at all. The place served us well for a time. And we leave a little a cache behind, perhaps for when we want to come back.

A mind that enjoys feelings and is articulate in its understanding might appear to be overthinking, or have already overthought. It may converse knowledgeably about affect and speak well of passion, even if not presently having the experience, and in all of this it might seem abstract and detached, emptied of subjective meaning, having lost the sense of refreshment. Mental understanding of feeling and emotion works on a different time scale, one that is not in the moment. The point of having things sorted is in large part building an infrastructure for access to our feelings. Often these help or cause us to react more quickly than thought to similar situations. We may have left a

place in the past, but we also now know the way back. The inner life is organized. In waxing philosophical over prior emotional states, it's possible to call up or conjure those feelings again. We can go too far of course. With our feelings all named, counted, sorted, and weighed, we have done little to secure our routes to back to happiness.

Another force pushes us onwards as well: hedonic adaptation, or the hedonic treadmill. We are genetically predisposed to not even like it if the good things stay the same. Our hopes and expectations adapt ever upwards. If we can't have constant improvement, or at least some gradual intensification, then we will go after variety for its own sake instead. It takes a lot of gratitude for what we already have to keep this process under some control. Familiarity would rather breed contempt. It's novelty that keeps the mind awake, just like it's acceleration, and not steady movement, that lets us know we are moving. We have a need to renew the familiar if we want to keep it around. A resource is a source that we can keep coming back to. Refreshment is just that, a freshening up again, just as respect means 'to look again,' which offers a clue to a lasting enjoyment or better appreciation of steadier states.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 48, the Well. This is something, literally, that we really dug at one time. We have a resource that we can come back to whenever we are driven by thirst. We retain the ability to go deep again, to access our depths. But most of the time we have left it behind us. The structure that makes the magic is out of sight and out of mind. We know the way back, and can even tell others how to get there as well. The texts of the lines in this chapter discuss the periodic checkup and maintenance issues, how we ought not to take this completely for granted, how we ought to keep the water accessible, to keep refreshing our outlooks and browsers. Even in stable systems, negative entropy still needs inputs of energy. By analogy, we have tapped, perhaps with forethought, a source of feeling, refreshment, or nourishment and conceptually set things in order, for the sake of securing future access. Although this source lives largely outside of our awareness, it is nevertheless a resource. The Yijing also emphasizes the social aspects, as either the well was dug at the center of things, or things developed around the well as a center. Feelings and emotions are an older and more common ground for humans than our cultures, languages, thoughts and ideas.

Key Words:

abandoned or forsaken success, acceptability, accessibility, acclimatization, adequacy, anticlimax, assets, back burner, been there & done that, bygones, cache, conclusions, contrivance, convenience, decline of interest, deflation, departure, desertion, detachment, discontinued effort, disenchantment, enough for now, equanimity, evaluating feelings, familiarity, excitement worn thin, final insights, follow-through, graduation, habituation, hedonic treadmills, impermanence, inurement, liquidating assets, lost interest, lost shine, moving on, new or next chapter, nominal access, non-attachment, novelty, obsolescence, outgrowing feelings or pains, presupposition, provision, refreshment, reservation, reserve, reservoir, resource, resourcefulness, restlessness, routine, satisfactions, secured access, set-aside, stock in trade, sufficiency, summations, thoroughness, wrapping up.

Warnings and Reversals:

apathy, boredom, complacency, desensitization, detachment, discounting, emptiness, feelings destroyed by analysis, halfheartedness, indolence, jadedness, neglect, numbness, over-familiarity, overthinking refreshment, taking for granted, taking things as given, presumption, stagnation, staleness, tuning out, weariness,

Components:

Eight plus Cups. Cognitive processes and communications can be involved deeply in feelings and emotions, but the objective is understanding, useful organization of memory and facilitation of recall. Feelings are evaluated and sorted, but one hopes the best of them are left alive and the worst can be managed in time.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mercury in Water Signs and Houses. A mind that is interested in experiencing and communicating feeling and emotion, but not likely to linger on these once they are understood and put in their proper places. Affective experiences collected as affordances.

Qabalah: Hod in Briah. A cognitive grasp of the fluid dynamics of the world of feeling and emotion, proceeding in an orderly way through what is chaos to others, and an appreciation of the responsive sensitivity of nature.

Yijing: Gua 48, The Well. Da Xiang: Xun (8) below, Kan (Cups) above; "Above the wood there is water. The well. The young noble labors for the people to encourage cooperation." Commonality and common ground in understanding our shared experience, in ways that can be communicated. "Rearranging the town does not change the well. Neither losing nor gaining, whether leaving or arriving, the well is the well. To nearly reach, but then to fall short with the well rope, or to damage its bucket, is disappointing." Provision of resource ahead of time, resourcefulness gained by having lived through something, locating and naming it, and having it available. Dangers in taking the well for granted, being unmindful, letting it go.

Nine of Cups

Flow, Responsiveness, Feeling, Contentment

Image: A portly, benevolent djinn beams at the reader as he floats cross legged just above and behind nine cups, arrayed like trophies, indicating the reader's choices with a sweeping hand. In the RWS deck, a portly gentleman sits in front of nine cups arrayed on a shelf behind him. His posture and expression convey satisfaction. "Ford's in his Flivver. All's well with the world."

Commonly called the 'wish card,' the more superficial interpretations predict that we will have a stroke of luck in attaining our happiness. This is the wish of the silly people, who only use Tarot to have their fortunes and futures told. If you have a wish out there, it is going to come true. Be careful what you wish for. It's your fate: you don't have to do any work or anything. This is usually nearsighted, and with unforeseen consequences. What is not often mentioned in the books is that this is almost always a temporary state, a little shot of neurochemicals that soon wears off. The deeper question this card poses is only hinted at by the frequent cautions against smugness and complacency. That is, if we want to have a more durable sense of happiness or satisfaction, we will probably have to trade wishing for working, and dreaming for diligence, and feel our way into a way of living that has happiness as a symptom, or a sign that we are on the right path, and even then with no real guarantee of satisfaction. We will tend to get what we position ourselves for. We give up the chasing of wishes and fantasies for the pursuit of higher activities, engagements and purposes that secondarily bring us more lasting emotional rewards. These provide a more resilient foundation (Nines and Yesod) for the continued ups and downs that are sure to follow this moment's up-ness. There may be problems of renewal and replenishment without change of context, unless the attitude is nimble enough to provide the motion. The Nine of Cups, regarded as a skill set, will develop the emotional intelligence needed to either make satisfaction last longer or to be more accepting of its comings and goings. It will also help instruct the whole being in how to find itself in this position more regularly.

Time or duration is the big question here. Most people have a squinty-eyed view of shallower time, like the sensationalist newspapers looking at wildly fluctuating curves instead of long-term trends and reporting 'crime rate soars' one day and then 'crime rate plummets' the next. We want a less ephemeral view here. Many books imply that the satisfaction or happiness predicted by this card will last. It almost certainly will not. And affect itself is too naive to have longer time horizons or a more mature relationship to change. Ongoing satisfaction is a more dynamic process that stays a course only by dynamic efforts at navigation.

The pursuit of happiness is an unfortunate phrase when we pick this for something to follow. The degree of our happiness is just a reading on a dial that may or may not tell us how well we are doing. We don't live for this readout, we live for doing well and the dial says what it says. Our best chance for sustaining happiness is simply doing what we love doing, or what we do best or well, finding a rewarding groove, and earning ourselves some self-esteem. There is nothing inherently wrong or inferior with having wishes and wants, and there is nothing wrong with wanting to believe in magic. Of course we want to be careful what we wish for and want. But these are just eddies and waves in the longer flow of the stream. Confidence wants repeated successes more than future assurances. Deep and lasting satisfaction actually requires impermanence: it needs to move and adapt.

Both moving water and moving through water are fundamental to the symbolism of both the Nines and the Cups, as well as their ties to Luna and Yesod. Heraclitus phrased this as *panta rhei*, everything flows and nothing abides, and asserted the impossibility of stepping into the same river twice. Laozi had much to say about the way that water moves and what this has to teach us. Bruce Lee wrote, “Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. Empty your mind. Be formless, shapeless like water. Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. You put water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend.” To be present in this way earns more luck than it stumbles into. We tune our ability to find the right place at the right time with the right attitude. The universe will stand behind someone on the right path, but the right path is defined as the one that has the universe standing behind them.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 29, Exposure, picks up the same double-water images and concentrates on the dynamic qualities of such a combination, activities that get the blood pumping, like traversing or running a river that’s running white through a gorge. The hazardousness of the image is often mistakenly interpreted as a prediction of danger, when in fact it’s a good incentive to use such exigency to come more fully alive, to awaken more completely to the realities we are moving through, to be more fully present in the flow of things. Deep water over our heads is not a bad place to be if we have either learned to how swim or learned how to learn. The trick is to keep ourselves centered and on our true path. Feeling here is a verb, and by feeling our way we learn what true means. The real happiness is in the difficulties and challenges that life can meet authentically and surmount. It has nothing to do with being given good luck or good fortune. We might have some plain old luck, but even there we must be present to win.

Key Words:

adaptation, alertness, aptness, assurance, attunement, availability, centering, challenge, comfort, commitment, concentration, concord, consummation, content in both its senses, contentment, continuity, currents, depth, emotional wealth, enjoyment, eudaemonia, exigency, exposure, feeling, flow, fluidity, fulfillment, gratitude, health, heart, heart’s content, hoped-for results, immersion, impressions, intensity, involvement, happiness, optimism, overcoming, *panta rhei*, path of least resistance, plunging in, presence, reassurance, replenishment, responding, responsiveness, reward, satisfaction, savoring, security, sensitivity, sincerity, spontaneity, subtlety, sure things, the way out is through, throughput, transitory suffering, trial, undergoing, well-being, white water, ziran.

Warnings and Reversals:

absence, blind faith, complacency, conceit, dispute, fear, feeling entitled, feeling shaped to attract failure, fear, heedlessness, imperfections, indulgence, insecurity, insincerity, misplaced reliance, pursuit of happiness as backwards, overindulgence, self-indulgence, self-praise, smugness, superficiality, unearned sense of self-worth, vanity, vicissitudes, vulnerability.

Components:

Nine plus Cups. The foundational possibilities of our feeling and emotion. Questions of where more reliability might be found. Getting past the ups and downs to a more lasting or durable happiness and satisfaction. Peak experience is temporary, but at least

it lives on in memory. The best keys to happiness are in flows, fluctuations, or processes instead of in states.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Luna in Water Signs and Houses. We can't get any wetter than the moon in water. This is immersion in a world of fluctuation and change, the rising and falling tides of feeling and emotion, across the full range from sensitivity to intensity to dreaminess.

Qabalah: Yesod in Briah. A fluid foundation for a fluid world, liquidity and flow as the basis of whatever stability and reliability we might find. Perhaps pontoons, ballast, deep leaden keels, and sheet anchors are in order.

Yijing: Gua 29, Kan, Exposure, The Abysmal. Da Xiang: Kan (9) below, Kan (Cups) above; "Water is ever arriving. Repeated exposure. The young noble continues in character and conduct, practicing teaching and serving." Heartfelt commitment, staying true to a middle path, concentration. "Be true. To keep the heart secure is fulfillment." Exploring the participatory aspects of moving like water through challenging terrain, maintaining presence of mind through a dynamic and even risky environment.

Ten of Cups

Satiety, Satisfaction, Fulfillment, Transition

Image: The RWS deck shows a family of four in a rural setting, celebrating a rainbow of ten cups. The rainbow may be meant to signal a covenant, perhaps promising lasting happiness or a happily ever after. Alternatively, two children might be seen playing with nine cups in an idyllic garden, perhaps making mud pies with the family silver, while behind them their young parents dance off to pursue a cup at the end of a rainbow.

The core meaning of the Ten of Cups is satiety, or how we feel about having or having had enough. There are several directions to take the interpretation of this, including some darker ones. The RWS card is a little misleading here, unless it's intended to be ironic, and encourages the writers of Tarot books to speak about perfected, permanent, perpetual, or lasting happiness and success. One might think these people had never been humans living on earth, but then many humans on earth believe they are going to just such a place after their death. Feelings don't stay still or last. The subject is indeed about finding or preparing to find some continuity after our needs get satisfied, or after we've had enough, but most of the time this concerns moving on, or returning to earth and reality. This is not a fairytale fantasy of happily ever after. Reality doesn't work this way. But feelings and emotions might feel things this way, leading to a temporary sense of lasting perfection.

Abraham Maslow has a good handle on this process. We progress from one satisfaction to another, meeting our most basic or fundamental needs first, and then moving on to our more optional ones, our electives. If this were managed with some care, we could satisfy ourselves upwards instead of around in circles. We can get the preliminaries and priorities behind us and then go to work on such lofty pursuits as working out our chosen destinies. This implies not getting carried away with our shortsighted illusions of permanence and perfection. Perhaps it sounds a little on the rational side for the suit of cups, but our feelings can learn lessons as well, and the formula is simple enough: meet needs, then move on.

The state of affairs depicted here could be more happiness than you ever thought was possible, something too good to be true or to last. With satiety, we have already reached a climax or culmination. We still have some happiness to spend before it falls away or slips from our grasp. We can make it last a little longer, or invest in something more durable. We often move ourselves forward with exaggeration and hyperbole, but beyond a point, this just doesn't serve us well, if it ever really served us at all. An excess of wine leads to a hangover, an excess of speed to a crash. Two-thirds complete might be the most perfect state for us all. There is a fullness of feeling or emotion that can still be fully appreciated, even in the face of realism, even though lasting happiness can't hold onto this much.

The word sustainability is horribly overused by our parasitic species and its pro-growth economy. As Edward Abbey remarked, 'growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.' At bottom the word sustain means to hold something up from below, to provide or take care of the preconditions needed for something to exist. The focus is not on the thing by itself. With this understanding, a sustainability of affect or attitude is what we are looking for with this card. The happiness here will need to move on soon. What we want to maintain or improve are the conditions of its arising. De-growth to sustainable levels is often proposed as the best solution for humanity's global woes. We can develop an analog for our internal world and calm ourselves down, redefine what 'enough' means, cultivate better gratitude, and maybe

take some deep breaths instead of racing onward for more than we need. We might try wanting what we already have. But then we have innate challenges to contend with, like boredom with steady states.

We want to look at how things are shaping up down the road before us. There is some implication of this in the depiction of the two children at play in this card: there is a new generation coming up now. The blessed state may yet keep regenerating. Impermanence of feeling and attitude will not be defeated, but a maturing attitude may still look to adjusting the meaning we have for contentment and remaining thankful for the chance to witness this grand parade as it moves on by. We can cultivate what is more likely to last for a little longer. If this time is used to re-choose, to redefine what is important and not, then some of our losses can be selected, or made matters of choice. Permanence is out, but who but those afraid of the unknown would want it? As Susan Ertz wrote, “Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy afternoon.”

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 43, Decisiveness, concentrates on satiety, or having had enough, but more in the sense of having ‘had it up to here.’ The subjects of the lines are busy getting carried away or going obsessively over the top. They are advised to unload some of the feeling or emotion that is driving them before they go too far: to back it down, or dial it back, or dial it down. Their hyperbole and exaggeration are to be supplanted by straightforward disclosure and exposé. The greater hyperbole, the sooner it will fail. It’s a time to put the feeling in its proper place, to discharge it, to deflate it. No matter how exciting this has all been, we prepare to wrap or sum it up now. We beat disappointment to the finish line with realism. We need to become less extreme, more sustainable, and prepared to let ourselves down safely and proactively, but without ruining the moment of consummation with pessimism.

Key Words:

abounding, abundance, affirmation, anticlimax, apogee, arrival, as good as it gets, attainment, breakthrough, climax, completion, consummation, contentment, counting blessings, cresting, culmination, decisiveness, deflation, desired outcome, detumescence, discharge, disclosure, emotional stability, enjoyment, extravagance, finale, fulfillment, grand finale, gratification, gratitude, having had enough, having our fill, home, family life, fantasy, finality, ideal states, lavishness, long-term enjoyments, mature pleasure, overdevelopment, overflowing, passage, peak experience, perpetuating success, pinnacle, plateau, progression, realization, regeneration, relish, resolve, reward, satiety, satisfaction, saturation, sufficiency, summation, superabundance, superfluity, surplus, sustainable states, thriving, transition, wrap-up.

Warnings and Reversals:

affluenza, disruption, disturbance, exaggerated life, excessive emotion, fairy tales, glut, hyperbole, diminishing returns, glamor, honeymoon ends, imperfection, impermanence, imprudence, indignation, indignity, indulgence, mania, obsession, overemphasis, overkill, over-stimulation, pink clouds, surfeit, superfluousness, too good to be true, wantonness.

Components:

Ten plus Cups. Reaching the limits of where feeling and emotion can take us, ultimately raising the question of where to go from here, which need not be answered until this state has passed. These states are not dwelling places, but they do make good rest stops for smelling flowers and stuff.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pluto in Water Signs and Houses. An overabundance of affect to remind us of our finitude. Refocusing on larger contexts, like what might last or what is larger or more durable than ourselves, and how we react to seeing things that way.

Qabalah: Malkuth in Briah. The fullest manifestation of the fluid universe. Containment is only possible on a temporary basis and needs refreshing.

Yijing: Gua 43, Guai, Decisiveness, Breakthrough, Resoluteness. Da Xiang: Qian (10) below, Dui (Cups) above; "The lake rises into the sky. Decisiveness. The young noble dispenses favor to reach those below, so that resting on virtue is avoided." The water level is sky high, or over the top. "A disclosure at the royal court, a truthful appeal. This will be serious. Inform the home town. Nothing worthwhile in resorting to hostilities. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go." Depicts satiety like the Tarot, but more in the sense of having had it up to here. To continue the old mode of excitement is to get carried away or take things too far.

Princess of Cups

Princess of the Water, Lotus of the Palace of the Floods
Economy, Service, Sincerity, Simplicity

Image: A captivating young princess, clad in a white Grecian tunic, is practicing her humility and charm by playing the role of Hebe, the Olympian cup bearer, offering the refreshments to unseen laborers. The cup bears a turtle insignia. She is self-contained and full of potential, like a rosebud. She is intent and reflective, willing to serve or to help, enthusiastic about sharing, a loyal and trustworthy worker. When not in service, she may be dreamy in creative ways, but perhaps unclear on the differences or boundaries between sensed, felt, and imagined worlds.

The fundamental lesson for the Princess of Cups is to maintain as much as she can of her original sensitivity and cultivate her own subjective truths in a world that's not always friendly to opening up. Maintaining a sense of wonder means learning to let traumas, fears, and insecurities pass without toughening up. This could mean limiting her exposure to the larger world, but it even requires strength and courage in the smaller worlds. She will be looking for the hearts of the matters, her core feelings, the most important ones, closest to home, the most true to who she is. She will be the most studious here. By original sensitivity is meant not cluttering her heart with a lot of extraneous emotional distractions, boiling things down to essences and essentials, valuing or treasuring the things that mean the most. It's an heroic effort and no small matter to stay kind-hearted and true, compassionate and affectionate, tender and thoughtful in a complicated world, thus the need to keep things simple. Such a sensitivity doesn't need to be overwhelmed to be fulfilled.

The cup-bearer image suggests humility and service. The cup is meant to move the wine, not to hold it. But the art of giving is also good training for learning to receive with grace. The substratum of relationship is symbiotic, give and take, sharing and taking with gratitude. The value of a sacrifice is more than its price or worth, but this aspect is much misunderstood. To sincerely offer something up is not to ask for more: it's an expression of gratitude for things already received. Those who get this backwards are just begging to be unsatisfied. We learn a lot more from our humbler perspectives, our places of learning and service. But this, too, recommends against doing this for results. We can't feed on the gratitude others might show us, we can't live for the happiness that others might choose not to feel. This is just codependence. We find our rewards in the experiences we own.

There is a bit of the Japanese tea ceremony in this card, a simplicity that distills the experience to its essence and draws more mindfulness than shallower minds might think it deserves. The word re-spect means to look again or look closer. This is cultivating the ability to find value in the ordinary and the everyday, which opens up the way to a deeper and more reliable sort of enrichment. There is parsimony here, and economy, taken in its original but nearly forgotten sense. Developing an appreciation for what we have is key to the most satisfying next step we can take: learning to want what we have. There is another great key here as well: if we are holding onto something of negative value, then losing it is a win. We lighten our burdens considerably by dumping the things that are not worth carrying with us. We also help ourselves to fill up by plugging our leaks. When we can enrich ourselves with what is already available to us, then we can save ourselves a lot of trouble, suffering, and running around.

We are often caught between being true and being hurt, between being authentic and being accepted, and between being impressionable and being a fool. We learn to place fuses that dim or cut off our sensations and feelings before they blow larger circuits.

We get scars through which we can no longer feel. There are good arguments for cultivating finely tuned sensibilities, for staying more simple, innocent and pure, but these also argue for choosing to live in a world that might be a little too small for our larger purposes. There is no magic solution that avoids getting twisted up or numb inside, other than waxing more philosophical about our emotional pain and learning to let it run or pass through us, and giving it no place to dwell.

The Princess is said to be artistically inclined, a little dreamy and romantic. Her fertile imagination is the power to give meaning and substance to contemplation and fantasy. Manifesting her subjectivity would be a function of her enhanced aesthetic sense, her ability to appreciate even a relatively impoverished environment. She should have a good sense of her gifts, and a sense of gratitude that would not want to waste them. This is also a way of creating new wealth, even if it only adds to the richness of her experience. Her art would tend to be artless, a simple expression of her natural sensitivities.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 41, Decreasing, shows a lake (big cup) half full or empty, reflecting a mountain. It's not a time of abundance or overflow, but the things we learn in this state, such as appreciating what we have, and learning to do more with less, are a great make-up sort of wealth that also serves in times of plenty. On the cup half-full or half-empty question, you might say the Yi weighs in with the cup being twice as large as necessary. Decreasing is about paring life down to the real essentials and finding wealth there. The turtle shown in several Tarot decks, also figures in one of the lines. The turtle's shells were used in divination, but while they represented wealth, they served no purpose if they were not used up.

Key Words:

acceptance, accommodation, accord, acquiescence, admiration, aesthetics, affection, agreeableness, aid, appreciation, approval, artlessness, assent, authenticity, being captivated or enthralled, caring, carefulness, cherishing, compliance, concentration, consent, core, courtesy, creativity, crystallization, deference, discretion, distillation, economy, enrichment, essentials, esteem, fondness, frugality, good faith, gratitude, guilelessness, hallmark cards, happy medium, harmony, heart, Hebe, honesty, humility, imagination, innocence, interest, invocation, kindness, less is more, manifestation, minimalism, modesty, nourishing appreciation, occupation, offerings, openness, parsimony, plainness, Polyanna, rapture, realization, reification, respect, sacrifice, satisfaction, sensitivity, service, settling for less, sharing, simplicity, sincerity, small is beautiful, softness, sufficiency, *sukkha*, sweetness, thankfulness, thrift, treasuring, valuing, vulnerability.

Warnings and Reversals:

codependency, depreciation, deviance, distraction, extenuation, disappointing reciprocity, flattery, guile, ingratitude, insincerity, irresponsibility, neediness, resentment, seduction, superficiality, ulterior motive, wear and tear.

Components:

The Earthy part of Water. Various forms of a loss of fluidity, movement into a denser state, making less dilute: crystallization, formation, ice, dew, distillation, condensation, precipitation, pooling, boiling things down, concentration, enrichment, getting essentials out of suspension, keeping the best stuff. Emotional eclecticism.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Caput Draconis in Water Signs and Houses. Cultivating true and funda-

mental sensitivities within a potentially hostile environment can mean wanting a more limited environment, or an appreciation of what it means to settle for less, settling for what is most important, or working with the most natural or essential feelings and emotions.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 41, Sun, Decreasing, Reduction. Da Xiang: Dui (Cups) below, Gen (Princess) above; "At the foot of the mountain is a marsh. Decreasing. The young noble rules out resentments and restrains desires." Trimming excess, plugging leaks, lowering one's expectations, doing more with less. "Be true. Outstanding opportunity. Nothing is wrong, but it calls for persistence. Worthwhile having somewhere to go. How is this applied? A pair of simple rice baskets may be used for the offering." This is close to Schumacher's idea of small is beautiful. Appreciating the subtle instead of needing to get blown away or loaded up. Economy in its best and most original sense. In liquids, concentration and enrichment both imply a smaller volume with a higher percentage of the good stuff.

Prince of Cups

Prince of the Chariot of the Waters
Intensity, Romanticism, Relativity, Point of View

Image: A handsome young prince, dressed for diplomacy or courtship, rides slowly towards the reader on horseback, bearing a full cup as a gift. He has intentions, perhaps in layers, but has not yet made them known. Whether for experience or love, he's a suitor coming to call. He may be bringing a proposition, an invitation, or an opportunity. He seems important. If he is not a knight in shining armor, he either thinks he is or is trying to look like one for reasons that he's not sharing. He may not yet know what dreams he follows.

The Prince of Cups has the costume and bearing of the alternatively named Knight of Cups. He seems to be a man on a mission or quest, a knight errant in search of chivalrous adventures, or a marital suitor of the sort that the Book of Changes calls indistinguishable from a robber. And he probably would have a winged horse, if he could. His mission may be known only to himself, but whatever it is, he appears committed and convinced, and would like to appear convincing. He could be romantically principled, or he could be a ladies' man in the garb of prince charming, just trying to get some desires satisfied. In all likelihood, he is sincere in his quest. But in the books this card raises a lot of questions as to the Prince's true character and motives. You get the idea that you might want to check his references, or even check the cup for roofies. Driven by internal chemistry, which expires, he won't always spend the night and cook breakfast. If this is some sort of *pon farr*, he might not even hear a loud No. It's likely true that if he is seeking relationship, it's for what it can do to enhance his own feelings or emotional states, and that he wants something that the one he approaches has probably not been planning to give him. But there is nothing inherently wrong or disingenuous about this. He may yet have much to offer in return. And even if this approach is a deception, it may be from self-deception, not wickedness. With all the trappings and mystery, it might not do any good to announce his intentions, since a con artist would do the same anyway. One looks for other tests, as for empathy.

As one of the four Princes, he is out to explore the extents of feelings and emotions, to see how far these go. There is a hunger for experiences that bring up feeling and emotion, an interest first in how things affect him. Intensity and passion are often the first measures of this, getting wound up, or getting up a head of steam, or some personal hydrodynamic. These feelings are felt down in his personal pool, and this is a private resource. He would like them to be deep, important, significant, and at least a little bit profound. They get amplified and exaggerated so that he gets a full measure. Of course he is full of himself. This is all a private and personal experience, however much he may want to share it. Of course he is following his desires more than real-world feedback, and while reaching for deeper personal truths he may yet be unable to understand others. This is not, after all, an especially discriminating intelligence that he is cultivating. He may be moved in wrong directions by his feelings, or driven into error by his emotions. He may, for the sake of intensity or intoxication, seek out pain and suffering, if it only feel potent and true.

The Prince is a romantic, who likely believes in himself and his mission, a dreamer within his visions, or a poet in love with love itself, who believes his poems non-fictional. Few experiences will enter his world unaltered by the romantic view. He may be driven to live for images just to add to his poems, or to be impressed for the sake of making impressions. Feelings lead, themselves in pursuit of the dream or romance.

Here is a paradoxical tension, between inner senses and romantic involvement with others. He wants to not be so private, but has to live deep inside, with only his own perspective and little overview. At least the search for a romance or a purpose beyond himself suggests being more honest about his lack of completeness if he is living in isolation. Even the self-absorbed must absorb some of the other, must search for external references or sounding boards, but something more than projections and their reflections, a world that is more than their mirror. This demands development of social skills that do more than go through the acceptable motions. This demands a working Theory of Mind.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 61, The Truth Within, begins with the subject as a private pool of personal resource, with wind and wood above to bring us news of the other. It speaks of relativity. Piglets and fishes, sons and daughters, must be expected to act like themselves, encouraged to be true to themselves, not be reflections of us. The new agers jump to conclusions from reading only the title, thinking that inner truth must be the universal truth. The message is the opposite. Yes, we have a resonance with things akin to us. But we need to outgrow our perceptual limits, to see more than our own little picture, if we want a less limited version of truth. This is not to dismiss our personal relevance, our libidinal worlds, our sub-surface selves, our undercurrents, our hidden communities of subliminal motives, our big secrets and mysteries. These are resources that we have for survival, our guts, our intentions and urgencies, our rage against the dying of the light. We simply want to learn what goes where, and know more about the big picture.

Key Words:

appeal, approach, ardor, attachment, attraction, charm, chivalry, conviction, courtesy, dedication, depth, desire, determination, devotion, eagerness, earnestness, emphasis, enticements, fancy, fervor, gallantry, hypnosis, import, importance, in love with love itself, inducement, inner nature, innersense, insight, intensity, intoxication, inviolability, invitation, involvement, issues of personal importance, meaning, mindset, mystery, outlook, partiality, passion, pathos, persistence, personal perspective, persuasion, poetry with purpose, point of view, privacy, profundity, proposals, propositions, prospect, quest, relativity, relevance, resonance, resourcefulness, romanticism, secrecy, self-interest, sentiment, shrewdness, stress, subjectivity, subtlety, suitor, tenacity, tension, tidal forces, undercurrents, zeal.

Warnings and Reversals:

artifice, bait, bewitchment, confidence game, craving stimulation, cunning, deception, deflation, discouragement, fantasy, flamboyance, flattery, flirtation, fraud, guile, jealousy, lack of overview, libidinal worlds, narcissism, obsession, pretentiousness, promises unfulfilled, seduction, self-absorption, self-delusion, self-importance, self-indulgence, solipsism, torment, toxic emotion, trappings, vanity, venom, walk of shame.

Components:

The Airy part of Water. Water obeys its own set of laws, which we learn from within by experience. We have the hydraulic transfer of pressure through liquid or steam, surface tension and elasticity, latent heat and volatility, and wave forms. The airy part of water is in exploring what shapes or boundaries the waters can assume. Steam and evaporation are water turning into air. This requires an input of energy to transcend one's own puddle thus. As the Sufi said, "I came like water, like wind I go."

Correspondences:

Astrology: Scorpio Ascending, as the Fixed Water sign, Ruler: Mars. Outlook from deep within. Characterized by depth and intensity. Persistent, tenacious, determined, driven, willful, passionate. Secretive or mysterious. Shrewd, devious, resourceful. Keeping that rubber band wound up to keep going. Self-generated affect.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 61, Zhong Fu, The Truth Within, Inner Truth or Sincerity. Da Xiang: Dui (Cups) below, Xun (Prince) above; "Over the pond there is wind. The Truth Within. The young noble considers legal process while delaying execution." Truth Within is a limited view, like a private pool, personal and intense, but narrow. We still need the overview and other perspectives before making important decisions. "Piglets and fishes. Promising. Worthwhile to cross the great stream. Worthwhile to persist." Relativity and alternative points of view are learned by getting beyond or outside of ourselves.

Queen of Cups

Queen of the Thrones of the Waters
Empathy, Openness, Accessibility, Responsiveness

Image: A mature and approachable queen sits on a throne on the far side of a small pond, gazing with a deep, trance-like expression into a cup held with both hands. There is a hint of a mirror image in the pond. She is being filled with the experience she seeks, a vision, an answer, a divining, or a feeling. More commonly, the images show a closed or covered cup. Alternatively, this could be some version of Yemanjá (Yemoja, Lemanjá, Yemaya) the Orisha, Mother of Waters, or a human representative, bathing at the seaside.

The Queen of Cups is traditionally described as a warmhearted woman, well-loved as a friend, wife, or mother. She is somewhat dreamy, gifted with vision, empathy, sympathy, and imagination. Since the greater part of human affect concerns social interactions, inter-personality and interpersonal relationships are near to the core of her world. She will want to be connected, interested, and beloved, and excited to circulate stories. But she will thrive or suffer according to the quality of her social environment. Without other skills, characteristics to give her confidence, a strong will, and force of character, she may prove too passive to be sufficiently selective about the society she keeps, and indeed may overly treasure such values as unconditional friendship and love, even if these people hurt her. She will tend to be trusting, kind, affectionate, and approachable, with a capacity for forgiveness proportionate to her empathy, but betrayals of her trust and credulity could take their toll and lead to resentment and a shutting down. A sense of helplessness and a victim mentality could rob her of her gifts. Her eagerness to belong socially could also lead into smothering behavior, excessive self-sacrifice, codependence, or enabling the dysfunction of others. Even here, though, reproach belongs more to the pernicious influences than to her. This may be the reason why many artists depict her with a closed cup, protected from pollutants. In the right environment, however, she is what feeling and emotion are all about.

Compassion, sympathy, and empathy would define her if you could stretch to call these definitions: their boundaries are permeable. They change with what they adopt or reflect. The name of the Asian goddess of these traits, Guanyin, means ‘attending the cries.’ They have this in common. However, there is a danger here that this goddess does not succumb to: fellow suffering, although Guanyin herself is a better fit to The World card. There are open feelings and hearts here, without much interposition of preconception and judgment, but there remains enough good sense to stay above the suffering that does nobody any good. Soft-hearted does not need to mean soft-minded, although these are often fused. A small bit of hardening of toughening can be useful here. Sensitivity need not be susceptibility to random impacts and impressions. Mistakes will be made without judgment, although frequently being open to the new will make up for being open to the wrong. The Queen simply needs to learn from all of her sampling and tasting, and lesson one is to live life in a wholesome place that encourages the aesthetic sensibilities to remain open. As a Queen, or a homemaker, she can do much to make this happen.

Like a mimic, chameleon, or mollusk, she might take the shape and color of what she touches or what touches her, adopting more than adapting, and might be imaginative enough to become anyone, and lose herself in the mirrored hall. As a chameleon on a mirror, who she is is anybody’s guess. Her versatility could come to be seen as frivolity, her ambivalence as confusion, and her unpredictability as unreliability. But maybe it’s her true nature to shift shapes and truly be all of these things she becomes,

to not have a hardened or solid core. An unconditionality of the mind brings its own set of challenges. The clarity of her perceptions might depend on the stillness or turbulence of her waters. The Queen is neither understood nor understands rationally. Critical thinking is not her strongest suit. She will tend to be unquestioning, and so can be faithful to things that are not true. She will likely be honest as far as she understands things. Hers is a protean reality, one of shifting shapes and images, and uncertainty, as the nature of the perceived reflects that of the changing observer. Belief without question, gullibility and credulity, and subsequent delusion, could be ongoing problems.

This Queen's mystic and mediumistic side is often referred to. She lives close to the threshold of subconsciousness, where dreams and visions emerge. Self-hypnotic loops and experiential engulfment can make whole otherworldly worlds, but she may not be the best judge of their reality or depth, ever at risk of becoming a bliss ninny or frivolous flibbertigibbet if she doesn't have friends who can help her stay anchored and oriented. There is a danger of spreading out too thinly. With trust in experience for its own sake, the subjective can tend to be reified, or made prematurely real. Inner musings, fantasy, and trance can go many places that reality wouldn't dare, but this sometimes exposes reality's failure of nerve and imagination, even leading to wondrous invention.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 58, Satisfaction or The Joyous. In addition to the above characteristics, the doubling of the trigram of the rich and sensuous wetlands also stresses the cultivation of pleasure and happiness as intrinsically benign and instructive. With self-interest and its gratification, we negotiate our own progress and personal evolution. It's an attractive rather than a driving force, but it moves us right along.

Key Words:

absorption, acceptance, accessibility, adoption, affinity, allure, ambivalence, ananda, appeal, attending, attraction, attunement, availability, bliss, breadth, broad-mindedness, captivation, caring, chameleon, channeling, charm, cheer, communion, compassion, connection, contagion, devotion, empathy, enchantment, encouragement, eros, exposure, fascination, fluctuation, fluidity, fulfillment, fusion, immersion, impartiality, impression, imprint, intuition, magic, medium, melting, merging, mimicry, mirroring, mysticism, open-mindedness, openness, pliancy, projections, rapport, rapture, receptivity, reflection, resonance, responsiveness, reverie, satisfaction, saturation, sensitivity, sentimentality, shape-shifting, subjectivity, sympathy, taste, tolerance, union, versatility, vulnerability, welcome, whimsy.

Warnings and Reversals:

bewitchment, codependency, confusion, credulity, distortion, disproportionate reactions, distraction, emotional manipulation, emotional vampirism, fickleness, hallucination, haze, glamor, gullibility, illusion, inconsistency, inconstancy, indolence, irresolution, meekness, melodrama, misguidedness, moodiness, naiveté, narcissism, nebulosness, overextension, pernicious influences, sentimentality, susceptibility, unreliability, vanity.

Components:

The Watery part of Water. The fluidity and immediate responsiveness of water, capable of taking any form that natural law allows. Saturation, immersion. An ability to merge with context. Tranquil receptivity and powers of reflection.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pisces Ascending, as the Mutable Water sign, Ruler: Jupiter. Characterized by sensitivity and openness. Affectionate, hospitable, trusting. Impressionable, sympathetic, sensitive, suggestible, receptive. Plastic, malleable, protean, adaptable. Ethereal, mystical, mediumistic, nebulous.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 58, Dui, Satisfaction, The Joyous. Da Xiang: Dui (Cups) below, Dui (Queen) above; “Interconnecting pools. Satisfaction. The young noble joins with friends for discussion and practice.” It isn’t water’s nature to separate itself from other water. Opening up, sharing, enjoyment, gratification. “Fulfillment. Rewarding to persist.” This is not the same as persisting to be rewarded. We follow our bliss by allowing ourselves to do so, but don’t chase it out of desperation. Harvest, reaping rewards, fruits.

King of Cups

Lord of the Waves and the Waters, King of the Hosts of the Sea
Maturity, Patience, Ephemerality, Deferred Gratification

Image: A mature or paternal, but still bright-eyed King on his throne offers a cup to the reader in the attitude of a toast. One cannot be sure if it's wine. A bemused but mischievous glint in his eyes gives him the air of a old Bedouin chieftain, but with strong suggestions of both sincerity and kindness. He is both dignified and approachable here, a potentially fierce or highly enthusiastic nature with a calm and warm exterior. Marcus Aurelius might be a good model here. So would Downton Abbey's Earl of Grantham. He wants both respect and gratitude, but he wants to earn them.

The King of Cups is usually described as a decent and mature man, with a calm exterior and good humor, experienced, deliberative, considerate, and approachable. He is likely to be likable and charming, and perhaps even charismatic. He might not appear to be a sensitive or emotional fellow, since he has developed some reserve or reticence in his maturity, but he is not at all cold, nor especially judgmental. He has a big heart, but also an understanding that won't submit to the frivolous and ephemeral. He is familiar with the ranges and options of his own feelings, and can feel them vicariously in others. Once consenting, he can be touched. He is responsibly responsive, or careful about his arousal, and steady in his enthusiasms, even if they may not last long. He could be both sensuous and sensible at the same time. He may or may not be deep, but he has collected some substantial life experience. We spoke earlier of the four Kings' degree of maturity and sovereignty each relying on one most-important life lesson. This King must learn about time in a related pair of aspects: ephemerality and deferred gratification, summed up as patience. He will be guided, but not controlled, by affect. He might also be fearful of losing control from some past experience. But then, because affect is fleeting, he will be on to other things.

The King of Cups is not without emotion. Rather, he is so comfortable in the realm of emotion that it is an area of expertise for him and he can feel empathy and compassion for those around him without becoming upset himself. He may seem reserved, restrained, even reticent. This is emotional self-control, or better, self-management, that is not at all unemotional. It is a kind of discriminating intelligence that is best learned by one who has been open to his feelings and emotions and learned some good lessons from this. His emotional intelligence has become emotional wisdom, even sagacity. He is the leader of his feelings now, not their obedient follower. Experience has given him a stock of alternative ways to feel and emote, including the skill he needs in order to hold them in abeyance until some more of his options have been weighed, and compared in the light of their longer-term outcomes. He knows some things now about promises and bait, some of them learned at some cost. He can estimate what is important before choosing to get involved, when his criteria for a more promising experience have been met. This is done by slowly learning his nature and developing his personal values.

You will find this King responding just about right in between repression on the numb side of things and catharsis on the overblown side. But when you witness him emoting you are apt to see some enthusiasm and earnestness, or caring and compassion. Feelings and emotions are not things that wise elders outgrow. The Buddha had much to say about emotional self-management, particularly when he spoke of right intention. But he trained his wisdom on our more problematic emotions, craving and greed, ill-will and aversion, harmfulness and cruelty. The superior states, while not to be hunted down, were not to be dismissed. Both the Stoics and Epicureans shared

similar values. The Stoics were a bit more extreme in seeking *apatheia*, life without passionate suffering, although this was not nearly as numb as what we now refer to as apathy. Both sought *eudaimonia*, human flourishing and well-being. The final word on the matter might be that our feelings can choose, not just our thoughts. With a little experience and practice, these too can have standards, good tastes, and values. This is how to cultivate the Stoic and Epicurean ideal of eudaemonia, or human thriving.

As a king, of course, he has his subjects. He needs to know what his subjects need and want, and even what they could be helped to want. As a counselor, he has clients. As a therapist, he has patients. As a dad he has kids, as a grandpa, grandkids. He will want to be a good listener, concerned and sympathetic, attentive and understanding, tolerant and comforting, but not a chump or a sap. Understanding doesn't mean agreement, support doesn't mean indulgence, empowering doesn't mean permissiveness. He may not be at all sympathetic with impatience or shortsightedness. As these are his duties, all he might want in return for this guidance and perspective is a little respect and gratitude, and these because these two help others to learn.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 54, Little Sister's Marriage. Much of the text looks at the problems of haste and impatience that resolve with our maturity later, but a couple of the lines depict the patience and self-control that this card is trying to develop. An ideal King of Cups is depicted as the King Diyi in Line 5. The lessons of immaturity, impulsiveness, or jumping to conclusions, will eventually lead us to longer time horizons and better perspectives. This is the one who says 'no, thank you' to the Marrying Maiden, despite the near certain promise of short-term gratification.

Key Words:

affect as choice, agreeableness, allowance, appeal, calm, care, caregiving, caretaking, cautiousness, charm, coherence, comfort, compassion, composure, comprehension, consideration, counsel, deferred or delayed gratification, dignity, diplomacy, discernment, discretion, emotional liberty, equanimity, experience, familiarity, good listener, grandpa, grasp, guidance, helpfulness, kindness, liberality, maturity, nobility of heart, noblesse oblige, patience, patronage, probity, provider, reserve, resilience, resourcefulness, response ability, right intention, reticence, sagacity, *samma sankappa*, sanctuary, security, self-assurance, self-management, self-mastery, self-possession, self-restraint, sentience, sincerity, solicitousness, stewardship, still waters running deeply, stewardship, support, sympathy, tact, tenacity, tolerance, tribal elder, warmth, wisdom, wise advice, values as self-taught.

Warnings and Reversals:

blindness, compromising position, distraction, double dealing, ephemera, haste, hypocrisy, impatience, impulsiveness, indecision, ineffectuality, precipitate action, prematurity, seduction, settling early for less, shiftiness, shortsightedness, transience, unenduring enthusiasm, volatility.

Components:

The Fiery part of Water. Potential energy or hydropower. Energy crosses the ocean as gentle swells, but these can turn into great waves when coming ashore. Water will hug the lowest place in the river bed until the bottom drops out and the water falls or cascades. Water's enthalpy powers hurricanes. Water has tremendous potential energy when the time and place are right for its release.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Cancer Ascending, as the Cardinal Water sign, Ruler: Luna. Characterized

by care, sensitivity, sympathy and nurture, but also some not-so-passive, proactive energy, provided that a sense of comfort, familiarity, or security are in place. Expanding the feelings as much as bruises and armor allow. Diplomatic, conscientious, careful. Helpful, caring, fatherly or motherly. Traditional, domestic. Can be volatile, impatient, erratic, easily upset, and irrational if insecure.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 54, Gui Mei, Little Sister's Marriage, the Marrying Maiden. Da Xiang: Dui (Cups) below, Zhen (King) above; "Over the pond there is thunder. Little Sister's Marriage. The young noble uses enduring ends to understand the ephemeral." Requires an understanding of how things play out over time, one that comes with maturity. "To go boldly has pitfalls. Not a direction with merit." Impatience, haste, or rushing into things is one way to learn about life. This can mature in the end to a calmer and more appreciative way of being that can look at options even for feeling and emotion, and defer gratification as needed.

Swords

Ace of Swords

Root of the Powers of Air

Ideation, Perspective, Epiphany, Comprehension

Image: A beautiful, but dangerous-looking broadsword is held triumphantly aloft from below the card by a hand which could belong to either a man or a woman. In many decks this sword is shown piercing a crown, which could symbolize both sovereignty and Kether, and with palm and olive branches to keep the Christians happy. The RWS card and most clones depict the hilt being held by a hand emerging from a cloud. Others show the hand emerging from a lake, alluding both to Excalibur and to Yetzirah emerging from Briah. Some variants show Excalibur embedded in a stone. Decks may show the sword pointing up or down, the former being more common.

The Ace of Swords carries the connotations of the Swords in general: one-pointedness (the Buddhist *cittekegata*) and penetration at the pointy end; the two edges, for cutting, dividing, and shaping, and a warning about unintended consequences; and also the hilt, wanting a firm grasp of matters at hand, the practicalities of thought. It's not a power but a tool to do the work that's the measure of power. It's a strong signal to others, a sign of authority, or a suggestion of competence. It symbolizes the cutting edge of discrimination or the making of distinctions. It's the power of having just the right word in both magic and science. The Vorpall blade goes snickersnack and takes off the Bandersnatch head.

This Ace can speak of the formation of a good idea, of the process of ideation or conceptualization, of a figure emerging from its ground, getting resolution or sharpness, the process of getting a definition or a name affixed to an experience, the cognition that precedes re-cognition, the reduction of the flow of experience to a form, principle, or order. It is in-formation, both a specific insight or special piece of information and a summary or generalization of many such insights and pieces of the puzzle that in turn becomes a component in a still-larger comprehension. It's a way to pack up a lesson so we can carry it with us, a distillation of experience or new piece of knowhow, a likeness or model that we can use as a tool. It's the name or word the wizard needs to make the demon run errands. It's the new word you've just learned that rearranges half of your thinking. The word concept means 'to capture with.' This is an organizing or central principle, a specific affirmation, command, or emphasis, which may become the central nexus of a new order or organization. It's a good question, or a good answer, but as an Ace it ought not be both: it's not both beginning and end.

One of our more vapid and erroneous platitudes declares that there are no new ideas. It's spread by those who have none. The word discovery suggests that we are uncovering something that is already there, but this is only sometimes the case, and even then the perception, cognition, concept, or name is often new. The Ace of Swords can be the birth of a new idea. It could be an invention or a patent, a new meme, a seed idea, a new key, a core meaning, a key piece to a puzzle, a new category, a new algorithm, a new thought, or a new application for an old thought. On a personal and even unspoken level, it might be a lucid vision, an epiphany, a mental breakthrough, a getting of the right idea, a new perspective or focus of awareness, a eureka moment, the formation of a gestalt, or even a whole new paradigm that starts a scientific revolution. A good, multi-layered example was the formulation of William of Occam's Razor: *entia non*

sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem, the principle that entities in a theory are not to be multiplied beyond necessity. This is a way to slice fat from our theories and a mighty fine Ace of Swords.

With this Ace we might be working on our first premises and postulates, or forming new questions or hypotheses, still at our cognitive starting point, or getting to the bottom of knowledge, questioning the ideas that we build our mental lives around. Perhaps we are integrating a new idea into an old framework. We have a lot of work to do here, since by birth and culture of origin, we are the heirs to a vast array of what might be called anti-cognitive processes, ways to not know or to keep ourselves from learning more: cognitive biases, defense mechanisms, coping strategies and logical fallacies. And when these things have taken over our cultures, we take up our literal swords as a sterner and more serious instrument of correction, righting wrongs outside of our own heads as well. As such, our sword can stand for our purpose, or our Excalibur, if we have a higher purpose, our noble cause or conviction, our highest priority and point of focus, our oath or word of honor.

Truth changes with point of view, although it is often merely the same truth enriched by adding new points of view. The Ace of Swords suggests that we look at our perspective, the starting points of our observations. The Buddha saw what our suffering did to our perceptions and asked how clear our vision could be if it had fear and pain at its base. For this reason, he dismissed our gods and religions, and looked instead to the suffering clouding our minds. Perhaps if this could be cleared up, if we developed a more comprehensive collection of points of view, we might see things more as they truly are. This is the theme of the Yi's counterpart, Gua 20, Guan (as in the name of the Chinese goddess Guanyin) perspective, contemplation, or the act of attending. This is the issue of being both subject and object and seeing from multiple sides, a true comprehension that combines both specification and generalization. It's about getting our minds and concepts wrapped fully around things. It advises the missionary to read the signs and the natives first, to understand other perspectives before imposing new ideas.

Key Words:

abstraction, affirmation of justice, aim, algorithm, analysis, answer, assumption, belief, breakthrough, clarification, comprehension, concept, conception, conceptualization, conquest, criterion, criticism, critique, cutting through, decision, definition, design, determination, discernment, discovery, emerging view, enforcement, epiphany, eureka, examination, exposé, focal point, focus, formulation, frame of mind, generalization, gestalt, good question, hypothesis, ideation, identification, initiative, insight, integrity, invention, inventory, investigation, invoked (not natural) force, key, knowhow, law, logos, lucid moment, means to an end, mental acuity, mental concentration, mental distillation, missing piece, model, object, objectification, objective, objectivity, one-pointedness, outlook, overview, paradigm, patent, perspective, plan, point of view, postulate, *prajna*, principle, priority, purpose, resolution, review, right idea, rule, scrutiny, simplification, specification, specificity, stark relief, starting point, summation, supervenience, thought worth having, truing, vantage.

Warnings and Reversals:

anti-cognitives, arrogance, bad idea, bias, brain fog, coldness, deception, delusion, denial, Dunning-Kruger, duplicity, error, fallacy, fetish, *idée fixe*, imprudence, lack of aim or focus, one-track mind, preconception, prejudice, procrustean concepts, reason being overvalued, remoteness, toxic belief, unexamined life, unintended consequences.

Components:

Ace plus Swords. The Ace of Mind. The origin of mental functionality and the beginning of the work to develop good and useful mental functioning. How the idea or the word comes into being as we get edges carved around an experience. Cognition is embodied when sensation encounters our native abilities and heuristics, our intellect.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Saturn in Air Signs and Houses. A character wanting reliable cognition or perception must examine the basis or formation of these. Wants a structural approach to cognition. Constraining the mind and setting its boundaries in order to meet the mind's objectives. Systematic, disciplined, organized, strict, critical. May see it almost a duty to perceive the world correctly.

Qabalah: Kether in Yetzirah. In the beginning was the Logos or Word, at least as it goes in the myth, but this is at the beginning or basis of cognitive or conceptual worlds.

Yijing: Gua 20, Guan, Perspective, Contemplation. Da Xiang: Kun (Ace) below, Xun (Swords) above; "The wind moves over the earth. Perspective. The early sovereigns examined the regions and comprehended their societies to establish their doctrines."

We want our understanding to fit the real world first, and do this by sincerely attending and trying to understand the reality first, rather than simply imposing our views and seeing what we are predisposed to see. "A cleansing but not a sacrifice. Being true is as good as majestic." Comprehensive observation or examination will involve multiple frames of reference. Our experience is enriched by our optional and alternative views.

Two of Swords

Synthesis, Synergy, Reintegration, Creativity

Image: The RWS deck and most of its clones depict a blindfolded woman, seated with her back to the sea, with arms crossed and holding two crossed swords in a symmetrical position. She appears to be in a deep deliberation or meditation, cultivating inspiration, possibly trying to Feel the Force. She is training to listen as well as see. Alternately, a sorceress with cowl thrown back holds two different swords high above her head in clashing contact, liberating a spirit fire against an unstable sky and a rough sea that she faces.

The RWS Two of Swords character seems to be working out or through a problem of perception, perhaps having blindfolded herself to wake up her other senses, to see other possibilities, even alternate realities, as though the solution has not been available to ordinary states. She wants to be blind to the obvious or the expected. Her back to the sea is said to be emotion held in abeyance, dispassion, a search for equanimity and equilibration rather than submitting to vacillation, ambivalence, or indecisiveness. She is deferring a decision or judgment, perhaps suspending both belief and disbelief, avoiding distraction while her analysis is in progress. Since we all have at least two brains, it often makes sense to think twice. We all contain contradictory natures, we all contain multitudes. The world has its tricky duplicities too: wave and particle, electricity and magnetism, space and time, mass and gravity, and so on. The mind wants some rising above. We pause here to rearrange our data, and even our methods of arranging the data, and perhaps we can ask some different questions.

At the lowest level of interpretation, we see most readers and writers concerned with the cognitive problems of dualism: two swords, dueling, *en garde* and *touché*, the fight to see which side is better, or who has the better argument. Those trapped in dualistic or either-or modes of thinking, which might be most of us, tend to see this card as some kind of conflict or conflictedness, clash, indecision, stalemate, or at best a *détente*, truce, or compromise, as a conventional title 'lord of restored peace' suggests. Even the mystics will get trapped by Yin vs Yang. As with our court system, such adversarialism is often the worst way to get at what's true, often just forcing a choice between exaggerated half-truths. It's our fault when we oversimplify things, reify or harden our thoughts, and take our ways of simple-minded thinking and talking as the basic rules for the universe. While binary systems exist in plenty of places, simplistic distinctions are often too sharp for a higher or more complex reality. There is nearly always some middle excluded. Sometimes this is a problem of perception, between us and what we think is the world, and the cognitive dissonance undoes us. Sometimes it's an analog of our retinal disparity or stereopsis: each eye gets a different picture. We argue about which point of view is correct, when we need them both to see depth. Polemics do not often serve us. The sum of these kinds of two-alisms is less than the sum of the parts. We need to do some work to get the rest of the data and perhaps even change our minds or our entire way of thinking.

On a level above our right-and left-handed options is a reconciliation of opposites, a resolution of paradox, a finding of common ground, a harnessing of opponent ideas into a working team. This does not always mean win-lose compromise: as with a good market transaction, both sides can get what they want and come away winners. This might take finessing and haggling. As Fitzgerald noted: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." We might call this trans-partiality. Here we have arbitration and mediation, or diplomacy, the finding of harmony, perhaps even making use of

the tension, disparity or stress between different ideas and points of view, and development of the skill, deftness, and dynamic control that this requires. Or else we have syncretism, putting two halves back together, a unified perspective doing double the duties, the power of synthesis leading to synergy, a whole that's made greater than the sum of the parts. This is the vision of depth that we get from combining visual perspectives. It's only increasingly complex until it all comes together: then we often get elegance. Insight is sometimes defined as "a dynamic reorganization of the perceptual field." A decision doesn't always require compromise. Sometimes an answer just needs a different question.

The next level up is just that: rising to a level above. Here we find Einstein's advice: "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." This is also known as de Bono's lateral thinking. Here we find Solomon's baby, and Alexander's Gordian Knot. We are the masters of our ideas, not servants. Here we ask new questions. Problems are good things here. We break up old patterns to suit our objectives. We think outside the box. We posit a tertium quid, a third thing unlike the two. We take liberties with the order, especially how we perceive things. Arthur Koestler suggested that creativity emerged from the juxtaposition or joining of two separate matrices, or separate fields of structure, thought, or perception, or movement between two mental disciplines. He called this 'bisociation,' the "simultaneous mental association of an idea or object with two fields ordinarily not regarded as related." The theory also accounts for the success of hybrid vigor, the successful evolution of sexual reproduction, and even the nature of humor. Koestler's Act of Creation is well-represented by the Two of Swords. Strong emergence provides another example in philosophy, how new things under the sun come to be out of unions of the old.

We can get outside and above ourselves here, and ask "what would the universe do?" We have a lot of momentum and power if we can get onto this ride. We can look to higher and natural law, and possibly even find loopholes. Here is vocation, calling, true purpose, living up to our fullest potential, and higher purpose as well, living for something greater and longer-lived than we are. It means several lifetimes of study, and a long, tough road to any real or earned success. Here we find Buddha's last words: Compound beings are ephemeral, strive with heedful diligence. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 01, Creating, symbolized by the growth of the dragon. This is the slow maturation or ripening of genius, precociousness notwithstanding. This is a look forward to persistence or duration in time, a perspective beyond the human, towards the being who comes next to replace us. A dragon is above the dualities, above yin and yang: why would he favor his left or right wing when a sky full of stars is what he wants?

Key Words:

advaita, alternate realities, arbitration, artistry, autonomy, awaiting more input, balance, bilateral agreement, bisociation, cause, choice, choice point, clarification, cognitive challenge, complements, complexity resolving, compromise, concertedness, coordination, creativity, decision, decisiveness, dedication, determination, dichotomy, dispassion, dualism, duplicity, dyadics, elegance, emergence, emergentism, equanimity, equilibration, equipoise, feeling the force, genius, higher ground, higher law, higher order thought, higher purpose, higher wisdom, hybridization, ingenuity, initiative, insight, intention, inventiveness, *ius naturale*, mastery, mediation, metacognition, metasolution, negotiation, non-dualism, originality, quandary, rapprochement, resolving disparity, reconciliation of opposites, paradox, quandary, reintegration, resolve, resoluteness, resolving paradox, simplification, suspended

judgment, syncretism, synergy, synthesis, *tertium quid*, thinking twice, visualizing outcome.

Warnings and Reversals:

adversarialism, betrayal, binary or dualistic thinking, cognitive dissonance, contradiction, denial, discord, disparity, dissension, duplicity, excluded middle, falsehood, incongruity, inconsistency, indecision, irresolution, misrepresentation, offsetting factors, paralysis, polemics, provocation, stalemate, uncertainty, vacillation.

Components:

Two plus Swords. Mental direction or directing the mind. The need to look at the right form of dualism, such as outmoded vs improved. Linear thinking is limiting, particularly when it limits to right vs left. Uses of higher order thought, getting above the problem.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Uranus in Air Signs and Houses. Uranus, as the higher octave of Mercury, is metalevel thinking, creation of the message that Mercury delivers, transcendent thought. Quick study. Outside the box, individual, original, questioning, visionary, innovative, experimental.

Qabalah: Chokmah in Yetzirah. Vector and direction in the world of form. Adaptation of form to serve the ends of the will: creativity. Applied logos.

Yijing: Gua 01, Qian, Creating, Heaven. Da Xiang: Qian (2) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Heaven moves inexhaustibly. The young noble is naturally energetic, without rest" Sovereignty, command, self-mastery, authority, cogency, will, dynamic life. "The greatest fulfillment rewards persistence." Genius, in the original sense of beget or create, still carries the more modern attribution of 90% perspiration. We work for it. Creativity as a function of mastering or harnessing opposites, as a dragon's left and right wings.

Three of Swords

Sorrow, Separation, Grieving, Moving On

Image: The RWS image shows a valentine-style heart, pierced by three downward thrusting swords. The image was taken directly from the late 15th century Sola-Busca deck, making this by far the oldest of the pictorial pips. Alternately, a robed penitent kneels before an altar in which three swords have been embedded, point down, resembling crosses. On the robe is an emblem, a bleeding heart pierced by three swords.

The Three of Swords is almost universally correlated with sorrow. This is another card with head (Swords) and heart (Threes) in a fragile partnership. In this case, the world has grown too big, or the options too many, or the better choices too few. Perhaps a painful truth has shown itself. Head and heart need to come to terms and agree on how to handle this. Our disobedient feelings are not following the rules of reason, or else our rational choices are leaving us in emotional quandaries. There are cognitive components to the suffering, and suffering is bewildering the wits. The meanings can be as simple as triage, trivialities, triangles and third parties, all threes, of course. Sometimes they take or tear us apart. It may be not so much about getting our feelings hurt as what alienation, abandonment, existential angst, or betrayal can do to us, and not so much our emotional pain itself but the pain of understanding things we might rather not face or see, which calls up the question of whether we are truly understanding things at all. The head must allow for feelings, and feelings, the need for good choices. This card isn't always about love for another person. This is merely a fine example of how things may not work out according to our wishes or designs. Others may have a say in how it all works out. But we will have some kind of losses to grieve or mourn, and this may leave us with little choice but to walk away. Choosing what to feel might mean choosing what not to feel. These are swords after all. Some problems can't be solved. The mind passes, the heart breaks.

What we thought was true, or wanted to be true, was not. The world that we thought was small and simple enough to manage was not. Things won't always go our way. We can't have it all. We might even have known this in theory already, and this new insult is just a reminder. Disappointment, disillusionment, and disenchantment have to be good and instructive things, don't they? The finitude of intellect is one of the truths to be found on the quest. There is too much data awaiting collection. When a hungry mind wants it all, it winds up with noise and much with no value, plus a neocortical overload. Those with a want to believe will stuff up their minds with guests best left uninvited. Soon the mind can take no more, including its cure. More critical skills are best instilled at the start, best by the end of childhood. If we sort our data on the way in we can have much less to toss out. So we say goodbye here to some things that we liked. A perfect lover loves someone else more perfectly. Another species goes extinct forever. An old growth forest is cut down to make toilet paper. A promising nation is lost to lack of vigilance. Your species flirts with its own extinction. We may face hard truths that can't be denied. Sometimes we need to have a good cry, and then get up the courage to change whatever things we can. Where bitterness and rancor do little to help this, it isn't inauthentic to cut our losses with our swords and part ways with them.

Helplessness and finitude can be our big problems here. We want to live in the largest world we can manage, but this world isn't made for our feelings, or limited brains, and it's easy to feel or perceive too much. Somehow we must come to grips with the news of the world, and crucial decisions made by lowest common denominators. We can't have it all our way, much can't be helped at all, and much of it is out of

our hands. We still have reasons to try, instead of just praying, but try telling that to your woe. And this immense frustration drives much of the bad philosophy that tells us why to just let it be. Sebastien Chamfort suggested: “Whoever is not a misanthrope at forty years can never have loved mankind.” The idealism of this card can be individualistic or cultural, but even the rugged individual needs some inspiring peers. The world’s suffering won’t diminish any time soon, but for us it’s still largely optional when we know we are doing all that we can. And we can always not cooperate, not participate, disobey bad laws in civil ways, and vote by how we live and spend our wealth.

We have to move on and divest ourselves of the things that hold us back. We have to see the bad for what it is, if we’re honest. We have to make choices and these will negate some options. Each decision means opportunities forgone. It’s the cost of living, but it’s still a bargain. Nietzsche said: “let my sole negation be turning aside.” Angry negation and denial do more damage than this. Therefore, we simply part ways at the crossroads, acknowledge our incompatibilities, and lose the friends we are better off losing. We find that even love must have conditions, and sometimes it must be tough. It’s this or dwell in our suffering. We need to grieve our losses as part of our nature, but grief does not need to own us for life. There are plenty of other fish in this tree.

We should also not forget there are sacred forms of sorrow and sadness, and reasons for having tragedies as well as comedies up on the marquee. We are finite and mortal, or for some, all that we’ve loved and learned will be lost to the next incarnation. We can do existential nausea over this for a while, and wallow in our *weltschmerz*. We can explore where our meaninglessness and senselessness take us. We can have our crises of faith, our dark nights of the soul, and our sloughs of despond. How long is art, how short is life? But there is nothing wrong with the longing of the Portuguese *saudade*. Or the Japanese *mono no aware*: the pathos of things, awareness of impermanence, or *wabi-sabi*, the acceptance of transience or imperfection, or *yugen*, the mysterious grace of a world beyond our ken. The fact is, we are lucky to be alive and prone to be ingrates about it. We are Vonnegut’s Bokonon’s lucky mud that got to sit up.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 12, Separating or Standstill, imagined as Heaven and Earth moving in different directions, and the wise and the foolish moving in different directions, and the problems of saying goodbye to good things gone bad and the good things we cannot have. What we thought was true or wanted to be true was not. Next?

Key Words:

abandonment, absence, abstraction, alienation, baffled hopes, bereavement, betrayal, bleeding heart, blues, coming apart, decay, delay, departure, deprivation, detachment, disappointment, disapproval, disarray, disengagement, disharmony, disintegration, disjunction, disorder, disruption, dissension, dissonance, distances, divergence, division, divorce, emotional discord, estrangement, goodbyes, facts of failure, failed dreams, farewell, finitude, grieving losses, heartache, heartbreak, helplessness, incompatibility, intervention, interruption, isolation, lament, letting go, loneliness, longing, looking aside, loss, melancholy, mourning, moving on, negation, numbness, painful truths, partition, powerlessness, pulling apart, rejection, removal, rift, rupture, sadness, *saudade*, seeing too much, shism, segregation, separation, settling for less, severance, sorrow, splitting up, stagnation, standstill, tragic drama, trying times, vulnerability, *wabi-sabi*, *weltschmerz*, *yugen*.

Warnings and Reversals:

agony, aloofness, angst, apathy, aversion, bleeding heart, confusion, decadence, denial, despair, disintegrity, disloyalty, distraction, divisiveness, divorce, error, failed dreams,

hatred, heartbreak, indifference, mental anxiety, misunderstanding, pettiness, quarreling, self-defeating negativity, small-mindedness, unhappiness, world suffering.

Components:

Three plus Swords. Expansive thought, visionary about the possibilities. The possibilities are far greater than the reality could ever be, and so opportunities are foregone. Cognition and affect are at odds and may be overthought. We will need to set higher or narrower standards, leave some things behind, perhaps even our suffering. Reason and emotions conflict. Conditional and tough love.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Neptune in Air Signs and Houses. Wants affiliation with other minds, or hive mind. Moving through mental and therefore cultural relationships. Too much of identification with the human cultural experiment might lead to understanding how few are really contributing, and a sense of isolation or smallness.

Qabalah: Binah in Briah. An ocean of pure possibilities, as seen from a tiny little boat. This is too much for us, but we lose some jetsam and sail on. We can't do nor learn to do this in safe harbors.

Yijing: Gua 12, Bi, Separating, Standstill, Stagnation. Da Xiang: Kun (3) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Heaven and earth do not interact. Separating. The young noble conserves virtue and avoids trouble, not allowing himself the luxury of compensation." Heaven and earth are moving in different directions. This is often mistranslated as 'Obstruction,' but it's closer to abandonment. "Separating oneself from inferior people, those not worth the young noble's loyalty. Greatness departs, smallness arrives." Mind necessarily moving away from portions of reality for reasons of self-protection. Sensing a necessary conditionality to our loves, our likes, and our wants.

Four of Swords

Retreat, Distancing, Reframing, Perspective

Image: The RWS deck shows an embattled knight out of armor, in horizontal repose in a religious sanctuary, seemingly recuperating or otherwise recomposing himself. Alternately, a warrior, perhaps only recently turned anchorite as evidenced by torn robes and bandages, recuperates near the mouth of a mountain cave, sitting Zazen. His four swords are still within reach, one being more immediately at than the others. If there's a chance he's still a warrior, he could be reading Sunzi now.

The Four of Swords is sometimes subtitled Rest from Strife, but there is a larger dimension to it, specifically, larger dimension itself. It's an adjusting of the boundaries with which we frame our worlds to optimize our perceptions. This is frequently called reframing. In psychology, cognitive reframing is "the process of identifying and then disputing irrational or maladaptive thoughts," or rethinking a problem in other terms and from other views or perspectives. It's a type of reflection used to transcend points of view that are proving to be less than optimal. For the person taking this rest or retreat, it's the ability to step back or out of what they have been doing to find some new or different approaches. For the one embattled, it might be a furlough, or strategic retreat, or rest from strife, or even a rethinking of the need for battle itself. For others it might be a sabbatical, or sabbath, or other form of time out. Perceptions, and thoughts based on them, change with how they are framed, even when situations from which they derive don't change at all. Less than optimal fixed frames can include narrow-mindedness, nearsightedness, small-mindedness, and shortsightedness. Altering these at will is a metastrategy, as with the Two of Swords. We refer our ideas to a more comprehensive or informative frame of reference.

The Four combined with Swords suggests composing or recomposing the mind, the cultivation of poise, equanimity, or equilibrium. The word strategic in strategic retreat is important here. This is not about finding an artificial mental stability that is too delicate to admit disturbance. It's also not about escaping or fugue, or going to one's happy place. It might mean getting out of a trap, or finding refuge or sanctuary. It's a refreshing of our browser. It's a re-scaling of our frame of reference, usually in order to see a little bit more of the ground or context surrounding a figure, to try to see what might be missing in the current view, by looking at the bigger picture. Sometimes we back up far enough to see that what we have been obsessed with was never important at all.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 33, Distancing or Retreat. It depicts a mountain standing tall under heaven, making it also not so very tall. This might suggest our own mountain-and-molehill image. One of the metaphors used in the lines is military, but this and others apply to any situation that we might be advised to back or move away from. It's common for people to leave a situation by making themselves and everyone around them unhappy in order to get pushed out, often leaving only resentments behind. The optimum retreat is a simple disengagement that will leave no such mess for others to clean up. Freedom-to is better than freedom-from, but both can usually be achieved. We have a choice of point of view or perspective. We are permitted to choose among options for the path that best serves our longer ends and objectives. In battle, of course, we call this slippery or crafty, but here it's whether you win or lose that counts.

Reframing is recontextualizing. It's like looking through a zoom lens and having the freedom to change composition. It's the paradox of finding stable mental formations by liberating ourselves from fixed ideas, dogma, and toxic beliefs. The Fours want some

form of stability, but they still permit changing the scale at which we look at things. This especially includes changing our time horizons. Today we have politicians with two years or less worth of vision, making hundred-thousand year promises about storage of nuclear waste. Much human endeavor looks quite different under the aspect of evolutionary or geologic time, and our failure to see from this angle might help put us out of that picture. Patriotism is another example, since mighty nations come and go like the seasons. And conscience requires a better vision of what a higher law might say. A frame with more ground and less figure lets us see our problems from more or multiple sides. And fractal self-similarity gives us analogs at multiple scales. *Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter*: we take steps back to make better leaps. Or to make better choices in life.

Zhuangzi wrote: "Men of great wisdom, looking at things far off or near at hand, do not think them insignificant for being small, nor unwieldy for being great." There are different measures to use in sizing something up. Tiny little molecules are some of our hugest discoveries, while some of our greatest achievements will be nothing in ten-thousand years. Love only lasts forever for the span of a handful of decades at most. We change the universe of discourse the better to master the space around an idea. We don't want the space too big either, or else we dismiss real problems. Like Goldilocks, we manage our perspective to find the thing that's just right. We look for optimums here: problems don't fill the whole screen, but they don't vanish into the background.

Key Words:

abandonment, abstention, acquiescence, adjusting perspective, alternatives, ark, asylum, backtrack, backup, big picture, breadth, broad-mindedness, caution, ceasefire, changing perspective, circumspection, collecting the wits, composition, composure, contemplation, context, convalescence, departure, discretion, disengagement, disentanglement, distance, distancing, economy, equanimity, equilibrium, escape, evacuation, exit, expansiveness, extrication, fallback, figuring it out, frame of reference, harbor, haven, higher order thinking, holding back, inaccessibility, keeping a distance, mental consolidation, mental rebalancing, neutralizing, optimization, perspective, pragmatism, problem solving, proportion, reassessment, reconsideration, recontextualizing, recuperation, reevaluation, reflection, reformulation, reframing, refuge, regrouping, rejuvenation, relief, renewal, replenishment, reservation, reserve, resort, restabilizing, restating criteria, rethinking, retreat, retirement, review, revisioning, revival, sabbatical, safe distance, safe space, sanctuary, scale, scaling down or up, self-preservation, solitude, stepping back, strategic suspension, strategic withdrawal, time out, treaty, truce, universe of discourse.

Warnings and Reversals:

being enmeshed, entangled, or implicated, cognitive inflexibility, denial, dismissiveness, dogma, escapism, evasiveness, fear, fixed frames, fugue, guarded advance, flight to happy places, pedantry, precaution, rigidity, shortsightedness, stubbornness, running away, toxic beliefs.

Components:

Four plus Swords. Composing and balancing the mind. Four boundaries make a frame of reference with an inside and an outside. Thought can be put in order, but it wants to be an order that works, so the boundaries are for reference, not for protection. Rigid beliefs will need too much defending when negative feedback suggests error. The mind needs both firmness and flexibility.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Jupiter in Air Signs and Houses. A sense of personal identity that's founded on perceptual and cognitive experience, on how we see things, over which we can learn some control by expanding our perceptions and mastering our perspectives. For Jupiter, this includes the including the Olympian or Jovian view, equanimity, patience, and equilibration. We can reconsider what we do mentally in order to optimize our worlds. Higher-order thinking.

Qabalah: Chesed in Yetzirah. Self-stabilization in the world of form will want form that keeps learning. An objectification of form in multiple dimensions allows it to be studied from different angles and at different scales. Figure implies ground.

Yijing: Gua 33, Dun, Distancing, Retreat; Da Xiang: Gen (4) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Beneath the sky is a mountain. Distancing. The young noble is distant from the common people, not with ill will, but with reserve." The mountain stands high against the horizon, but heaven is not diminished by this. Choice of distance and scale. "Success. Little reward in persistence." If what we are doing isn't working as it should, we should be doing something differently. We are missing information that might be available from a larger picture and more complete context.

Five of Swords

Surprise, Trust, Shenanigans, Learning Curves

Image: Four young boys have just lost their swords in a game played with an older boy. Marked, sharked and dejected, they slink away while the older boy gathers up his spoils. Something about them told the winner beforehand that they would make likely victims, and this is usually some sign of overconfidence or unrealistic expectations. Now they have new ideas to process. It is left undeclared which figure represents the querent, one of those who has just learned a lesson the hard way, or the one who has offered this instructive, if expensive, experience.

The pictorial Five of Swords depicts a pop quiz here at the School of Hard Knocks, education the hard way, with winners and losers, but potentially losers all around in the long term. The teaching seems thus: I'll teach you a thing or two, or I'll teach you a lesson you'll never forget. Mental patterns are involuntarily shifted. In the RWS deck, and most of the others, we see the outcome of a confidence game, which, as the name suggests, requires somebody's confidence to fail them. The winner triumphs at the moment the loser expects to claim his victory. He does this by counting on his mark's naive assumptions to lead him across that line where exceptions start proving the rule. The card is not about this defeat or failure, but the process that led to this, and what we do afterwards with our fresh, raw, real-world lessons. Ultimately, this is about the confidence we have in our mental constructs of reality, that allows us to move through life more courageously, without being paralyzed by doubt, fear, and mistrust, and how this sometimes will fail us in rude encounters with reality. The energetic force of the Five disturbs the clarity and certainty of the Swords, and the reality of the rocks dulls those razor-sharp edges. The mind sometimes needs to learn to unlearn and to steer well clear of having things all figured out. It's often a positive learning opportunity for those able to learn and salvage some kind of win-win outcome here. Wisdom from experience can still restore some balance if we can cut our investments in ideas that don't work.

We have to believe that the world is not out to do us harm if we want to get anything positive done. We need to believe in things like natural justice, and a basic goodness in humankind. Trust is a precious currency. But we need these beliefs to bend and bounce a little. The pain that we feel when our expectations are violated is the fault of the expectations. These will betray us if we fail to keep an eye on the reality of things. Many of us start out with some patently ridiculous assumptions that get passed around almost universally as vapid platitudes: god works in mysterious ways, everything happens for a reason, there are no accidents, this is the best of all possible worlds, you karma's gonna get you, love is all powerful. The game assumes that someone has learned some incorrect lessons in life. With illusions like this, it's no wonder we get disillusioned. The real world is way beyond morals and ethics: bad guys win, good guys lose, lousy things happen to good people, and cosmic justice is a fantasy. Ten million Native Americans did nothing to deserve their genocide. There is no god with special plans for me and you. If we happen to succeed, it's not because we were too good, pure, or important for failure or injustice. We just managed to do something right and had a little luck. Mischief and misbehavior, treachery and betrayal, force us to adapt, or just as often, maladapt. We reassess our picture of the world, but too often we only tack on random amendments to the larger illusions we start with. We sometimes need to revamp the whole thing.

Mohammed is said to have said: "Trust in Allah, but tie your camel first." This is the right formula to optimize the Five of Swords. We cover more of the bases. The Yijing

counterpart is Gua 25, Without Pretense, Innocence, The Unexpected. The natural history of nature, life, mammals and primates has given us a natural ethic and crude intelligence. Without an excess of painful conditioning, this gives us original mind and an instinctive goodness, what we fall back on when we are artless and guileless. We already know how to be true without looking it up in a book. When things are going well, we can proceed as if the world was good. The savage might not always be so noble, but he's born with the same nature you have, so you know a little of what he might be up to. We reinforce this naturalness culturally with the presumption of innocence and the benefit of the doubt. We give special license and privilege to people of proven goodness, and special stigmas to our degenerates. To let us move still further forward, our reputations precede us. Then we do what we can with the dark side when this is encountered. No matter how kind and sincere we may be, life comes with no guarantee. We have only this from Louis Pasteur: "Chance favors the prepared mind," and a correlate: probability favors the good and the kind. It's at least enough to tip the odds a little in favor of goodness and kindness.

Oliver's Law asserts: "Experience is something you do not get until just after you need it." We likely do not need to worry about running out of surprises, or humbling blows to our egos, or challenges for our many mental defenses. We have new lessons in store, even when we can learn from others' mistakes. We will have big and shocking plot twists, involuntary new insights, lessons we may not understand for decades to come, and some that will never make sense. It may be all but impossible to maintain any innocence, but we might yet find ways to stay open, and just the right measure of vulnerable.

Key Words:

accessibility, adaptive learning, adjustment, assumptions, artlessness, being corrected, being edited, being tested, caught unawares, certainty, codes of ethics, codes of honor, cognitive adaptation, confidence backfired, credence, credulity, cunning, deception, disappointment, disillusionment, dissimulation, element of surprise, embarrassment, failed expectation, faith, good faith, guilelessness, imperfection, inadequacy, innocence, insecurity, integrity, knowing better next time, learning by surprise, learning curves, live and learn, loss, lost innocence, lost trust, mischief, morale, naïveté, narrow expectations, openness, overconfidence, plot twist, pop quiz, presumptions, relearning, reorientation, rethinking, revelation, revising conceits, revocation, school of hard knocks, shenanigans, slings and arrows, surprise, trust, tuition, uncertain outlook, uncertainty, undeserved lessons, unexpected outcome, unfairness, unpredictability, upset, violated expectations, vulnerability.

Warnings and Reversals:

ambush, bad judgment, being marked, betrayal of trust, blow to ego, coercion, con game, credulity, danger from liars, deceit, defeat, failure, embarrassment, false accusation, gossip, gullibility, humiliation, hurt feelings, injustice, lies, malice, pop quiz failure, rudeness, rude awakening, shock, slander, treachery, trickery, unfairness, wounded pride.

Components:

Five plus Swords. Kinetic energy is applied to structured thought. Things move forward well when all is as predicted and presumed. But surprise may bring blunt force trauma to the delicate or unrealistic idea, cracking one's beliefs and assumptions. The need to adapt, process new data, or adjust mental pictures when experience suggests change.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mars in Air Signs and Houses. An appetite and naive enthusiasm for the mental world. Piqued by lessons and stimulated by learning but confused by the need to unlearn. The will trusts thoughts and perceptions for a guide, but one might be overly confident or 'know too much that ain't so.'

Qabalah: Geburah in Yetzirah. Force and severity applied to the world of form will lead either to adaptive resilience or to failure. This is only 'just' in the sense that you 'just' have to get it right.

Yijing: Gua 25, Wu Wang, Without Pretense, Innocence, The Unexpected. Da Xiang: Zhen (5) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Beneath the sky moves thunder. The creatures interact without pretensions. The early sovereigns flourished according to season and nurtured the myriad beings." Life beneath the sky. Probability for success has been folded into the genes. But there are no guarantees. We simply live and learn. "Most fulfilling. Worthwhile to persist. For the one without integrity there will be suffering, and not much reward in having somewhere to go." We play the odds and probabilities here, which favor the ethics and intelligence that we have been born with, a natural and original mind that somehow stays able to learn.

Six of Swords

Comprehensiveness, Exploration, Reintegration, Organization

Image: The RWS deck depicts a woman and child being ferried across water, whether by a husband or ferryman, with six swords in the boat. We see them from behind. New land lies ahead. Several clones imply a perilous journey ahead, or else the boat and figures are seen head on as the perspective is on the past. It is unclear whether they are leaving a troubled situation or a limited one. In many interpretations, the card may be too broody or mooney. Alternately, six warriors, with their swords behind them, having a parley in a circle around a fire, near a ferry across a river. The mood is engaged and peaceful, while their hair, skin color and dress suggest they may be from different, even hitherto warring tribes. There is a parity here, and some tension that's in the process of being dissipated.

In the RWS deck, the Six of Swords begins a series of easily misunderstood images, culminating with the Ten. These cards all imply at least a slice of the meaning pie, but the meanings suggested by number and suit are in each case quite a bit broader. Here, the woman and child, or family if the ferryman is father, might be leaving troubles behind them, or otherwise making a passage from difficulties or unsatisfying conditions. It could be flight, or a seeking of refuge. They could also be reestablishing their social, cognitive, and perceptual worlds following a challenge they got from the fives, and broadening their understanding of the world. This could be what recovery groups call a geographic cure: thinking that past patterns can be escaped by moving someplace else. But these are lesser implications. More broadly, these characters are enlarging their world, extending their horizons, expanding their context, transcending an outgrown niche, or simply exploring a larger one. New ideas are needed to complete the picture. The ready swords imply they are bringing their wits along with them. This may be more of a case of 'freedom to' than 'freedom from,' even though some dissatisfaction or unpleasantness might still drive the move. As child leaves crib, and young adults leave home, the sage leaves nations behind him. We expand and then reintegrate in a more expanded context.

Since we are dealing with the Swords, the mental world, the culture in which we are immersed might be our biggest factor and context here. The change is much more than geographic. We may be expanding, or perhaps upgrading, the society around us, or the company we keep. We burst out of the bubble of local or parochial culture. We may even make it all the way to global culture and find some collective common ground on those farther and foreign shores. This is a good card for anthropology and sociology, or comparative cultural studies. And if we really want to look for who we are, we can look into primatology, and even zoology. Mark Twain wrote, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." We learn to suspend our judgment until more of the facts are in. Human is as human does, and we have to go see what we do. Books will only take us so far in showing us the way we actually live. Thus do the academics, in towers behind the high walls, know so little about us. The tourists also learn little, who bring their high walls along, as a sort of a shell. The maintenance of this shell, and the insecurity that requires it, is an industry unto itself. But we speak here of going more native. We want to fill in the lacunae on our maps. If the maps say 'here be dragons,' we need to go there and see that. Of course, 'wherever you go, there you are' has us wondering how much we can change, or how much we want to.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 13, Fellowship With Others, depicts a fire under the stars, where we have gathered for hundreds of thousands of years, inventing our language and telling stories. This is one of several places where the Yi suggests the benefits of crossing the great water. The phrase means different things in different contexts, but here it means to leave the familiar behind and seek out the larger family. We get beyond ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and anthropocentrism, to find our common ground. We get beyond our belief systems, collective associations, and mass follies to find etiquettes and ethics that we might all be able to share. We get beyond mutual endorsement and admiration societies to discover cultural diversity and creative cultural hybridization. We get good help and perspective from others. Our more usual search for like-mindedness can preempt a chance for expansion by way of variety. If there is a superior race, it is still yet to come, and it will mix the best of our separate, present-day traits.

Krishnamurti sums this card up with: “you must understand the whole of life, not just one little part of it.” Beyond the socio-cultural elements to this card, we have also the personal cognitive world. This is still a departure from the familiar for greater familiarity, and an infilling of the mind with things it is missing. It’s a rounding out of the big picture, that we cannot get by staying in one place, at least metaphorically, or by minds remaining at smaller sizes. We need the larger world even to grasp our own private psyches. And perhaps we suspend judgment and belief until more facts are in. Crowley called this card Science, a word that derives from knowing how. We can add some more depth to this term now by adding the implications of interdisciplinarity and consilience: that is, the card represents a more comprehensive view of the world, not scattered and cut up into countless smaller disciplines, but integrated into a whole, and then tested against practical challenges. Holistic thought or thinking is not as simple-minded as one might imagine from reading the new age material. It is only simple in that when it all comes together or integrates, things might reappear as elegance or a simple-seeming gestalt.

Key Words:

accord, alloy, assimilation, alliance, bigger and better worlds, breadth, broader horizons, broadening perspective, change of scenery, coalition, common ground, commonality, completing the picture, comprehension, comprehensiveness, consensus, consilience, consensus, context, cultural broadening, cultural diversity, cultural exchange, cultural exposure, departure from the familiar, discovery, education, embrace, escape, excursion, expansion, expedition, exploration, exposure, extended family, extension, familiarity, filling in the lacunae, fraternity, freedom from, freedom to, fresh perspectives, higher order, horizons, human association, improved circumstances, inclusion, incorporation, integration with a larger world, interdisciplinarity, internationality, journey abroad, mental infill, moving on, multiculturalism, networking, new channels, new context, new horizons, open system, organization, outward bound, overview, perspective, pilgrimage, reaching out, reconnaissance, rite of passage, rounding out life, science, scope, simple passage, social organization, social transition, sojourn, systemization, systems thinking, universalization, holism.

Warnings and Reversals:

broken negotiation, cultural limitation, delays, dislocation, displacement, divisiveness, ethnocentrism, exile, fragmentary understanding, fragmentation, geographical ‘cure,’ intolerance, lost passport, misoneism, narrow-mindedness, parochial beliefs, patriotism, refugees, seeking asylum, stalemate, unacceptable proposal, xenophobia.

Components:

Six plus Swords. The assembly and integration of a more expansive and comprehensive world view. The word science works here only if the various disciplines are working together. Thinking in wholes and systems, putting a larger picture together, rounding out the curriculum, figuring it all out. The search for holistic patterns and elegance.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sol in Air Signs and Houses. Identifying ourselves with our awareness and recognition. The mental stimulation of experience, and figuring this out, as the ignition of the self. Working with and integrating information, gaining perspective. Attention to novelty with a will to understand. The social aspects of life, particularly education and communication. Work towards a broader sense of belonging may require an appreciation of diversity while in search of common ground.

Qabalah: Tipareth in Yetzirah. Balance, harmony and beauty in the world of forms. Ideas, formation, patterns and natural laws. Integrating and organizing the various formulae into working models of the world.

Yijing: Gua 13, Tong Ren, Fellowship With Others, Fellowship With Men. Da Xiang: Li (6) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Heaven accompanies flame. Fellowship with Others. The young noble, according to kind and family, distinguishes the beings." Fire under the stars, where our fellowships gather. "Fellowship with others on the frontier. Fulfillment. Worthwhile to cross the great stream, and worth the young noble's persistence." The search for broader fraternity and coalition. Crossing cultural boundaries and networking. Thinking globally, acting locally.

Seven of Swords

Strategy, Ingenuity, Problem Solving, Self-Interest

Image: A shadow warrior has entered a crusader encampment by stealth and is making off with five enemy swords. He spots two guards in conversation and contemplates taking their too. No guts, no glory. This is a man with a plan. It's almost certainly not approved in advance by all parties concerned. He may or may not get away with it. Whether you want him to or not may depend on where your loyalties lie.

It seems to be up to the readers to decide if they are to identify with the character in the picture or with those on the other end of his sneaky plan. Seeing common interpretations like deception, trickery, theft, dishonesty, etc., it seems that most tarot writers identify with the victims here, overreact to the RWS design, moralize on this image and jump to self-righteous value judgments. With the preconceived notion that anything tricky is bad, they get busy shaming the subject for committing a stealthy act. This misses the point of the Seven of Swords entirely. This scene is about situational ethics, and amorality, not good or bad karma. What the subject is doing is no more immoral than the swordsman Kyuzo stealing guns from the bandits in the Seven Samurai. Would anyone have thought it wrong to steal Nazi guns? Besides, this is *bing fa*, the art of war here, and you're supposed to use crafty surprises, avoid confrontation, and win without combat.

The Seven of Swords is about our self-ish thoughts. The Seven wants its Victory, or *Netzach*, it wants to survive first and then thrive all it can. The mind, as Swords, is set to the task of figuring out how to do this, doing problem-solving behavior, vicarious trial-and-error, running mental scenarios, choosing the best of the ones which might work and projecting their outcomes. We start with what we need, and then work on what we want. A nursing mother feeds herself first. When oxygen masks drop from the airliner ceiling, we put our own on before we help our children. There is nothing inherently wrong with selfishness, or acting out of self-interest, except for when it's done badly and people and other life forms get hurt. Even the Buddha admitted that we are selves for now, and that these need our attention. That doesn't mean we aren't also one with everything else and interconnected and such. But if we want to survive and interconnect, we need strategies for survival. If we want to have our needs met, we have to negotiate a world that can kill us in a heartbeat and keep right on going as if it didn't care. We just figure out how to get what we want without getting hurt, and hopefully doing no harm in the process. We take our steps in accord with our best projections of success. This plan is being tested against a harder reality, but more is at stake here than the plan.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 10, Respectful Conduct or Treading. It uses the amusing image of someone about to tread on the tail of a tiger. The measure of his success is in whether or not he gets bitten, or eaten. This will not be known until after he is done. He wants his accomplishment to be without consequences or disastrous entailments. If there is to be any divine guardianship here, it will be on terms not his own. This is only accomplished with a great deal of respect for where he is and how he comports himself. Steps may be taken in accord with projections of success, but correctness is situational and the real element of risk is largely proportionate to deviation from natural law, not from the plan. The steps are bold and sometimes heroic ones. It is not a place for glib appraisal, or fascination with the mystique or romance of taking bold and heroic steps. We want to set aside anything that leaves us with an inadequate quantum of attention, effort, focus, or perseverance. The world standing between us

and success has powers that need to be respected and weak points to exploit. We don't want to confuse the two.

To per-form means to move through a form. This form, Swords or Yetzirah, can be any of a number of things: a plan, a plan B, a protocol, a scheme, a strategy, a ruse, a trial, a game, a myth, and the list goes on. We make these to guide us in our adventures. What a form is not, however, is the reality it proposes to model. In the distance between the two lies our possibility for error. We use our mental flexibility and resourcefulness, our ingenuity and subtlety, to get the two to line up or coincide, to find the right track that follows them both. Ultimately, however, the facts of the matter are more important than our vision and ideas. Not many people truly perceive this. We cannot count the men who have marched to their deaths behind lies that they have told themselves or let themselves believe. Thoughts and beliefs are bad masters and leaders. Being true to ourselves wants a better selfishness, to let us abandon the ideas, rules, peer pressures, and expectations as soon as they no longer serve us. We experiment with variable attitudes and convictions and think what needs to be thought. This, too, can be a bold step to take, especially when there are witnesses, but according to Stuart's law of retroaction, 'It is easier to get forgiveness than permission.'

Key Words:

action's meetness, actualizing, alternative tactics, anticipating problems, artfulness, being fa, boldness, canniness, challenge, circuitous means, cleverness, conscientiousness, contrivance, counting coup, craftiness, cunning, daring, designs, difficult success, ends and means, enlightened self-interest, espionage, expectations, expedient thinking, exploit, exploitation, foresight, forethought, game plan, gamesmanship, hazarding, ingenuity, intrigue, inventiveness, Kobayashi Maru, legitimate shortcuts to victory, living by wits, making own rules, maneuvers, mental flexibility, opportunism, performance, plan of action, practice, pragmatic amorality, prediction, problem-solving, procedure, program, protocol, reality check, risk assessment, ruse, scenario, scheme, self-ishness, shrewdness, situational ethics, speculation, stratagem, strategy, stealth, subtlety, tact, tactics, tempting fate, testing faith, testing karma, testing limits, tests, trials, vicarious trial and error, wiliness.

Warnings and Reversals:

arrogance, betrayed confidence, cheating, chicanery, consequences, deceit, deception, deviousness, dishonesty, double dealing, futility, guile, hasty decision, inconsideration, insolence, lost cause, plan may fail, pettiness, powerful opposition, questionable advice, scheming, self-doubt, suspicious activity, unrealistic designs.

Components:

Seven plus Swords. Wanting victory, success, or thriving means making the mental forms or ideas serve our ends. Executing a plan or scheme in order to come out victorious or on top. Expedient thinking. Situational ethics are relative to which side you may be on. The how of getting what we want. Risk is proportionate to deviation from natural law.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Venus in Air Signs and Houses. Wants and their emotions are reviewed mentally. Behavior is understood first in terms of its likelihood of success. Versatile, investigative, innovative approaches to solving problems. May understand ethics well, but not for the sake of obedience. Knows the way around, especially around obstacles. Qabalah: Netzach in Yetzirah. Victory or success attained through use of forms, such

as ideas models and plans. Problem-solving behavior, strategies for self-preservation and the fulfillment of needs and wants.

Yijing: Gua 10, Lu, Respectful Conduct, Treading, Conduct. Da Xiang: Dui (7) below, Qian (Swords) above; “The sky above, the lake below. Respectful conduct. The young noble distinguishes high and low to steady the human purpose.” We modify what we think and believe according to human purpose. “Treading on the tiger’s tail. When it does not bite one, success.” Treading carefully, with circumspect behavior, we measure the correctness of our actions by their outcomes.

Eight of Swords

Restraint, Interference, Entropy, Distraction

Image: In the RWS deck, an attractive, seductively dressed, and barefooted young woman stands fairly loosely bound and blindfolded, with eight swords stuck into the ground before and around her. She is being kept from both adventure and meddling. The owners of the swords are absent, off doing who-knows-what. The woman is loosely bound and not suffering here. Her bindings could be easily cut with the edges of the standing swords, so she has what she needs to escape. There is a chance she is playing along here and simply waiting to be the next priority. Ironically, the problem here may be too much freedom, in need of restraint or constraints.

Here again the RWS card gives the reader a choice of which character to identify with. But none of the writers I have seen on the tarot have made any significant comment on what appears to be the eight men who tied this poor woman up before setting off to take care of other business. Consequently, the suggested interpretations tend to cluster around censure, restriction, restraint, temporary duration, or domination. Clearly she seems to be some sort of victim here, and could not have tied herself up like this. Levi comments, "Woman enchains you by your desires; master your desires and you will enchain her" (Vol. 1, p. 4). Restraint, in fact, is one of the most central or core meanings of this card, but this really centers around self-restraint, or self-control in the face of seductions, diversions, or distractions. In particular, given that the Eights typically concern mental organization, structure, systemization, intelligence, and predictability, and that the Swords concern the tools of the mental world and the utility of thought, these distractions would pull us away from our higher mental pursuits. More than a little interestingly, the Yijing counterpart, Gua 44, Dissipation or Coming to Meet, also depicts a seductive woman as a primary threat to our more cerebral pursuits. It should not be forgotten that this woman is a metaphor for anything which might leave our clearest and tidiest thoughts in shambles and maybe ourselves in pitiful ruin. I submit that the subject of this card can also be the ones who have tied this metaphor up, for their own protection, exercising self-restraint, to get on with other pursuits.

The mind, which is well-represented by the Eight of Swords, is able to dwell in a world entirely of its own imagining. There are no theoretical limits to conjecture or theory itself, or to our flights of fantasy, but various forms of self-limitation are available. The mind won't get all the possibilities surrounded. The card is sometimes called 'shortened force' perhaps because cutbacks are to be made here before unlimited permutation, attenuation, extenuation, entropy, and randomization turn the whole mental system into incoherent and useless white noise. We need to leave or put some things out of the mind if the mind is to hold itself together. Just as vampires must be invited into our homes, we learn to do this with the thoughts and information that we allow into our heads, and show our uninvited guests the door. Pieces of information arrive with equal weight and we must assign them value or they don't get sorted for relevance or priority. This is the point of looking for core meanings. These are reference points, standards, and measures of value and relevance. Without them we are mentally promiscuous, dissipated, scattered, not knowing when or where to stop. There is much talk and ado about nothing, as nothing is true, everything is permitted, and anything goes. The high noise-to-signal ratio leaves us with little more than apophenia and pareidolia with which to make meaning from nonsense. People will then believe anything they read or anything they are told. We are also inclined to get lost in our maps, having long ago left and lost the real terrain to which they were made to refer.

These become tautological realities, true in their own right, by their own definition, with no need to refer to anything else. We see a lot of this in occult studies, particularly with the over-elaboration of structural elements. Ideas are not all of equal value, and most are *ghafila*, mindless distractions. Too much attention is paid to fussy detail at the expense of the principal and more important points. We always have many options, but the best ones, by definition, are limited. Not all available ideas are equal in value.

Selection works in a mind's evolution as well as it works in nature. We learn to rule our thoughts and learn critical thinking skills. Sometimes we need to be told we can't do or think all the things we want to do or think, at least not yet. We budget our attention to enrich our minds with higher quality stuff and more effective cognitive tools. Constraints are not just good things in systems theory. We bind ourselves to our better purposes, like Odysseus passing the Sirens, staying focused, resisting distraction. Meanwhile, the crew of his ship has their ears stuffed with wax. We wait for the right time and occasion to allow our thoughts and opportunities to ripen. We draw lines and hold them. We use Occam's razor, or our eight razor sharp swords, to slice away the superfluous. Restraint is not imprisonment. Editing is not an insult. Criticism is not a bad attitude. Simple systems and algorithms can give a complex mind what it needs. All of this having been said, however, there is still great wisdom in making or saving some extra room in the mind, for wild ideas to run around and play in.

Key Words:

accepting limitations, avoidance, beguilement, boundaries, carefulness, caution, censure, chance, clearer heads prevail, complication, composure, constraint, criteria, critical thinking skills, culling, curtailment, deferred gratification, deviation, disempowerment, dissipation, distractions, diversions, drawing and holding a line, economy of thought, energy wasted, enticement, entropy, exclusion, extenuation, fighting disorganization, forbearance, gleaning, hazard, inhibition, insinuation, interference, intervention, intrusion, luck, managing system leaks, mental coherence, negative entropy, Occam's Razor, parsimony, patience, persuasion, preference, prioritizing, randomization, randomness, resisting distraction, resisting restriction, restraint, seduction, selection, self-censorship, self-control, self-discipline, self-imposed restriction, self-possession, simplification, tangent, tautology, threat of randomization, time out, undermining influence, unexpected encounters, use of upper head, voluntary limitation, winnowing, won't power.

Warnings and Reversals:

accidents, arbitrary censure, betrayal, confinement, cynicism, disquiet, drastic measures, entrapment, *ghafila* or mindless distraction, hypocrisy, ill-directed action, incapacity, indecision, insinuation, involuntary restriction, much ado about nothing, overreaction to the bait, pettiness, randomization, scandal, scattering or dissipating forces, slamming the doors, paranoia, temptation, trusting in whims, turmoil, white noise.

Components:

Eight plus Swords. The mind minding mind is runaway mind, able go anywhere and do anything, with not much to ground it. Enthusiastic investigation opens too many doors and questions. We need to limit our minds with patterns of preference and critical skills. We learn how to stop or say no.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mercury in Air Signs and Houses. Thoughts here are relatively free and

unfettered by our emotional and practical needs. Not so much feedback-oriented as cognitively proactive, leaving the subject able to live in a rationalized, cognitive world all its own. Can usually use some grounding experience or practical limits to thought.

Qabalah: Hod in Yetzirah. Complex organizational systems still need forms that allow an adaptive response to reality. They are useless when they occupy only themselves. Systems are not systems without boundaries and constraints.

Yijing: Gua 44, Gou, Dissipation, Coming to Meet. Da Xiang: Xun (8) below, Qian (Swords) above; "Beneath the sky is the wind. Dissipation. Rulers issue commands and decrees in all four directions." The wind will undo the commands. Reiteration, repetition, and redundancy are a hedge against entropy here. "The woman is powerful. Not at all useful to court this woman." If this referred to an empowered or liberated woman, the Chinese words nu and zhuang would be reversed in the text. Instead, this refers to someone to whom one surrenders power. Restraint awaits the right time and occasion. This is an error of interpretation made frequently, and it's most ironic, given the subject. Any purely mental experience can justify itself without reference to self-preservation.

Nine of Swords

Conflictedness, Fixed Ideas, Adaptive Cognition, Unlearning

Image: A dreamer sits bolt-upright in bed, as if awakening from a nightmare in a cold sweat, both hands to his face and wearing a look of horror. An arrangement of nine short swords or daggers on the wall behind seem to point inward towards him, forming an aura. One suspects this character might be clinging subconsciously to an outdated, toxic, or partial idea, and it festers in his sleep. Dreams are often of our unresolved issues kept on standby. He might not even be aware of this conflictedness when awake, except for a general sense of anxiety, stress, or unease.

Traditionally, this card can refer to a number of unpleasant emotional states of mind: despair, anxiety, suffering, cruelty, tribulations, angst, shame, resentment, helplessness, guilt, regrets, desolation, doubt, crises of faith or confidence, or demons in general. It suggests unresolved troubles, complications, conflicts, quarrels, and other miscarriages. One might well ask what all of these wet emotions are doing in a card in the suit of Swords. The answer to this must eventually come back to cognitive structures and the psychological problems that errors in thinking or perception might lead us to. This also suggests that these problems have either been buried or else have gone unnoticed, allowing them time to fester, to awaken us later with bad dreams. Mind runs amok and life makes no sense. While emotions are not some hydraulic fluid that's somehow conserved in its quantity, requiring channels, outlets, catharsis to vent or release, it's still the case that repression, suppression, or stuffed emotions do not solve problems, but drag them along, beneath the threshold of awareness, where awareness gets its power and problems do the most damage. To correct this condition, the unpleasant emotions must be seen as information leading back to the problem, as friendly signs or reminders that we have gone off track. What is it that we have ignored for too long? Thoughts and reality are two different things. If you need to give up one or the other, give up the thoughts or let them adapt to reality. We need an ability to unlearn, to replace faulty parts in our cognitive edifice, to maintain a nimble and healthy mind.

Careless or sloppy learning is one usual suspect. As discussed under Numbers, the Nines symbolize states that have come into their fullness, with little room remaining for more, other than maintenance and adaptation to ongoing changes. This implies that the mind is full, or processing as fully as it is able. This in turn implies that when the mind is troubled and confused, we might think to switch tactics and start preferring quality over quantity of information and its processing. In theory, this will enrich us. Some claim to not care, openly disliking critical thought as being 'too negative,' citing a preference for emotional happiness or popularity instead, but then they show puzzlement when their happiness turns inevitably into trouble and confusion. Their reasoning is now automatic and out of their control. Questioning everything on the way into the mind should have been ongoing. Now there is much catching up and unlearning to do. The big problem here is that our views of the world are interconnected, and built up on a foundation that includes early experience, basic assumptions, and core beliefs. We build with what is at hand, often before we have seen or learned better ways. The mind is a bricolage, with outdated stuff embedded in important places. Errors accumulate and compound each other. It's hard work rebuilding foundations, but it's never too late to start being more choosy about letting our minds fill up with unexamined data and unquestioned beliefs.

We want a better criterion of truth than the simple convincingness of ideas. Beliefs that cannot be questioned, or faiths and convictions, are how we get viruses in our minds, toxic memes that spread out to the horizons of our perceptual worlds, where we

ought to be learning new things instead of twisting what we see there to suit our mental diseases and pathologies. Fixed ideas may promise comfort and security, but the deception catches up. Beliefs are self-serving, self-maintaining cognitive loops. Sometimes we know them by bad names: presumptuousness, prejudice, dogma, propaganda, and fanaticism. But more often we take pride in having them: we have the answers. Well, how is that working out? Getting into lots of fights? Nightmares? While absolute relativism, where all ideas are equal, is the sloppiness just discussed, the other wrong-headed extreme here is advocacy, adversarialism, partiality, partisanship, or polemicism, all from the fixed idea that admits no second opinion. This is the theme of the Yijing counterpart, Gua 06, Contention or Conflict. Strife and resistance, or unpleasantness in general, is information, not something to die for. We navigate better when we can use this simply as data, and adapt our thinking as we move along.

Suffering is information that can lead us to its own cessation. For this we need adaptive cognition, with continuous questioning, revision, and unlearning, even of some of our most basic assumptions. This is especially true of challenges to our identity, beliefs, or sense of belonging. This is a basic teaching of the Buddha. With life comes a great capacity for self-deception and a host of mechanisms to assist in its practice. It isn't easy to live life counter to this. Generally speaking, our choice is suffering or diligence. Most, it seems, choose to suffer, rather than admit and shed error, because this is a lot of hard work. Even those claiming to be on a path to the light will scornfully scold those who discriminate and select the superior things to learn. But this aversion to judgment only leads to bad judgment. We don't need the teacher within if we know the learner within. We don't need the answers if we have the right questions.

Key Words:

accommodation, adaptive cognition, adversarialism, antagonism, antipathy, assertion, competitiveness, compromise, concern, conciliation, conflict, conflictedness, cognitive bias, contention, contradiction, cracks in the paradigm, disagreement, discrepancy, disparity, dissent, dissonance, doubt, editing, excessive response to problems, facing facts, friction, inappropriateness, incongruity, inconsistency, internal contradiction, judgment, lack of selection, maladaptive thought, mid-course correction, modification, negativity, overreaction, philosophical overhaul, pragmatism, presumption, questioning, reconsideration, rectification, reconsideration, reexamination, reformulation, reification, relativity, re-sentiment, resistance, revision, rigorous honesty, selection, self-doubt, self-perpetuating belief, skepticism, supposition, suspicion, uncertainty, unexamined alternatives, unlearning, unresolved troubles, vigilance, worry.

Warnings and Reversals:

adaptive failure, angst, anxiety, arrogance, cognitive dissonance, crisis of faith, crisis of confidence, cruelty, demons, denial, despair, discord, dogma, dread, fixation on relative truth, fixed ideas, hauntings, ideologues, incoherent thought, inconsistencies, infidelity, inflexibility, loops of thought, lying, malice, mental complications, nightmare, obsession, partiality, pitilessness, psychological crisis, repression, quarrel, rationalizing, regret, repercussion, resentment, self-deception, shame, slander, stinking thinking, stubbornness of thought, suppression of evidence or feedback, tautology.

Components:

Nine plus Swords. Foundations and fundamentals that support structures in the cognitive and perceptual world. Basic assumptions, postulates and premises, and how

these affect the ability of the completed structures to function in a world of change. Stable, well- founded cognition must be adaptive and continuously question its own truth. Trouble here is simply evidence of trouble, evidence that something needs to be changed.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Luna in Air Signs and Houses. At home in the mental world, in the head, and enthused by ideas. The senses serve intellect before the emotions. Impersonal feeling but still feeling for humanity. A model of the world makes a more comfortable home than the world, until it fails. Will think first, and then act on evaluation. A mobile mind, but not moved by sense or concrete reality.

Qabalah: Yesod in Yetzirah. Reification, thought becomes the thing. A world in itself that is dependent on the adaptive functionality of its working parts. A foundation in change must also be able to change and adapt, or risk an accumulation of error and a subsequent crisis of correction.

Yijing: Gua 06, Song, Contention, Conflict. Da Xiang: Kan (9) below, Qian (Swords) above; “The sky together with water is contradiction in movement. Contention. The young noble, in undertaking the work, appraises beginnings.” Revisiting the early postulates and premises when there are multiple points of view to choose from. “Being true, yet opposed. Wariness in the middle is promising, at the end, unfortunate. Worthwhile to meet a mature human being. Not worthwhile to cross the great stream.” Without questioning ourselves, or using resistance as data, we will subject ourselves to hostilities, and even mutiny by the crew of selves within.

Ten of Swords

Attrition, Wearing Force, Micromanagement, Finitude

Image: The RWS deck shows a man alone, face down, stuck in the back with ten swords, and this does not leave him among the living. No single wound seems to be a mortal one. It looks as though he had turned his back on insignificant threats, reprisals, or things that he thought could be put behind him, and transcended or ignored, perhaps out of arrogance or pride. But things caught up with him. The Sufi Inayat Khan might have called this “a total annihilation of all that you believed in and thought that you were.” But he would have called this a positive development, since now you can move on to the next great thing. The first of the twelve steps is admitting defeat, for now at any rate. Sometimes it takes destructive force to unseat overlearning or a stubborn way of thinking.

Commentators on the RWS deck are often very quick to point out that this is only a metaphorical death, although there is still plenty of ruin, affliction, grief, bankruptcy, desolation, troubles, misfortune, dashed hopes and dreams, and the utter defeat of hope or intention. There are similarities here to the Tower, but this is in the mental realm. The most significant aspect is that the damage is cumulative, a death of a thousand cuts, not one mortal or devastating wound, but a death by attrition. As a Sword card, it warns of a potential failure of the mind, a failure of the intellect to cope with the ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.’ We have many handy metaphors that might be applied here: an accumulation of thought or theory can collapse like a house of cards. A final straw breaks a camel’s back. A government grows too complex and the center can no longer hold. A boxer takes one punch too many. A lapsed alcoholic might say ‘I was run over by the caboose.’ Environmental damage reaches a tipping point and a system collapses in a cascade failure. By the Peter Principle, a man gradually rises in his job to his level of incompetence. In sum, this is the climax of something a long time in coming, a function of accumulation and not a sudden event. This suggests the question of why this outcome was not foreseen and acted upon. One might well answer with the frog in the hot water metaphor, even though this doesn’t really happen in reality. The frog got the hell out when it was actually tested. But many humans are not this bright. Paradigms die hard, taking lots of blows on the way down.

The Ten of Swords is the wearing force of excessive detail, an erosive process, by the abrasive grit of the sands of time. We are slowly worn down or detailed to death. An architect, probably while praising himself, once coined the phrase “God is in the details.” It wasn’t long before someone countered with “the Devil is in the details,” which soon became a lot more popular. Whichever may be the best, it’s awfully crowded down there in those details, and really hard to work around those two. The Yijing counterpart, Gua 09, is Raising Small Beasts, or Taming Power of the Small. A modern English equivalent of this amusing title might be ‘herding cats.’ It speaks to the diminishing returns of fussing over details, advocating a simplification and streamlining of our character or being, a smoothing of rough edges that we get by moving to a larger scale or more distant time horizon, a ceasing to sweat the small stuff. This principle is often applied in politics as devolution, the transfer or delegation of power to lower or local levels. This is also the ombudsman with vertical mobility through a world of layered bureaucrats. The trifles, irritants, and back-breaking straws still do their work of fine-tuning, but this is seen to have its place in self-regulatory processes. This is also about our ultimate finitude as it’s seen from high above: our species going extinct is a galactic trifle, as is our glorious Sun’s burning out. Eternity, for man, is the briefest flash of all.

Micromanagement makes existence overly complex. The mind will never surround or comprehend a reality seen at this scale, where all it is is little things adding up to take us down. We want the view with the most information for the least effort. Our lives, our minds, our cultures grow and elaborate themselves into Rube Goldberg contraptions. At some point, only hive mind can take control. This is great for self-organizing systems, made of elements that are 'fast, cheap, and out of control,' like insects. But it's not as promising when decisions need to be made that will determine the fate of the world, like nuclear disarmament or the destruction of the environment. We don't want the averaged behavior of insects to make these kinds of decisions. We want to have more components with higher perspectives, longer horizons, and authority instead of helpless anonymity.

Hyperextended systems eventually collapse, in parallel ways to crashes in populations, which fall to below their long-term sustainable levels. Sometimes the standard models just disintegrate with a single unwanted datum. A bubble bursts or a market collapses. A delusion ends, or a way of thinking suddenly gets abandoned. Sometimes we simply hit bottom and decide we have now had enough. Sometimes this is a very good process, a quick conclusion to the ill-conceived, and saves us dismantling something noxious one bit at a time. Dead-wrong ideas invalidate themselves, gone the way of phlogiston. To paraphrase Max Planck, science progresses one funeral at a time. In the best revolutions in science, the newer, simpler, more elegant paradigm is already waiting in the wings, to take the sting out of letting go. Besides the devastation, the Ten of Swords is also this large-scale rethinking, the finding of simpler, more versatile schema, like an aerodynamic mobility through the levels of awareness, like the vultures thermaling high above the wasteland, looking for signs of life to erase.

Key Words:

abrasion, attenuation, attrition, bother, collapse of the standard models, comeuppance, complete rethinking, complexity, cumulative changes, effects, and errors, deconstruction, demise, details, devolution, diminishing returns, diminution, disintegration, do-over, effortlessness, erosion, exaction, extinction of a bad idea, failure of imagination, final indignity, final straw, fine adjustments, fine grit, finitude, gradual adaptation, herding cats, hitting bottom, hyper-complexity, hyperextension, inevitability, insignificance, irritants, large-scale rethinking, minutiae, non-essentials, outdated principles, overhaul, overload, overthinking, overview, paradigm failure, polishing, ravages of time, redo, refinement, relative importance, rescaling, revolution, simplification, streamlining, subtle persuasion, summing it down, surrender of answers, sweating the small stuff, systemic collapse, technicalities, tipping points, troubles add up, unlearning, unsustainable thought, watch your back, wear and tear, wearing force, weathering.

Warnings and Reversals:

back-breaking final straws, backstabbing, bankruptcy, bubbles burst, cascade failure, collapse, conceptual gluttony, dashed hopes, death of an illusion, death of a thousand cuts, detailed to death, disregard, entropy wins, exasperation, frivolousness, fussiness, heedlessness, hitting bottom, micromanagement, overconfidence, routinization, ruination, stereotypy, system crash, trifles, triviality, troubles add up, turning back on realities, undoing, vexations.

Components:

Ten plus Swords. Overthinking things. The Ten in the world of ideas will take the whole system too far. Things grown overly complex or complicated means too many

moving parts to be managed and maintained. Maladaptive cognition. A superior order allows lower levels to manage themselves with a minimum of supervision or control.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pluto in Air Signs and Houses. An overabundance of thought brings a strong sense of limitation, finitude and deeper time. Major systems of thought collapse of their own weight, as with scientific revolutions, to be replaced by more elegant paradigms.

Qabalah: Malkuth in Yetzirah. The fullest manifestation of the system of thought may be viewed at varying scales. As Malkuth suggests, things have gone too far, one is down in it, where small things can be overwhelming. Sometimes only broken shells remain.

Yijing: Gua 09, Xiao Chu, Raising Small Beasts, Taming Power of the Small. Da Xiang: Qian (10) below, Xun (Swords) above; “The wind travels high in the sky. Raising small beasts. The young noble trains and refines his character.” The original concept of streamlining, working with the fine grit of time to knock down the rough edges and simplify life. “Fulfillment. Thick clouds but no rain from our western horizon.” Don’t sweat the small stuff. Fuss as you might, there are greater perspectives to take. Simply do what it takes to help the details to take care of themselves.

Princess of Swords

The Princess of the Rushing Winds, Lotus of the Palace of Air
Correction, Vigilance, Parrhesia, Truthfulness

Image: The RWS card shows a young adult Page holding a sword upward and ready for something he appears to be either seeing or looking for. His look is serious, but not angry. Storm clouds and a flock of birds are in the background. Alternately, a fair, lithe young princess is shown with her sword in mid-swing, lopping the head off an idol that someone has left on her family's shrine. She might be expressing impatience with the way things are hiding themselves from change. Still learning her swordsmanship, training and sparring with diligence, she might be a little inexperienced still, but she is not swinging this weapon carelessly. She intends to be a Queen of Sorts or Swords. Finding out what's wrong in the world is as important to her as learning what's right.

The Princess of Swords is known to most commentators as a young woman (or a page) with a precociously penetrating mind. She can also represent communiques of news and information. She is quick, vigilant, assertive, inquisitive, challenging, astute, iconoclastic, adroit, feisty, insightful ahead of her years, and ready for the unforeseen. You might have met her in a coffee house near some college campus, or out rousing the rabble, planning a demonstration, or a more ambitious revolution, an *en garde* to the forces maintaining the status quo. Youthfulness and rebellion go together, of course, not yet lulled into sleep and obedience by consensus, peer pressure, or economic insecurity. As Jefferson noted, one generation has no right to bind [or bankrupt] the next. She is simply editing the past for a new generation. She stands behind the cutting edge, and, word to the wise, she's a little young for diplomacy. She will speak truth to power. As for causes, whaddaya got? I once saw a very young lady of about eight preparing for a day of hard play, and I overheard her saying to her father, "I don't want to wear my princess dress today, Daddy. I want to wear something I can get blood on." I'm certain that this was the Princess of Swords.

Perhaps it's the fixed idea that rouses her ire the most, the general rule that won't admit the exception, the letter of the law that won't admit the spirit, the law that won't look at true justice or the reasons for its own enactment, the old that won't look at the new, the stagnant that won't let in the fresh, the liberal idea that's become an institution. She will play rough with entrenched beliefs. 'Fixed' is an odd word. When you fix something it's supposed to get better, but it's just not so with ideas. The Yijing's counterpart is Gua 18, Detoxifying, or Work on What has been Spoiled. It is built on the images of wind, stopped and stagnating, at the base of the mountains, as with a smoke-filled temperature inversion, and that of a poison or bad medicine that was made by trapping venomous and poisonous creatures together in a bowl and letting them fight it out. Many cultural things fit these images of stagnation, pathology, atrophy, festering, and necrosis: bad or unjust law, senseless behavioral norms, entrenched political corruption, organized crime, dogma, ethical decadence, fixations, and obsessions. Circulation, jolts, exposure, whistle blowing, exposés, outspokenness and openness are the cures for these toxic conditions, or stirring things up. Sometimes even a little rage or outrage is in order. Simple resentment will get nothing done. Neither will resignation or just letting it be. The Princess will not deny herself the courage to change the things she can.

As a Princess, her foundational task is to get her ideas set up on the right foundation, and then the ideas in her closest surroundings, the cultural context she needs to mature within. This will help her develop an honest identity. This is her domain and her right, and she need not be shy about it. She has rights to all premises and postulates, her

data's base, to know how things work and why, and why things resist correction. The best time to question is youth, so there is not as much to unlearn later on. She has a right to right wrongs, even the ones entrenched in tradition and legacy. It would not be surprising if she did some damage when thumping the family idols to see whether they rang hollow or true. She might destabilize things just to see what happens. Negation is going to be needed, and criticism too. These are things that the swords are good for: getting to the point, cutting through rubbish and lies, interrogating with pointed questions, and getting confessions from liars. The meaning of cynicism has rotted much over the years. In the old days it meant taking a stand against arrogance, insisting on excellence, and practicing parrhesia, outspokenness and candor. This might be a little bit tactless and blunt, but it isn't what the word cynic became. We find the limits of things, where they fail tests of their truth. We want to find fault and weakness. These are not found by making no noise, and they are not found by conformists or polite, smarmy flatterers. This is a force of correction.

Negation will take us part of the way. When the worst of the lies and delusions are out of the picture, authentic investigation can begin and we start to get constructive, and offer unasked-for second opinions. The Princess will speak her mind, hard questions first, and then her opinions. She is no friend to the information being examined, although perhaps she hopes truth will forgive her some day. She needs to recognize problems invisible to others, due to their familiarity. The platitude might get cut down or cut off in mid-air. But all of the slicing and dicing has construction for its aim, ideas demonstrated and proven, and set on solid ground, a place to take a stand.

Key Words:

breath of fresh air, calling bullshit, candor, caution, challenge to fixed ideas, changing of minds, circumspection, clarification, clearing the air, conscience, conscientiousness, constructive criticism, correction, criticism, critique, curiosity, cutting edge, cutting the crap, deconstruction, defiance, demonstration, detective, discernment, destructive logic, diligence, discernment, discovery, exactitude, examination, espionage, exposé, force of negation, forethought, forthrightness, frankness, freshened perspective, getting to the germane or point, glasnost, Greek Cynicism, grounded knowledge or thought, hard facts, heedfulness, honesty, iconoclasm, incisiveness, incorruptibility, independent thought, inquisitiveness, intelligence gathering, interrogation, investigation, judgmentalness, kids nowadays, negative feedback, no nonsense allowed, openness, outspokenness, parrhesia, pragmatism, purging, questioning authority, radical reform, reading fine print, rebel, rebellion, redemption, reenvisioning, reexamination, reform, reformulation, regard, rejuvenation, remedial action, revitalization, rigor, rigorous honesty, rousing the rabble, sentry duty, skepticism, speaking the mind, stirring things up, suspicion, testiness, testing limits, uprightness, ventilating, venting, vetting, vigilance, whistleblowers.

Warnings and Reversals:

conformity, blind obedience, chip on shoulder, corruption, cynical negativity, decadence, deceit, defensiveness, degeneration, disease, dogma, fixations, fretting, hypocrisy, hyper-vigilance, indiscretion, intolerance, pathologies, powerlessness, resentment, rot, secrets aren't safe, stagnation, tactlessness, toxic ideas, unpreparedness, vindictiveness.

Components:

The Earthy part of Air. The condensation or materialization of the idea, grounding ideas for realism, applicability, and practicality. A down-to-earth set of theories and

rules of behavior, with proper cautions against rigid or fixed ideas. “The most valuable insights are methods” (Nietzsche).

Correspondences:

Astrology: Caput Draconis in Air Signs and Houses. Cultivating foundational principles, constituting ideas, cognitive foundations, premises, first principles, core beliefs and assumptions. Candor or honesty used for a basis, integrity of thought, edification, rigor. Challenge to ideas that need it.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 18, Gu, Detoxifying, Work on What has been Spoiled. Da Xiang: Xun (Swords) below, Gen (Princess) above; “At the base of the mountain there is wind. Detoxifying. The young noble stirs up the people to fortify character.” Wind is stopped short at the base of the mountain. An inversion or stagnation, wanting refreshing. “Most fulfilling. Worthwhile to cross the great stream. Before the beginning, three days, after the beginning, three days.” Things need to be in their proper place in context, not stuck in isolation. Purging of the stagnant may be needed. Calls for broader context, stimulation, fresh air, reform. Even the shortest moment is six days wide.

Prince of Swords

Prince of the Chariots of the Winds

Exploration, Extrapolation, Intellect, Reasoning

Image: The RWS card depicts a knight in armor, visor up, mounted on a white war horse, charging into the wind with sword drawn. Alternately, a fair, young prince is shown in mid-leap from the back of his rearing war horse, wielding a sword with both hands. He is practicing skills, speed and agility with an intensity similar to battle, or typical of male youth.

Modern tradition describes the Prince of Swords as a brave, skillful, dashing young man. He is heroic, clever, restless, adroit, assertive, independent, quick, witty, creative, idiosyncratic, persistent, relentless and competitive. Ill-dignified, he is rash, brusque, importunate, impatient, careless, shallow, and lacking in staying power. Commentators err somewhat in overemphasizing his haste, as he is capable of far more thoughtful and deliberate paces. Yet he may be in a hurry due to time wasted in error. Sometimes what seems like haste might only be quick-wittedness, or to stay with the sword symbol, his rapier wit, enjoying the exhilarating thrill of a nervous system operating at capacity. Also, due to the common misinterpretations of the swords, writers may also attribute an aggression, quarrelsomeness, or even violence, that is by no means ever-present, even though he might be suspiciously quick to respond to stimuli. Response time is often as helpful as prowess in such mental athleticism.

Ultimately, as the airy part of air, this is the mind within the world of the mind, the entertainment of thought by more thought. As the Prince, it is his duty to explore this world, to understand how the mind works and then to work it. The frontiers here, those he is charged to go beyond, are endless, and so his explorations are up to and beyond his own limitations. Still, he is tasked with carrying these ideas out, elaborating the premises, varying the themes, exploring the what-if's with alternate assumptions, extrapolating, projecting, ramifying, permuting, inventing, and following ideas to logical conclusions, including reductions to absurdity. He may assume too much about this applying to the real world.

At the mind's least useful level, thoughts have little structure, no rules of construction, no hierarchy of meaning or value, the monkey mind's internal chatter. Information and its deft handling are mistaken for intelligence and intelligence for wisdom. This is not unlike turning the mind over to some French philosopher for deconstruction, or to a cloistered academic competing with his peers. The human mind serves only itself. Intellect and information exist for their own sake. Many believe that all thoughts are true, at least to their mind of origin. Everything read can be believed if it meets expectations. And others believe that all is inane, pointless, and aimless, false, and pre-refuted, 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' Here we have tautology, sophistry, cultural dilettantes, cleverness for its own sake, and to no small extent, peer-reviewed academia, sucking up for tenure. There is harmlessness here too, solving puzzles, jousting and sparring, jesting and satirizing, gymnasiums for training the mind. One only hopes that the eloquence and articulation found here can find something useful to do in the end.

The whole point in moving all over the place is to visit and investigate the world from multiple angles or alternate points of view. We don't stick with one view of things and we stay wary of beliefs and convictions. We don't just think once and then stop: we think at least twice. And taking a second look at things is the core of the word re-spect. Revisiting ideas also gives us a chance to unlearn before an error takes root. Leaning is an ongoing process. This ongoing effort to penetrate the world is the core of

the Yijing's counterpart, Gua 57, Adaptation or The Penetrating. We reconnoiter before going in, assess before following through, optimize our approaches and occupy niches with fitness and respect. Of course we contradict ourselves: we have choices of frames and perspectives. We have devil's advocates too. And minions. We are legion.

The Prince is not a Ronin or sword for hire. He wants a higher throne than sophistry can give him. In the end, he will need to reduce his thoughts to meanings, to touchstones, paragons, and points of reference, to useful behaviors and methods, to the sciences and technologies, to arts and humanities. He needs to learn critical thinking skills to question himself as well as the world, to arrange his thoughts according to value, to pick his battles well, to assess the worth of his programs, to subordinate his knowledge and serve his higher purpose. To do this his thought must have feeling. Many will go wrong here with emotional commitment to rigid convictions, fanatic belief, bluster, bravado, and ego involvement. Beware the terrible, swift swords of the misguided crusaders and zealots. They have learned nothing useful. The critical thoughts are best trained first on our own delusions.

Key Words:

access, acumen, agile mind, ambiguity, ambit, analysis, appraisal, assertion, cleverness, complication, comprehension, comprehensiveness, contradiction, criticism, derring do, development, devil's advocate, discrimination, edification, education, elaboration, elastic mind, eloquence, enthusiasm, examination, experimentation, expansion, exploration, exposure, extension, extenuation, extrapolation, familiarity, fitness, fluid dynamics, fresh pathways, ingenuity, insight, intellect, intelligence, interrogation, investigation, irony, jousting, knowledge, learning, meaning, mental, penetration, persuasion, projection, quest, questioning, ramification, range, rapidness, reasoning, reckoning, reconnaissance, reconsideration, references, relentlessness, research, resilience, restlessness, rethinking, rush, shrewdness, sitreps, sparring, spectrum, study, subtle persistence, subtlety, survey, teaching, vicarious trial and error, vision, wit, wittiness, wordmeister.

Warnings and Reversals:

absurdity, argumentativeness, belligerence, contrariness, crusader, deception, delusion, dilettante, dissimulation, error, evasiveness, excess cleverness, extravagance, fallacy, fanaticism, faulty premise, haste, hypervigilance, ideologue, illogic, illusion, impatience, imprudence, impatience, indecision, misconception, not picking battles, overthinking, preconceptions, rationalization, ridicule, sarcasm, scatteredness, self-deception, slippery thought, sophistry, specious reasoning, superficiality, tactlessness, tautology, vacillation, want of criteria or principle, zealotry.

Components:

The Airy part of Air. Breeziness, but the wind only blusters part of the time, with calmer periods between. Air is even slipperier than oil, mercurial and dynamic, yet it has weight and occupies space. The doubling asks what air is responding to, to an environment or to itself?

Correspondences:

Astrology: Aquarius Ascending, as the Fixed Air sign, Ruler: Saturn. The experience is referred to thought and idea, wanting resolution, clarification, and consensus. Seeks social and natural order and organization. Creative, inventive, progressive, determined, forward thinking. Ideas are given a telos or goal, a vision of being made real or true. Qabalalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 57, Xun, Adaptation, The Gentle, The Penetrating. Da Xiang: Xun (Swords) below, Xun (Prince) above; “Subsequent winds, adapting. The young noble sets forth the higher purpose in carrying out the work.” Both green wood and the wind probe first for openings and subsequently follow through. “Adaptation, in little successes. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go. Rewarding to encounter a mature human being.” Rethinking or thinking twice will allow the mind to find and examine options before moving forward. Intelligence is more subtle than fixed ideas permit. The role model, like the purpose, sets a hierarchy of value for reference.

Queen of Swords

Queen of the Thrones of Air

Accession, Transmission, Challenge, Versatility

Image: A fair and very serious or solemn Queen invites the reader to approach her with her left hand, while holding an upraised sword in her right. She's the woman in charge, both intimidating and encouraging, and she's ready to transmit and share some of her power with you, you poor, lucky bastard. She has a lot to offer, but it's at a high price. Service is in the future, not in the past: this is a challenge, and not a reward, and if you accept the dare to strive for greatness, expect big changes in life, and brace yourself, and gird your loins.

This is one of the most misunderstood images in the RWS deck and its clones, and I'm not sure whether any of the Tarot writers have noticed that this card depicts a knighting ceremony, a transmission of license or authority, and a call to step up to a higher level of excellence. Most commentators manage at least to see the solemnity and seriousness of the Queen's expression, but most seem to take this for deep sorrow and loss, or perhaps widowhood. Her strong character may have developed in hardship, knowing reversal and misfortune. Traditionally, she's independent, regal, perceptive, demanding, disciplined, severe, driven, assertive, intimidating, penetrating, cold, pragmatic, exacting, versatile, liberated, and complex. She's a good judge of character, but she wants it demonstrated. She's epitomized by the goddess Athena or Minerva, or an Amazon, or a Valkyrie, or a Viking shield maiden. She can also be an ice queen, complete with *vagina dentata*. She might make difficult and unpopular decisions without regrets. She is most emphatically not Guanyin, the goddess of compassion. Nor is she Venus, though many commentators suggest that she loves to dance. She has an elastic mind, but it's used to gain victory, not to vacillate. Today, she might wear a suit in the boardroom, or something really hot in leather. Either way, she is not to be trifled with. This is the other side of the Earth Mother, not the nurturing Empress or Queen of Pentacles, but the one who lets the unfit of all ages get selected out of the gene pool for good, the one who saves her compassion for future generations. She calls to the best that's within us.

This is a call to step up, with courage, daring, commitment, and accountability. It's an intensification and an exigency, a renaming of this time and place with a word of power, a new and higher standard or frame of reference. There are no masks or flattery here. This is a great chance to learn to swim in water way over your head, in a do-or-die sort of way. Compromise and halfheartedness are ill-advised. Posturing and pretense will not survive this. If one is composed of multiple selves, it is time to pull these together. Stepping back, note that all of life is like this. When time stretches out, things seem more relaxed, when time gets compressed, things intensify. But those who know or remember that life is short have a more urgent air. They will want to keep their wits close to hand, and make better use of their sense of mortality and finitude. *Memento mori*. But even the slow times can often use higher standards. If choices in life must be narrowed, why not find some kind of compelling reason for choosing the best we can find? Sometimes we only need to retitle, rename, or reframe a situation as having a more vital importance.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 28, Greatness in Excess or Preponderance of the Great, depicts a heavy storm, a surcharge of weather, that could lead to complete inundation. The roof could come down under these lively loads, the rivers rise and bridges wash out. Dispatchers will be called and first responders summoned. Emergency means that you really want to emerge from the far side of this. It is something interesting to go

through, and best to go all the way through. We don't always know what to expect, except that we will be greeting something greater than ourselves. This is a peak experience, a stretching of limits and envelopes, an unleashing of abnormality. Once again, stretched out in time, this is just life, our education. Scrunched together, it's a pace we didn't bargain for, but that serves us right for bargaining instead of preparing. Minds encounter a broader world, and strategies, a less predictable one. Perceptions change and laws mutate. We want to get to the point and see clearly without much philosophy. Much behavior may be disallowed. Halfwits will not do well. The Queen is a better ally in times of adversity, when she hasn't let us grow lazy and slack.

Stepping up to be tested is the way to get an education, not sitting in back of the class, guarding unearned self-esteem and fearing pressure from peers. We toughen up under scrutiny, think and get real fast. Higher bars and standards are set, and the ante goes up. It's a waking up in a hurry, and a time to walk the talk. It's not enough to get it right: we want it exactly right, and then to ace the dismount. Critical and crisis come from the same word, a decisive turning point. Once again, this Mother Nature is the force of selection, the half of evolution that below-average folk would rather not be aware of. But the fitness that selection rewards is not what the unfit think it is. Fitness is fitting best into the niche, a sensitivity and an intelligence, and only a little to do with brute force and competition. This too may seem cruel to the weak and the average, but this is a Queen we are serving here. She does not want our half measures. Seek and take wise counsel.

Key Words:

accession, arete, assignment, attainment, austerity, being tested, best judgment, calling, career, challenge, clarity of focus, cogency, command, communication, connections, contacts, crisis, crisis management, critical juncture, criticality, delegation, demands, determination, discernment, discipline, dispatch, double dare, effectiveness, emergency, employment, enlistment, exaction, excellence, exigency, expedition, extremity, fitness, forte, guardian, higher standards, imperative, insistence, intensification, justice, mandate, mature intelligence, merit, no nonsense, notice, objectivity, pressure, recognition, raising the bar, reconsideration, recruitment, resourcefulness, responsibility, savvy, selection, self-control, self-determination, seriousness, severity, stepping up, strictness, summons, superiority, taking responsibility, tough love, transfer, transmission, transmittal, trial, turning point, ultimatum, upping the ante, urgency, versatility, vivification, walking the talk, worth.

Warnings and Reversals:

artifice, averages, bigotry, compromise, cowardice, deceit, elitism, evacuation, flattery, half-heartedness, half measures, hardship, intimidation, irrelevancies, lowest common denominators, malice, mediocrity, meh, narrowness, nonsense, posturing, presumption, privation, prudishness, severity, ultimatum.

Components:

The Watery part of Air. The watery expression of Air includes waves and pulses in the ocean of atmosphere, the transmission of fluid dynamics, as pressures move from high to low. It's also the adaptability of the fluid air to the form it wraps around, its conditions, movement that is precise and without delay, even more quickly than water responds.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Gemini Ascending, as the Mutable Air sign, Ruler: Mercury Prometheus.

Concern for the broadening of horizons and relationships, branching out, perceptual mobility, social involvement. Access and accessibility, curiosity, intelligence, association, patternment, encoding. The power of the word and its recall. Second nature, second-handedness, vicariousness, picking knowhow up from others.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 28, Da Guo, Greatness in Excess, Preponderance of the Great. Da Xiang: Xun (Swords) below, Dui (Queen) above; "The lake rises over the trees. Greatness in excess. The young noble stands alone and undaunted, and steps back from the world without sorrow." Bubbles and structures under the lake. Adapting in a hurry may be the only hope. "The ridgepole bends. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go. Fulfillment." Storm proofing. Life is contingency. We mutate accordingly. We allow that there is something else that we might change into when we encounter things greater than we are.

King of Swords

Lord of the Winds and the Breezes, King of the Spirit of Air
Proficiency, Repertoire, Resourcefulness, Expertise

Image: A fair, powerful king sits on this throne, leaning forward with both hands on the hilt of his broadsword. A look of intense concentration on his face shows he is about to deliver a judgment or plan. Few will call this merely his opinion. There will probably be no appeal. He has the wisdom of experience, and knowledge of conflict and its costs. Exemplars of this character would include Arthur pulling Excalibur from the stone, Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian Knot, and Solomon, threatening to divide the baby.

The King of Swords has a lifetime of learning behind him, and is now a grownup man with a grownup mind. He is described by commentators as determined, authoritative, professional, commanding, experienced, educated, judicious, skillful, rational, assertive, discerning, tactical, analytical, accomplished, articulate, respectable, philosophical, and tough-minded. He might be an diplomat, a dean, a doctor, a lawyer, or a judge, but he also might be an autodidact who needs no certification to be seen as an authority in his field. He can be a self-made man who has earned his position and identity. He can make hard choices like the Emperor, but he can and will explain them. He is, in Castaneda's terms, 'a man of knowledge, claiming knowledge as power.'

All four Kings have specific life lessons to learn, that will pull their whole character together to optimize the best qualities of their suit. This King wants adaptive learning and thought. He must grasp that even what there is to be known evolves while we are learning what used to be true. He cannot be a know-it-all, but must retain a degree of humility when it comes to his lifelong learning. Pedantry and inflexibility get broken by forces of change. Arrogance just gets embarrassed. Authority is a thing for authors, and people find out when you don't really have it. It's good to move around, to flex our better judgment and try out our different attitudes. Even the path that's most proper to us takes turns and winds around obstacles. To truly follow that path is to keep the same goal but also keep changing directions as needed. Purpose and nimbleness function as a team.

This is what we become with our lifetime of educational experience, our database of knowledge and algorithms, the tricks that we've picked up on the way, our contacts and repertoire, our assembly of methods and strategies, our masteries and our proficiencies, our cognitive and attitudinal toolkits and skill sets, our collections of knowledge and wits. These slowly become second nature. We do not need to accumulate everything that we need to get by, and the eclectics have the least crap to carry around in their heads. Sometimes it's enough just to have the right connections, or to know the way to the useful resources. This accumulation of wisdom is analogous to momentum and is as good as accumulated mass or energy. Knowing how to take hold of a thing when we need it is as good as owning the thing. We learn to interact and cooperate with our environments, even while we are making changes to them. In particular, the Swords are most concerned with our social and technological surrounds. The King must know how things work, from natural law to black markets. Where he cannot be fully informed, at least he knows a guy. He wouldn't think himself above having consilience with superior knowledge or wisdom.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 32, Continuity or Duration, embodies this dynamic of interactive adaptation while maintaining a sense of purpose and direction. Even if we are disciplined, we still have the freedom between disciplines. If we are learned, we can still admit error and do some needed unlearning. This means to know our own anti-

cognitive processes, that defend what we have already learned from the newer and better wisdoms. Thoughts are for using and not for defending. It's not vacillation to change when change is made for the better, especially when the culture or world keeps changing. The model for the Gua is the weather, which only seems to come and go, but in fact is a dynamic system of climate circling the globe. This Gua works in larger contexts, as does a king over larger realms than the palace. He is connected to the culture at large, and to history. Perseverance here is not always predictability, or continuing a sameness: it's continuously upgrading our life skills.

This King is in an interesting position in that he is arbiter of the rules and laws that he is also charged with making. Hypocrisy here sets a lousy example, so he must be careful with ethics. Principles, standards and justice mean something here, but so does their right application, which returns us again to adaptive flexibility. He can stay true to ideals and long-term goals while modifying his means to those ends. The law has both letter and spirit, and the king must make both work together. While most law takes a worst case scenario and generalizes this to all times and places (just to be fair), the best government is still that which governs the least. This asks for integrity and conscientiousness from the King. Consistency, then, is a bit more important than constancy. Over a long reign with many changes, the principles evolve to continue to make sense.

Key Words:

accomplishment, acumen, adaptive principles, adaptive thinking, adroitness, alliance, assertion, big picture, command, comparison, compass, competence, comprehension, connectedness, connections, consistency, constancy, content, continuity, coordination, cultural continuance, decisiveness, determination, diplomacy, discernment, disciplinarian, discrimination, doctor, earned authority, enforcement, ethics, experience, expertise, informed intelligence, ingenuity, integrity, intellect, interactivity, judgment, judiciousness, jurisdiction, jurisprudence, knowhow, leadership, learnedness, lifelong learning, logical counsel, mastery, maturity, mental dexterity, mental prowess, being plugged in, polymath, principles, profession, professional ambition, proficiency, qualification, repertoire, resilience, resourcefulness, seniority, skill, skill sets, standard, superiority, versatility, wisdom.

Warnings and Reversals:

arrogance, authoritarians, bluster, condescension, contempt, disconnection, domineering, guild monopolies, haughtiness, hypocrisy, inflexibility, malice, pedantry, pomposity, prejudice, protectionism, pursuit of a matter to ruin, rigidity, rule bound, ruthlessness, sarcasm, self-glorification, self-importance, severity, suspicion.

Components:

The Fiery part of Air. The force of the climate, as weather, seems to come and go, yet this is inter-connected, with the trade winds, storms, and doldrums. Consistency is more than constancy, and self-succession more than sameness, as truer measures of endurance. That invigorating spirit of the tempest is also present in the gentle breeze. Brainstorming.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Libra Ascending, as the Cardinal Air sign, Ruler: Venus Lucifer. A personality configuration characterized by mental leadership, passionate thought and a sense of justice that is not watered down. Will take the potential of an idea and bring it about, but without insisting it go through no changes. Applied intelligence, evaluation, mediation, appraisal. Fair, impartial, judicious, diplomatic.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 32, Heng, Continuity, Duration. Da Xiang: Xun (Swords) below, Zhen (King) above; "Thunder and wind. Continuity. The young noble makes a stand without changing bearings." The dynamics of climate and its traveling storms. Dynamic balance in change. "Fulfillment. Nothing is wrong. Worthwhile to be persistent. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go." Keeping to the path or vow, holding true throughout the outer or superficial changes, may yet allow for substantial changes if the spirit, principle, and ethics of the matter remain consistent.

Pentacles

Ace of Pentacles

Root of the Powers of Earth

Seed, Realization, Preconditions, Gestation

Image: A coin-like disk is held up from below, engraved with a five-pointed star, the form of Solomon's Seal, the Pentagram or the Pentalpha of Pythagoras, the top point up, each point engraved with an elemental sigil. This is an item consecrated to an incipient future, whether as a talisman to invoke a force or an amulet to ward one off. It may be seen as a medicine shield. This is also the first stage in the progress of a thing, the first seed or cell. This is a new beginning, although the seed comes from the consummation and ripening of something that went before. The true beginning is further back, as atoms come from exploding stars.

Traditional interpretations of this card suggest such things as material gain, prosperity, profit, attainment, perfection, security, contentment, comfort, and invocation of aid. But it's far too soon in the progression from Ace to Ten to be seeing any real fulfillment or watching any rapid progress. This situation still needs more cultivation and care. There is potential to be nurtured, or raw talent to be developed. This is about basics, putting first things first. The Ace of Pentacles speaks to the conditions needed for an idea to become a reality, a proposal to become a business, an invention to become a prototype, a seed to become a plant, or an egg to become an animal. It is not wealth, as many would have it, but it may be an opportunity for wealth. It might be the core of a good idea, or a need for a new beginning. It behaves like the seed particle that a raindrop or snowflake forms around. A set of necessary and sufficient conditions acts as a cause for an increase in existence, attracting material and promoting development, growth in layers of accretion, without much internal force or substance to drive the process at first. Slowly, energy freezes into physical form, verbs slow down into nouns, light cools off into thingness. Materialization should not imply a lack of light or spirit, merely an investment, and that just for a time. When we look closer, the mystery of it all still shines through the ordinary.

Three conditions must be met for things to come into being, or for entities to come to life and thrive. Prohibitive conditions must be out of the way. Supportive conditions must be in place. And the necessary information must be present to inform the new formation.

Getting to the beginning, a crack appears in the sidewalk and the seed of a weed washes in. A promising niche opens up and little is there to stop it from being exploited. There may be a need for a thing to occur, a problem that wants a solution. The new thing is somehow enabled or allowed into being. Some real-world potential has its prerequisites and preconditions met. Zoning allowances and site conditions permit a house to be built. The feasible or viable thing is offered a niche in which to take root. The new thing may be welcomed by society because there is trust and good faith. Sometimes the obstacle is the young thing itself: perhaps it's overly complex, or lacking in humility, or lacking in parsimony. Perhaps security is too big an issue and the thing won't let its shell come undone. Here, all but the essential and the germane might need to be surrendered. We might need to want even less than what we now have. The word capacity can mean both emptiness and power. When the prohibitive conditions are out of the way, it can mean both at once.

Next, a thing will need support to get started. The seed wants to land in good soil. The business plan wants some demand and investors. The patent wants some venture capital. The research project wants a grant. The new crop wants a field. The new field wants a down payment. The new life wants its wherewithal. The poker winnings want an ante. Resources must not only be available: they need to be available at a sustainable rate of use, and one hopes for lots longer than the life of the thing. The thing wants purchase, as in a place to begin, a place on which to stand, a basis, an environment to sustain it. The mountain peak wants a base much wider than itself, and it may have to give up some of its height to get this. This is the image of the Yijing counterpart, Gua 23, Decomposing or Splitting Apart, whose core meaning is stripping away the inessentials to get to essence of things. Things not germane are expendable now. In lightening up, we carry on with less, but with a greater stability or greater potential. A breakdown in prohibitive or superfluous conditions that still leaves the essentials intact is what we want in order to move forward.

Finally the thing wants the needed instructions. This is the DNA, the prospectus, the patent, the blueprint, the business plan, the discovery, the mission statement, the brief statement of goals and objectives, some common sense and basic business savvy. This is compact information, like the constitution sets the form of a government, or the zygote implies the adult. While evolution and life produce the myriad beings without holding this essence or plan in advance, it has still become part of the process.

Key Words:

abridgment, affordances, ante, antecedent, award, base, basics, beginning, building block, buy-in, capitalization, claim staked, clay, conception, consolidation, constitution, core, cornerstone, crystallizing, curtailment, deposit, down payment, embryonics, endowment, essentials, feasibility, fertile eggs, fertile ground, formation, founding, foundations, fundamentals, germ, germaneness, germination, gestation, getting ready, gift, grounding, groundwork, implementation, incubation, initial investment opportunity, job offer, laying claim, manifestation, materiality, necessities, offering, opportunity, parsimony, patent, planning, potential, preconditions, preparation, prerequisites, purchase, raw material, raw talent, realization, real-world potential, requirements, reward, root, rudiment, security, seed, seed money, shield, sigil, simplification, source, stabilization, stake, start-up capital, substance, substantiation, substructure, support, sustainability, sustenance, underpinning, underwriting, utility, venture, viability, weal, wherewithal, windfall, zygote.

Warnings and Reversals:

avarice, baggage, corruption, discontent, failure, false security, fool's gold, frivolousness, greed, haughtiness, impatience, inessentials, insignificance, irrelevance, opportunity cost, opulence, over-exploitation, overindulgence, priorities reversed, unfitness, unsuitability, usury, unsustainability, waste, wealth frozen or immobilized.

Components:

Ace plus Pentacles. Ideas begin to materialize, congeal, solidify, or take tangible shape. Invested energy will be disproportionate to the mass of a product. A royal battle is fought between titanic animals for the sake of tiny DNA molecules. Massive amounts of energy potential and information are invested in tiny bits of matter. The stigma gets pollinated, the egg gets fertilized.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Saturn in Earth Signs and Houses. Shows a concern for security, order,

reliability, practicality, and economy. Down to earth and discriminating. Ambitious but patient and prudent, not overreaching security concerns.

Qabalah: Kether in Assiah. Idea condensing, congealing, crystallizing into concrete form, verbs turning into nouns, energy turning into mass, light freezing into solid form or fuel.

Yijing: Gua 23, Bo, Decomposing, Splitting Apart. Da Xiang: Kun (Ace) below, Gen (Pentacles) above; “The mountain depends on the earth. Decomposing. Superiors are generous to subordinates, confirming their positions.” The towering mountain surrenders some of its height for the sake of a broader, more stable base. “Not worthwhile to have somewhere to go.” It is a time to shed things not needed, dead weight, shells, husks, or overburdens. Getting down to the germane, or the seed to the germ that sprouts.

Two of Pentacles

Harmonious Change, Interplay, Dynamic Equilibrium, Affirmation

Image: The RWS deck and most clones depict a juggler handling two pentacles, which travel the path of a lemniscate or infinity symbol. In the background, two ships ride waves on different aspects of a sine wave pattern. Alternately, a large stone, once roughly spherical, has split in two. A jagged crack divides them. The figure vaguely resembles the Taijitu. Into and through the crack a wild flower has sent its roots. Other alternatives could depict two separate material objects functioning together to create an outcome, maybe meshed wooden gears or block and tackle pulleys. The interplay does most of the work. The reality is the process.

The Two of Pentacles is sometimes titled harmonious change, and is said to suggest such properties and things as agility, flexibility, juggling, multitasking, financial dexterity, profitable partnership, difficult or challenging situations, precarious balance, full hands, handiness, sleights of hand, changes of occupation, getting with the rhythm of change, harmony in mid-change, a playful approach to change, stimulating developments, coping with competing demands, and the deftness needed to handle two situations at once. In simpler terms, things are in motion here and want some skillful handling, as distinct from mishandling, if one wants any say in the outcome.

Things have a way of working themselves out. Each thing has its own way, which may or may not be the same as the ways some others have. There are learnable or predictable responses to the interaction of internal forces with environmental conditions. In the West this is called natural law, in the East, the Dao or the Way. A thing following its original nature has a natural behavior. This has been symbolized by an uncarved piece of wood, which, unlike an unformed lump of clay, will have a natural grain, suggestive of natural inclinations or an inherent direction. Looked at naively, this makes even inanimate things appear to have intent, or to be operating according to some plan or purpose. When we learn the way of things, we begin to see where things seem to want to go. Our lives get a lot easier when we want these things to go that way too. When we want to change their direction, we learn a little more about different responses to different conditions and then add those to the mix in necessary and sufficient quantities. When we choose a new path for a thing without due regard to givens or the facts of existence, our lives become more challenging. It's best to want rivers to take the most direct downhill route, one that snakes between its obstacles. Such a path is also taken by weather, lightning, roots, and the young. One who acts with this knowledge appears to have mastered things, but he is merely obeying their discoverable natural laws.

The Two is best understood here as the before and after of change, even when there are yin and yang, heaven and earth, checks and balances, ups and downs, men and women, or rights and lefts in play. The world just isn't as simple as yin-yang theory would have it, although this simplified model can sometimes help us to manage our worlds. Our ups and downs can be leveraged. If we buy low and sell high, we can even profit in the bear markets. It's important to understand the interplay and the inter-regulation of what we may perceive to be opposites. Simplicity emerges from that, and direction. Patterns of alternation are the rhythms of the world and its concert. The harmonies interconnect us when we can be in tune with them.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 11, Interplay, often incorrectly called Peace. This depicts Heaven and Earth moving together in concert. Contrary to popular belief, the original Yijing preceded any sort of Yin-Yang theory by many centuries, yet this Gua diagram is the closest the original Changes comes to having a Taijitu, the familiar Yin-

Yang symbol. In this chapter, the interplay of forces is energetic, productive and highly creative. In humans, one type of this intercourse makes human children. In the text we are advised to move with the way things are moving. A willingness to adapt and go with the flow allows us to harness the world's inertia, the direction and momentum it already has. This way, the world is inclined to move with us instead of against us, which can often be mighty convenient and a most productive arrangement. And if we need to steer things the tiniest bit, we have some energy already saved up from mostly not fighting the world.

The idea here is to get things done by cooperating with the world and its natural laws. Because of the synergies involved, things can get relatively energetic or dynamic here. This is why Peace is such a poor name for the Yijing counterpart. What to do may be clear, and even simple if we are seeing shining paths, but change is still inclined to be dynamic and demanding of a fuller attention, as implied by the RWS juggler. We make our best luck here by capturing available opportunities and using the world's momentum or inertia as our primary source of kinetic energy. This is like imbalance, but in a forward direction instead of side to side. Thus we lean into the change, and get up to speed, when it is hanging back that would overwhelm us. To go the way things are already going is not doing, but it's not doing nothing.

Key Words:

accommodation, accord, acumen, adopting ambient energy, affirmation of path or career, agility, agreement, alliance, alternating polarity, ambivalence, assent, balance, balanced books, centeredness, change, circulation, concurrence, conducting forces, cooperation, coordination, correspondence, creativity, dance, Dao, dynamic adjustments, dynamic equilibrium, dynamism, emergent simplicity, *enantandromia*, exchange, flexibility, flow, fluctuation, going with the flow, grace, graceful transition, greazed grooves, gyroscopics, harmonious change, harmony, harnessing available forces, interaction, interchange, interplay, inter-regulation, knack, leveraging ups and downs, manipulate to advantage, momentum, multitasking, natural law, nimbleness, optimizing, particles as waves, poise, process orientation, progression, quickening, quickness, reconciliation of opposites, relatedness, rhythm, smooth runnings, stabilizing change, steady state ecology and economy, suppleness, synergy, time's arrow, transformation, transition, ups and downs used together, versatility, vitality.

Warnings and Reversals:

adversarialism, balance mismanaged, blundering, clumsiness, concern, disagreement, discord, dualism, extreme swings, false joy, fumbling, illusion, imbalance, imperfect vision, inconsistent action, isolation, manic depression, out of control, out of touch, polemics, recklessness, sleight of hand, struggle to keep up, ungainliness, worry.

Components:

Two plus Pentacles. Directed materialization, the dynamic movement of change through time, making use of the dynamic tension of opposites, in concert. Direction into forward motion. Organized progress. The weaving of forces together. A natural grain or direction of things which can look like intention but often is not.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Uranus in Earth Signs and Houses. Finds a higher order in the material, challenged to find new methods and applications in working with powers that be. Approaches appear original but they come from reading the way things work. Problem solving and pragmatic behavior. May sense the more efficient pathways by finding

lines of least resistance. Established methods are less important than optimum results. Qabalah: Chokmah in Assiah. Wisdom in the material. There is what looks like a *telos* or purposefulness in the world of matter, but this belongs to higher forms of life. Across the spectrum, the way of things is obedience to natural law.

Yijing: Gua 11, Tai, Interplay, Peace. Da Xiang: Qian (2) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; "Heaven and earth interact. Interplay. Their heirs enrich and complete heaven's and earth's natures, confirm and reciprocate their proper order, supporting and protecting the people." Division and disconnection unplugs beings from an infinite power supply in the momentum of the universe. We reconnect and heal this. "Smallness departs, greatness arrives. Promise and fulfillment." We learn what we can of the natural law and accept the forces around us to live life with the greatest effect.

Three of Pentacles

The Great Work, Participation, Contribution, Tikkun

Image: A master craftsman is putting the finishing touches on an ornate temple piece, featuring a sculpted triptych of symbols. A monk and a nun look on. The artist is not of their order and might even be fully secular. He might do this as a donation or he might take money or trade. His name will not be signed here since the work is being dedicated to something higher than himself. The work will probably outlive him.

Traditionally, the Three of Pentacles refers to a spectrum of kinds of work that we do in the world, but always on a level above drudgery and tedium, and preferably higher still, on the level of journeyman or master. This is to be inspirational or meaningful work, work that goes beyond itself, that isn't done when the day is done. As such, common interpretations speak to skill in work or trade, craftsmanship, material endeavors, gainful employ, beneficial arrangement, collaboration, cooperation, commission, working with others, sponsorship, patronage, contribution, growth, building, expansion, development, material increase, prestige in a vocation, mastery, dignity, and renown. A combination of key words for the Three and the Pentacles suggests "understanding the material," which might be taken in the sense of knowing the possibilities of the medium in which we work, and also understanding what it means to be living embodied in this material existence.

For the secular and apophatic mystics, this material world is our home, and its nature is our nature. Alan Watts wrote, "You did not come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave comes out of the ocean. You are not a stranger here." Similarly, the highest that one can rise in Zen is everyday suchness, and the highest circle of attainment in Zen's Oxherding Pictures brings us back into the world, with gift-giving hands. Nobody here is getting free from the chains of matter and flying off to join ascended masters in all-white spirit realms. This is the secular sort of mysticism that even real scientists like to explore. And it's the grounded and earthy understanding of this card. There is a sacredness in the ordinary that's worthy of a reverent respect. This is what we put into our higher work, a dedication and consecration to higher states and purposes, to the best that's within us. This is dignity and humility both. Mohammed explained why: "Because Allah has no other hands than yours." We pay our rent in this world, out of reverential respect and gratitude. We elevate and redeem the lowly material. The Kabbalists call this *Tikkun*, mending the world. The Hindus call the work Karma Yoga. This is service by which we heal the false or illusory divisions between matter and spirit, and in this service there is at least enough selflessness to broaden our sense of who and what we are, confirm our character, expand our time horizons, and share our influence in the grander scheme of things. Alchemists declared the The Great Work to be the Transformation of Mankind, perhaps one seeker at a time, changing from lead into gold. As such, the work is cultural as well as material, and the culture in turn will reshape our material world.

We get here by coming home, by finding and knowing our place and settling right in. This is Wendell Berry's home world, and we belong here as well. We own ourselves and possess what little domain we might have. This is our sacred trust, our own dominion and our responsibility, and we are its stewards. It's ours to accept and approve. If we practice good nichemanship, if we manage to fit in here, then we have the fitness that Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin praised as a key to evolution. It's to be noted that to accept our place in the grander scheme of things is not an end to our more ambitious behaviors, but only a place to begin. Acceptance is not the same as approval, it's merely to start out with the facts. We can still make things better by our

dedicated service and consecrated works and contributions. The Work is meant to inspire.

This card is about participating in the world as though we belonged here, about getting involved, partaking in wholeness, working at creation and coevolution, expanding and extending ourselves in the process. The common ground is the work we need to do to belong here, to participate more fully in this world. We not only accept our place in the grander scheme, we own it in ways that give us a sense of duty to leave the world a better place. We chop wood and carry water and find our nobility in this. Worth has more value here than gain. Honest labor and labors of love confirm our place in this world. From this place we make our art and other contributions. We realize and materialize our spirit; we don't help it to escape.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 02, Accepting or the Receptive. There is a bit of stoicism to the chapter as the endurance and perseverance of the mare is celebrated. It speaks of tolerance, contentment, patience, accommodation, and affirmation as free assistance to our sense of belonging. But this is also the place that we begin from, the capacity or power of possibility. Existence gives us a lot of givens, and a lot of raw material. To the extent we can accept this as a great gift, with gratitude, it's ours to work with, our raw material.

Key Words:

acceptance, accepting, allowance, appreciation, attending, augmenting the given, being useful, building a better world, calling, caretaking, collaboration, collective growth, commission, competence, comprehension, consecrated work, constructive endeavor, contribution, cooperating, coordinating, dedicated work, dedication, demonstrating ideals, development, doing our share or part, donation, embrace, employment, endorsement, extension, generous action, gifting, gifts, givens, giving back, grant, grounding, grounds, helpfulness, honest work, higher purpose, higher work, inspiring others, integration, involvement, karma yoga, labors of love, largesse, lasting quality, naturalness, noble endeavors, occupation, partaking in creation, participation, paying our rent, persistence, potential, presence, raw material, realism, realization, right livelihood, sacred space, service, setting examples, simple dignity, simplicity, sponsorship, stewardship, substance, support, taking part, teamwork, the Great Work, tikkun, tolerance, transforming mankind, understanding, undertaking, upholding.

Warnings and Reversals:

absence, cheap ideas, contempt, denial, disjointed existence, disrespect, dissociation, drudgery, escapism, frivolity, fugue, half-heartedness, idleness, indolence, ingratitude, mediocrity, narrow vision, pettiness, settling for less, slacking, slipshoddiness, sloppiness, thinking small and short term, whining, wrong livelihood.

Components:

Three plus Pentacles. Understanding the material world, understanding the earth and our place in it. Realization, an exteriorization of inner realities, three-pointed foundations as the stablest. Development, expansion, to accept and embrace our physicality, expansion and growth in plan or potential.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Neptune in Earth Signs and Houses. Enacting, realizing, or grounding of vision, idealistic use of money or resources. An earthing of the mystical, spirit become practical. Getting down and dirty and soiled in the best sense. Functional wholes.

Secular mysticism. Wanting a sense of tangibility. A demonstration of ideals, setting of examples and making of models.

Qabalah: Binah in Assiah. Understanding the material world, knowing our place here and getting involved. Tikkun as redeeming or mending the world.

Yijing: Gua 02, Kun, Accepting, The Receptive. Earth. Da Xiang: Kun (3) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; "The earth's capacity is acceptance. The young noble, with a tolerance of character, upholds the outer world." Upholding the world, accepting the givens as givens, tolerating our conditions until they can be changed, gives us all the ground we need to make a stand. "Supreme fulfillment, rewarding the mare's persistence. The young noble one has somewhere to go. To lead is confusion, to follow is to learn mastery. Worthwhile west to south: find companions, East to north: forgo companions. Secure the certain good fortune." From the humblest of our beginnings come the noblest endeavors. We need nothing extraneous to our natures to express ourselves. We begin with what we already have, by accepting the place we start out from.

Four of Pentacles

Security, Consolidation, Unassailability, Authenticity

Image: The RWS deck features a man holding on to three pentacles and balancing a fourth on his hat, appearing to be using everything that he has to hang on to what he owns. The image is a little silly and it seems to imply little more than insecurity and miserliness. Maybe a better alternative would show a hard-working man wrestling a huge stone into place, the fourth of four cornerstones for a house. Indications are that the house will be small, humble, well made, and built to last many generations.

The Four of Pentacles is usually interpreted either in terms of the RWS image or else meanings cast in terms of power. Those who call this card mundane or earthly power don't understand what the word power means. In physics, it's the rate at which energy is transformed to do work. It has next to nothing to do with this card. The image of the miser, on the other hand, has led to such associations as ownership, property, possession, establishment, love of wealth, acquisitiveness, surety, satisfaction, realism, fortification, stockpiling, banking, savings, holding on, holding back, clinging, cleaving to what one has, gain of money and influence, physical materials and skill in allocating them.

Matter, materialism, and the material world have long been the target of verbal abuse by the spiritual and religious folk. But there is another whole wing of philosophy that sees the spirit as emerging from this. Laozi suggests "those who are most mature keep to the substance and do not dwell on the sham, keep to the fruitful and do not dwell upon the flower." (DDJ 38). The secular mystics and scientists like their *terra firma*. Existence precedes essence. If they even have gods, they tend to be chthonic. They want to build on foundations, constitute their theories with evidence, and reason from ascertainable and even unassailable facts. The Four of Pentacles concerns the building of something real, tangible, authentic, or palpable. It asks for engineering, infrastructure, and maintenance. It seeks surety, soundness, and reliability. Because failures here cannot be dismissed as readily as errors in the mind, there are concerns for getting things right, working within realistic limitations, and defensibility against the real-world forces inclining things to entropy. As Stewart Brand pointed out, this doesn't mean that something like a building can't learn things over time and change form. Stability is often misconstrued as stasis.

Conservatism is a characteristic of this card, but we aren't speaking here of the fiscal politics and moralizing practiced by aging, fearful, and ignorant imbeciles. However, this is the opposite of revolution. Conditions of necessity and sufficiency must be met. There is concern for things that endure the ravages of time, for traditions worth keeping, for buildings worthy of having brass plaques, for bridges that don't fall apart in the wind. We don't want haste with the basics: if these aren't stable, nothing on top of them is. Security is a big deal here: not the kind that leads to smugness and complacency, but the kind that lets us concentrate on higher endeavors. We have safety nets and margins, protective buffers, contingency plans, plans B and C, fallback positions in place, devices that blink and beep at us when things are going wrong, and two means of egress from most of our rooms. There is also concern for conserving, as in resource conservation, working to minimize our waste. This way we have something left over, for our distant descendants to enjoy and rely on.

As implied in Smith's depiction of the miser, much conservatism can go over the top and waste available resources. There are many examples of this. The status quo it defends may have little or nothing to recommend it when seen against greater horizons

and better possibilities. We might design something for worst-case scenarios, and then to be fair, generalize these designs to all things instead of staying specific, thereby wasting massive amounts of resources. We might keep standing armies, rattling their sabers, instead of hidden militias. The prison guard is stuck behind the bars as well. Erring on the side of caution is still erring. And risk still has much to teach us, from our earliest years on up. We want to be safe and comfortable without alarms and locks everywhere. But we might have some use remaining for schools and playgrounds where children can learn the harder lessons and get their much-needed owies and bruises.

It is said that telling the truth is better because we don't have to remember as much. A corollary is that self-assuredness is more assured if we are not overreaching ourselves. Being real is a safer position than being hyperbolic. As the Bard boasted: "my mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun." We have a huge reservoir of abundance in what we already have. We need only to learn to want this. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 15, Authenticity. The word Modesty accurately translates this chapter's title through most of the text, but the text is ironic, and its meanings consistently speak to our misunderstanding of the idea as self-effacement, which is another form of vainglory. This is really about the bestowing of honor, not about dismissing it, respecting and appreciating things for what they truly are, without flattery or exaggeration, without cynicism or deprecation. It's about accurate assessment or estimation, and curtailing the superfluous. It's all about optimizing, not minimizing or maximizing.

Key Words:

accumulation, acquisitiveness, assurance, authenticity, banking, bonding, bonds, bracing, buffers, certainty, collateral, concretion, confirmation, conscientiousness, conservation, conservatism, consolidation, constitution, contingency funds, cornerstones, credibility, defensibility, dependability, due regard, economy (its original sense), embodiment, enclosure, equity, establishment, firmness, footing, fortification, foundation, framework, frugality, groundedness, guardedness, holding one's own, holding steady, infrastructure, insurance, inviolability, keeping it real, nest egg, net worth, order, parsimony, possession, property, reliance, reserve, respect, reticence, safe space, safekeeping, sanctuary, savings, security, security deposit, self-containment, self-evidence, self-possession, solvency, soundness, stability, stabilization, stable platform, stewardship, structure, substance, sure thing, surety, terra firma, touchstones, unassailability, unruffledness, warranty, weight underside (an aikido concept), what's truly yours, withholding.

Warnings and Reversals:

attachment, avarice, bankruptcy, bondage, covetousness, entrenchment, fear of loss, greed, grieving losses, hoarding gains, indecision, inflexibility, insecurity, insolvency, instability, miserliness, obsession, overestimation, over-protectiveness, possessiveness, quantifying self-worth, rigidity, stubbornness, suspense, underestimation.

Components:

Four plus Pentacles. Expansiveness contracted again around the most stable and genuine elements, around the core, root, or foundation of a thing. Care with the cornerstones for structures to come. Cautious establishment. Embodiment, incorporation, consolidation, constitution.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Jupiter in Earth Signs and Houses. Will tend to a realistic self-image, self-confidence in the real and palpable. Identity sought in the tangible, obvious, and manifest. Gratitude as grace. Self-edification as meeting real needs. Self-referential or setting limits from within.

Qabalah: Chesed in Assiah. Settling, consolidating and cohering in the material world. Stable configuration in manifestation.

Yijing: Gua 15, Qian, Authenticity, Modesty; Da Xiang: Gen (4) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; "Within the earth is a mountain. Authenticity. The young noble diminishes the excessive and adds to the deficient, appraising things with fair allocation." Many translators fight the real meaning, reading: diminish the great, augment the little, weigh and make things equal. But it doesn't mean this at all. A mountain inside the earth is what it is, a mountain and also not much. "Fulfillment. The young noble gets results." This is about appreciating things for exactly what they are, not making them less, not making them more.

Five of Pentacles

Patience, Endurance, Resilience, Recovery

Image: In the RWS deck, a man on crutches and a shabbily dressed woman trudge through snow, past the lighted stained-glass windows of what appears to be a place of worship. There is no visible door, but they might see one soon, once they get a bit further or turn a corner. There is hardship here, but they are also missing something, or failing to notice a reason for hope. Most variants and clones depict distress, especially endured in winter. A bright future is not currently visible, and it takes an effort or a special insight for hope or reassurance to overcome despair.

The Five of Pentacles is often called material trouble or worry. The energetic force of the Five has disrupted the balance found in the Four and things are knocked off of their course, or fortunes are reversed. As such, most associations indicate an unpleasantness of circumstance that might take some time to escape, typically loss, anxiety, destitution, impoverishment, setbacks, adversity, unemployment, overextension, privation, delays, poverty, dry spells, stretched resources, challenging circumstances, indigence, strain, or riding out the winter. Short-term relief remains a possibility, with a refuge or sanctuary, or even a temporary home, but the real light at the end of the dark tunnel is generally thought to be some distance away, asking for endurance, faith, or patience. An inability to see any short-term solutions is sometimes implied, and ironically, this is due to the nearsightedness brought about by the nearness or immediacy of this distress. If they only knew better, the half-frozen urban homeless could just as easily be eating mangoes while camping in some tropical forest, on roughly the same budget. As Gandhi suggested, “to a hungry man, food is god.” We can see no further in time or space. We only see our toil unrewarded and rewards too long deferred.

There is probably no more fortunate time in the life of an alcoholic or drug addict than the moment in time known as ‘hitting bottom.’ It’s at this point that the alternatives to utter failure come into view. The moment when multiple options are seen and felt at the same time is known to the Buddhists as *samvega*. Sometimes we have to reach this state or point before we have any true choice. It’s here that we turn our lives around. The Earth just creeps past this point at the winter solstice, but it does this every year like clockwork, and we count on spring’s return. When we can understand this during our lowest lows, some gratitude will also help turn things around. Poverty can assume a cloak of voluntary simplicity, and even a freedom from burdens.

The sense of time is important in this card. When a force is applied to material, the discontinuities of the response are a function of mass or inertia. Matter responds more slowly than energy, and recovers more slowly. We are but lightweights and inertia is not on our side. Forces applied to our little lives can lead to large dislocations, while forces like seasons applied to the Earth take time to show and time to rebound. The Sun reaches its nadir on the winter solstice, but the cold has only begun. The recovering light takes time to catch up, to warm an enormous mass. Sometimes inertia resists change as long as it can, and then yields suddenly, as with landslides and earthquakes, but more often the large-scale change is more continuous, while our small adaptations to this proceed by fits and starts. Then life wants buffering, to meet our short-term needs amidst the long-term changes. This is the worried relationship (and its cycles of viciousness) between the family farmer and the local bank. We try our best to survive with rainy-day planning, savings, reserves, stockpiles, caches, nest eggs, and safety nets. These estimate the distance between real and ideal. Sometimes we ask for trouble

by insisting on unreal ideals, and get far enough off course and out of balance that we fully deserve our extremity. And sometimes it's just bad luck that intervenes and nature does some selecting. But we find a way through.

The turnaround 'out there' may be some time in coming. The longest, darkest night at least gives us hope when we know it's the longest and darkest. Sometimes we know when a bad trend reverses, when the bottom has been reached, or when we will take no more. Then we can turn our perspectives around ahead of the cycles and seasons. We can have turnarounds in attitude when worry proves maladaptive. The homeless, the pilgrim, the bum, the *sanyassin*, the drifter, and the monk all have roughly the same material resources and the same size load to pack for a journey. Those with some inner freedom can change the weather by moving out from under it. Poverty can become simplicity. Thoreau didn't suffer at all at Walden Pond. We just need some trust in the great wheel's turning, some kind of minimal faith that swings of circumstance will average out on an acceptable course. Whether time hurts us or heals us, we have to know that spring is just ahead, even when it's the end of the current spring.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 24, Returning, which specifically speaks to the winter solstice and cycles of time that are longer than short-term concerns. This is more about coming around full circle, or moving through the cycles of things, carrying the lessons learned with us, and not so much about quitting and turning back, although turning back is something to do when wrong turns have been discovered. The core truths will survive any such change or digression, and things will eventually return to their proper place. Nietzsche suggested that 'a loss rarely remains a loss for an hour,' a fine observation on our opportunistic adaptability that can help to replace the moronic 'everything happens for a reason.' The Yi observes something similar in a few places: what we really need is restored within seven days. If it doesn't come back, we didn't need it. Readjustment is gradual. We just need a little endurance and patience.

Key Words:

adaptability, beginning anew, buffering, challenging circumstance, coming around slowly, cultivated insecurity, cycles, deep cycles, demotion, determination, dislocation, distant hope, dry spell, economizing, ends not meeting, endurance, extremity, faith, fortitude, frugality, hardiness, hitting bottom, homecoming, hope, humility, inevitability of cycles, insecurity, low point, making do, making ends meet, meeting basic needs, missed boat, nadir, natural cycles, patience, perseverance, persistence, physical adjustment, pluck, readjustment, reappearance, reassurance, rebounding, recompense, recovery, redirection, refuge seen, rehabilitation, reinstatement, reintegration, reliance, reorientation, reserves, resilience, restitution, restoration, restraint, retrenching, rock bottom, samvega, sanctuary, shelter, simplicity, simplification, solace, squeaking by, stamina, staying alive, staying power, steadfastness, subsisting, surviving, tenacity, trust, turnaround, turning a corner, turning point, unsettling, winter solstice.

Warnings and Reversals:

adversity, anxiety, bankruptcy, dark nights, deprivation, dereliction, despair, destitution, discomfort, disadvantage, drought, failure, famine, hardship, hopelessness, humiliation, impoverishment, inadequacy, indigence, insecurity, insolvency, loss, monetary anxiety, nearsightedness, neediness, pessimism, poverty, setback, strain, trouble, overextension, unemployment, worry.

Components:

Five plus Pentacles. Force meets inertia. Insecurity. Matter is slower-moving than

energy. Earth changes more slowly than we do, so we often must wait for reality to catch up to where we wish it to be. Adaptive pressures working in longer time scales. Inertia, gravity, or weight as material force.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mars in Earth Signs and Houses. Will asserted through concrete achievement. Matter takes up massive amounts of energy, so results are usually slow in coming, asking much of ambition and effort. Must learn about the longer view. Endurance, patience, persistence, perseverance. Stubborn, determined.

Qabalah: Geburah in Assiah. Corrective force applied to the material. Things falling into place or moving through cycles, effecting changes that require adapting.

Yijing: Gua 24, Fu, Returning, Return, the Turning Point. Da Xiang: Zhen (5) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; “Thunder dwells within the earth, to Return. The early sovereigns, on the day of winter solstice, closed the frontier pass gates; merchants and travelers did not move about; the rulers did not inspect the domains.” We wait it out in the best available place, our home or sanctuary. “Fulfillment. Exit and enter without anxiety. Companions arrive without fail. Turning around and returning is the way. The seventh day brings return. Worthwhile to have somewhere to go.” Things out of our control are moving along at a pace that may not suit us. We may just need time and more suitable attitudes.

Six of Pentacles

Economy, Investment, Discretion, Resource Management

Image: The RWS deck shows a gentleman standing, with scales in hand, giving alms to two kneeling beggars. It's important to note that the giving here is measured, perhaps implying that there is something other than unconditional generosity happening here, or some kind of quid pro quo. He is not giving them all they want or could use. Results of this giving may be weighed as well. Alternately, a well-to-do merchant stands behind a paymaster's table weighing out six stacks of coins for disbursement. Two men wait for their share, looking unequally wretched.

It is easy to mistake the gesture shown on the RWS card as an act of largesse, charity, or unconditional generosity. The presence of the scales is given too little attention here. He is not giving all that he can afford. Rather, he is doing the least that he can do, and giving just barely enough to keep this part of society moving along. He is taking care of business. What these poor souls absolutely need is also what they are best able to receive. There is an economic floor beneath which we might be called less than human. In many places, this is called the poverty line. Maslow would define it as the point below which we do not get our basic survival needs met. Once these basic needs are met, we fortunate beings have more discretion in what we do with ourselves. The aim of the common welfare is to fare well, and a society as a whole cannot do this with poverty dragging whole segments of it down. The costs in health care, childhood adversity, and lack of education are enough to drag the whole civilization down. Elevating ourselves to at least a level where the most basic human needs are met is a wise, long-term investment, perhaps on a par with education in wisdom. To do more than this, however, runs afoul of other principles, like self-determination and personal responsibility. As Nietzsche (TSZ 23) offered: "For this is hardest of all: to close the open hand out of love, and keep modest as a giver." So, for the traditional card meanings, some that remain are material success, prosperity, vigilance, philanthropy, opportunity, gift, favor returned, obligations, repayment of debt, responsibility, give and take in balance, patronage, parsimony, safety nets, and investment in the public welfare. This card is not so much about the giver or the doer, but more about what gets given for what gets accomplished.

The Six of Pentacles is economy in the original sense, before it meant profligate waste, planned obsolescence, and runaway fiscal policy. Investments are reasoned, measured, and methodical here. We exercise our discretion and prudence. At the same time, no wealth or welfare exists without circulation and its multiplying effects. So we look out here for the perfect compromise, between maximum system stability and its optimum productivity. Resources are apportioned and allocated with vigilance and care. In leaner times we make allowances, budget our outlays, and ration our consumption, while still circulating what we can. The Sixes symbolize the formation of coherent systems that begin to self-organize and self-regulate. In the material world of the Pentacles, we begin to see Adam Smith's invisible hand start to do some of its card tricks.

The Pentacles, being of earthly nature, have mass and inertia, and tend to move more slowly than the other elements. The resource and capital outlays that we make here will take some time to manifest their results and returns. There are long games and end games involved here. This is what warrants the measuring and calculation, particularly where resources are limited. With both public welfare and public education, the results might be a full generation away. Some of the long-term costs of our endeavors could be seven generations or seven millennia away. Sometimes it's a tragedy that all this is

entrusted to politicians and others endowed with less than two years worth of vision. This warrants special concern for material equilibrium and a steady-state economic model over a growth-for-growth's sake model. First we cover what sustains us and keeps us going. First you put on your own oxygen mask, then tend to those you are trying to save. The physician first heals himself. We don't get extravagant here: it's a conservative card. Long-term endeavors mean we will be more or less blind to the outcome, relying more heavily on our models and rules of thumb. The profitability of our speculations requires us to store our energy within the environment in the form of long-term investments. We trade the fish we are given for tuition to fishing school. The rewards are postponed and we find that we must buffer our fortunes against the more day-to-day ups and downs.

The word invest means to clothe, cloak, cover, or surround, to make your thing wear vestments. We are doing this with our energy here and tying it up in savings. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 36, Brightness Obscured or Darkening of the Light. This is analogous to damping down a wood stove, lowering the flame and banking the coals so the fuel burns more slowly and the fire lasts through the night. Only prior experience, such as history, will suggest what we can expect when morning comes. This too is a regulation of expenditure for longer term ends and objectives. We cover and guard our investments with methods and management practices. We withhold our energy as needed, as the card's benefactor weighs out his contributions. Several of the Yijing's lines use the image of covert operations, the cloak of investment, and the dagger of shrewdness. In corrupt times we hold ourselves back for self-preservation, perhaps withdrawing our consent and support, while trying not to martyr ourselves, as we quietly work towards better days that may or may not come, and invest our energies in more distant outcomes.

Key Words:

accounting, allocation, allotment, allowance, apportionment, attention, banking, budget, camouflage, carefulness, cloaking, conditional giving, contingencies, covert operations, damping, diet, discretion, durable assets, economic floor, economy, effective altruism, end game, endothermic processes, exchange, expense, favor returned, flywheel, frugality, general welfare, guarded expenditure, hidden motives, investment human capital, investment in public welfare, long game, long-term investment, maintenance, material success, measured or calculated approach, method, microloan, mutual benefit, noblesse oblige, obligations, opportunity, outlays, parsimony, patronage, philanthropy, postponed rewards, practicality, prosperity, rationing, redistribution of assets or wealth, regulation, reintegration, repayment of debt, reservation, resource management, rational spending, sacrifice, self-preservation, self-regulation, service, solvency, sound investment, sound judgment, soundness, steadiness, stealth, sustenance, system outputs, system yields, underground operations, vigilance, welfare, wise investment.

Warnings and Reversals:

bad debt, deficit spending, dependency, dissipation, excessive expenditure, extravagance, impatience, instant gratification, indignity, indiscretion, misplaced generosity, ostentation, poverty maintained, prodigality, prosperity threatened, sunk costs, throwing good money after bad, tokenism, unwise investment, selfishness, tactlessness, usury, wastefulness.

Components:

Six plus Pentacles. Intelligence realized, making matter of light, a social photosyn-

thesis. Realistic system parameters, homeostasis, preserving stability, settling down. A system has learned something and components of reality are working together. System outputs or yields are intelligently maintained. The least energetic part of a physical cycle, but energy is put into the system expecting some eventual output or improved organization.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sol in Earth Signs and Houses. Inclined to a worldly sense of participation, an identity based in more tangible realities and their organization. Practical, conservative, concrete, evidential, conscientious, discriminating, reliable, methodical. More interested in appreciating beauty than in being beautiful.

Qabalah: Tipareth in Assiah. The real world self-organizes into a system that learns to regulate inputs and outputs for stability and homeostasis.

Yijing: Gua 36, Ming Yi, Brightness Obscured, Darkening of the Light. Da Xiang: Li (6) below, Qian (Swords) above; “The light goes within to the heart of the earth. Brightness Obscured. The young noble manages the multitude using darkness, but with intelligence.” The sun goes down for the night and we endure the darkness with vigilance and care. “Warranting difficult persistence.” Covert intelligence that risks no opposition and wastes no energy in self-expression is used here to symbolize restraint and watchfulness, so that minimal resources are used to maximum effect.

Seven of Pentacles

Assessment, Stepping Up, Accession, Follow Through

Image: A young man takes a break or breather from working in his garden. He leans on his hoe and daydreams that the fruit on the bush in front of him has turned into money. Seven large coins appear, but it isn't harvest time yet and there still remains much work to be done, and the odds are that rewards will be proportionate to the labor invested. The break he is taking may be a midcourse appraisal, and evaluation of progress to date, with an eye to improvement of probable outcomes. It wouldn't be at all timely if this were just goofing off.

The RWS version of the Seven of Pentacles is fairly clear about this being a break in the work, but leaves open the question whether the break has positive, negative, or neutral value. The hope is that this labor will eventually be converted into something nourishing. But resources are finite and we want the best return. The book commentators tend to lean towards the negative readings: anxiety, dreamery, delay in growth, inertia, hesitation, relaxing efforts too soon, unprofitable speculation, premature worry, unrealistic hopes, unrealized success, failure, or fear of both failure and success. Sometimes this is a simple re-evaluation of goals, or a questioning of the effort in terms of worth, or of the time and labor invested. It nearly always has something to do with the pursuit of reward or profit, and the break is always taken before the end of the labor required. More broadly, the symbology of the Seven with that of the Pentacles suggests, simply, wanting stuff that has some value. This will almost certainly involve some investment of labor. A little more narrowly, this could be one of those get-rich schemes where you get adequately compensated for a lot of hard, honest work. You want stuff that's not ready to be yours yet. You aren't yet done with the tasks you need to do to get this. It might be preferable if everything was right here already, and free for the taking, but it's just not working out that way. Nothing is often the preferred price for something, but this is a way of thinking that often leads to crime.

The getting of stuff that has some value is described by economics. The more value it has, the more it will tend to cost. Of course, if you want to work less, you can also learn to want less. Now, the really good stuff takes a lot of work. This is on average, of course, as luck and privilege poke some holes in this theory. So on average, this becomes a question of whether this most excellent thing is worth the cost of obtaining it. We assess our costs and risks against our benefits and rewards. And it's still permitted to do this assessment halfway into an effort, and perhaps to cut losses or sunk costs early and bail out. It's also hard to be sure of the future, even with the good Tarot cards. Our motive is profit, our hope of reward. Work is either the best or the only guarantee of success. But there is also working smart, and often information can be as good an input as energy. Sometimes this warrants taking a break, to look for a better or easier way, and sometimes this time is wasted and diminishes our returns. We speculate that rewards will be worth it, but the nature of speculation is that sometimes we lose. This is one of the costs of our anticipated profit that we don't like to think about, but remembering adds to our savvy.

As with most of the Pentacles, things tend to move slowly here, being made of material instead of wishes. The fruit takes time to ripen. We have plenty of time on our hands to count up our unhatched chickens and weigh the next year's harvest. But this doesn't get the work done. We can't just jump to these kinds of conclusions. Ongoing assessment, management on the fly, tracking investments, and mid-course corrections are all a part of the budget with any good long or end game. But we step back to stay with it. Dreams and extraneous thoughts only help when they open the mind to better

ways to get the job done. We don't want to waste past efforts in present inaction. Slacking off too soon will compromise our momentum, follow-through, and elegant dismount, and those cost lots of points in the final score. But we also don't want to burn out. Much time and dedicated work may lie between here and rewards, unless the rewards are intrinsic.

The key to sustained motivation is value, and to value, relevance. Work worth doing is worth commitment and diligence because intrinsic rewards want more than half a heart. We want to want in moving ways, in ways that drive us forward, whatever the Buddhists might say. The earth is unresponsive to wishes and prayers. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 19, Taking Charge or Approach. It's core meaning is in the word accession, stepping up to a challenge. It's one of the twelve seasonal Gua, specifically, the season to get dirty and sweaty, to get the ground plowed and seeds planted before the season has passed. While this depicts a time a little earlier in the growing season than the RWS card, it is still about the work to be done between beginning and end of the effort. And it also refers to the perils of standing too far back too soon to observe: the Eighth month is Contemplation, which in this untimely season suggests more unfortunate outcomes. This coincides with taking a break. The sentence yuan heng li zhen is used here, as it is in a few other places. Because these are also the first words of the Yi, all sorts of hyperbolic metaphysical meanings have been proposed, but its literal meaning is straightforward: the greatest fulfillment rewards persistence. The best things in life are the ones that we work hard for.

Key Words:

accession, acquisitiveness, assessment, assignment, calculation, commitment, cost-benefit analysis or assessment, dedicated effort, deferred gratification, delayed feedback, deployment, diligence, earnings, efficient management, endurance, energy input, energy investment, engagement, evaluation, follow through, gainful employ, groundwork, hard work, implementation, incubation, industriousness, industry, information input, ingenuity, inventory, labor, long game, long-term plans and prospects, management, negotiation, oversight, patience, perseverance, persistence, planning, productivity, profit motive, progress report, promotion, proportionate reward, querer (want), realism, reassessment ongoing, re-energizing, re-evaluating, remuneration, renewed effort, responsibility, rewarded effort, ripening, risk assessment, risk taking, second wind, slow progress, speculation, steadiness, stepping back, stepping up, striving, survey, taking charge, taking stock, time to fruition, tracking investments, trans-seasonal prospects, venture, wanting, work.

Warnings and Reversals:

abandonment of effort, anxiety, character building only, cutting losses, delay in growth, discounting the future, farmers' uncertainty, greed, impatience, indolence, jumping to conclusions, laziness, little gain for much labor, lack of endurance, premature dividends or harvest, resting on laurels, unprofitable speculation, unrealistic hops, shortcut, success unfulfilled, sunk costs, suspicion, unproductive distractions, unwise investments, wishful thinking, worrying over gain and loss.

Components:

Seven plus Pentacles. Wanting stuff of value. Wanting more than what is here. Desire for gain or success. What will we give for what we want? Acquisitiveness applied to material gain. Profit motive. Self-interested acquisition weighed in terms of net worth: value against expense. Demand for supply. Time horizons apply: do we plant trees for the grandchildren, or seek a more immediate gratification?

Correspondences:

Astrology: Venus in Earth Signs and Houses. An acquisitive nature, wanting tangible realization, not promises and hopes. Self-interested. Takes on the challenge of combining ambition and patience, having to learn the value of hard work and deferred gratification. Experimentation, speculation. An appreciation of the sensible.

Qabalah: Netzach in Assiah. Victory or success in the material world. Obtaining what we really need, then getting what we really want.

Yijing: Gua 19, Lin, Taking Charge, Approach. Da Xiang: Dui (7) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; "Above the pool is earth. Taking charge. The young noble instructs and plans without exhaustion, accepts and secures the people without drawing boundaries." It's a time to put heads down, get dirty and sweaty and get done what needs to get done. "The greatest fulfillment rewards persistence. To arrive in the eighth month would be unfortunate." Quit contemplating and get to work. It's time to commit to the effort. Even the right kind of oversight can lead to the wrong kind. It's not the time for congratulations or self-admiration.

Eight of Pentacles

Diligence, Conscientiousness, Pragmatism, Thoroughness

Image: An apprentice sits at his bench, absorbed in his work on a set of eight sculpted jade pentacles. A shelf above him holds the first seven of these and he nears completion of the eighth. Although they seem identical, we get a sense that each is ever-so-slightly better than the next. This is more than manufacture or mass production, even though work may be done pursuant to a model or mold. Care is included.

The RWS deck captures the core meaning of the Eight of Pentacles well, and unlike many cards, it's difficult to misinterpret. One of the Buddha's final words, *appamada*, also sums it up with a meaning that combines heedfulness, diligence, conscientiousness, care, and even a little bit of zeal. Adding the Buddhist and Pali term *vinaya*, meaning discipline, practice, and education, could round out the core meaning of this card. The Buddha even called out eight stepping stones on the path to liberation. Combining key words for Eight and Pentacles, we have intelligence applied to material affairs, the taking of rational steps, one at a time, towards practical ends. Other traditional meanings include prudence, employment, apprenticeship, promotion, skill, commissioned work, candor, frankness, honesty, modesty, covering bases, preparation, training, regularity, earnings, planning ahead for the future, orderly progression, going step by step, long preparation, applying oneself, thoroughness, incremental gain, set-asides for rainy days, graduated tasks, banking, hedging, calculation, and paced efforts. Progress is graded or measured. Although the focus of the work is on the matter at hand, a more distant future is kept in mind and distractions are set aside for the sake of these more distant goals. One plans for long-term development and thinks the steps through carefully.

We have the idea here of starting out small and humbly. We have a modest approach, but this is a means to one day being able to take some pride in our work, maybe even great pride. It's a bold sort of humility that seeks competence, proficiency, or mastery. No matter how precocious we may be, cockiness and smugness won't take us to the heights. We observe those who are further along, practice with those who are better than we are, train with those who are quicker. We pay some dues and log some late nights and long hours. We listen to people who tell us where we've gone wrong or off track. We learn some dumb-seeming prerequisite stuff, like how we are holding the pencil all wrong, or how we aren't sitting correctly. The one not rolling his eyes at all this is the one who will go the farthest. We will earn our self-esteem and not work for praise or flattery. If we do it right, at the end of our long-term commitment, we can hope to find students as good as we were. As Nietzsche wrote, "He repays a teacher badly who remains only a pupil." We will want to be competent students if we want to be competent teachers. Conscientiousness, conscientiousness, and conscience will all blend into the same right attitude. Doing things right takes more time. The final two percent of the work, the polishing and honing, might even take as much time and effort as the first ninety-eight percent. We have to care about quality, and the standards will rise as we go.

Education and edification both apply here, but they aren't the same word. Education means to lead out of, which is simply being led out of not knowing how. Edification is to build an edifice in our minds, an organized structure of skill sets, tools, and techniques, and we must construct this one piece at a time, often according to a plan or curriculum. Perhaps we do models and prototypes first. We are graded on our progress here, to learn where we stand, to learn how far we still have to go, and to keep any self-esteem real. We upgrade ourselves, learning slowly but well. We may use the word

'perfecting' as though we might one day be perfect, but any true master knows better, or will show you by making mistakes of his own. Still, there is something that might be called mastery, even well shy of perfection, that gives us examples to build towards. Now note that creativity has yet to be mentioned here. We are more likely in vocational tech, not art school, but even if we were, we would still be studying technique and techne first, until it became second nature. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 46, Advancement or Pushing Upward. It's built on the image of wood underground, sprouting and rooting itself, constructing or assembling itself one molecule at a time into something big and sturdy. The name of the chapter, Sheng, means both measure and taking incremental steps. This long and patient effort happens one day or one step at a time.

Key Words:

accretion, accumulation, acumen, ambition, *appamada*, apprenticeship, articulation, assimilation, attention to detail, care, career, consistency, constitution, craftsmanship, cultivation, developed skill, development, diligence, discipline, doing it right, economy, edification, education, exercise, fine details, finishing touches, follow through, gain in small sums, gradual build-up, gradual mastery, graduation, habit, heedfulness, honing, human capital, improvement, industry, lifelong learning, long-term investment, measured progress, method, paced efforts, paced progress, patience, paying dues, perfecting skills, personal bests, personal growth, place of learning, practicalities, practice, pragmatism, precision, preferment, preparation, prerequisites, preset steps, procedure, productivity, proficiency, promotion, protocol, provision, prowess, prudence, qualification, recursion, refinement, repetition, rising standards, rites, routine, second nature, self-betterment, self-improvement, self-surmounting, skill sets, skillfulness, staging, steady improvement, stepping stones, steps, taking the time, thoroughness, trade school, tradition, training, upgrade, *vinaya*, votech, work in progress, working knowledge.

Warnings and Reversals:

boredom, carelessness, conceit, counterfeit, cut corners, crudeness, drudgery, fussiness, halfhearted effort, haste making waste, heedlessness, hurry, hypocrisy, impatience, incompetence, indifference, ineptness, lack of ambition, lapse, OCD, over-specialization, overthinking, pedantry, regression, retrogression, shallow mastery, sloppiness, tedium, unconcern, unwarranted pride, unearned self-esteem.

Components:

Eight plus Pentacles. Intelligence and ordering applied to material affairs. Practice as both a verb and a noun. Working knowledge, knowhow. Taking rational steps, building up, practical capital. Calculation, specialization, pragmatism. Experienced self-organization, fine-tuning the organization.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mercury in Earth Signs and Houses. One's thoughts are practical, carefully chosen, fact-based. Inclined to reason from hindsight rather than forethought. A conservative and earthbound mind. Concentrated, methodical, workmanlike, precise, reliable, diligent, realistic. Serious, dedicated, thorough, prudent, earnest.

Qabalah: Hod in Assiah. Splendor in the material world, the organization of the material into an impressively functioning whole. The wisdom of the body.

Yijing: Gua 46, Sheng, Advancement, Pushing Upward. Da Xiang: Xun (8) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; "Within the earth wood grows. Advancement. The young noble

is accepting by nature, collecting the small things as a way to the noble and great.” The young tree constructs itself one molecule at a time, and yet might one day dominate a landscape. “Most fulfilling. Productive to encounter a mature human being. Do not worry. To go boldly southward is promising.” Have ambitions as big as you want, realized one step or day at a time. Laozi’s “journey of a thousand Li begins underfoot.” Measured or graded progress, as if by steps, rungs, or grades.

Nine of Pentacles

Resilience, Capital Management, Reserves, Diversification

Image: An elegantly dressed, middle-aged woman of means inspects the grapes in her vineyards. Nine full purple clusters hang on one of the vines. Her posh estate lies beyond. A small, hooded falcon accompanies her, possibly symbolizing an ability to rise above or to see past her present boundaries. She is in a position to take care of her higher order needs. This is a point of culmination, not a permanent state. Some degree of readiness for change ought to be seen in the image. If this is going to be sustainable, there will be more resourcefulness here than meets the eye.

Commentators emphasize the encouraging aspects of this card, with interpretations like material gain, stability, accomplishment, favor, plenty, sufficiency, equity, ripeness, being fully funded, comfort, abundance, having means, resources, prosperity, productive living, realized gain, wherewithal, harvest, and a cultivated or cultured life. There is, however, frequent mention of security issues related to the maintenance of such prosperity, a need for good management or administration of capital and property, or needs for discernment, vigilance, circumspection, foresight, and safety provisions. We want to maintain some fluency in our affluence. If we have that in a psychological sense, we can move in any direction we want. It's the emotional equivalent of material solvency: not being needy or indebted. This is how to keep winning where others would lose.

Well-being and being well, welfare and faring well, are dreams come true, or seem to be. But things are not always what they seem. The Nines still imply all the challenges of building reliable foundations in a world that's always changing, and so meanings of this card should speak at length to the problems of adaptive resilience in the built and home environments. Yes, the woman here appears to be enjoying a bountiful harvest. At the same time, however, there are reasons why those nasty old bandits don't raid pretty little farms until after the harvest has been brought in and sold off. There are explanations why systems enjoying vigorous growth resist rot until they stop growing. Anticlimax follows the climb. Rewards and satisfactions, once gained, are subject to change. It's difficult to 'have it made' forever. True fortune is to roll well with fortune: the good life must be dynamic to handle any vicissitudes.

A rigid sense of security is inclined to invest too much in expecting the worst. We get overspecialized and inflexible. We need keys to leave the house. We build Maginot lines that wind up guarding the thieves. Wealth should expand the options, not narrow them. Fixed assets, attitudes, and behavioral responses limit the ways we can move in a crisis. Although we haven't been truly self-sufficient since we left the trees and the caves, some measure of self-reliance will give us a broader range of responses, as well as a broader perspective. Most items in the first aid kit will hopefully never get used, but we have to admit that it's worth the investment. The odds are good that we never recover the money we spend on insurance, but this leaves us more ready for our unexpected events, and the sense of assurance and security has some value of its own.

Clearly, having plenty of means and wherewithal affords us a plenum of resource from which to draw. Extra supplies are cached, the granaries and cisterns are full, rainy day savings bring interest. There are pressures in economics-driven societies to spend all we have, and then some, and many simply submit here, then count on help from others when things go wrong. Discipline, character, and maturity resist this with a little restraint. This is like practicing, or having fire drills, or developing an immune response. Values are for practicing. Responsibility is remaining able to respond, having not squandered one's safety margin or buffer. Maturity looks to what's truly important,

and this is continuity rather than sameness. Things come and go. They are tools, not parts of ourselves or beings with rights. We have a versatility in being able to put one thing down and pick up another, and this includes our attitudes as well as what seem to be lifestyles. Such a stance gives us meetness, the ability to meet the world on its own terms, known to others as fitness. In this way, too, the situation can be more than it seems. We may look like one thing, but we can also be many others. We look like we can survive one kind of hardship, when in fact we can dance around many. We can also note that the strength and resilience of an ecological system is in its depth and diversity, in its depth of field, in its redundancy of functions, and in a broad portfolio of available responses to stressors. This is a much different and longer-lived kind of richness than having static piles of wealth.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 07, The Militia. Most translators call this the Army, but in doing so they miss more than half of its meaning. The model depicted throughout the lines is that of an ad hoc force, a grassroots militia, that disappears into the populace except when in training or when called up to meet real threats. Other than the Swiss army, and perhaps some guerrilla forces, this has little resemblance to the standing armies we know. The title, Shi, also means teacher, and this speaks to experience, maturity, the discipline of training, and a familiarization with optional responses. And above this too, we have a metaphor for resourcefulness, preparedness, and adaptive resilience in general. The two Bagua or trigram images depict a groundwater resource to be drawn on as needed. It's a metaphor for mobile responsiveness, for solvency and liquidity in life, for strategic security, the hedging of our bets, and the diversification of our portfolios.

Key Words:

ad hoc organization, adaptive fitness, adaptive resilience, affluence, aptness, assurance, biodiversity, bounty, broad base, cache, capital management, circumspection, coalition, collective assets, contingency plans, culmination, cultivation, curve balls, discretion, diversification, diversity, foresight, full granaries, fulfillment, guardianship, hedging bets, immunity, independent means, instruction in options, insurance, inventory, liquidity, maintenance, material discipline, means, meetness, mobile wealth, moveable assets, perpetuation, plenum, portfolio, preparation, preparedness, prosperity, protean nature, provision, provisional security, rainy day savings, readiness, ready reserves, redundancy, refinement, regimen, reservoir, resilience, resourcefulness, restraint, rewards, robustness, rounded lifestyle, security, self-containment, shape shifting, solvency, stability, strength in numbers, sufficiency, tolerance, versatility, vigilance, ways and means, wherewithal.

Warnings and Reversals:

bad faith, carelessness, complacency, deception, extravagance, heedlessness, inflexibility, fixed assets, fixed behavior, fluctuations of fortune, lack of diversification, Maginot lines, miscalculation, monoculture, overlooked need for resilience, overspecialization, rigidity of response, ripeness precedes rot, profligacy, roguery, threats to safety, unexpected challenges, unpreparedness, unreadiness, waste.

Components:

Nine plus Pentacles. Establishing a system on secure foundations in an ever-changing but normally slowly-changing world. Preparedness to work with the actual facts and adept to hold on to our gains. Maintenance of a stable state is still a dynamic process.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Luna in Earth Signs and Houses. At home in the physical world, in the senses. Responds in grounded, steady, matter-of-fact ways. Context, home and local environment supporting the good life. Material resourcefulness. Reserved, secure, stable.

Qabalah: Yesod in Assiah. Foundations in the material world need to be site specific and cover local conditions, including anticipated changes and extremes in conditions.

Yijing: Gua 07, Shi, The Militia. Da Xiang: Kan (9) below, Kun (Pentacles) above; “Within the earth there is water. The Militia. The young noble is tolerant towards the people and cares for the multitude.” The people are analogous to a reservoir or reserves maintained underground. Resourcefulness, or the ability to respond to contingencies. “Persistence. A mature person’s good fortune. No blame.” There is need for experience with many alternate scenarios for the sake of readiness. The militia symbolizes a protean society, led by our experience. Shi also means teacher. Maturity understands what is important, has priorities straight: not sameness but continuity. We shape-shift for the sake of resilience and adaptive fitness.

Ten of Pentacles

Legacy, Foundation, Civilization, Philanthropy

Image: A coat of arms, consisting of ten Pentacle tokens arranged as the Tree of Life, adorns a window, through which is seen a garden vignette of family life among the landed clans. Four generations are represented at the gathering, and a couple of hounds, maybe symbolizing loyalty and breeding. The clan appears to intend to stay here for centuries. Success will depend on what they hand or pass down, including the savvy and wisdom to maintain their good fortune. There is more than one lifetime's worth of wealth here. What's all this for?

This is another card whose core meaning is both well-represented by the RWS deck and difficult to misinterpret. Traditionally, its meanings range around wealth, inheritance, ancestry, prosperity, accumulation, husbandry, estates, social position, tradition, surplus, affluence, heritage, domain, dynasty, legacy, establishment, pensions, savings, lineage, trusts, descent, family solidarity, wills, archives, permanence, traditions, embarrassments of riches, and cumulative cultural achievement. The Ten suggests that the accumulation has gone about as far as it can without changing into something else, but of the Tens, this is the one most likely to take a long time to do so. The Pentacles cast the scene in terms of material wealth. With the accumulation of mass come gravity and inertia, to resist the weaker forces for change. The card also speaks to the lifestyles that come along with this, particularly to those of noble or established families and their progress through time. Cultural inheritance is also strongly implied.

This is the card of the mound builders, the movers and shakers, and the makers of the ruins of ancient civilizations, the ones we find in their elaborate tombs. Compared to the mountains that these mounds mimic, the pyramids of Egypt are transient ephemera, but humans have to try building big shit to confuse their distant descendants. Also implied here is socioeconomic stratification, or strata at least, and a nobler class of family. But this often passes quickly in the longer historical stream. When it does, the fields need to be leveled off again. Them that's got need to lose, inheritances are taxed to death, rights of first possession are forfeit, copyrights and patents expire ahead of their time, and any wealth that remains gets distributed all around. There are worthy places to go after we get to the top, but over the top isn't one of them. Accumulation finds a way to recirculate.

For large parts of our human history, stratification has been a plague on humankind, with power and wealth passed down to entrenched and unearned privilege. And of course the spoiled rich kid that squanders the family fortune is both tragedy and cliché. But at times nobility has worked out well and been of good use to the species, far better than the equalitarians can admit. The key to how it has worked, when it has, lies at the heart of a true meritocracy and noblesse oblige or noble obligation. Thomas Paine wrote, "When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary." And just a short time later, Thomas Jefferson praised a 'natural aristocracy,' marked by merit, good character, and conscience, a real worthiness to inherit the things we've handed down as a culture and civilization, and a strong sense of duty to serve, and to leave the world a better place for our having been alive here. There is nothing inherent in the order of things that suggests that this and wealth cannot go together, except in the adage that power corrupts. What we want here is a genealogy of character, of beings who are worth something to this world.

We cannot agree on who first said this: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." But Dietrich Bonhoeffer added, "The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it leaves to its children." Good

stewards understand that being a worthy heir is the same thing as being a worthy ancestor. This insight and inspiration was in fact the whole point of ancestor worship. This will mean being the actual treasure that we are handing down, or “being the change we want to see in the world,” the passing of good character to future generations, as well as a habitable world. Sadly, our parasitic species is now failing badly at this. As trustees and stewards, we would take up the world and the commons as a usufruct, a borrowed wealth that must not be diminished, and practice a true conservation, a true sustainability, and not what this deluded and myopic culture thinks these words mean. This would indeed be the great work, of the transformation of mankind. Such trustees and stewards would be the only heirs truly worthy of all of these cultural and economic riches. Wealth piled this high will not rest. The best among us spend it, pass it down again, to build a better world, and establish foundations and philanthropic trusts, award grants and endowments, re-energize the energy stored in material and currency, making both destiny and new traditions. We conserve and protect the land and oceans and their non-human inhabitants. The great work is inter-generational, work to be done in deep time, by lineages of humanity.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 26, Raising Great Beasts, or Taming Power of the Great. The Junzi, a young member of the noble class, receives his instruction in social duty and ethical training, and is encouraged to get some exposure outside the noble household and beyond the great stream. This is the term so frequently translated badly as ‘superior man.’ Throughout the book, in fact, the Junzi is encouraged in his noble obligations or noblesse oblige. This is a steward of the land and a caretaker of the people. The job requires a lot of work, service, and sacrifice, but this is as much the inheritance as any wealth received. To assist are great stores of accumulated riches and culture, as symbolized by a mountain full of heaven. This is another way of saying that we stand on the shoulders of giants.

Key Words:

achievements, accumulation, advantage, alliances, ancestry, archives, becoming a worthy ancestor, benefaction, civilization, civilizing forces, common inheritance, conservation, consolidating gains, culmination and beyond, culture, cultural engineering, cultural legacy, cultural progress, cumulative wealth, curating, deeper time horizons, discipline, domestication, dynasty, endowments, endurance, establishment, estates, family line and solidarity, foundations, founding, future generations, good works, grants, great work, harnessing, heritage, husbandry, inheritance, investing in potential, lasting structures, legacy, lessons and uses of history, limits to growth, links to past, long-term commitment, longevity, meritocracy (the real kind), mound builders, natural aristocracy, passing culture down, pedigree, pensions, philanthropy, posterity, privilege, prosperity, redistribution of wealth, resources and capital, restraint, schooling, social position, social engineering, stewardship, storehouses, tradition, treasures, trusts, trustees, usufruct, worth.

Warnings and Reversals:

betrayal of trust, disengagement, disowning obligations, dissipation, frivolity, gambling, irresponsibility, libraries unread, loss of inheritance, self-indulgence, self-gratification, shortsightedness, squandered wealth and opportunity, tragedy of the commons, unearned sense of entitlement, wastefulness.

Components:

Ten plus Pentacles. The building of the world. Great accumulation. With the mass come gravity and inertia. Culmination, the most likely Ten to last at least temporarily,

long term embodiment. Things appropriate to earth might be made to last through lesser cycles as only earth can do. Structures resisting entropy. Regenerating the world, picking up the pieces. The great work of the transformation of mankind.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pluto in Earth Signs and Houses. This is generational accomplishment and accumulation. An overabundance of material in need of a use. Inheritability of process. Persistence in time. Production, wealth, incorporation. Plutus as a Greek god of wealth was etymologically related to the Roman Pluto, who was also a god of riches. Pluto is not, however, a real planet.

Qabalah: Malkuth in Assiah. Full extension into the material world, taking matter as far as it can go, which means reuse beyond accumulation, redemption and *Tikkun*, a mending of the world and a lifting up of the *Shekinah*, the divine bride.

Yijing: Gua 26, Da Chu, Raising Great Beasts, Taming Power of the Great. Da Xiang: Qian (10) below, Gen (Pentacles) above; “Heaven dwells in the midst of the mountain. Raising Great Beasts. The young noble makes use of large stores of knowledge of prior ideas and past deeds, with which to develop his character.” Heaven in the Mountain is the accumulated treasure of culture and civilization as well as economics. “Worthwhile to be persistent. To not dine at home is promising. Worthwhile to cross the great stream.” The young of the noble class have a duty and noble obligation to serve, to help to make the world a better place than it would have been without them. The common man will not do this, and this is what makes him common. Wealth and the wealthy need to get beyond and over themselves.

Princess of Pentacles

Princess of the Echoing Hills, Rose of the Palace of Earth
Stillness, Concentration, Centering, Mindfulness

Image: The RWS deck shows its character standing, holding a pentacle at eye level and engaged in an act of deep contemplation. Alternatively, a simply dressed, barefooted young princess practices a motionless, self-enclosed dance pose or yoga posture, one which suggests that her pose is about to unfold in full flower and graceful motion. She works within a stone circle. Some decks show her reading a book, indicating study, but even when there is a pentacle present, she is only attending one thing at a time. She may also be standing, holding a round object like a ceremonial drum or medicine shield over her belly. Deep concentration is the rule, regardless of design. As to character, we have an intent, introspective young lady searching for a remarkable woman inside her.

The Princess of Pentacles is among the least frivolous of the court, wanting nothing to do with nonsense or distraction. She is sometimes also said to announce communiques in business and practical information. She's known to most commentators as turned inward in a sincere quest for who she really is. She's described as absorbed, reflective, diligent, appreciative, honorable, deliberate, careful, mindful, thrifty, methodical, conscientious, steady, authentic, brooding, entranced, subdued, attentive, quiet, patient, trustworthy, solid, sensible, and sometimes pregnant, at least with her possibilities. She's characterized by concentration, introversion, groundedness, honesty, respect, economy, and her raw potential. She may be studious, but she will learn best by doing. She's not one to push the envelopes or get wild. Suggested vocations include curator or archivist, due to her reliable character and the respectful care that she shows.

This card starts the development of the Earth element as a personality type. As the 'earthly part of earth,' this begins with the search for the core of being, the most germane or essential parts. We can examine who we are from a lot of different points of view or angles, and we get most of our detailed and complex information from observing how we interact with our environments or contexts. This is not that. This is the view within, even more than the view from within. It's getting the sense of who we are, without the without. We even have sets of nerve endings for this, the vestibular and the kinesthetic senses, for example, and some say that even consciousness is simply our sense of the central nervous system as it interacts with our chemical compounds. We withdraw in search of a palpable essence, not an etherial thing, but a substance, an original nature, a heart or core, seeking touchstones and cornerstones, and even the wisdom of stones. We reach for where the ground is, for terra firma, for *tathata* or suchness, or *yathabhuta*, reality-as-it-is. We reach for an in-derstanding. And we can often find it right in the middle of the ordinary, just under the surface of things, a treasure that was only hidden by our inability or refusal to see, our lack of respect, a word which means to look again. In skipping over the obvious and wondering where reality is, we miss out on the wonder itself. This presence, that can be rightly considered sacred, or even divine if we don't take that too far, is called the *Shekinah* by the Kabbalists, and is sometimes regarded as divinity's bride.

This persona was called the brink of transformation or transfiguration by Crowley, and brooding, 'as if about to become aware of secret wonder.' There is a readiness here to transition into something even more special. This might be regarded as the emergence of sentience, consciousness, and spirit out of material form. A butterfly about to emerge from a chrysalis phase would be another model, or an egg about to hatch, or a

seedling ready to sprout. Michelangelo spoke of freeing the form that was latent in the marble. The Daoists speak of *pi*, the uncarved or unworked piece of wood that still contains all of its original raw potential, but nevertheless has a grain or original nature that a proper respect will work with instead of against. It is not, in other words, pure possibility. This card's quest for self-discovery is like this. Of course we can become much of what we imagine, but not all of this is true to our inmost, authentic nature. While this isn't a form in the sense that Plato would have misunderstood it, discovery still means to uncover, and this may have much in common with morphogenetic fields, at least as it's understood scientifically in developmental biology: a predictable shape that will find its expression. This is also the vision quest, and the search for a totem or magical name.

The parallel to Buddhist mindfulness practice is clear enough, in both its *vipassana* and *samatha* forms, as well as to many of the yogic practices, and such meditations as weight underside in aikido. We go deeper into our sense of the real. The French *jamais vu* is the opposite of *deja vu*: you know you have been here before, but you would also swear that this is the very first time. This is the fresh look we seek here. The novice with entheogens invariably asks, 'have you ever really looked at your hand?' The counterpart in the Yijing is Gua 52, Stillness or Keeping Still, symbolized by mountains repeated, stillness over stillness, and their resemblance to a spine. The text fairly clearly describes some ancient Chinese form of yoga or meditative practice, although we do not know its name. This is regarded as a necessary practice for a time and place, but not a thing to take around in public, and not a round-the-clock practice, except for some lingering authenticity and equanimity, or meditation in action.

Key Words:

anchoring, absorption, authenticity, availability, balance, basis, beginner's mind, being, brooding, centering, concentration, conscientiousness, containment, core learning, deep thought, delimiting boundaries, dependability, diligence, emergent mind, equilibrium, focus, forthrightness, getting real, *gnōthi seauton*, groundedness, groundwork, honesty, immanence, inherence, inner strength, integrity, introspection, introversion, knowing yourself, latency, learning what you have, gestation, groundedness, jhanas, matters at hand, meditation, mindfulness, ordinariness, original nature, parsimony, patience, peace and quiet, poise, positioning, potential, preparation, prepossession, presence, principle, quietude, rawness, readiness, realism, reduction, reflection, respectfulness, rootedness, rumination, sacredness in the ordinary, security, self-containment, self-discovery, self-examination, self-restraint, settling in or down, silence, simplicity, single-mindedness, stability, steadiness, straightforwardness, steadfastness, stillness, studiousness, study, suchness, things in themselves, time out, vipassana, vision quest, yoga.

Warnings and Reversals:

addiction to fantasy, alienation, aloofness, catatonia, degradation, dissipation, distraction, escape, evasiveness, fear of rejection, fugue, humorlessness, inattention, insensibility, monomania, narcissism, fear of coming back out, prodigality, solipsism, stagnation, withdrawal.

Components:

The Earthy part of Earth. The earthly expression of earth is stillness and silence, being all by itself and sufficient unto itself. Down to earth. It's symbolized by the spine of a cordillera or range of mountains, and the spine of vertebrates too, even including the

associations of having a spine with courage and character. “First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is.” Balance and equilibrium, stable states.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Caput Draconis in Earth Signs and Houses. The search for the most reliable manner of being and growth, growth on sure footing. Finding our true or original nature, then growing into who we are, and not out of it. Filling in the boundaries of potentiality. Self-containment and self-respect.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 52, Gen, Stillness, Keeping Still. Da Xiang: Gen (Pentacles) below, Gen (Princess) above; “Adjacent mountains. Stillness. The young noble contemplates nothing outside of its place.” A range of mountains, or cordillera, resembling a spine. Attending to matters at hand, the near and the relevant. Being present, being here now. “Stilling one’s spine. Not grasping one’s own being. Moving through one’s courtyard, but not seeing other people. No blame.” The possibility of blame indicates that this is a practice done for a time, not one continued forever. But there is a time and place to get centered in the core of our being, to learn who we are to begin with. It is not an end.

Prince of Pentacles

Prince of the Chariot of Earth

Steadiness, Reliability, Predictability, Endurance

Image: The RWS deck show a knight mounted on a workhorse, holding a pentacle, and surveying his agricultural lands. A variant of this might replace the pentacle with a surveying device like a handheld transit or clinometer. Alternately, a muscular, hard working prince labors in his fields, bare chested and sweating behind a plow, drawn by his noble workhorse. The activity is not beneath him as his robust health will attest. His satisfaction is a job well done. The pentacle could appear on the workhorse's tack. He is looking towards the horizon, but only to read tomorrow's weather or inspect the fence for damage, not to daydream.

Were this a modern Tarot and, per Crowley, the princes drove chariots, this one might be found on a John Deere or a D5 Cat. But he might still have a rotary phone on a landline. From one angle, you might see some plumber's butt crack. This is a pretty conservative fellow, and not some fancy Prince Charming. As discussed elsewhere, the moving around that princes do is more circumscribed for him, and much of his exploration may be a reexamination of the known. As far as exploring and exceeding the boundaries, as the princes are charged to do, the Prince of Pentacles might only be riding out to fix the fence or bring in strays. He might have a reason to go into town, but he's not so wild that he'd go without a reason. He is a simple, predictable man, who knows his goals well in advance, and a dedicated, reliable man, who can be trusted to finish a job. He is said to be slow to anger, but furious if roused, and he is not forthcoming about his feelings. Commentators also describe him as persistent, patient, consistent, methodical, industrious, sensible, practical, hard working, capable, steadfast, conventional, cautious, stable, responsible, stubborn, and even bull-headed. He is notable for perseverance and practicality, and a slow-but-steady pace for getting things done, the right way, the way it's always done.

The Prince's life is fairly well mapped out by the conventions of the world around him. He is rooted in the land and has a good sense of his place, but he may be too wrapped up in his work to see its beauty or sense his good fortune. Local concerns are the boundaries of his world. The Prince isn't much of a reader, in part due to his time constraints, so he may be prone to adopting simple and ready-made ideas, often in the form of platitudes, propaganda, and quotes from the holy books. He may adopt ideologies that are not in his own best interest. He is not the sharpest hammer in the box, and may come off as simple-minded instead of single-minded. He will tend to believe what he has been told to believe by tradition. He can be convinced of untenable ideas even when evidence to the contrary is right in front of him. His values are traditional and his ethics are probably unexamined. He follows protocols but may not know what the word means. He is set in the ways that things are done. But despite his lack of rebelliousness and self-direction, he nevertheless represents Jefferson's yeoman farmer ideal of civic virtue and incorruptibility. And he's the salt of the earth. Even when he is wrong, he is innocently and honestly wrong. And he isn't just honest because he's too dull to be crafty. He does what he can to be genuine. He usually shows good, common sense, except with politics and religion. Do not even try to convince him that there is a world outside of his country, or thoughts outside his beliefs, unless you want to hear some mighty strong opinions. He simply cannot see, much less question, his errors. Any good wisdom that he carries around will be of the folk variety. Maybe other wisdoms can be smuggled into his mind through this particular door.

The Prince also has his own brand of intelligence, of a concrete operational sort. If a thing was manufactured before he was ten years old, you can be certain this guy can fix it, or even build a new one from scraps. He is a handy man. He knows how things work and how they go together, though he probably holds no patents. He may have good business sense but isn't very risk prone, so he may avoid new lessons. His math may be limited to striking bargains, inventory, and counting time and seasons, but he has that at least. He can probably design a barn better than any architect, and can certainly build one better. An obedience to natural law takes some smarts and savvy, with enough of a knowledge of nature not to fight it. It may take a while to unlearn a traditional way of doing things wrong. You can trust him to do what he knows, but not to find any error in that.

In short, if a task falls within his range of skills, you can rely on this Prince to complete it, and do a solid, workmanlike job. A handshake is almost certainly the only contract you'll need. He will not abide any dishonesty, frivolity, whining, or shenanigans. Great achievements can be built here with humble parts and long days. A lot of time might be consumed in the process. Thoroughness and quality mean more than efficient production. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 53, Gradual Progress, symbolized by a tree growing slowly on the mountain, slowly securing a patch of rough ground all its own and eventually becoming a landmark. It's a long process, wanting a steady and reliable effort. It is also symbolized by the wild geese or swans, who mate for their very long lives and move through routines long-ago established by evolution. This is a long-term commitment, and a slow but still progressive conservatism, which advances by degrees, the gradual school of character development.

Key Words:

accommodation, adopted values, boundaries, capability, circumscription, common sense, concrete value, confines, conformity, conservation, conservatism, consistency, constancy, constraints, conventions, cultivation, day to day progress, dedication, dependability, determination, diligence, due process, duty, endurance, establishment, fidelity, handyman, hard work, honesty, implementation, incremental growth, industry, knowhow, labor, long haul, long-term commitments, long-term goals, loyalty, method, morality over ethics, naive realism, patience, perseverance, persistence, practicality, predictability, procedures, realism, regulation, reliability, responsibility, routine, rules, salt of the earth, security, sense, sensibility, simplistic realism, stability, standards, steadfastness, steadiness, steady progress, stoic endurance, sweat, thoroughness, traditional values, trustworthiness, usefulness, workhorse, works in tangibles, yeoman farmer.

Warnings and Reversals:

bigotry, carelessness, dogma, dogmatism, drudgery, dullness, ignorant rustic, impatience, inertia, inflexibility, insensitivity, intolerance, lack of determination, lack of overview, misoneism, narrow-mindedness, outdated methods, overconfidence, plodding, simple-mindedness, sloppiness, stagnation, stereotypical behavior, stubbornness, tedium, tunnel vision, workaholic, working at a loss, working in a rut, xenophobia.

Components:

The Airy part of Earth. An airy or formative expression of Earth, practical knowhow, fruit-bearing, productivity. An ultimately intelligible reality in the plowed field, the cycles and seasons of a greening earth and budding life. Nature's rules, earth becoming

intelligible, articulation of the four seasons. A suitable template for biomimicry in such fields as land planning, holistic management, and permaculture design.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Taurus Ascending, as the Fixed Earth sign, Ruler: Venus Hesperus. Personal experience is referred to practicality and physical sensation. Processes of consolidation and substantiation. Perseverance, work, and worth. Methodical attention to growth. Tends to be strong, stable, thorough, unassuming, set in ways. May be dogmatic, bull-headed, stubborn. A heavy or ponderous energy.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 53, Jian, Gradual Progress. Da Xiang: Gen (Pentacles) below, Xun (Prince) above; “On top of the mountain there is a tree. Gradual progress. The young noble abides in excellence and character to raise the social norms.” We may be just being ourselves, doing our best and minding our business, but this is a position from which to set a good example. “The young woman’s engagement is promising. Worth the persistence.” The metaphor ties in with the subsequent image of the wild geese mating for life. The formalities and protocols established by society or evolution keep us busy for life. If we want to progress in this manner, progress is made one step at a time.

Queen of Pentacles

Queen of the Thrones of Earth

Reciprocity, Symbiosis, Coevolution, Responsiveness

Image: A dark, prosperous queen occupies a throne set amidst an oasis of abundant plant and animal life. She belongs to this landscape, and at its center. She is exotically beautiful, moderately zaftig, and bedecked with gifts to celebrate her beauty, including the large precious stone or pentacle that she holds in her hands and admires. Alternatively, she could be hosting a feast at an outdoor table, surrounded by community. She's the beating heart of this home.

The Queen of Pentacles is known as a big-hearted woman, perhaps of some means, with immense funds of affection, a woman combining dignity and grace with the sensual and erotic. She is a fine example of the bountiful earth and the compelling stimulations which drive life to glory and abundance. She enjoys conceiving babies as well as raising them. She's a force of nature in her home and local environment. She's a little different from the Empress as an Earth-mother type. More than just being a human instead of a demigoddess, she is more participatory or involved, a little less ethereal, has a bit more hair and smells more like a real woman: just the right amount of sweaty. And her fingernails are often broken from work in the garden. She can change her own oil and flat tires. She wears rustic with some class, and sandals in three seasons. Her life is largely outside of herself, in circulation, in the garden, or with family and community. She has many moods, but most are easygoing. Commentators also describe her as sensible, compassionate, sensuous, lavish, gracious, supportive, nurturing, generous, charitable, hospitable, forgiving, responsive, accessible, resourceful, and caring. She is known for cooperation, liberality, enrichment, relatedness, familiarity, fecundity, abundance, and a love of nature. The manner of her interaction and interdependence might be described as mutualism, symbiosis, or reciprocity.

There is a sense in which this queen represents the opposite of the Queen of Swords with respect to the primary evolutionary processes. The latter is unquestionably a force for selection, and sometimes can be quite harsh and cold, while the Queen of Pentacles is more experimental, tolerant, nurturing, supportive, kind, warm, obliging, pleasant, and encouraging towards diversity. She is not, however, a loose woman. As a patroness, she puts resources into circulation, spreading the wealth and well-being, to grow more wealth and well-being. But some of the wealth she shares might be yours, after she's persuaded you to part with it.

There is a little more to her than this, though. This card has a strong resonance with the mutable earth sign of Virgo, which is ruled by Mercury Epimetheus, hindsightedly analysis or reasoning from precedents, and also is symbolized by the virgin, who will do very little sensuous procreating until she uncrosses her legs. But the connotation of the virgin here can be a little misleading. Yes, she is choosy and sets her standards fairly high, but once she affirms a choice, she has better reasons than most to move forward, and a better chance of success. This queen is generous because it pays extremely well. She has figured this out. She knows the value of free markets and open exchange. Spreading the wealth is a very practical way to amplify wealth. Diversity in a system is depth, strength, and resilience in that system. Even the very roots of sexual reproduction had this practical effect, which furthered our evolution immensely and led to this becoming a natural norm. This also made the world a lot more interesting and fun than just splitting ourselves in two. There is much more to giving and altruism than self-sacrifice. The world is a great tat and quo for the bargain price of our tit and quid. What goes around comes around, often multiplied in the process.

So the Queen is not a loose or simple woman. She is ready to respond to someone or something worthy and authentic. She is ready to explore or exploit what's available to her senses, and she's apt to regard sensation as a good enough door to the truth. She will appreciate the variety and texture of it all, how all of the differences work together and weave themselves into a whole. Having a nobler understanding of the material, she will want enrichment rather than riches, comfort rather than comforts. She is moved more by persuasion than reason, and a promise of mutual benefit more than her own reward. She will see the reality in the exchange itself, not in the goods exchanged. Interrelationship and interconnectedness form strong threads that make for strong fabrics, especially of her family or community. Her life is in the weaving of this. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 31, Reciprocity or Influence. One of its images is the alpine lake, high on the mountain, and a young woman on top of a young man, and what these two pairs have to give to each other to mutual benefit. The distances between them are crossed, sometimes at some length or with difficulty, but the reward is a renewal of life. Congress or coming together is for mutual purpose and welfare, for symbiosis and synergy, for meeting each other's needs, and sometimes even creating new beings.

Key Words:

affection, affinity, agreeableness, altruism, amenity, association, attraction, belonging, care, caretaker, coevolution, combinations, commensals, common interests, community, complements, congress, congruity, conjugality, conjunction, creature comforts, devotion, embrace, enjoyment, eros, Gaia, gardening, dissemination, diversification, earthy grace, embrace, enjoyment, familiarity, fertility, flowering, forming bonds, fruition, gardening, generosity, greatness of soul, healthy combinations, home, home economics, homemaker, hospitality, incentives, incitement, inducement, influence, interaction, interwovenness, kindness, liberality, love of nature, making sense, mutualism, mutuality, natural nurture, nutrition, oasis, patroness, persuasion, pleasantness, plenum, productive interaction, quid-pro-quo, readiness, reciprocity, recombination, relationship, resonance, resonating, responsiveness, sensuality, sharing the wealth, stimulation, stirrings, support, symbiosis, synergy, texture, tit-for-tat, warmth, webs, worldly love.

Warnings and Reversals:

codependence, consumed by lifestyle, fear of intimacy or rejection, isolation, nothing left for herself, mistrust, monologue, monomania, moodiness, overindulgence, responsibility neglected, self-indulgence, mistrust, selfish motives, sequestration, stinginess, suspicion, suspiciousness, toxic combination.

Components:

The Watery part of Earth. Mutability of the material, the ability of one form to assimilate another, as in absorption, digestion, or incorporation into larger wholes. Inner meaning of the physical, beauty in the material, color, texture, richness, flowering. Fertility, irrigation, living soil, oasis, the valley spirit. Growth, interconnectedness. Puts the fluent in affluent.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Virgo Ascending, as the Mutable Earth sign, Ruler: Mercury Epimetheus. A mind inclined to nutritious or rewarding relationships. Selective, but once the standards are met, approaches may be made with confidence and promise. A sensible approach to wealth as enrichment. Discriminating and sensible, alert, thoughtful.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 31, Xian, Reciprocity, Influence. Da Xiang: Gen (Pentacles) below, Dui (Queen) above; “Up on the mountain there is a lake. Reciprocity. The young noble is open to welcome the other.” The alpine lake, alpine life, a young woman and a young man, with much to give to each other. “Fulfillment. Rewarding to persist. To court the young woman is promising.” There will most likely be challenges and distances to cross, with great diversity being involved, but rewards will be proportionate. Follow that bliss and scratch that itch.

King of Pentacles

Lord of the Wild and Fertile Land, King of the Spirits of Earth
Heedfulness, Conscientiousness, Savvy, Realism

Image: The RWS deck shows the King on his throne, holding and contemplating a plate-sized Pentacle, symbolic of the wealth he has managed to accrue. Alternately, an obviously prosperous but unpretentious king is sitting cross-legged on a dais, something in the attitude of a Buddha, but contemplating the coin of the realm in multiple stacks, which he is apportioning for disbursement. He ponders the projects he is funding. He could also be seated behind the desk in his counting house. He needn't appear like he's handling the filthy lucre himself, but he must look like he could cut you a huge check, or tax you by just as much.

The King of Pentacles is thought of as a wise and careful ruler, worldly, more real than regal, but with ample enough gravitas, possessed of a steady temperament and a good fund of patience. He has the economy's pulse. He's a man of quality and substance. Each of the kings comes truly into his own when he has mastered an important life lesson. For this king, this is the courage to risk resources in just the right amount. Too much caution and conservatism could leave him with too few resources to provide for the needs of his heirs and the common good. On the other end of the lesson is the ability to know when to stop and declare that enough has been gained to meet all reasonable needs. Failing at this also fails his heirs and the common good. When he finds the sweet zone between these, the King is an influential man, a patron or sponsor who benefits the world. He gets most of his savvy from experience, and yet very little from devastating losses. He is often called competent, consistent, realistic, stable, accomplished, down to earth, enduring, steadfast, methodical, equitable, considerate, disciplined and worthy. He is a bondable character, although his word is as good as a bond. Modern politics has given a lot of horrible associations to several of our best words: conservative, liberal, and libertarian, for example. Setting aside the morons in office who call themselves by these names, this king is a compassionate conservative for the sake of his liberality towards his people. He is a builder of both infrastructure and social coalitions, and is a responsible steward of his resources, economy, and culture, and a patron of the more promising causes.

Having some mastery of the material element, the competent businessman provides a good metaphorical model for this king. He makes guarded but sound investments, with a well-diversified portfolio. He is not a believer in getting rich quickly by taking foolish risks. He practices real economy in the older sense of the term, with practical capital and resource management. Capital is invested wisely, not mistaken for income, and resources are used only at their rates of replenishment. He is sure to have his contingencies covered carefully, and at some expense that might not be fully recovered. The cost of a little extra insurance is apt to be his greatest financial risk. He likes the tried and true, and the bonds and blue-chip investments over stocks and futures. While not overly speculative, he is apt to be a good, savvy reader of signs and trends that escape the notice of others. He follows the plan and does all the math, or at least the basic arithmetic. His wealth is apt to build its momentum slowly, like a freight train. The best way to secure our optimism here is by doing things correctly. He knows where he is going, but he usually has a good map, with little *terra incognita*.

The King is not without ambition or entrepreneurial spirit. He is simply not in a hurry, not one for getting rich quickly or taking big risks. Others around him may be liquidating their resources and capital, calling them income instead, still overspending wildly and piling up crushing debt to justify the printing of increasingly worthless

currency. Our King's humbler ambition takes the longer-term view, still valuing quality and durability, and even saving a little of the wealth for future generations. He's still driven to succeed, but he has a somewhat calmer and less deluded vision of success, where real needs are met in the least harmful ways. As a mover and shaker, he might move and shake a little less, but what needs doing gets done. Slow, steady progress, while not inexorable and unrelenting, is at least harder to stop, just as a firm, steady character will tend to be unimpeachable. It's the exaltation permitted by surety of footing, compelling example, realistic attitudes, and level-headed respect for the powers in play. But like a goat climbing a mountain, this requires a kind of nearsight for the sake of surer footing, a heedfulness that likes to know exactly where it stands, and a humility that remembers how vulnerable life can be to earthly forces like gravity and inertia. Power will slip from the most competent hands when reality loses its status. But the up side to this humbler realism is that the goat gradually gets to the top of the mountain, where the grander views await.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 62, Smallness in Excess or Preponderance of the Small. Its lessons are cast in terms of reducing inflated expectations. It better represents the idea of humility or modesty than Gua 15, which usually receives this title. One of the primary metaphors is that of a high flying bird submitting to gravity, one of the ways that earth expresses its power. In evolutionary terms, the smaller creatures that proliferate here are r-strategists: it's up to them to take enough care to survive in a world that can kill without caring. Realism and a proportionate caution are skills for success and survival. We are conservative in our desire for self-preservation, and then acquiring all that we need for success beyond that. We grasp our proper place in the larger picture and scheme of things. The King of Pentacles isn't really the undisputed master of his realm: he serves. He's simply trying to make his position work as well as it should.

Key Words:

accomplishment, acquisitions, acumen, astuteness, attention, attentiveness, blue chips, bonded investments, business, capitalizing, carefulness, caution, coinage, collateral, common sense, competence, confidence, concern, conscientiousness, conservation, conservatism, consideration, consolidation, constancy, constraint, contingencies covered, counsel, covered the bases and basics, deliberation, details, determination, disbursement, discernment, discipline, diversified portfolio, due regard, durability, effects, endowment, enterprise, evenness, exactitude, forecasts, givens, grasp, gravitas, grounded priorities, heedfulness, humility, investment, laws of averages, levelheadedness, local activity, lowering expectations, monitoring, nearsight, needfulness, nichemanship, objectivity, planning, practicality, pragmatism, precision, preventive care, prudence, realism, realistic ambition, reliability, reserve, responsibility, savvy, scrupulousness, security, solvency, soundness, status, surety, steadfastness, steadiness, tenacity, vigilance, vulnerability, wariness, watchfulness.

Warnings and Reversals:

airy speculation, anonymity, avarice, cold calculation, conceit, corruption, deluded grandeur, diffidence, exaggeration, fearfulness, flights of fancy, grandiosity, heedlessness, hyperbole, impatience, inattention, ineptitude, mediocrity, misinterpretation, miserliness, negligence, overreach, recklessness, self-importance, stubbornness, timidity, triviality, wasted talent.

Components:

Fiercy part of Earth. Gravity, potential energy and inertia as earthly forces, leading,

when built up, to quakes and volcanism, tectonic movement that builds mountains at a normally slower than visible pace. Flight comes about by understanding gravity as a law. We obey the powers that be in order to succeed or surmount them. Finding the exceptional in the ordinary. Wanting the ground underfoot.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Capricorn Ascending, as the Cardinal Earth sign, Ruler: Saturn. A serious but sanguine temperament that likes and appreciates hard realism. A concern for due regard. Content with steady growth or advance along with the confidence of being on terra firma. Knowing where one stands, sure-footedness. Patience, discipline, proficiency.

Qabalah: Not a very useful source of ideas here.

Yijing: Gua 62, Xiao Guo, Smallness in Excess, Preponderance of the Small. Da Xiang: Gen (Pentacles) below, Zhen (King) above; “Over the mountain there is thunder. Smallness in excess. The young noble, in conduct will exceed in respect, in loss will exceed in sorrow, in practice will exceed in economy.” Thunder from the mountain. Err on side of caution, but still try not to err by much, “Fulfillment. Worthwhile to persist. Appropriate for minor concerns, not suited to great concerns. The flying bird bequeaths this message: if not adapted to heights, then adapt to remaining below. Much promise.” Respect for the powers that be permits appropriate achievement. Excess is not a healthy long-term objective for finite and vulnerable beings.

Trumps

The Fool

#0, Beggar, Jester, Joker, Le Fou, Le Mat, Il Matto, El Loco,
The Spirit of the Aethyr
Naiveté, Openness, Thoughtlessness, Childishness

Image: A young man with some androgynous features holds a carefree stance at the edge of a cliff, apparently unaware of the danger. One leg off the ground is being batted at by a playful, knee-high wolf pup. His gaze is slightly upwards, as if drinking in the distances. He appears to trust powers other than his own wits for survival. Snow-capped mountains in the background indicate alpine terrain. He wears a knee-length, patchwork dervish robe and a flower garland with a feather in his hair. He carries a green walking stick or wand over his shoulder, with a small bundle (bundle) bearing an obscure symbol tied to the end. If this carries a cup, a knife and a talisman, he may be unaware of their magical significance. These meager possessions are all that he appears to own, or even to need. The precipice is the same one the Hermit will stand on later. He is sometimes accompanied by a companion dog or crocodile, make of this what you will, but it might just be foolishness.

The Fool is the original wild card, and appears to have been a contribution from the Tarot back to the 52-card deck, as the Joker, in the 19th century. He did some evolving along the way, though, having begun as a beggar or loser card. He is about as ambivalent as cards get, but this is primarily around one axis: whether or not it is foolish or wise to adopt this character or his superpowers in the present context. Having expectations of consequences to our actions can work in opposite or unpredictable directions. He has neither dignity nor a need for it. There is no future, so there is no fear.

There are a couple of characteristics that are sometimes attributed to him that just do not fit at all. He is not a trickster: he lacks the understanding or wits to stay a step ahead of himself, much less others. Neither is he the blank slate that was once thought to characterize each of us before we begin to individuate. He has the basic set of foolish human characteristics, such as modes of self-deception, a lack of self-restraint, and a difficulty with deferring his gratifications. He is still a *puer* or child. At least in his inexperience, his mind is in no way closed. Further, one of the great lessons life has learned in its aeons is the value of play, having fun and just fooling around as among our greatest teachers, at any age, not just before our first seven years are up. Play also may give us a resilience that seriousness lacks. Like a drunk falling out of a wagon, we bounce better.

The Fool is celebrated in many ways in human tradition, particularly in religion. Most famously, perhaps, we have ‘Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ (Mat 18:3). Zen speaks of Beginner’s Mind or *chūxīn*. Associated from early on with the element of Air, he is the original airhead. Breathing in the air is the root of the word inspiration, and breath itself is the second meaning of many words in many languages that also mean spirit: *pneuma*, *spiritus*, *ruach*, *prana*, and to some extent, the Chinese *Qi*. The Sufis sometimes refer to living the holy life as ‘Being breathed by Allah.’ Zhuangzi references the importance of letting breath take us when he says ‘The breathing of the true man comes from his heels.’

The journey that the Fool is on, as suggested by his bundle and staff, does not yet have any goal, so this isn’t really a quest, unless it’s simply a quest for an unforeseen

vision. His is a journey of discovery, but not a journey to discover. Regardless of the randomness of the 'fool's journey' idea in Tarot lore, this card is the start of a real journey. It's merely one where the next steps aren't known. True discovery is almost always unexpected, and often requires a detachment from any hoped-for outcomes. He remains clueless as to what it is he is after, and is far more drawn than driven forward in his movements. He is in the wind, and is at its mercy for direction. He is on walk-about, Zhuangzi's *xiāo yáo yóu*, wandering free and easy. He is letting life be *zì rán*, just so of itself, or purely spontaneous. His transcendence will be without any map or intention, except perhaps to follow his bliss. Ecstasy and enthusiasm may tell him that he is on the right path, but this could be just before he stumbles over the edge. The objective world, with its suggestions of consequences, offers no guidance. There is nothing here to call wisdom. There's only live and learn. It's a roomful of monkeys eventually typing Shakespeare, and it's a sea full of microbes eventually evolving into us. But it's also life taking nearly four billion years to learn how to think, and then believing in the Bible. He is not on a quest to be who or what he truly is, because, like the rest of us, he makes this up as he goes along. Original nature does not set our goals. It only pushes us out there.

Entering into this card's state, we set aside what we know, suspending our disbelief and hopefully belief as well. Nothing is precluded from experience. We are ready to admit all possibilities or approve of any hypothesis. It's often what we know that keeps us from what we might know, so we sometimes need to reboot or reshuffle the deck. This also happens when we use elucidogens. Perspective is refreshed or renewed. Our trust in the unknown may be unwarranted going in, but the openness can free us from preconceptions and cognitive biases that keep us from what we are better off knowing. And much of the time we may need to risk the unknown in order to grow. We gain access to what's missing, and our access is often unfettered, like the historical fool's access to the inner court and circle of the king. He has the power to nonplus, disarm, or deflate the royal hubris. He can speak truth to power and still keep his head. He comes at life sideways instead of head on, and as long as he is almost certainly harmless, he's refreshing and entertaining.

In a way, the Fool is the happier side of universal injustice. He might enter a state of grace or inherit vast wealth and territory without doing any of the work prescribed for such rewards. Sometimes he seems to exist to annoy the religious, sometimes to annoy the atheists. More often than not, it's just that the world is a safer place than our fears would have us believe. The law of gravity is always in force, but most of the time we don't have that far to fall. Society cannot praise him for his success, and much of the time must use the dismissive epithets, like bliss ninny, or mooncalf, to be certain he represents nothing important to matters of real consequence. But he is an algorithm of sorts. He had it worse in the earlier days, when zero was new, and still illegal in places ruled by the church. He is like a big What If? Or maybe WTF?

Aside from injury and death, the downside of being a fool is ignorance and delusion. This is the fool we don't want. The laughter here is not the laughter of great wisdom, and getting the joke that is life in its cosmic-sized context is not always funny. We practice witlessness, heedlessness, recklessness, and indiscretion. We can't tell a nugget of real wisdom from a vacuous platitude. We will sometimes step right over the cliff, and this doesn't work like it does in cartoons. We are taught to look both ways because of what our deaths might do to our families. Unawakened man ultimately suffers. When we don't know right from wrong there are still some who would excuse us, claiming we aren't responsible, but these folk are showing they have the same problem. We are accountable, and it really does matter which way we go when we stand at the beginning of our future. Butterfly wings can do real damage.

Key Words:

abandon, absurdity, amazement, artlessness, beginner's mind, bewilderment, blind luck, blithe spirits, boundlessness, breaking open the head, cheerful indifference, childishness, clarity of conscience comedy, credulity, curiosity, detachment, disinhibition, dreaminess, drivel, ebullience, eccentricity, entertainment, enthusiasm, expansiveness, exuberance, faith, fantasy, folly, fooling around, freshness, guilelessness, indifference, inexperience, inner child, innocence, intuitive reactions, irrationality, lateral thinking, leap of faith, letting go, levity, lightheartedness, monkeying around, naiveté, naturalness, nonchalance, non-rational impulse, nonsense, novelty, openness, optimism, passivity, play, positive nihilism, puer, resilience, random numbers, randomness, silliness, simple-mindedness, simplicity, spirit, spontaneity, submission, surprise, suspended disbelief, the unexpected, thoughtlessness, traveling light, trust, unawakened man, unknowns, unsullied optimism, walkabout, whimsy, wild card, wonder, zero, zì rán.

Warnings and Reversals:

airhead, apathy, blundering forth, carelessness, credulousness, delirium, denial, disregard, disconnectedness, false start, fascination, frivolity, gullibility, heedlessness, ignorance, incompetence, indiscretion, infatuation, insanity, intoxication, irresponsibility, mania, manic states, meaningless waste, negligence, pitfalls, recklessness, seekers unable to find anything, simple-mindedness, stupidity, thoughtlessness, twaddle, vacuousness.

Components:

The Fool and the World, as nothing and everything, may be the two purest symbols in the Trumps. As Zero, this Trump manifests no particulars. It also has no force of its own, but is moved as if by currents of air or wind. Submissive and passive, it shows us the ways of sensitive chaos.

Correspondences:

Astrology: The system here offers no astrological counterpart to the Fool. This dismisses the more traditional assignment to Uranus (which is given here to Judgment, displacing poor Pluto). The connection to Uranus is often justified in terms of its unpredictability, eccentricity, or apparent originality in the behavior of both. But this is conflating two very different kinds of unpredictability. Uranus acts under power and higher purpose. The radical effect that it is said to have on people's lives is due to their living so much at cross purposes to power instead of living in tune: they get knocked sideways when they come across it. The Fool lacks this kind of force. His unpredictability is rather a function of his unknowing and lack of self-direction. He is more like a leaf in the wind, and willing to be blown away.

Qabalah: The Mother Letter Aleph, for the element Air as the middle of a triad, flanked by Water and Fire. Air as spirit, *pneuma*, *spiritus*, *ruach*, *prana* and *Qi*.

Yijing: Hsiao 0, Yin. This association was a challenge. The only diagram in the Yi that seems to be as little imbued with self-direction as the Fool is the simple Yin, the purely passive element, wholly at the mercy of any force acting upon it.

The Magician

#1, The Mountebank, The Juggler, Il Bagattel, Le Bateleur, The Magus of Power
Communication, Semiotics, Instrumentality, Perception

Image: A wiry, lithe, bright-eyed young man prepares to demonstrate the Magician's craft to unseen witnesses. He stands behind a table, altar, or other platform, the field of attention, his right hand raised high, bearing a wand pointed straight up, his left hand stretched to the table, with five finger tips touching the surface. He wears two robes, the inner one is white with a golden Caduceus on the chest and a serpent belt, the outer is scarlet and flowing. A hat whose broad brim hints at infinity's lemniscate completes this deliberately distracting outfit. Red roses and white lilies obscure his feet. Arranged on the table are a silver cup, a short sword and a circular talisman. Off to the side, out of play, are his book of spells, a lamp, and a writing quill. To orchestrate miracles, or another person's perceptions and experience, is no mean feat. His concentration is showing. Every twitch will have a purpose. The witnesses here have paid for some 'real magic,' assuming that these two words go together.

The Magician, like the Fool, underwent an upgrade of his character with the advent of the occult Tarot. Earlier versions showed a street hustler or trickster. This is not to say that the modern version should be trusted. If he is not you, then he might well be a few steps ahead of you. This character has long been associated with the practices of Hermes, Mercury, and Thoth, and the higher understanding of magick and the esoteric. Magic, the entertainment without the k, remains a useful metaphor here. The word comes from the Indo-European *magh*, to be able, and was adopted by the Zoroastrian Magi, who might have been seen demonstrating 'miracles.' The card is often associated incorrectly with power or magical powers, as is the popular understanding of witchcraft. This is merely the working knowledge or knowhow that allows the magus to direct power, and perhaps enabling an attitude of empowerment. The power is not his.

It's important to remember that Mercury was the messenger between the worlds, now often called planes or dimensions. Here, he translates ideas from the world of thought into the world of action. Here too is his use for nested analogies, giving mobility between frames of reference and universes of discourse. Translation means that he understands both languages: that of the linguistics, semiotics, and correspondences of ideas in the mental world, and of the *techne*, technology, art, and craft in the walking-around world. He connects the two with his knowhow and his practice. *Scire*, the root of science, is usually glossed too broadly as 'to know,' but it should retain connotations of knowing how, and of the Indo-European *skey*, to split or dissect. It's a kind of knowing that's already leaning towards action. The Magus is a scientist in this sense at least, whereof it is said in Clarke's Third Law, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." The technology here would include psychology.

Language has always been a big part of the Magician's repertoire. Words and names are handles. He knows what he wants, how to spell it out in his spells, and how to bring it about. He needs the name of the beast or demon in order to tame it. His patron deities, as if they were, were also the inventors of language. Language is an important component to both cognition and communication, covering an enormous territory, hence Mercury's winged feet and Thoth's Ibis wings. He delivers messages, and gets the meanings and experiences across the gulf between theory and practice. Also important to this idea is having a command of more than one perspective. Multiple points or angles of view allow him to fine-tune the message or experience to optimum effect. In the analogy of stage magic, this can involve illusion, impression, persuasion,

suggestion, redirection, and misdirection. It's important that he have all of the puzzle pieces, including the audience's perspective. The magician must discriminate between illusion and truth while other observers may not, and he must see through his own illusions. This might give him an advantage in understanding the nature of illusion itself. Enter James Randi, Penn, and Teller as well-known debunkers.

There is always more than meets the eye here. The Magician works with the limen, the threshold of subliminal awareness, controlling the subtleties and complex nuances. He cannot fixate on a single point of view. Control of perspective is control of perception. Having multiple perspectives may have an interesting effect on ethics, making them almost necessarily situational, and possibly leaving the actor amoral, at least with respect to consensual norms. Separate realities may be played against each other. Anti-cognitive processes like cognitive bias have their uses where the nature of truth may still be up for grabs. But perhaps the most salient aspect of alternative forms of a truth is that such a condition permits a choice of preferred conditions. The Magician thus has freedom to choose his own state of mind, so that when the work comes around to what is called High Magick, or the Great Transformation, he has learned a thing or two about transforming himself, or shape-shifting. The real power we have is in changing our own minds.

For the Magician, knowledge isn't something to be gathered and stored for its own sake, or just for the comfort of knowing, much less of believing. Even the most purely cognitive aspects of this card will see the known primarily in terms of its applicability. Knowledge here is useful or instrumental. The best insights are methods. The practice here is to gain familiarity, and this in turn is for the sake of repeatability, and therefore predictability, just like the scientist's goal. It's not just a coincidence that this art is also associated with divination, the extrapolation of projected outcomes from limited data sets. Knowledge must prove itself, so at some point reality becomes an aid to discernment or assessment. It isn't in the Magician's interest to assert things that cannot be demonstrated. Knowledge here is also creative. Insight reorganizes perception, knowledge reconfigures the system. Understanding needs to learn the ways of natural laws, encoding them in recognizable, communicable, and practical forms. Knowing how things work underscores prediction, and good prediction is needed to implement our intentions.

There is also something to be said about the fun to be had in using one's wits to their fullest potential, the hedonics of thinking at a lickety-split tempo, even perhaps thinking circles around others when they have come and paid to be fooled. Wittiness, cleverness, or nimbleness of phrasing can also be a trap of course. But there is much to be enjoyed in a mind that is working well. There is also an evolutionary advantage in the ingenuity, adaptability, and resourcefulness that are characteristic of this card, and this may have led to some of the neuro-chemical reward systems in the inherited brain. Even the Buddha identified such states as worthy forms of pleasure, naming them *cittalahuta*, *cittamuduta*, *cittammannata*, the agility, pliancy and efficiency of consciousness.

Key Words:

abstracting, access to options, acumen, adaptability, adroitness, agency, agility, analogies, articulation, assessment, augury, awareness, calculation, channel, cleverness, cognition, cognitive command, communication, concentration, conducting experience, connection, correspondence, craft, craftiness, creative problem solving, delivery, dexterity, diction, directing, discernment, divination, elucidation, enacting, expedients, experimentation, finesse, flexibility, focus on task, go-betweens, illusion, implementation, improvisation, ingenuity, intermediary, instrumentality, intelligence,

interchangeability, knowhow, language, manipulation of elements, mathesis, means, medium, mental advantage, mental discipline, mental training, mentalism, message, messenger, metaphor, moving between worlds, negotiation, nimbleness, nuance, operation, perception, perspective, persuasion, practice, precision, prediction, problem solving, protocol, ready wit, reconfiguration, repertoire, resourcefulness, savvy, science, semantics, semiotics, signs, skill, spellcraft, spelling, subtlety, subliminal operation, suppleness, symbols, tact, trade secrets, training, translation, transmission, techne, tool use, trickiness, versatility, wit, wizardry, wording.

Warnings and Reversals:

charlatans, cockiness, confidence games, cunning, deception, deceit, decoys, distraction, evasiveness, exploitation of another's blind side, failure of imagination, fallacy, fallacious reasoning, false expertise, hidden methods, illusion, inattention, indecision, intrigue, misapplied skill, manipulation, misdirection, narrow-mindedness, pranks, propaganda, self-deception, sleight-of-hand, sophistry, tricksters, unanchored skill, vulgar trickery.

Components:

The Magician is a fairly straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with his associations to Mercury, Hod, and now Xun, and second-tier astrological associations to Gemini and Virgo, and the 3rd and 6th Houses. All suggest investigation, penetration of the world with the mental faculties.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mercury; Kokab. Mentation, the structure of perception and communication, the nervous system, information and networking, logistics, discernment, assessment, association, making connections. Nimbleness, quickness, dexterity, cleverness, craft, precision, mental agility, the trickster and illusion, analysis, creative problem solving. Cognitive tools, repertoire, skill, familiarity, repeatability.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Beth. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Beth with various other Planets, with little agreement among them (See Kaplan's *SY* on that matter).

Yijing: Bagua 3, Xun, Wood/Wind, The Gentle, Penetrating. Xun is the symbol for the versatility and plasticity of the mind, the ability to approach a situation from all available angles in order to find and occupy a niche, to fit into or conform to the scheme of things. Its second symbol is wood, specifically green wood of roots and branches, which explores its environment, finding the paths of least resistance, in order to extend its reach and assimilate the little, specific pieces of that environment into itself. Wood is also thought of as a little boat, which gets about by penetrating water and working with the currents. A sensitivity to place and detail, and an ability to grow both by learning and dissemination of information is implied by both of these symbols.

The High Priestess

#2, La Papessa, Juno, Isis Veiled, The Priestess of the Silver Star
Mystery, Unknowing, Sacredness, Subliminal States

Image: The RWS deck shows a priestess dresses in blue, seated between two columns, Jachin and Boaz, wearing a lunar diadem on her head and holding a scroll of the labeled Torah on her lap. Alternately, a woman sits cross-legged on a dais between the two columns of a Torii. She guards a temple gate. A strung recurve bow with a nocked arrow lie within easy reach. Her gaze is alert, but composed and serene. Only her eyes are seen clearly. She wears a translucent robe and veil, the cool white of starlight, or great heat at great distance. And she wears a silver headband with a crescent moon, and a silver key over her heart. There is a very disturbing suggestion that her beauty is better than human. So too with her aim. On her lap is a white scroll, but the scroll is blank (and definitely not the Torah), perhaps kept handy for poets and painters. Her gifts are not verbal. She is virginal, or at the very least, she is way out of your league. And you are not going to get any real access to that book of hers. What she teaches us is to ask more interesting questions, fine tuning a better sense of wonder.

Names for the High Priestess go on and on: Indwelling Glory, Gate of the Sanctuary, Queen of the Borrowed Light, Psyche, Eros' bride, Spiritual Bride of the Just Man, and Diana the Huntress. She is the woman withheld, unrevealed, and unpenetrated. Her book or scroll may also be called the Book of Science, Torah, or the Akashic Record, all those things men dream of knowing while already pretending to know. Many incorrect things are said about her. Secret, occult, or esoteric knowledge are common errors. Most books assert that some secret knowledge is to be found here. We don't require knowledge for clarity. She isn't knowledge any more than the Magician is power: she's what we do not know. Fertility is often mentioned, but this whole idea is a really bad fit with *virgo intacta*. She is only fertile in theory. An important distinction may now be drawn between secrets and mysteries that was not there in the beginning, when *mystes* meant an initiate sworn to secrecy and silence. Now we can say that a mystery will open itself to someone who is both ready and worthy. Secrets are held by the culture or the cult, and many have heard them or had them revealed. The Hierophant deals in those. The Priestess holds deeper mysteries than this, many still beyond any human comprehension. If you come away from her with answers, you're doing it wrong. She also babysits for the mother of the nine Muses, Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, a fundamental function of the subconscious, where much of our potential knowledge is indeed occult or occluded. But down in those depths, it isn't gnosis or knowledge at all. There is no inner teacher deep down in there. There is, however, a learner deep within. Our emergent awareness has no hindsight for its origins.

The Priestess is a channel of sorts, not of knowledge, but of the wisdom of unknowing, where knowledge should not even try to go. She is the stimulation or draw of mystery, the stimulus to discovery, the need to listen, the need to ask better questions. She inspired Einstein's credo about mystery and awe. Wonder heightens our perceptions, not knowing wakes us up. There are messages and lessons for us here, but they are not answers. We might, for example, need to settle for learning to be true instead of learning the truth. The larger reality here is not for wrapping heads around: it's just too big for that. With all the stuff beneath the surface, and all the stuff beyond our horizons, and all the unknowable pasts and futures, it's just sad that we can be so pretentious to think that we can have all the answers. But it's great that we can go looking into the darkness and listening into the silence, despite the lack of reflections and echoes. There are mysterious wisdoms to be had and touched that never will be

packaged, inscrutable things that we nevertheless can still play with, and states so altered that we have to alter ourselves just to go there. It's gift enough that we are drawn to these. Mystery doesn't need solving: it just needs to be left to work its magic, take us down deeper, and open us up. Mystery teaches with questions. If you're getting answers out of some version of Torah, you're doing it wrong.

Then what comfort is there here? Is there a home for us? What wisdom is there in such an insecurity in our knowledge? We certainly don't belong in such a sanctuary as long as we are full of ourselves, still smug and pretentious in what we think we know. Nobody who believes the Priestess holds knowledge for us should be allowed past the gate. We must even forget the hope that the Priestess knows what we don't. She's not a fount of wisdom but its guardian. This is also no place for the dilettante, the dabbler, or the hasty. This isn't welcome here. We need to earn some value or worth and raise our standards out of respect. There is no unmerited knowing. This is a sacred space. The wisdom here is not transferable. We make ourselves ready and worthy. We will not be given any undeserved secrets. She is not there to offer you wisdom, she will not read to you when you finally reach her, not even from the subtext. Some think it needful to bring some religion along, but this is the same error as trying to enter with answers. Yes, the place of unknowing is sacred, but that does not make this the house of some god. Nature is wonder and divine enough. It's worthy of reverence, but that does not mean that some deity stands behind it. It's worthy of gratitude, but this does not require someone to be grateful to. All of these props only signify lack of humility, despite they pretend to be. Even the wisest of us must drop the pride we have in our present degree of wisdom. Making ourselves at home here is as simple and difficult as running into the ocean or jumping into the lake. It's best to get naked first, and sincere, and then we simply commit. The cold isn't so ethereal after all, but we still must abandon our reason to make the leap. The otherworldliness was only the view from the previous world. Now it's just a richer and deeper world, and a lot less crowded with pilgrims and seekers.

Key Words:

abyss, altered states, apophatic mysticism, attunement, awakening, awe, channels, cloud of unknowing, commitment, conditional wisdom, consecration, cryptomnesia, depth, desire for the unknown, dignity, divining, dowsing, dreaming, elusiveness, enigmas, gateway, gnosis, hazarding, humility, immersion, implication, incomplete information, inscrutables, intuition, inviolability, listening and hearing, longing, lucid dreaming, merit, muse, mysteries, native heuristics, *neti neti*, oracles, pending new revelations, personal subconscious, psyche, purification, questioning, reflection, respect, reverence, sacredness, sacrifice, sanctity, sanctuary, sincerity, sophia, sounding depths, stimulus to discovery, stirrings, subconscious, subliminal exploration, subliminal states, submission, subtext, subtleties, thirst for wisdom, thresholds, tidal pull, uncertainty, unfathomable mystery, unknowing, unknowns, unlearning, unpretentiousness, veils, venerableness, veneration, visions, wonder, worth, worthiness.

Warnings and Reversals:

bedazzlement, deceit, delusion, distraction, *ghafila*, glamor, hidden agendas, inattention, insincerity, intellectual conceit, misinterpretation, misoneism, muddling the waters, mystification, mystique, obfuscation, passionate despair, premature claims to answers, pretensions, seeking to know too quickly, self-deception, self-denial, shallow knowledge, superficiality, vivisection of mystery.

Components:

The High Priestess is a fairly straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with her associations to Luna, Yesod, and now Kan, and second-tier astrological associations to Cancer and the 4th House. All suggest a world of feeling rather than thought, of affect rather than cognition, and that fulfillment is a function of our ability to open up, our ability to be fully present, and our worthiness to receive. She is the purest conception of the moon (Crowley), the darker side of which is addressed by the Trump of the Moon. Like the moon, continuous change is the rule, a fluctuation in states.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Luna; Lebanah. Readiness, responsiveness, sensitivity to impression, nurture, the cumulative past, including the ancestors, inherited and accumulated functions and behavioral forms, the embodiment of feelings as soul, apperceptive mass and perceptual inertia. Nourishment, assimilation, growth, absorption. The ability to receive. Memory, imagination, dream as basis.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Gimel. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Gimel with various other Planets, but with little agreement. Crowley has a plausible association with Gimel, a camel, as a means to cross the abyss.

Yijing: Bagua 2, Kan, Water, Exposure, the Moon. Kan is water in action, cutting a river canyon or filling a pit, symbolizes a fluid response to context, the deliberate changing of self and shape to meet needs and necessities. From above, the human perspective, there arise feelings in the pit of the stomach, and a pounding of the heart, when one wishes to cross this tricky ground, the challenge ahead. The point is, of course, that the teacher is at work below, patient yet opportunistic. The solution to the problem ahead is not a single leap in a single direction, but a series of risks, decisions, and choices. These will call upon memory, second-hand if not first, and concentration, meaning to locate oneself around something central, such as one's courage, heart, or balance.

The Empress

#3, L'Imperatrice, Isis Unveiled, Isis-Urania, The Daughter of the Mighty Ones
Flourishing Life, Procreation, Reward Systems, Pleasure

Image: A dignified, warm, approachable woman sits in a comfortable chair in what seems to be a paradise garden. She is full-figured, approaching the middle of childbearing years, and of a current pregnancy. Her robe sports all the colors of optimism, but the dominant color of the card is a deep green. She holds a sheaf of wheat. She wears a string of pearls, and a crown of 12 golden stars over long, wavy hair. Her royal feet are bare. By her side sits a medicine shield, her only protection. A hawk perches on an arm of her chair, stretching its wings. A stream cascades over a background falls and winds through the garden past her feet. Fruit trees and herbs grow in the background, wheat and corn in the foreground. She is immensely satisfied, grateful to be a well-used woman. These are not difficult times.

The Empress is Good Nature, that part of nature not trying to kill and eat us, but she's also the one being kind to the predator who might. She's life in its procreative, positive mode, expanding and experimenting. This is life out in the open, in broad daylight, not a card of undercurrents and hidden meanings. Seeking secrets and omens seeks too deeply. She is the accessible goddess, the one we touch whenever we touch flesh. This is sensible nature, beauty even in the most ordinary, importance even in the small. We enjoy our earthly paradise here, cherishing the world, not flying our spirits high above it like kites, but living down deep in the juices of life. And that the glory of the world is transient is reason to make the most of it while it lasts, not to dismiss it to look for something eternal instead. She is a medicine woman as well, healthy and healing, and knowing her herbs. She is also Gaia, mother of the material, moist, warm, and worldly, and Isis unveiled, not even a little bit shy. She is the woman clothed with the sun, not from the book, but as feminine sexuality dignified. She is Ceres, goddess of grain, and a life lived close to rich soil. She's a goddess of love and ripeness for love. As the Dineh chant, 'With beauty all around me, I walk.'

We reunite with nature and with our own half-forgotten natures here. We reconnect and interconnect with all our relations that our culture has hidden or taken away. We struggle against this culture to participate in the flesh again. Warren McCulloch wrote, "But we, to little State and transient God, gave all our souls and let our loved ones bleed. Thus have we bought again the vanquished grace of nature's moral law. Again we come out of our lesser loyalties, in tears, to build love's well-earned city in the rich sod." Our nostalgia and our longing for real community can be found here in this Trump. Our ecosphere, our biosphere and its biodiversity, the authority of nature and natural ways, the emergence, renewal, and decay of life, are what pass here for the divine, an emergent divinity, creating with materials at hand, creating with living accomplices, not the divine come down from on high with mysterious plans and purposes. Mary Oliver wrote, "You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert repenting. You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves."

This is evolution before selection, but make no mistake, selection will happen. Part, and eventually all, of this explosion of life and gifting of birth will be mulch and food for other parts. Nature's basic disaster plan requires too much and too many. To encourage the breeding we have elegance, beauty, exuberance, and orgasms. Mother Nature nurtures exceptions and the exceptional, but she also brings forth the miscreant and the good-for-nothing parasites. Superabundance stocks the food chain and the unfit and misfits become food of the fit. Overgrowth needs pruning. Prosperity doesn't

happen without regard to its consequences, but happens because there will be. We at least take some comfort here: everyone alive has descended from a very long line of survivors. While nature is not a protective force or a guardian, we have it in our nature to keep going, and today at least it is home. In the end, the most help is for those who help themselves, but loosely, with laws like averages. Dark nature, all red in tooth and claw, may or may not be nearby, may or may not forgive our little experiments. But that's what life is.

The Empress card means affection and contact, nurturing and compassion, comfort and reassurance. She is that great bag of tricks that life has learned to play on us with juices like oxytocin and dopamine and limbic kinds of love that make use of our basic emotions. In fact, she is all of the juicy tricks that life has learned, to help us satisfy our needs and wants, the inborn reward systems, the pleasures we have when we're on our way, and the jubilant rejoicings we have on arrival. And, of course, to get us there, we also have our hungers and thirsts, our passions and desires, our preferences and tastes, our values and standards, the powers that draw and attract us. She is *elan vital* and its *joie de vivre*. She is the strategy by which we bargain and negotiate our way to success, but she is more persuasive than rational, more seductive than straightforward. The driving force is self-interest, that wants to learn the way from deluded to enlightened forms. She is more fun and playful than serious and calculating, even when she takes her calculation seriously. She is *pathesis*, knowledge gained through feeling, knowledge that only takes form when stratagems succeed.

Key Words:

abundance, accessibility, accommodation, acquisitiveness, affection, affirmation, allure, appreciation of beauty, approval, attraction, beauty, bloom, care giving, caring, Ceres or Demeter, charm, comfort, community, compassion, connections, consensual pleasure, consummation, contact, contentment, deep ecology, delight, desire, ecosystems, *elan vital*, embodied cognition, embrace, emotional sustenance, enchantment, encouragement, enlightened self-interest, enlivening, Epicurean hedonism, eros, exchange, externalized nature, exuberance, fecundity, fertility, fleshiness, fleshy parts, flirtation, flourishing, fruitfulness, gardening as an analogy, generative forces, gratification, gratitude, gratuity, growth, hunger, idleness, incentive, indulgence, interconnection, interdependence, *joie de vivre*, juiciness, limbic loving, living networks, maternal drives, medicine, mutuality, nourishment, nurturing, opening up, openness, overgrowth, oxytocin, passion, *pathesis*, persuasion, *physis*, pleasure, procreation, proliferation, reassurance, reciprocity, rejoicing, repose, richness, ripeness, sensuality, sensuousness, taste, thriving, tolerance, transaction, unfolding, vivification, warmth.

Warnings and Reversals:

barrenness from restriction, codependency, complacency, crass materialism, decadence, dissipation, dullness, excess, idleness, indifference, infidelity, over-consumption, over-dependence, overly unconditional, overprotection, pruning overgrowth, self-indulgence, parasitism, promiscuity, seduction, smothering influences, squandering, superficiality, tantrum, vacillation, vanity, wantonness, waste.

Components:

The Empress is a fairly straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with her associations to Venus, Netzach, and now Dui, and second-tier astrological associations to Taurus and Libra, and the 4th and 7th Houses. All suggest an enhanced appreciation of the world spread out before us and desires to be satisfied according to our tastes.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Venus; Kokabet or Nogah. Aesthetics, the creativity of perception, attraction, the beholder's eye, the endocrine system, chemical communication, desire, satisfaction, personal hydraulics, hedonics, hunger, appetite. Valuation, motivated love. Valences, the readiness to combine, chosen responsiveness, acquisitiveness, interrelation, cohesion. Good attitude as a personal conquest, the ability to satisfy desire.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Daleth. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Daleth with various other Planets, with little agreement. Some meanings may be taken from the birth canal as the doorway into existence, the comings and goings through the gate of manifestation.

Yijing: Bagua 6, Dui, Wetland or Pool, is a symbol of the pooling or collection of selves which constitutes a person, with particular reference to how this feels, on and beneath the surface. This feeling is a community, of wants and needs, desires and hungers, tastes and preferences, each jostling, striving and bargaining, in a kind of marketplace, for purposes of satisfaction. The Chinese had no problem with hedonism, as the Greeks defined it, so long as this pursuit of happiness was in accord with the due mean and good balance. This accord was indicated by the persistence of joy and serenity. Discord and frustration might be called symptoms of bad taste, poor choices, and ingratitude. A good life is rewarding: rewards should be enjoyed.

The Emperor

#4, L'Imperatore, L'Empereur, Jupiter,
Son of the Morning, Chief among the Mighty
Sovereignty, Immediacy, Decisiveness, Authority

Image: A mature, bearded man sits half-comfortably on a cubic stone, his right foot resting on his left knee, figuring a four. Between his foot and his left hand he absently spins a small globe. In his right hand he holds a long scepter, capped with a *crux ansata* or ankh. He's wearing light armor, a breastplate with the sign of the ram, a battle helmet that doubles as a crown, and a scarlet cape. His garb is not new, nor is it ceremonial. He is intently busy supervising a great deal of activity occurring below his position of vantage. The background terrain is relatively rough and barren. One gets the idea that below him this is being transformed dramatically, that this was his idea, and that little time elapsed between the idea and its large-scale implementation. Perhaps his idea of doing well, or doing good, is doing much, and without needless delay. He values his time. His regalia varies between decks. Sometimes his scepter is capped with a globus cruciger, or orb and cross, of Holy Roman Empire infamy, and sometimes this is also the form of the globe in his left hand. Other decks have him holding a sword, to add some extra confusion. He has guards to do his swordplay for him.

The Emperor is the like-it-or-not fact of concentrated secular power, and the inclination of human alphas, particularly males, to seek such positions. Not surprisingly, this is the feminist's least favorite card, with the Hierophant close behind. This social role has been with us for ages, even defining some ages. It continues to evolve, and now it co-evolves with democratic ideas and corporate influence. The throne itself might still be ascended by divine right of birth, conquest, arrogation, or inherited wealth, and its occupant may range from despotic tyrant to powerless figurehead. If imperious enough, he can start a war, at the cost of far too many lives, just for something that he thinks is a bright idea. It is one of humanity's great and fatal weaknesses that it has not learned a reliable way to govern its own collective behavior. Democracy can only be thought promising by failing to account for the intelligence and insecurities of the average voting citizen. Otherwise, it will simply be mob rule in slow motion and peer pressure writ large. Importantly, for our purposes here, popular committees cannot make executive decisions with the speed and clarity that energetic and confusing times call for. This sort of ship frequently requires a captain with at least some protection from mutiny.

The key to success here may be twofold: we find a way for merit to rise to power more easily than corruption, and we find a way, as a matter of course, to depose a rising tyrant before he gains too much power and armor. Privilege, prerogative, and entitlement need to be forfeited for specified breaches, even when one is safe behind the legal walls that those in power can build. But once again, for our purposes here, this leader has a use, and a service to perform, and needs some benefit of the doubt. He is the father of his people and the only one who can make the hard choices at the speed at which they need to be made. Knowing that he may be more inclined to strength than wisdom, we still give him one more chance to show his character. We can only hope he finds the need to delegate to helpers more skilled than himself at the various aspects of ruling, including wisdom. We can hope that he is strong enough to meet and negotiate with rivals and peers, and to respect his subjects and underlings. We can hope for some feminine counsel, or someone else to openly question his judgment, someone not bound to agree. We can also hope for increasing numbers of women on the throne.

The Emperor is a symbol, of course, for sovereignty and self-mastery, for dignity and autonomy, for service to higher purposes, for obedience to our own self-made laws, for holding faithful to the prime directives of beings, for taking charge when everyone else is confused, for finding courage where needed, and stepping or ‘manning’ up when this is called for. Sovereignty is a divine right, even without a divinity, and even if all that you rule is yourself or the smallest of empires. This doesn’t always need to be done alone, but it needs to be done from the center, where the creating gets done and responsibility gets taken. Authority is for authors. Leadership at its most basic level is service, even when acting alone and leading our selves. Having a commanding presence is sometimes the only commanding that needs to be done, and being a compelling example, the only compelling. Nietzsche asked, “Free, dost thou call thyself? Thy ruling thought would I hear of, and not that thou hast escaped a yoke.... Many a one hath cast away his final worth when he cast away his servitude.... Free from what? Free for what?”

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 55, Abundance. Perhaps the best Western equivalent is ‘be careful what you wish for.’ This is the peak experience, as busy and confusing as life gets, overwhelming to ordinary folk, demanding the clarity and decisiveness of quick and competent judgment. The diem has to be carped. Tunnel vision is a recurring theme in the text, and the end of these tunnels may be where the only light is. Options are limited and actions are taken with limited recon and intel. There isn’t the time to carefully examine alternative points of view. There is only objectivity and objectivism, no time for subtleties and ramifications. The thing held in focus may be all that is not a distraction. Peripheral vision is limited, the big picture is absent, time is short, and presence of mind is a must. If advice can be taken at all, it had best be on the run and right to the point. Immediacy requires that responsibility begins and ends here. This too may be a metaphor, for life down deep in the clutter of selves that we are, and all of the business and mischief that these can get up to. One of us needs to take charge and find a way to some daylight.

Key Words:

achievement, ambition, assertion, assertiveness, assumption of right, attention, audacity, authority, autonomy, birthright, challenge, clout, cogency, command, competence, concentration, conquest, constraint, control, conviction, creating order, decisiveness, decree, determination, dignity, direction, directness, dispatch, dominance, dominion, edict, efficacy, efficiency, emphasis, enforcement, entitlement, example, excellence, execution, executive ability, executive decision, exemplar, fearlessness, fiat, firmness, focus, goals, governance, government, immediacy, initiative, intentions manifested, job one, jurisdiction, laying down the law, leadership, legislation, limited options and paths, management, mandate, mastery, meritocracy, objectives, opportunity for advance, order, overview, patriarchy, patronage, pioneering, polarization, preeminence, prerogative, presence of mind, pressing affairs, pressure, prioritization, priority, privilege, proficiency, purpose, purposefulness, reconnaissance, resolve, role model, rule, self-determination, self-education, self-mastery, self-respect, self-rule, shining path, sovereignty, stress, structure, summary justice, superiority, supremacy, tactical strike, taking charge, tests of ability, urgency, virility, willpower, word of a sovereign as law.

Warnings and Reversals:

abuse of authority, abuse of power, armor, arrogance, authoritarianism, autocracy, blind ambition, bullying, butt-headedness, coercion, conceit, cruelty, despotism, dictator, ego, high-handedness, hubris, impatience, indecision, inflated ego,

inflexibility, insensitivity, jealousy, lost focus, rage, rashness, rigidity, impetuosity, isolation, micromanagement, peripheral distraction, polarization, presumption, rashness, severity, stress, stubbornness, temper, thick skin, tunnel vision, tyranny, volitional paralysis.

Components:

The Emperor is assigned to the first of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, He, in its turn assigned to Aries and the 1st House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Cardinal/Angular and Fire in Astrology, as well as Li (Cardinal) below Zhen (Fire) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Aries, Nissan; Cardinal/Angular Fire, First House; Patron: Mars. The Spring thunder, the seed germinating, quickening. The primal spark, burning to exist, prime directive of beings, feedforward movement. The spirit of enterprise, initiative, vim and vigor, drive, impetus, adventure, courage, spiritedness, willfulness. The coherence and persistence of identity, self-reliance. Boldness and urgency. Personal sovereignty as a birthright, self-assertion, self-assumption, and self-definition.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter He, the first of the twelve and the beginning of the Zodiac attributions, traditionally assigned to Aries. The Window symbolism can suggest that the self of Aries and the First House is a unique point of view or outlook on the world, a locus of opportunity, and an alternate means of egress.

Yijing: Gua 55, Feng, Abundance. Bagua Li (Cardinal, Angular) below, Zhen (Fire) above. "Thunder and lightning, coming as one. Abundance. The young noble executes justice and carries out judgment." A time of much busyness, hustle, confusion, crowding, multiple choices, complexity. "Fulfillment. The sovereign approaches this. Do not be anxious. It suits the sun to be at midday." A culmination or zenith. Many demands on the attention, a challenge even to the sovereign. Tunnel vision of daytime stars, or polarized light. Directions may be limited to one, exigency and execution.

The Hierophant

#5, The Pope, Il Papa, Le Pape, The High Priest,
The Magus of the Eternal, Triumphant and Eternal Intelligence
Education, Accreditation, Mentoring, Culture as Library

Image: A mature man, with a graying beard, wearing a long, flowing brown robe and sandals, sits on a park bench between a deciduous tree and an evergreen. This is a temple, school, or academy, and he is fielding questions from two thoroughly unlike students seated on the ground before him. Between them, on the ground, lay two keys. He is showing them a many forked branch, maybe as an analogy, to which he points with the first two fingers of his right hand. This is an ambiguous gesture: it could be a benediction, an “ah, but” or a “slow down.” He appears to be trying to find right words, and wears an amused expression. This question might send him to the library. He still has a recognized institute behind him. The original Pope here became a Hierophant, interpreter of doctrine, a gatekeeper to arcane knowledge, and a mentor. The original Hierophant was the chief priest at the Eleusinian Mysteries. His successors interpret sacred mysteries and arcane principles. We have no more use for a Pope.

We have de Geblin to thank for the name *ιεροφάντης*, the one who shows us what is holy, according to our need and readiness. Before this was the Pope, our father confessor, whose truth was somewhat more standardized. And yet, over the centuries, it appears that what this teacher has to offer has grown increasingly exoteric and even commercial. We have many challenges here, not the least of which is that human beings are not equal in their ‘spiritual’ wisdom or understanding, and more controversially, are not equal even in long-term potential. Muhammad is credited with saying, “Speak to each in accordance with his degree of understanding.” People must progress at their own pace, young or old, dim or bright. And yet at the same time, we live in societies where we require at least some consensus on the core curriculum and the universe of discourse, if not on its precise content. Our minds require structured learning and enough of the common culture to live together. Second-hand wisdom needs to be conserved between generations, so teaching (pedagogy) and well-paced education are necessary. This can be done well by good mentors, or badly by pedants and proselytizers. The Hierophant can refer to either. The more gifted among us are normally left to fend for ourselves as autodidacts and eclectics. We will crack open that box of pretty rocks and gems that everyone gets and is told to treasure and worship, toss out the fool’s gold and paste, and the box, pocket the good stuff and move on with lighter loads. At least these days we are put to death less often for our heresies. We do *philo-sophia*. We love that wisdom. In the Buddha’s words, “You should train thus: we shall be wise men, we shall be inquirers.”

Any shared spiritual ‘truth’ will be parochial to some degree. There will be middlemen to keep the gates and keys, and they may or may not any have real contact with the truths locked up inside. They are occupants of a place, not the essence of the place. There will be exaggerations for impact, and lies told for comfort, and profit in even the most sacred of scrolls. There will be many things lost in translation and transmission, including the first person and due credit to fallible human authors. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. There will be accounts of what happens to those who fall short with the teachings, and to those who lack the good sense to join in, and many depictions of the bliss that comes with belonging. It seldom really matters if the ritual or ceremony has no more inner content. Most people want others to do their thinking for them, as long as they don’t have to know this. One must be blessed by someone duly licensed to bless. Believers get stuck in the rhetoric, parroting without under-

standing, languishing in the lingo, with the wisdom reduced to vacuous platitudes pretending to be knowledge. The pros and cons take their marks. Someone is minding the valve that regulates the flow of wisdom, but given what we know of the human capacity for real wisdom, this is all probably just as well. We still need the consensus just to get along, even when belief does not seem to be helping, even when we align with beliefs that are not endemic to our nature. The flock will demand some sense of order, and the outliers will have something else. Most will still crave a fixed sense of identity, belief and belonging. It really isn't so surprising that this sort of pedagogy produces more permanent disciples than graduates, innovators, and teachers. But for the latter, getting up to speed with the cultural literacy, with the aid of a teacher or mentor, is still a necessary step for all but the fiercest of autodidacts. Still, getting that badge, certificate, or accreditation can be a big investment of wasted time.

Yet there is one kind of person who makes sense of this whole apparatus, and redeems all the time and expense. This is the young noble one, hungry in mind and spirit, still full of potential and questions. The Hierophant exists for him or her, if not in patronizing ways, then at least in avuncular ways, in loco parentis, as mentor, with special counsel to offer and an abiding concern for the generations to come. Such students and seekers are excellent long-term investments. This will only take the young one so far, to a certain degree or grade, to a point of graduation or some accreditation. They may not need to pay dues to the guild in the end, but it doesn't hurt to be licensed to bless. We have a great wealth of memes in our cultural libraries, of nuggets and gems of wisdom, both in and out of original contexts. Even some religions can lack a little in foolishness.

Most of the cosmic wheels have already been invented as well, and others have offered instructions in lighting the cosmic fires. We can make good use of our earlier years in this part of the world, finding giant shoulders to stand on. It rarely hurts to ask for some help or guidance. By-the-book education need not be a problem when we know that it was fallible people who first wrote the books. We learn a language in our studies that others can speak as well, and this lets us share what we can, and help where we are able. This is where rebellion and iconoclasm are not productive. The good student doesn't need to become a believer. He can simply place himself in a place of learning, and avoid the need to reinvent fire-making and the wheel. He can admit that others are better educated and have things to offer. Many will resist this and insist on the democratization of knowledge, where all perspectives are equally valid. This is flunking the grade and faking diplomas with crayons.

The patience required to associate and synch up with resonant Taurus, from Astrology, and Wood, from Yixue, means the student becomes part of a very long process of growth, a co-author and a co-conspirator in an ever-evolving culture. Nietzsche offered, "One repays a teacher badly who remains only a pupil." But first we must have teachers to help us to grow ourselves, past all the pat and premature answers. As David Haselkorn noted, "Teaching is the essential profession, the one that makes all other professions possible." Bless the teacher or mentor who primes us first with hunger and teaches us first to take charge of our learning, both in the how and the why of it. Then the prescribed progressions are just the food, not the diet. Then education begins as it should, with a subject learning, not with subjects taught. We get self-directed behavior, instead of generalized prescriptions and proscriptions. There will be frustrations. The academy will permit only one creative idea per paper, and this must be defended, and often approved by others for whom the idea is new. Ideas must be supported by other people's ideas. One is not supposed to think for oneself, only as a collective. But we try to keep our eyes on the real prize.

Key Words:

academy, accepted practices and processes, accreditation, adopted values, advisors, apportionment, arcana, by-the-book education, ceremony, channel of transmission, code of practice, codification, cognitive templates, common ground, comparative doctrine, conformation, conformity, consensual realities, convention, counseling, cultural literacy and memory, curriculum, *dhamma-vinaya*, discipline, doctrine, edification, education, exotericism, explanation, formal learning, formalities, formats, formulae, formulaic learning, grades, gradual enlightenment, graduation, guidance, guilds, help from one's superiors, indoctrination, initiation, institution, instruction, legacies, licensed knowledge, lore, mental discipline, mentoring, methodology, neoteny, orders, orthodoxy, paced revelation, parochialism, parsed knowledge, paths, patience, procedure, professional guidance, protocol, ritual, routine, sanctification, sanction, secrets withheld, secure knowledge, solid growth, standardization, students, subject matter, teaching process, tradition, training, translation, transmission, tribal elders, tutoring, vested authority, wisdom vehicles, zones of proximal development.

Warnings and Reversals:

abdicated self-rule, adulterated teachings, anachronism, arguments from antiquity and authority, cliff notes, collective delusion, condensed books, condescension, conformity, conspiracy theories, conversion vs transformation, cultural error and delusion, dogma, empty ritual, groupthink, gullibility, intolerance, koolaid communion, loads of bull, middlemen claiming primary access, misinformation, mystification, mystique, outdated thought, over-generalization, pedantry, procrustean beds, repressive doctrine, rule by convention, shallowness, spiritual authority, stereotype, suppressed diversity.

Components:

The Hierophant is assigned to the second of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Vau, in its turn assigned to Taurus and the 2nd House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Fixed/Succedent and Earth in Astrology. In the Yijing, Fixed Earth is one of the Four Xiang, Shao Yin, which might be represented, only with some stretch, by two of the Wu Xing, Wood and Earth.

Correspondences

Astrology: Taurus, Iyar; Fixed/Succedent Earth, Second House; Patron: Venus Hesperus. Wealth and valuation, roots and anchoring, weight, substantiation, stabilization. Means and tools, productive uses of time, sustenance, investment, acquired resources. Deriving the measure of worth. Budgeting and management. Invested work calling for good choice of goals and values, self-appraisal, self-assessment. Wherewithal, attachments, securing the self, foundations, groundedness.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Vau, the second of the twelve Zodiac attributions, attributed to Taurus. Reaching for some meaning here, the nail is an implement to affix things, nail things down, and to hang things on.

Yijing: Xiang 1, Young or Shao Yang, Wood and Earth. The Four Xiang or Emblems have been assigned in this system to the four Kerubic or most elemental signs of the Zodiac, the Fixed Signs of each element. Xiang 1, Young Yang, is problematic as Wood and Earth. This is an uncomfortable forced fit of the Chinese Scale of 5 or Wu Xing, to the Scale of 4 Greek Elements. Wood and Earth are both relatively passive processes of consolidation and substantiation. But wood grows actively and has its own kind of intelligence. We have the idea here of gradual pressure for penetration, as the root splits the rock, a paced learning that eventually adapts itself. We also have growth by accretion and integration.

The Lovers

#6, L'Amoureux, L'amore, Gli Amanti, The Lover (singular), The Two Paths,
The Children of the Voice; the Oracles of the Mighty Gods
Transition, Expansion, Branching Out, Moving On

Image: In the original versions of this card, a healthy young man stands in the card's center, in between two women. The woman on the right appears to be his own youthful age, the one on the left, older and more careworn. This latter would be his mother, about to give him away to his future bride. A high priest, hooded and robed in gray, stands behind them, with arms outstretched in a gesture of blessing, sanctifying the couple's transition into a new life of greater breadth. Other versions of this Trump show the young man trying to decide between two potential partners, one young woman representing the world of the senses and the other the world of the spirit, the profane versus the sacred. In either version, Cupid is frequently seen with drawn bow, ready to pierce the heart of the woman about to be bride, or of the young man while he's looking at one or the other. In the RWS deck, the card depicts a hieros gamos, or sacred marriage, perhaps between Adam and Eve, presided over by the angel Raphael, the healer, and features a tree of life behind the man, and a tree of knowledge behind the woman. This is the only place Waite preserved the idea of choice. For a majority of clones and variants after this, the card remains a sort of valentine, far from the original exhortation to make up your mind, commit to one path, and leave another behind. These are very different versions, and even the core meaning is driven by which of these is preferred. The original meaning is assumed here. The path taken means that another was not. But all suggest a life-altering transition based on a choice to be made between two worlds or lifestyles.

Even before the Lovers card took on its now-traditional associations with the zodiac sign of Gemini and Mutable Air, it was never really about two people in love, whether this was a fraternal, platonic, romantic, or erotic love. It was always about a change or transition from a younger, smaller, or denser state to one more developed, expansive, or rarified. As we mature, we are gradually drawn into larger and larger worlds. Child leaves crib, youth leaves home, groom and bride start a new family, extending their clans, and the sage leaves his nation behind, and maybe even his species, to live in a greater world. Such thresholds are one-way crossings into more expansive environments. We are drawn irrevocably outward. Although we may revisit our younger states from time to time, we do so as permanently altered entities, unable to truly come home again. We can't get the worms back into the can. This Trump is a transition from childhood into adulthood, from the familial and familiar life into a life richer in unknowns and surprises. Our education, a word that arose from *ex-ducere*, to lead out of, is how we prepare for such transitions, in advance of the restlessness, allurements, attractions, appetites, compulsions, temptations, desires, and loves that would draw us out there, with or without the education in advance. This is the crossroads, where the mischievous spirits are so wont to loiter. But we face facts: when is making a choice or vow not the same as giving something else up? We must foreclose some of our options as we move forward through life.

Since its association with Gemini, this card is more about the mutability and changes that learning, experiences, and perceptions bring to us, the long-term alterations that our minds undergo. But this is still best symbolized by our closest human relationships and the cluster of social needs that pervades Maslow's pyramid at all levels, those for family, belonging, affiliation, love, sex, and the esteem of others. We will strive to overcome our original and fundamental sense of separation to seek a higher integration

with something transpersonal, beyond and greater than ourselves. We still try to find a sense of wholeness alone, and not let our needs and our neediness overtake us, but only some kind of love, someone or some thing we can love, can move us out of ourselves, where the reality of it all will outlive us and not flicker out of existence when we do. To reach for this, we must also be somewhat less than whole, and sometimes be exactly a half. This is life reaching and branching out into higher dimensions. The poor, deluded Pharaohs thought that the pyramid's shape would capture the eternal. Yet what lives the longest is the humble bush, that branches outward and survives by spreading its seeds around. But lest there be the confusion that often catches up with such lovers of larger life, this is not a reaching out for something more general or something more abstract: that way be mostly platitudes and experience with little content. This is reaching out for more of the specific, real loves and relationships, encountered one at a time, single acts of kindness, the little things in life, and hence all the multiplying branches of the bush. We still retain some coherence and identity as we expand.

In choosing the bigger worlds, we expand ourselves into unknowns and the unfamiliar. A decision made in thin air becomes a path in reality. We make bargains and contracts with strangers. We risk complete immersion in the strange. We commit to life-altering choices, from which we can never come all the way back, even when skilled at unlearning. We are changed in critical ways, especially by significant others. We risk becoming someone else entirely and losing our comforting mindsets. There are choices and errors that will have to be paid for, and high opportunity costs for all we forego. We don't all have the courage for this, even knowing that a larger world most likely means more to be gained. We have to trust that if this is not in our nature, then learning and adapting can become our second nature. We have to have something as potent as love, or mad desire at least, to overcome the fear and mistrust.

The Yijing counterpart is Gua 59, Huan, Scattering or Dispersion, Wind over Water, which is perhaps the most mystical of the chapters and one of the few that mentions the establishment of temples. One way to understand this is 'seeding the world' with what used to be a smaller, denser version of you. It's change to a higher state of being which shares the same symbolism as Omar Khayyam's line, 'I came like water, and like wind I go.' It's also literally about the energy moved around in changes in states of matter, melting, evaporation, and sublimation. Much further wisdom may be gleaned here from Rumi and M. Eckhart. We are becoming a part of something larger, returning the bits of stardust that were gathered together in our making. There is a sense of surrender here, and often a terror that precedes it, death threats to the human ego that we try to block out with our fairy tales. There are trust issues involved at all levels in this card, and issues of commitment and courage. But what we have to gain is immense.

Key Words:

allure, ambivalence, approach-approach conflicts, attractions, branching out, broadening, change of state, childhood's end, choice, choosing a path, commitment, complements, consecration, conversion, coupling, crossroads, diffusion, dispersion, discriminating, divergence, diversifying, dyadics, dynamic choices, ego death, embracing paradox, expansion, familial relationships, familiarizing, force of attraction, going to seed, greater embrace, halves uniting, hermetic marriage, *hieros gamos*, higher states, higher union, immersion, involvement, letting go, liberality, making new contacts, metasolution, moral choice, moving on, networking, opening channels, opening up, outreach, overcoming separation, personal finitude, progression, ramifications of choice, relationship, remaining whole, reunification, rite of passage, sanctification of choice, scattering, significant others, simulacrum fidei (conjugal faith), spreading outward, sublimation, transcendence, transformation, transit,

transition, transpersonal outreach, trial and error, trust enough to surrender, unfolding, unfurling, unification, wholeheartedness.

Warnings and Reversals:

conflictedness, contradiction, dissipation, distractedness, either-or logic, entanglement, envy, fascination, fickleness, fragmentation, fugue, holes in need of filling, infidelity, immaturity, indecision, interference, living elsewhere, living in the third person, neurotic fears, opportunity costs, over-extenuation, pressured decision, regret, shallow relations, superficiality, temptation, triviality, vacillation.

Components:

The Lovers is assigned to the third of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Zain, in its turn assigned to Gemini and the 3rd House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Mutable/Cadent and Air in Astrology, as well as Kan (Mutable) below Xun (Air) in the Yijing. The 3rd house is about laying groundwork for future life. Gemini being an air sign, the choice here has a rational component, between wants and needs, between desires and practicalities.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Gemini, Sivan; Mutable/Cadent Air, Third House, Patron: Mercury Prometheus Diversification, education, branching out, exploration. Gaining familiarity, siblings, social involvement, access and accessibility, networking, broadening of horizons and relationships. Versatility, adaptability, curiosity, inquisitiveness, orientation to novelty, opening channels.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Zain, the third of the twelve zodiac attributions, traditionally assigned to Gemini. A sword is a stretch at best, but a sword could be used to represent distinction, duality and choice, also as a tool for cutting the cord and apron strings.

Yijing: Gua 59, Huan, Scattering, Dispersion, Dissolution. Bagua Kan (Mutable, Cadent) below, Xun (Air) above. "The wind passes over the water. Scattering. Early sovereigns made offerings to the divine and founded ancestral shrines." In a Sufi story, a little stream was terrified of crossing a desert, but the only way to do it was to let the sun evaporate him and come back on the far side as rain. "Fulfillment. The sovereign approaches his temple. Worthwhile to cross the great stream. Worthwhile to be dedicated." This is the Yi's approach to the unitive, oceanic or mystical experience, letting go, changing to a higher state, and the enthalpy that this involves or liberates. Sublimation, dissolution, evaporation. Metasolutions to problems, rising above. Surrender and reintegration with a higher unity. Going to seed.

The Chariot

#7, Lo Carro Triumphale, the Triumphal Car, The Charioteer, Il Carro, Le Chariot,
The Child of the Powers of the Waters; the Lord of the Triumph of Light
Security, Confidence, Self-Control, Augmentation

Image: A warrior princess, young adult, stands in a war chariot drawn by unmatched horses, in the process of leaving a fortified city behind her. She wears a six-pointed gold crown over her long, golden locks, holds a long staff in her right hand, and wears light battle armor, its epaulets suggesting the waxing and waning moons. Her chariot, canopied over four posts with star-spangled blue, bears a crest with a winged orb over a joined lingam and yoni. She seems to be passing through a triumphal procession, or perhaps a sendoff. She seems confident, self-possessed, and ready for the next exciting chapter. Her world is with her, contained both as a vehicle and a well-arranged shield. Note that her sword is not drawn or bloodied, her armor not dinged, her chariot not damaged, and her horses not yoked or reined. In many decks, these are sphinxes, one black, one white. Nor is it obvious that the horses are ready to pull in the same direction. Is the driver's seat just a little too comfy? The canopy is shade and sunscreen, but what else justifies the weight? This is either a ceremonial event or a demonstration of readiness. Deployment to the front lines of battle does not appear to be immanent, and it seems a little premature for a triumphal parade. It might at least be a victory over not getting started.

Like several of the other Trumps, this one has gradually moved away from its earlier associations in response to assigned astrological correspondences. The newer affiliation with the sign of Cancer has pulled the Chariot away from earlier associations with the planet Mars. There remain martial applications for the Chariot, obviously, but the primary focus shifts to its defensive capabilities and armor, thus leading to greater confidence, and away from attack and offense. Power and momentum are now more secondary aspects of this card, while security and control or self-mastery are brought to the fore. Is Phaeton up to the task of driving the the Sun god's chariot? Can he hold or manage his horses?

There are some important solar aspects to this card's core meaning. The tie to the sign of Cancer suggests the summer solstice and the early days of summer. This is also a time when the animals molt, surrendering the protection that they can no longer afford to carry, or shells that they have now outgrown. The Yijing counterpart, Gua 49, Seasonal Change or Revolution, also has strong ties to this image of shedding the old and encumbering weight, or renewal and lightening up. Fire in the Lake also means the time for the lake to overturn, where its bottom layer upwells to the surface. We are stirred into motion again, but we want to stay able to move with the time, to advance or retreat accordingly. All of these point out a fundamental question with the Chariot card: what compromise is to be made between the security of the Chariot's defenses and its mobility and effectiveness in pitched battle. We don't want a slow-moving, horse-drawn tank any more than we want a warrior fighting naked.

When we unpack this image as a metaphor, we look at psychic structure as a vehicle for moving through life. We might even find Arjuna down in there. We are born with a wide array of potential defenses: some help and some don't. We live and learn which is which. Here we want to strip this vehicle down, to optimize our adventure, losing things like parts of the ego that do us no good at all. We don't want ideologies that prevent us from changing direction. We don't want convictions that blind us to our errors. We want brakes as well as forth-going power. We want to travel as lightly as we possibly can, and yet we might still want the cup-holder option and the corrosion-

resistant undercoating. How at home do we want to be in our journey through this life? The hotels want us to fear going native, the villagers want to see Peace Corps with backpacks. The trick with incarnation is being at home in our skin and as little else as we need to get by and away with. There is carry-on luggage and then there is baggage.

Armor gives us a comfort zone, a way to withstand the onslaughts, a refuge and a safe space, a tiny little home kingdom to rule. It's the circle a witch draws around her to keep the damned demons out. We protect our softest spots, where we want to get fondled, not stabbed. This is all like adding a second skin. But the problem is, only the first skin has senses. We can make ourselves so secure and protected that all we get now is numb. We get senseless and unreachable when we go too far. The persona or mask we put on to deal with the outside world has a hard time changing expression to show how we really feel. It's the opposite of naked, or simply-girded loins, and just as problematic. The chariot stays in the middle of that road, but tries to avoid the ruts.

Aside from protection from actual damage, the Chariot gives us self-confidence and courage, a sense of being prepared or ready. We have moved the locus of conquest back to the outer boundaries of self and now try to conquer our doubts, insecurities, and fears. We don't need the blind and senseless heroics, but we do want the kind of audacity and daring that comes through the battle still breathing and still having slain at least a couple of errors and faults. We might even hope to transform our fears into power, or adrenaline at least. We pull ourselves together like harnessing those horses and reining them in, and get our selves moving all in the same direction. What we draw on for encouragement will work best in the end if it isn't a lie or a myth, but we do what we can here. That part of the task might come down to what best encourages the horses. After courage, we learn to command ourselves, to direct the team of selves within, to harness our beasts and even to bind our demons. We can even learn to manage our moods and their swings, to pull those contradictions together and get some control over where we are going in life. Nietzsche suggested (TSZ-49): "Do as you will, but first be able to will. And love your neighbor as yourself, but first be able to love yourself." The Chariot gives us a very small kingdom to rule, but within that lies more sovereignty and nobility than most of us can carry.

Key Words:

aegis, affective mastery, amenities, approach-avoidance decisions, armor, ascendancy, assurance, at homeness in motion, augmentation, comfort zone, command, confidence, conquest, courage, daring, defense, driver's seat, effective personality, emboldenment, emotional self-control, enabling conditions, enduring change, facing challenges, fear transformed, harnessing affect, hides, incarnation, lessening vulnerability, lightening up, risk management, mobility, mood management, new departure, new venture, opposite of naked, optimizing one's effectiveness, overcoming, perseverance, personal momentum, personal victory, portability, preparedness, preventative measure, prophylaxis, protection, protective layers and skins, pulling it all together, readiness, reinforcement, resolution, restraints, risking the new, safety, sanctuary, security, self-confidence, self-conquest, self-control, self-defense, self-mastery, shells, shield, support, surmounting emotional issues, taking charge, taking reins, teamwork of selves within, triumph, venture, victory, vulnerability, willingness, winning ways and attitudes.

Warnings and Reversals:

anxiety, calluses and callousness, chariot as clunker or lemon, complication, defensive walls, defensiveness, disorganization, emotional baggage, fear, fragility, hardened exterior, hauling the past around, hypersensitivity, implicit dilemma, incapacity,

inflated ego, inhibition, insecurity, insensitivity, internal conflicts, numbness, over-anticipation, overcompensation, over-insurance, overwhelmed, presumption, reaction formation, scar tissue, self-delusion, self-importance, thick-skinned, thin-skinned.

Components:

The Chariot is assigned to the fourth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Cheth, in its turn assigned to Cancer and the 4th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Cardinal/Angular and Water in Astrology, as well as Li (Cardinal) below Dui (Water) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Cancer, Tammuz; Cardinal/Angular Water, Fourth House, Patron: Luna. Home and security, defining the limits of environment. Sensitivity and its limits, the readiness to feel, extending the feelings as much as bruises and armor allow. Closeness, belonging, connectedness, nearness, vulnerability. The creation of worlds permitting feeling without damage. Self-importance relative to smaller worlds and limited activity. Accumulated environment, things brought home and arranged. Parental influence, protection, nurture, intimacy. Chosen influences, limited commitments. Fourth house as feeling at home.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Cheth, the fourth of the twelve zodiac attributions, tradition- ally assigned to Cancer. (GD: Cheth, Fence, Value 8. The fence as a protective boundary works very well with this trump and contributes to its meaning. Both keeping things in and out, defining a working space, fencing out distractions, delineating a domain.

Yijing: Gua 49, Ge, Seasonal Change, Revolution, Molting. Bagua Li (Cardinal, Angular) below, Dui (Water) above. "There is fire in the lake. Seasonal Change. The young noble organizes the calendar and clarifies the time." Dealing with obsolescence, anachronism, aging institutions. Revolution as the revolving of the earth and rotation of the seasons, action is best keyed to timing. "Complete the day and then be sure. Supreme fulfillment is worth persistence. Regrets pass." The Chinese character derives from a hide and seasonal molting, shedding protective layers. Metamorphosis, divestment, stripping to a minimum needed for the season, optimizing function. Security weighed against effectiveness. This would focus on the Chariot's mobility and usefulness, wanting to minimize the armor.

Strength

#8, Fortitude (Andreia), Force, La Forza, La Force, The Force, Lust,
Daughter of the Flaming Sword
Empowerment, Character, Integrity, Life Force

Image: A young woman stands behind a large male lion, leaning over his shoulder to close his jaws with her hands, maybe preparing to climb onto his back if all goes well here, but one thing at a time. First the enchantment. She has long, red hair and wears nothing, except flowers around her head and waist. A lemniscate halo is above her head, suggesting higher order activity, or *sub specie infinitatis*. Her strength, like the lion's, is relaxed, in gentle reserve. The background is wilderness. In the foreground are two thighbones, gnawed in half. She has met the lion on his own turf. Her smile dawns as apprehension meets with success. This is a rite of passage, her own, without witnesses, and a radical reassessment of her relationship to the world, an honest test of whether wisdom is, in deed, power. Of three approaches to the beast, these being conquest, domestication, and partnership, only the third will leave our enchantress with a truly great, unspoiled, unbroken familiar. The higher strength here is not in the woman but in the pairing.

This card evolved early on from the image of a man in an adversarial relationship with a lion, usually seen as Hercules and the Nemean lion, forcibly subduing or even killing the beast, to that of a beauty, finessing or whispering her beast into a familiar relationship. In parallel, the idea of force has evolved from violence into a higher understanding of Fortitude, *Andreia*, as a cardinal virtue. The technical difference between force and power isn't commonly understood. As a sensory metaphor, we begin to understand force as the resistance we feel to applied muscular effort. But power is energy out, not energy input. In physics, power is the rate at which energy changes form, measured in terms of effect or work accomplished. The sense of resistance that we relate to force usually means a loss of power. It's when things happen with less applied effort that we have power's highest measures of efficacy. Assuming that the young lady can do something useful with her new friend, her familiar, or her totem, she is in fact more powerful than Hercules. The 'conquest' or repression of the lower self, of the baser instincts, or the control of our brutal and bestial natures, so often found in descriptions of this card, presents us with an inferior solution to the problem of power: it's a deficient way of looking at things, given what might be accomplished by befriending the beast within. Strength is an integrated being, not spirit over mind or mind over body. The working parts are working together, not through control but cooperation.

The beauty of this card will be missed by those still inclined to the old dualisms of matter versus the spirit, or animal nature versus higher human culture, or nature versus nurture, or libido versus superego. All of these names for our lower and higher aspects are places that parts of us fall on the fuller spectrum of who we are. Bringing all of our parts together and coaxing them into all moving in the same direction is called integrity, from integer, being one person undivided. This is a fundamental dimension of character. Consider that intelligent nature has kept life going longer than the human mind has. The beast within only wants some more intelligence, not control. The wild, unruly, dark, and primitive beast within is not that at all, and it doesn't need to be sublimated. Humans would do far better to behave as morally as animals.

Somewhat broader than fortitude as the classical virtue, this is Strength to get through the good times as well as the hardships. This is *virtus*, excellence, courage and worth, distinct from an artificial practice of virtue. *Virtus* comes also from deep down

inside. It's just too dark-aged and medieval to continue to punish brother ass for holding us back from the spirit, or to blame our devils for the failures of our angels. Great portions of our strength and motivation come from our flesh and it's error to think of brute strength as beneath us and bestial, dark, unruly and primitive, ever ready to burst through the thin veneer of our civilization and wreak havoc on the world, with creatures from the id and libido run amok and tearing us apart. It's probably our tameness that's doing most of our damage. Look what civilized man has done to the savages, and the lands and life that they had preserved so well for so long. The savages fought from time to time, but they never killed thousands and millions at once. If ideology isn't completely to blame, then it's also what happens when we cut ourselves off from our deeper selves. The beast within is not subhuman. It only wants some intelligence, not ignorance, and not the whip. Then we cultivate this as strength. Nietzsche offers, "It is precisely as tame animals that we are a shameful sight and in need of the moral disguise." We've long been wrong about who the beasts and the monsters are. They are not natural expressions of primitive life. They come from being what the Chinese would call *bùdào*, off the course that is proper to our original natures.

Effort is an issue here, and much light is shed on this topic by Master Yoda's advice: "Try not. Do or do not. There is no try." There is power just in simplicity and sincerity. Few men have ever wielded the political power of Gandhi. There is power in leverage, and in being at the right place at the right time, and in pausing to take a few deep breaths, and in stepping back from overreaction to recover a little dignity. The so-called weaker sex drives half of the human economy with the power of persuasion. Martial arts like aikido can do powerful things with the effortless. And of course *wu wei*, the Daoist not doing, gets everything done in its time. Mary Oliver had this powerful advice: "You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves." Power here means simply to maximize or optimize the results we get for our effort. The fire itself, the force or elan that drives us all, is effortless. This is sunlight getting free again, a liberation from fuel, just happy to dance around on that log. Given all of this, it's wise to find things to do that the whole of us wants to do, lion and lady alike. We can call this living wholeheartedly.

Strength as virtue works on all of the planes of our being and can draw them all back together, finding our innate strengths and joining them into a single entity. Spirit may as easily be voluptuous and erotic. Our deepest urges, as joys of life, and even the means to make life, are holy and sacred as well. Great energy means great hunger. Sport and lustiness celebrate light just like the flame on the log. Our passions can deliver us into the heart of the mysteries. Of course we need to learn to make choices between some emotions and rule a few of them out. Jealousy costs us the thing we want to hold. Anger isn't power or strength if it breaks things. That list goes on and on. But we make our choices by deciding what we want, and by looking at what has failed to work, by what forces have failed as power. Through this we learn Strength.

Key Words:

ability, acceptance, adventure, alignment, andreaia, applied passion, aptitude, ardor, befriending your animal, being true, biological exuberance, brio, challenge, channeled emotion, character, cogency, combining forces, competition, confidence, conquest of resistance, continuity of layers, cooperation, courage to live own life, creative energy, cultivating strength, dé, determination, discharge, doubtlessness, drama, dynamics, eagerness, elan vital, emergence, empowerment, endurance, enthusiasm, exercise, exothermics, expansion, experimentation, expressiveness, extension, externalization, extroversion, exuberance, familiars, force of character, fortitude, guts, hazard, identity, immodesty, impulse, instinct, integration, integrity, intelligent nature, joie de vivre,

leverage, libido, life force as sacred, liveliness, magnanimity, metabolism, moral force, natural rights and duties, non-reflective self-awareness, outward pressure, outwardness, passion, pathos, play, presentation, pride, procreative urges, progeny, radiation, relish, risk, robustness, shamelessness, singlemindedness, spectrum of identity, sportsmanship, stalwartness, strong feeling, sunniness, surplus, sway, symbiosis, synergy, tempering severity, thrill, totem helpers, transformation, trust, uprightness, using all of oneself, using all the event, verve, *virtus*, vitality, wholeheartedness, wholeness, working relationship.

Warnings and Reversals:

abandon, aggressiveness, civilization as veneer, conflictedness, desires suppressed, disconnect, disintegrity, domination, exaggeration, excessiveness, exploitation, failure, failure of nerve, guilt, helplessness, immodesty, incompetence, impotence, infighting selves, inhibition, inner schism, insensitivity, power abused, rage, reaction, reactivity, repression, shame, suppression, tools of another's power, tyranny,

Components:

Strength is assigned to the fifth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Teth, in its turn assigned to Leo and the 5th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Fixed/Succedent and Fire in Astrology. In the Yijing, Fixed Fire is one of the Four Xiang, Tai Yang, which may be represented by the Wu Xing of Fire.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Leo, Av; Fixed/Succedent Fire, Fifth House; Patron: Sol. Dynamic expression, externalization, adventure, outwardness. Abundant energy, exuberance, sport, celebration of identity, play, liveliness. The internal pressure to be more in order to burn more or give more. Satiety or surplus as a motive force or a calm of strength. Procreation, granting creation a life of its own. Pride, assurance, confidence, life force. Qabalah: The Simple Letter Teth, is the fifth of the twelve Zodiac attributions, in the Golden Dawn tradition related to Leo. Teth is a Serpent. Suggestions compare this serpent to the fiery kundalini energy, the sacred life force, connecting the chakras, and to this energy uncoiling like a snake, emerging from containment, as metabolism liberates photosynthetically stored solar fire.

Yijing: Xiang 3, Old or Tai Yang, Fire. The Four Xiang or Emblems have been assigned in this system to the four Kerubic or most elemental signs of the Zodiac, the Fixed Signs of each element. Xiang 3, Old Yang, is only problematic as Fire because it comes from a forced fit of the Chinese Scale of 5 or Wu Xing, to the Scale of 4 Greek Elements. Still, it works better than most and there are meanings to be mined here: flame is ascending, changing, discharging, vitalizing, leading, externalizing. Implications include expansion, ardor, impulse, enthusiasm, exuberance, and cogency.

The Hermit

#9, L'Eremita, Le Capuchin, El Gobbo (Hunchback), Father Time, The Veiled Lamp
The Magus of the Voice of Light, the Prophet of the Eternal
Inquiry, Higher Standards, Discretion, Renunciation

Image: A world-wizened old man, with long, white hair and beard stands at the edge of the same precipice seen in the Fool. This may be moments later, or his own life later. The air is colder, thinner, and cleaner up here. He wears a coarse, brown, cowled monk's habit, belted with a rope knotted three times. He leans on a simple, uncarved staff in his left hand and holds out a simple candle lantern with his right. The light is partly shielded by the sleeve of his robe. As an Arabic proverb has it, "If it's dark enough, one candle is plenty." His face expresses serious questions, as though secure in knowing he now owns the puzzle's pieces, but he has yet to complete the puzzle. Time flies. His lantern does very little to light the valley below, especially in daylight. Perhaps it signs welcome to a single, promising protégé. There is a small serpent at his feet, just because. Does the old one still have exuberance and laughter? Only if the truth he has built up here allows it. The end of his quest is a question. Some old versions of this card show him as Father Time, with an hourglass instead of a lantern. Others depict Diogenes, the original cynic, looking for an honest man. Still others simply call him a Capuchin or Franciscan monk, with the knots in his belt representing his vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Nobody provides a better entry into this card than Thoreau in Walden: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms." Other than the true hermit, perhaps nobody lives the life more completely than the Theravada Buddhist renunciate, because he also gives up the comforts of belief. His quest is in fact *vipassana bhavana*, a mindfulness training for insight. But the Bhikku still has his Sangha. In this card we have someone here who has renounced the traps and trappings of culture in order to get at the meaning of life. He is as serious in this quest as humans can get: he has to be to forego the persistent demands of the social needs of a highly socialized primate. This doesn't mean he is antisocial, only extra-social or asocial, wanting removal of cultural and linguistic distractions. In the end, Lily Tomlin noted, "We're all in this alone." This negates the conventional wisdom that all meaning is in relationship, at least for the time spent here.

The duration of this quest is not known. It could be permanent or indefinite retirement, a one-year sabbatical from ordinary life, or a two-year pilgrimage like Thoreau's. One might assert that the Hermit can also be a walking-around attitude with which to move through daily life, but this is simply called introversion. Fundamental to the adventure is the setting of high personal standards and goals, and the renunciation of any aspects of life that distract from this. The Hermit raises the bar here and makes big demands on himself, trying to set aside all that isn't seminal and germane. The thing he gets most of is time, in frightening amounts at first, but soon enough the days will be plenty full again. The word contemplation means 'with time.' There is also plenty of silence here, in which to hear himself think, and if so inclined, to hear that still, small voice. Some search their souls, others search for them. This is an analog of sensory deprivation and ganzfeld experiments. Jung suggested that the "animation of

the psychic atmosphere [becomes] a substitute for loss of contact with other people.” The mind abhors a vacuum, but he still must be careful so the desperate mind won’t fill that with hallucination and fantasy, unless that is the kind of vision that he has set out in quest of. He puts himself where the hidden can speak and the dim can be seen, but where society is unable to offer suggestions of what should be heard and seen.

A few commentators have recognized Prudence (*Phronēsis*) in this card, completing the set of four cardinal virtues contained in the Trumps. This means taking a great deal of care in what goes into the mind, on the cybernetic axiom that ‘garbage in means garbage out.’ The Hermit manages his inputs with care. Critical thinking is an important part of the process. Thrift and parsimony are used here at all levels, with Occam’s razor proving useful on the fuzzy ideas. He needs to be suspicious of what his mind can do. He might be especially wary of the kind and quality of the questions he asks, since these not only frame the answers: they also establish a universe of discourse that can leave the best answers out of the frame. The spirit of inquiry is *philosophia*, the love of wisdom. When it’s real, it’s a lifetime commitment to learning. Edification, then, is the long and patient building of a mind, with ambitions of some height for the views and therefore concern for foundations. We grow one molecule at a time, build one piece at a time, and fill up one drop at a time. This is why he is picky. He is not just a seeker, but a finder as well. He is an autodidact, first-personing his knowledge, high-grading the teachings as if they were ore, reinventing wheels at times, being deprived of sounding boards and stereopsis, or other perspectives. Who knows what he might learn? The fellow who wrote the Kama Sutra was a celibate hermit too.

The Yijing counterpart, Gua 04, Inexperience or Youthful Folly, examines the process of inquiry, beginning with taking the care to ask the right questions with the right amount of respect. The book takes the role of the teacher or mentor, but ultimately this has to be the ability to learn, the learner within instead of the teacher. While Waite suggests that this is a card of attainment instead of a quest, we have to suggest this is wrong. Many of the Hermit’s commentators stress the need of this character to broadcast his doctrine, and view his lantern as a signal for students to come. We can only ask of these authors: “What part of Hermit, or what part of leave me alone, did you fail to understand?” He’s not about to proselytize or be loose with the pearls. He’s not there to be your guide. Any leading here is done by example. Nevertheless, we almost have to believe that he might entertain an especially promising seeker or two. This goes along with setting high standards. It might also be useful to mention that other hermits might be around in this neighborhood also, with whom he might on occasion share the belly-laugh scene from old Chinese paintings, perhaps with Han Shan himself.

Key Words:

abstention, assay, attention to detail, autodidacts, carefulness, choosiness, close reading, cognitive housecleaning, coherence, concentration, criteria, critical thinking, cultivation, deliberation, discernment, disconnecting, discretion, discrimination, distancing, earned revelation, eclectics, elder knowledge and wisdom, elevation of standards, erudition, essentials, examinations, exploration, farsightedness, filtering input, first-hand wisdom, focus, germaneness, guardedness, high standards, honesty, independent investigation, independent thought, inquiry, insight, introspection, introversion, isolation, learning, learner within, learning how to learn, meaningfulness, measure, mindfulness, moment of silence, narrowcast, own counsel, own terms, personalizing, perspective, pertinence, place of learning, privacy, private path, probing, prudence, prudent assimilation, questing, questioning, raising the bar, reassessment, redrawing the personal world, re-evaluation, reflection, relinquishing, renunciation,

reserve, retreat, reevaluation of values, rigor, roads less traveled, sabbatical, sacrifice, sagacity, *samma sati*, scrutiny, seclusion, seeking and finding, selectiveness, self-awareness, self-examination, self-guidance, self-knowledge, self-possession, self-reliance, self-scrutiny, separateness, silence, simplification, slowing down, solitude, sorting out, soul-searching, specification, specificity, study, time out, unlearning, *vipassana bhavana*, vision quest, voluntary simplicity, watchfulness, wisdom, withdrawal, worthiness.

Warnings and Reversals:

abdication, alienation, boredom, coldness, concealment, deadly seriousness, desertion, dissociation, distractions, escapism, estrangement, flight, forgetting to laugh and play, fugue, fussiness, hiding out, ignorance, ignoring counsel, insulation, isolation, loneliness, misanthropy, narcissism, regression, over-seriousness, self-deception, solipsism.

Components:

The Hermit is assigned to the sixth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Yod, in its turn assigned to Virgo and the 6th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Mutable/Cadent and Earth in Astrology, as well as Kan (Mutable) below Gen (Earth) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Virgo, Elul; Mutable/Cadent Earth, Sixth House, Patron: Mercury Epimeheus The work of self-acceptance, qualification, standards, cutting back on options, pruning. Self-care, self-improvement, self-critique. Clear identity and identification. Relevance, germaneness, pertinence, meetness, congruity. Fitness, aptness, consonance. Admission of qualified experience. Usefulness and aptitude. Concern for nutrition, assimilation, digestion, what is absorbed and used to build our selves, what is to be acceptable.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Yod, the sixth of the twelve zodiac attributions, traditionally assigned to Virgo. The Finger symbol is a stretch, but some association to seed or germ, the seminal and the germane is useful.

Yijing: Gua 04, Meng, Inexperience, Youthful Folly. Bagua Kan (Mutable, Cadent) below, Gen (Earth) above. "At the foot of the mountain emerges a spring. Inexperience. The young noble proceeds to fruition by nourishing character." This chapter concerns the spirit of inquiry and investigation, symbolized by a youth who must learn to ask the right questions. "Fulfillment. It is not I who seeks the young and inexperienced, the young and inexperienced seek me. The first consultation informs, while the second and third show disrespect. Disrespect deserves no information. It is worthwhile to be dedicated." The Yijing here takes the part of the elder sage, whose wisdom is being sought out. Early development, education, guidance. Inquiry, questioning, questing, discovery. Gradual fulfillment is like a pool fed by a spring. Learning and unlearning, training the mind like a wild vine.

The Wheel

#10, Wheel of Fortune, Ruota Della Fortuna, La Roue de Fortune, Chance, Fate,
The Lord of the Forces of Life
Equanimity, Composure, Eventuality, Full Circles

Image: A wheel occupies most of the card. It has eight spokes and an axle the length of its radius. But the wheel is not on a cart. It only goes around, widdershins, the way the Earth really turns, not the way Sol seems to go. Three figures ride on it's circumference, representing the temporal scale of three: Hermanubis rising, Typhon descending, and the Sphinx on top, for the moment. Old versions show a king on this merry-go-round, with *regnabo, regno, regnavi [et] sum sine regno* (I shall reign, I reign, I have reigned, I am without reign) inscribed in the appropriate places. Intoxication with today's success may become tomorrow's hangover. The corners of the card are occupied, from lower left, widdershins, by the four kerubs of the bull, lion, eagle and human, representing the elements, and marking the midpoints of the four seasons. These figures can be found on the World card as well. Other than traveling nowhere and being useless, most wheel metaphors apply. This Wheel belongs to the goddess Fortuna, who spins it at random, changing the positions of those on the wheel. When it spins out thread, this is done by the three Fates, to whose decrees even Jupiter, the king of the gods, is subject, and must adapt as Jovially as he can. It comes around to this: "You've got to ask yourself one question: "Do I feel lucky?" Well, do ya, punk?"

Samsara progresses, but in the end it goes nowhere. We are always in a season that always passes. Much of the nonsense in human religion is spewed in explaining the vagaries of fate and fortune, and advice on rolling with these vagaries is a central or axial question in most human systems of thought wherever answers are packaged. This is often entangled with issues of merit and justice. What we get is supposed to be connected with what we deserve. Sometimes past or future lives are invoked to balance the karmic accounts, or account for unfairness in this life. In the Mid-East, Mohammed offered a wise compromise: "Trust in Allah, but tie your camel first." In the far East we roll with it: "*Junsei nana korobi, Ya oki*" (Such is life: seven times down, eight up). The Yijing (Zhouyi 11.3) suggests moving towards the center: "There is no level without a slope, no going without a return. It is difficult to persist with no errors. Do not worry: these are certainties. Find happiness in nourishment." Buddha was also centrist, urging *upekkha*, equanimity, tolerance, or balance of mind, understanding both that our problems must work themselves out, and that sentient beings must work themselves out of their own problems. But the formulae that we've been given by others for hindsight, insight, and foresight may fail us here. Lowered expectations may be advised, and in the end, adjusting our attitudes in the act or on the fly may be where the best wisdom lies.

Readers are generally told by Tarot books that good luck is on its way here. This might be because our being upbeat will tend to better our odds, or maybe because when systems get more energetic they like to move towards order. Momentum rolls the wheel towards resolution of forces already in play. If the outcome of a sequence of events is less than a cycle away, then angular momentum will bring it around. Effects emerge from preceding causes. But these are not always meaningful connections, and they certainly aren't always reasons. It might have been better if Carl Jung had never given the word synchronicity to weak-minded thinkers. Except in classical physics, accidents are common. But people do love their platitudes, maybe as much as they fear their freedoms. For these, things may as well run on fortune and fate, with destiny being something that sweeps you up instead of a way you step into, with purpose being

some grand and mysterious puppeteer's plan for your soul. This we know: that the universe is big, and most of it will go wherever it will, mixing randomness up with natural law. Many of the rhythms and cycles are almost fully predictable. But tiny little parts of it are subject to our modification and agency. As if to provide an alternative for the vapid 'everything happens for a reason,' Nietzsche noted how life is just opportunistic: 'A loss rarely remains a loss for an hour.' This lifts us out of the puppet mentality regarding our fates and fortunes. It has to be accepted that some fortunes are predictable, others whimsical. We don't have to approve, but there it is. Maybe all we can do is play the odds and proceed as though character were destiny.

Many systems offer their ways for coping with our ups and downs, explaining life's comeuppances as some kind of natural consequence. But they fail, and not only in Vegas. There is no cosmic system, and not another to beat it. The facts seem to be that bad things happen to good people, and good things to bad. Our problem here is called the excluded middle. The simple minds want simple, black-or-white answers, but life calls for more complex minds than this. Fortune behaves like a deity eager to teach. The teachable few learn quickly but the rest never seem to grasp it. "Chance favors the prepared mind," as Louis Pasteur suggested. And "perfect sincerity offers no guarantee," as Zhuangzi might add. We live and work in a world of probabilities and play the odds as best we can. Some rules of thumb can give us some advantages, 'buy low, sell high,' for instance, but these don't give us a vision of what is to come. Good behavior, on average, leads into a better life. But crime and corruption do pay, especially when our governments are criminal and corrupt. And here you are reading a book on Tarot. This might help, but if you think it's going to predict your future or tell your fortune, well, good luck with that. That learning what we can, and working with the odds, is the best that we can do is not a reason to give up. It's simply what's done by people who do the best that they can do. We gamble and hazard best guesses. And we sometimes must enter and play to win.

Clearly, the center of the wheel is host to the least disturbance. Being wholly 'under the circumstances' is like being out on the ever-changing circumference, with perpetual ups and downs, and periodically beneath the wheel. To occupy the center, as with Buddha's *upekkha*, can have a couple of meanings here. It doesn't require an inattention to the rim, which is con-centrated on the center as well. Pathos or apathy remain choices here. There is a center in feeling that feels something of everything, but there is also a numb one that regards its numbness as winning. The response or reaction to a change is what matters more than its nature, and the center is almost always the place where all the best choices are made. The helmsman needs both left and right turns to steer the boat a straight course. The high-wire artist needs to use left and right in exactly equal proportions, which is only done from the center. The moment is the center of time, from which the cycles of time are best understood. Be these long cycles or short, this is the key to patience. Things always happen in season, so we only need the patience to pick the right season. Change is best undergone, if not with detachment, then at least with an overview, with deeper horizons in time. Anxiety and discontent are myopic. Not seeing the big picture is often the same as not seeing full circle. Fortune isn't predictable, except in those places fully subject to science. We learn and guess what we can. We can bet on the probability that events will occur in their usual sequence. We can be the best beings that we can be, hoping to tip the odds in our favor. But if we want to formulate truths, we don't want nearsighted views of the wheel to come to terms with our fortunes, and the greater time horizons are longer than our lives. At least the greater perspectives make our little problems and our ups and downs seem small, and perhaps not worth the worry.

Key Words:

acceptance is not approval, accident, balance, big picture, center, centeredness, centering, chance, circumference, circumstances, clockworks, composure, comprehension in view, con-centration, confirmation, consequences, controlling reaction, culminating, cycles of need satisfaction, destiny, equanimity, even-mindedness, evenness, eventuality, fateful turn of events, fates, fortuitousness, fortune, fruition, gambling, happiness, hazarding, imperturbability, inevitability, in the cards, issue, levelheadedness, luck, magnanimity, manifestations in time, necessity of cycles, odds, opportunities, oscillations, outcomes, overturning, overview, patience, perpetual motion, pivoting, poise, possibility, potential, predictability of fortune, presence of mind, probability, randomness, range of possibility, recognizing inevitabilities, resilience, rewards, rhythm, right time and place, ripe destiny, rolling with cycles, round trip, samsara, seasons, self-possession, sequiturs, serendipity, serenity, serenity prayer, speculation, stillness, stoicism, synchronizing, time frames, time horizons, the hand you're dealt, TOs and FROs, turning point, turn of the cards, turns of events, unfolding events, upekkha, ups and downs, venturing, what goes around, wheel's still in spin, windfalls.

Warnings and Reversals:

anxiety, apathy, chasing the dragon, compulsive gambling, detachment, fatalism, fate, fortune telling, going in circles, gullibility, hedonic treadmill, inconsistency, injustice, interruption, intoxication, mischance, mishap, myopia, non-sequiturs, overreliance on ideas of providence, powerlessness, suffering, undergoing, uncertainty, underneath the circumstances, unfairness, unfortunates, vicious cycles, victim mentality, vicissitudes, ways the cookie crumbles, wishful thinking.

Components:

The Wheel is a straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with its associations to Jupiter, Chesed, and now Gen, and second-tier astrological associations to Sagittarius and the 9th House. All suggest moving to a higher order of perception, one that's more comprehensive relative to the details, getting above the small stuff.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Jupiter, Zedek; The higher power of grace, majesty and command. Self as the sum of one's extensions, expansion, diastolic awareness, exploration. Self defined from within in positive terms. Internal cohesion, confirmation, what we get away with.

The bestowing virtue, equanimity, sitting pretty, being on top, balance, equilibrium, poise. Association with Jupiter as the greater benefic or fortune may be partly responsible for the the Wheel's often cited prediction of good or improving luck.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Kaph. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Kaph with various other Planets, with little agreement. Regarding the Palm of the Hand, we might note that the Jews, from long before Kabbalah, were no strangers to palmistry for the telling of fortunes.

Yijing: Bagua 1, Gen, Mountain, Stillness. Gen, as mountain, is a symbol of individual existence, solid and real for practical purposes, but only insofar as its foundation upon a greater reality is secure, which requires that the basis be broader than the summit. Here, security, composure and balance are inseparable. From below, the human perspective, the big picture is grasped only when one is on top of things. Until the work is done to get to this lofty place, the mountain is an obstacle, or limit to the grander view. To be great means to be greatly grounded. Mountains are also thought of as the centers of the world, hubs, poles, axes and reference points. And, of course, they are home to

the gods. This is half of the third dimension, things, as islands in time. As discussed earlier, Gen can be represented by either Jupiter or Saturn. As a force of equilibrium, equanimity, stability and a higher, or less needy, kind of love, this is Jupiterian or Jovian, and as such can be associated with this Trump. As a force that stops us or brings us up short, it is Saturnian, and this aspect doesn't really apply here.

Justice

#11, Justice (Dikaiosynē), La Giustizia, La Justice, Adjustment,
The Daughter of the Lords of Truth: the Holder of the Balance
Social Contract, Accountability, Objectivity, Conscientiousness

Image: The goddess Dike is shown seated on a throne, wearing the robes of the duly appointed arbiter. Her hair is long and fair and she wears a crown. In her left hand she holds the scales of Libra, weighing evidence. In her right hand she holds a double-edged broadsword upright, symbolizing both the enforceability of her decisions and the ability to correct bad or distorted truth. She is neither blind nor blindfolded here. The seriousness of her expression indicates how little of what is put before her will go unnoticed. She is emphatically not a cosmic principle, except to the extent that survival among others may also require a respect for the way that the greater world works, the laws that apply to all things. A presumption of objectivity and objective truth presupposes much. Two different points of view may or may not be both or equally right. Getting at the truth may require complex analysis in more than one dimension, assurance of accountability, and divorcing reason from emotion.

Our ideas of Justice have done some evolving. Themis, a daughter of Uranus and Gaia, was the first goddess of greater or cosmic Justice, of divine law, and divine justice as the consequence of breaking that law, but not of rewards for obedience. Dike, her daughter by Zeus and also named Justice, is the goddess in this card and of the human moral order and forces of correction. A number of commentators will still identify her as divine or cosmic Justice, but this is not correct. She is also sometimes confused with Astraea, the goddess of purity. Dike is here to help humans get along with each other, whether their law was born of divine mandate, natural order, social contract, or a practical utility. The blindfold, sometimes seen in her form, is supposed to symbolize objectivity, her being without bias or prejudice, and perhaps a fair hearing as well, but it is also an unnecessary handicap to fair witnessing. Stereopsis or retinal disparity requires that the pictures from two eyes or points of view be combined in order to construct perceptual depth. It is not a question of which view is correct, but one of what the differences between the two views can tell us. It's not a good idea to lose such a useful metaphor behind a blindfold. Here is an appeal to higher level of comprehension.

The early human justice that arose with urbanization and politics nearly always used the supernatural as the force that justified local enforcement. Appeals to cosmic justice used the power of superstition to bring subjects into line. The order seen in nature was interpreted as the kind of law that human rulers decreed, but writ a little bit larger. Good consequences were called rewards, and bad ones, punishments. Kings and Pharaohs were just the bailiffs here, divinely appointed but not the first or final word. This point of view will take an idea like karma and conflate it with retributive justice, and possibly go even one step further and see all misfortune as earned, although perhaps in previous lifetimes. We are now moving slowly towards a combination of laws derived from natural order and our own social contracts. This starts to hold the derivation of law itself up to scrutiny, and calls into question the excessive and unjust laws that pervade our systems of justice in proportion to our corruption. Accountability is the core of Justice. Grievances are heard and redressed. The civil law covers the nuisances, torts and properties, and criminal law, force, fraud and theft. Between them we hold ourselves up to standards of ethical action and the meanings of the words that we speak when making contracts with others.

Justice is also the question of getting to objectivity, when given at least two different sides of a story. Our modern systems are dismal failures at this. We get two excessively expensive adversarial champions, each presenting an exaggerated half-truth as the whole of the picture, threading their arguments through legal loopholes and around the rules of evidence and court procedure, either to a group of peers who are not allowed to question, or else to some old guy in a silly wig talking in outdated language. This sort of justice only encourages crime and encroachment. The rule of law becomes the rule of lawyers. If we want this card to mean real justice, rightness, fairness, impartiality, some retribution for the guilty, and some restoration for the injured, then it's about time to start looking for something closer to mediation or binding arbitration, where positions can be more simply and honestly explained and intelligent outcomes more fairly appraised, where the spirit or the intent of the law and the mitigating factors can be taken into account. Fairness and one-size-fits-all approaches have failed to prove themselves to be the same thing. Justice is supposed to begin where aggression is arrested and cooler heads prevail. True justice is like the part of the brain that combines the two views from the eyes and sees more deeply into the matter at hand.

With equal respect and attention, we structure our relationships according to the ways we evolved to get by with each other in groups, and to the contracts, spoken and not, that we've adopted to take ourselves further than troops of primates can go. The larger the group, the more we tend to specialize in our roles, the more we need clearer boundaries defined, the more we need to read the fine print. This is organization, specialization, and specification of function. It fails to function properly when clarity cannot be maintained, or respect for what we have given up is forgotten. Rights and duties are not opposites, but reciprocal functions. Our duties are the upholding of the other's rights, including rights of creatures not human, and even those of unborn generations. This is fairness. It's the right to redress when rights are stepped on, and the duty to submit to corrective measures when found to be stepping on others. We do unto others as we would be done by, and then we add an 'or else.' The Yijing counterpart is Gua 37, Family Members, picturing groups of people living behind the same door, trying to live together while maintaining their rights to be different and special, all while settling their differences. We acknowledge the other with respect, and re-spect means to look again, to examine more clearly and closely, to look in more depth for the truths, with multiple points of view.

Key Words:

accountability, adjustment, agreements, appeal to right, arbitration, artificial conscience, arrangement, attitude adjustment, awaiting judgment, being held to standards, checks and balances, comeuppance, commitment, compromise, conscience, conscientiousness, consequences tied to decisions, consideration, cooler heads prevailing, corrective action, counterpoise, deliberation, diplomacy, due consideration, due process, dyadics, ethical standards, equity where equality is lacking, equilibrium, ethical inquiry, evaluation, fair hearing, fair play, fair treatment of others, fair witness, fairness, fine print, force arrested or in abeyance, great levelers, higher law, honest assessment, honesty, impartiality, judiciousness, just desserts, justification, law, making life work, measured responses, mediation, mitigating circumstances, moral compass, objectification, objectivity, probity, proper weighting, reconciliation, recourse, reciprocity of right and duty, recognition of others, redress of grievances, relationship, relativity, resolution, respect, restitution, restoration of stability, restorative justice, rights and duties, rigor in judgement, rules of the game, second party, seeing both sides, seeing oneself from outside, social contract, spirit of law,

stereopsis, subjugation of action to thought, treaty, vindication, what is due, what we deserve.

Warnings and Reversals:

adversarialism, bad rule and laws, bias, bribery, defensiveness, exaggerated half truths, excessive standardization, false accusation, frivolous suit, grievances ignored, hypocrisy, inequality before the law, injustice, intolerance, laws unclear and unevenly enforced, legal loopholes, legislated morality, letter-of-law mentality, liars, litigiousness, passive aggression, prejudice, procedural obstacles, recusal, retributive cosmic justice, rule of lawyers, self-righteousness, suspicious severity, unjust laws.

Components:

Justice is assigned to the seventh of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Lamed, in its turn assigned to Libra and the 7th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Cardinal/Angular and Air in Astrology, as well as Li (Cardinal) below Xun (Air) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Libra, Tishrei; Cardinal/Angular Air, Seventh House, Patron: Venus Lucifer. Encounter and relationship, objectification of the dyad, recognizing the significant other. The dynamics of harmony and perspective. Accommodating ambiguity and ambivalence. Interpersonality, interdependence. The economics of interaction, appraisal, appreciation. Marriage, partnership, alliance, face-to face encounter, eye-to eye exchange, interfacing of liberties. Contracts, contractual arrangements. Trust, pledge, good faith. Arbitration, mediation, diplomacy, tact.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Lamed, the seventh of the twelve zodiac attributions, in the Golden Dawn tradition assigned to Libra. The ox goad is a useful addition, as an implement for urging, guiding, directing, regulating behavior, keeping the beast on the path, poked right and left.

Yijing: Gua 37, Jia Ren, Family Members, The Family, Bagua Li (Cardinal, Angular) below, Xun (Air) above. "Wind comes forth from flame. Family Members. The young noble speaks with substance and acts with consistency." The influence of the flame is carried outward by the wind, out the door, into the palace, across the stream, around the world. It is managed for clarity and harmony. "Rewarding the woman's persistence." Familial roles are specializations that need to function together as a whole in working relationships. It is not a competition but a functioning society. Ranks and rights are not tied together. Moral or ethical boundaries and practice propagate outward beyond the door and down through the generations. This warrants conscientious management, at the center, before things move out of hand. "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world" (William Ross Wallace).

The Hanged Man

#12, L'Appeso, L'Impiccato, Le Pendu, Il Traditore (Traitor)

The Spirit of the Mighty Waters

Acceptance, Surrender, Letting Go, *Samvega*

Image: A young, blonde man hangs suspended by his left foot from a living tree, used as a gibbet or gallows. His hands are behind his back, his legs form the same figure four seen in the Emperor, but reversed. He doesn't seem to be suffering, rather, he has an aura of transcendent ecstasy. The tree could be the 'world tree' of legend, here in the shape of a Tau cross. The subject has in some way volunteered to undergo a trial, an initiation, or a renunciation. He may have 'turned himself over' as if to some higher power, or as though emptying himself to prepare for a major change. He is 'taking no stand' of his own, but simply submitting. This could be a dream or vision quest, or a rite of passage. The card demands trust before such an act of surrender. The earlier versions and titles of this card suggest a less voluntary submission to this rite or ordeal, or 'volunteering' for it by way of making bad choices. Hanging a debtor by a foot for public disgrace was one of several punishments called baffling. He would be humiliated into better behavior in the future. Others saw a traitor being punished, although back then traitor simply meant one who betrays a trust. Still, most figures, including those receiving some punishment, do not appear to be suffering, and in fact seem to be grateful. Some are even glowing with a nimbus or halo, either for the chance to redeem themselves or for a chance to transcend to a higher state of awareness.

The image of the Hanged Man may imply much from cultural lore, from Buddha and the Bo Tree, to Zhuangzi's Bao Jiao, Jesus, Judas, Peter, or even Houdini. These are not central to the modern image, although Odin hanging from the world-tree, Yggdrasil, for nine days to discover the runes comes close. This is not a named figure. It's possibly an act of expiation, someone atoning for a sin or a crime, whether driven to this by contrition or penitence, or involuntarily receiving a punishment. If this is redemption, it would imply a debt to be paid that soon will be. If this is correction, it appears to be welcome, or even a relief. Maybe there is hope that humiliation becomes humility, as dignity and pride are stripped away. It may be time for sober reflection, a time to admit, as is done in 12-step recovery, that 'my best thinking brought me here,' and begin the rehabilitation, now that the bottom has been reached, now that how low you can go may be known a bit better.

But atonement is only one account of this image. More centrally, it's the welcoming of a chance to change our ways, or quite literally, our point of view, as our world is turned upside down. This might also be a voluntary act of sacrifice, though most of our thinking regarding sacrifice is wrong-headed. Giving something up to get something better is not sacrifice at all. Sacrifice as a trading up in value is just buying something cheaply. The word means to make sacred, and it isn't about getting at all. It's about saying thank you instead of asking for more. The Hanged Man could be offering himself up for the benefit or use of the others, for some idea of a higher power, or for a higher purpose, something greater or something more long-lived than himself.

This card could also refer to a needed time out, a temporary suspension of our goal-directed activity. This might be a bit extreme without having a higher purpose or end in mind, like Buddha's vow under the Bo Tree, to not to move again until enlightened. But even simple delays, detours, and changes of plan can provide perfect times to broaden our perspectives. Turning ourselves around, resetting our priorities, reevaluating our values, or checking out surprising new orientations, can be radical, life-

changing events. Such tests of our patience and understanding can show us how free our minds can be, and how flexible our directions. We can move ourselves around as if we were water. Central to the attitude needed here is acceptance. Like water, we accept the place we find ourselves in and submit ourselves to its shape. We accept reality as it is, instead of what we wish it to be. This is not the same thing as approving of reality as it is, or wanting things to stay this way. This is merely starting our process of adapting from a place of more perfect realism, so that if we do decide to change things, our efforts are based on the facts of the matter instead of our fantasies and delusions. We may even find unexpected advantage in having our course redirected.

This is also the card of our higher unitive or oceanic states, the mystic's truth, the great embrace, attunement to cosmic rhythms, an infinite plenum as our source and destination, and together with this, the prerequisite dissolution of our ego, and perhaps even human exceptionalism. The self must stop its endless fussing over itself. The fake mysticism of the new age cannot get over its narcissism. We must lose our self-importance, humble ourselves down to an appropriate size to really get the perspective. There still remains the question of how much reason or logic we're allowed to pack for the trip. Certainly for the duration we must let go of our baggage and luggage, our burdens and our parcels, our prior beliefs and disbeliefs, in order to get where we're going. There are goals that require a self, and selflessness costs us these, at least for a time. It doesn't matter if annihilation of the self is in the beloved divine or in the tortured calculations of astrophysics. At least we get a break from our smallness and may find something great where we might be of some service. The more serious among us can take a shamanic route and break our heads open with elucidogens. Mescalito, Teonanacatl, Mother Aya, Alice D. and the Bwiti all have lessons for us if we have the courage to simply lay back and welcome the learning. We don't want to try this without some good guidance and reasons to trust the process, but to really know the water we need to melt ourselves down. The Yijing counterpart used here is Bagua 0, Kun, Accepting or The Receptive.

Not all of our surrendering needs be so grandly transpersonal. Sometimes this just means waiting a little longer than you're prepared to wait. Maybe it's minor revisions in thinking that cease to be scary. Just a little loss of self, or a little gain in unselfishness, can help change a mind going bad, or off in the wrong direction. The search for deeper meanings seems like such a scary thing to those who can only be upright and full of themselves. Sometimes it just helps to turn over and dump this stuff out. Changing our minds, breaking our habits, upending old patterns, reversing our attitudes, flip-flopping our opinions, rethinking all that we are, thinking outside the box, reprogramming our own minds, will no doubt get others to point and wag their fingers and tongues, like they do at that poor guy hung upside down in the plaza. And yet this can get us unstuck. The only real humiliation and shame is when we prefer old errors and faulty perspectives to a little social discomfort.

Key Words:

acceptance, accounting errors, acquiescence, atonement, between worlds, breaking habits, broader perspective, change of plan, circumspection, compliance, concession, conversion, cooperation, corrective force, counterintuitive tack, deliverance, detachment, devotion, dissociation, emptying the cup, endurance, expiation, forbearance, giving without getting, humility, inevitability, interference with plans, letting go, limbo, losing self-importance, malleability, metamorphosis, new angles, new point of view, new perspective, offering up, opening up, opting out, outside the box, passivity, patience, pause, penitence, places of learning, powerlessness, putting oneself last, quitting, realignment, reconsideration, redemption, reexamination,

rehabilitation, relinquishment, renunciation, reorientation, reprogramming, resetting priorities, resignation, respite, restraint, rethinking, reversing direction and perspective, re-view, rite of passage, ritual offering, sacrifice, *samvega*, service, shamanic journey, sobering reflection, submission, subordination, surrender, suspending belief, suspending disbelief, suspense, suspension, taking another side, trial, turnaround, turning it over, uncertainty, undergoing, understanding, upending patterns, vision quest, waiting is.

Warnings and Reversals:

control, delay, detention, empty ritual, enforced sacrifice, failure to commit, fixed points of view, frustration with progress, half-heartedness, helplessness, humiliation, impotence, imprisonment, inanimacy, lack of reward for ordeal or trial, martyr complex, narcissism, narrow mindedness, ordeal, pride, punishment, shame, shaming, stagnation, stripped of dignity, stubbornness, suffering, time out, uncertainty, victim mentality.

Components:

The Hanged Man is a pure conception. Out of his association with Neptune, he might be thought to have some meanings in common with Pisces and the Twelfth House. The new correlation made here between Water and the Yijing Bagua Kun, Accepting, symbolized by the Earth, requires some explanation. The civilization that birthed the Bagua did not live by the sea. The oceanic experiences that are symbolized in the West by big water were symbolized in China by the good Earth. Still, the idea of acceptance or embrace is very much common to the Hanged Man, Mem, and Kun.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Neptune. Self as a wake through chaos, the complex and mysterious universe, a place where impressions are left, writ in water. One's reference feeling within greater environments, life, region, world. Processes of universalization, embrace, acceptance, dissolution, dreaming. The edge of measurability, the undefinable, the ineffable, doors of perception, unification, compassion. Failure of definition and fact. Ocean and Gaia in the blood. The Roman god Neptune was pissed off a lot, astrology's Neptune, not so much.

Qabalah: The Mother Letter Mem, for the element Water as the part of a triad, with Air and Fire. Mem, as representing the sea, works well with the idea of acceptance and embrace.

Yijing: Bagua 0, Kun, Accepting. Kun comes close to the conception of Earth which we know as Gaia, the great Mother. Since the ocean did not play a very important part in the lives of the ancient Chinese, those aspects of life which in the West accrued oceanic and aquatic symbols were represented in China by symbols of the Earth: these include unity, fecundity, understanding, tolerance, embrace, plenum, capacity, and the mystic's truth. And of course there are the more "earthly" meanings of basis, ground, substance, support, substratum, accessibility and as many gifts, simply, yet conditionally, provided, as one is capable of accepting. The dimension is breadth, the range of the possible, or the field of options with an infinite number of paths. The point here is complete acceptance of the world as it is, with what it has to teach.

Death

#13, La Mort, Il Morte,

The Child of the Great Transformers: the Lord of the Gates of Death
Closure, Finitude, Importance, Transformation

Image: The grim reaper, on a pale horse, under the banner of a rose, moves through a field of skulls that once belonged to both royal families and peasants, all equal in status now. For an alternate image, the royal family, king, queen, prince, and princess, pose for a portrait as mummies from a thousand years hence, all of them wearing the half-hideous, half-hilarious grimace, the look of surprise, the embarrassed silence. The once-fine cloth hangs tattered and brittle, jewelry gleams in the gloom. The hands of two young children explore the leather and bone. The insects have done their work, the rotting flesh no longer bubbles and flows: the rotting was still life. Few of us can ask the question “Could I die right now, satisfied that I had lived?” with real courage instead slippery words and discomfort.

Almost invariably, both commentators and readers will backpedal away from this card in a reading, beginning with a quick and reassuring apology like, “This doesn’t predict death or disaster so much as some kind of change or transformation.” Most of humanity is just as quick to back away from this subject, which in fact is a driving force behind much of human culture, especially religion. And of course the fear of death authors gods and spins lies like nothing else on earth, from those with no clue as to what this Death really is or means. But a Tarot reader here is doing the querent a disservice in not allowing this card to impact the reading with at least some emotional force. This is an opportunity to feel death’s nearness, its relevance, its inevitability, and its finality. In Castaneda’s words, it’s a chance for sassy, immortal, irresponsible, important beings with the sense of having time to use Death as an advisor. On failing to deal with our death directly, one can choose from a vast array of metaphysical foma and live a life twisted by fear. But this will not insure one a noble place among the ancestors. Buddha tried to take the subject head on by teaching *anatta*, no soul, that there may be a rebirth of some of your component factors, and even some memory, but there is no spirit that reincarnates from one life into another. He taught the need to face this possibility, to give us the urgency and the diligence that we need in order to live our lives more skillfully. Even the harder-core Theravadans can get pretty squirrely and apologetic when this subject comes around. But with that said, we can set ourselves a challenge, while staring into this abyss, to find the perfect life to live, no matter what is true beyond this. It would seem that a full, rich, and optimized life might satisfy all the contingencies and possibilities. It will be likely that such a life would have a deep connection with something greater than ourselves. We can ask Mr. Death for advice on this when we see him pop up in a reading. He will not give us vapid, mealy-mouthed platitudes.

If we are to become heroes in life, it’s important that we each make our hero’s journeys down into the underworld, to meet and learn from this great shadow, to dance the danse macabre, to bargain for Persephone’s return to the light, to feel the death wish Thanatos, to come to know heaven and hell, all in order to conquer our fears without the aid of lies and delusion. All of the present will one day be mulch, as detritivores eat up the past. In the great old-growth forests and climax ecosystems, life and death are equals. Destruction becomes renewal as it clears the way for new life. To run from this is to run from what we are. We’ve pretended for too long to be beings of light from outer space that come to get dirty in order to get clean again. We make up strange explanations for how this light can be that ignorant. And this illusion of alien

nature has made a real mess of our home world here, the ground of our being, and the prospects for all our descendants and other relations. This is the price of our cowardice in facing our finitude. Seneca asked, “You want to live, but do you know how to live? You are afraid of dying, and, tell me, is the kind of life you lead really any different from being dead?” Death would have us ask the big questions, to cut it all down to the barest of bones: what is important, really? The meat won’t survive, but some contribution or legacy might. Then we let the outdated and outgrown decompose into soil again.

Finding a way to closure, of a matter ending or ended, is urged by this card. Mourning and grieving are done by the wisest among us, but there comes a time to let the gone be gone, to let the dearly departed depart, and the outdated and outgrown die, to let go, to have nothing more to lose now, and get on with the living again. Even if the refreshing new life or next transformation has so far failed to make the slightest appearance, we clear the way first, unhaunted by things not let go. Our costly, embalmed corpses, clung to and kept from decay, are resting in error, not peace. Descansos are our milestones. Change is the proper way to greet death, not fighting or denying the inevitable, but seeing all things, including ourselves, as merely part of the larger process or procession. It’s not about the far side of transformation, but about what precedes it, the way we face change in the present and have our say in its progress, and the way we’ve let go of old baggage and burdens, that we might step more lightly into this world of renewal. What’s left of life is most of it. We stay present by keeping life current.

Death should at least metaphorically scare the crap out of us, to show us how little time we have to make the most of this life. We want it to urge us to reach down deep inside, to call upon every resource we can. We want to feel its power, to see what it’s done for and to us. We want the motive to let go of dead weight. We want the encouragement to place some hope in the future, and make our contributions, through our work and art, and our children. We want to rage and not go so gently. It’s the fear of death that’s the thing to be feared, while it’s death that can give us the courage to live. The inevitability of death means our debt for life is already paid: what we do now is spend life before it gets taken. This is the treasure we bring back from our time down below with the shadow. That we have much living to do, and not all the time in the world, suggests that we decide what’s important, what is worth keeping with us, and what we need to let go or set free. We stop killing precious time. We high-grade the ore of life. It’s a moving-day yard sale, maybe a little bit sad and nostalgic, but we lighten up. We get our priorities straight. And it may be a good thing after all that the reaper has no respect for the self, that in the end we can only continue in larger continua, involving our ancestors and heirs, and other lines less mortal, like the great work of mankind’s transformation, or other faces of higher purpose.

Key Words:

anatta, ancestors and heirs, art of dying, *artes moriendi*, bare bones, becoming soil again, bucket lists, cessation, children and fame as longevity, closure, completion, conclusion, continuity, culmination, decay, decomposition, degeneration, detachment, detritivores have to eat too, digging deeply, elimination, endings, eulogy, expiration, facing fear and finitude, finality, great levelers, grieving, impermanence, impersonality, importance of living, inevitability, keeping life current, leave-taking, legacies, limited time, limits, living lives less mortal, memento mori, metamorphosis, motivation, mourning, moving on, mulch, new chapter, obsolescence, old growth, outgrowing the old, permanent loss, plot twist, prioritization, process thinking, profound change, pruning, purging the trivial, reaching down deep, recycling, release, remembrance,

renewal, resistance to change, reevaluation, salvage, selection, seriousness, shedding, space for the new, task undone, termination, Thanatos, things not yet accomplished, transformation, transition, transits, transpersonal dimensions, truer measures and values, unfinished life, urgency, using death as an advisor, wabi sabi, worlds to come.

Warnings and Reversals:

anxiety, apathy, avoidance, careless values, clinging to the moribund, corruption allowed, cowardice, decay, degeneration, delusion, denial, dragging the past, ego, failure, fear, fear of change, half-hearted change, hoarding of life, ingratitude, insecurity, involuntary change, lethargy, life unlived, powers of hell, regret, resignation, stagnation, tasks still undone, thinking to kill time.

Components:

Death is assigned to the eighth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Nun, symbolized by a fish, in its turn assigned to Scorpio and the 8th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Fixed/Succedent and Water in Astrology. In the Yijing, Fixed Water is one of the Four Xiang, Tai Yin, which may be represented by the Wu Xing of Water.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Scorpio, Cheshvan; Fixed/Succedent Water, Eighth House; Patron: Mars. Our self-importance, import and the emotional means for its amplification, reaching within, intensity, resourcefulness. Libidinal worlds, deep drives and power sources, sub-surface self or selves, undercurrents, hidden communities of subliminal motives. Resources for survival, facing the end and beyond. Emotional ability as potential energy, stress, the energy of steam. Reserves and reservoirs, regenerative abilities, latent faculties, source-taping behavior. Property, inheritance.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Nun, the eighth of the twelve Zodiac attributions, attributed to Scorpio. Nun is a fish or water snake, a creature of the sub-liminal world, life down deep and at one with its context, available if you know where to fish and with what.

Yijing: Xiang 0, Old or Tai Yin. The Four Xiang or Emblems have been assigned in this system to the four Kerubic or most elemental signs of the Zodiac, the Fixed Signs of each element. Xiang 0, Old Yin, is only problematic as Water because it comes from a forced fit of the Chinese Scale of 5 or Wu Xing, to the Scale of 4 Greek Elements. Still, water works as water. It is deeply emotional, internalizing, absorbing, resourceful, valuing, and comprehending. Experience is felt as personally relevant, internal, private, intense and important. The form it takes or finds itself in isn't as important as where it has come from and what it is becoming.

Temperance

#14, Temperance (Sōphrosynē), La Temperanza, La Temperance,
The Daughter of the Reconcilers: the Bringer-Forth of Life
Synthesis, Synergy, Emergence, Transcendence

Image: A transcendent, but still human figure, with some angelic characteristics, fair, sporting a pair of useful-looking white wings, faces the reader but with gaze intent on an alchemical act in progress at hand, to create a successful blend of animus and anima. She (arbitrarily) straddles the bank of a stream, right foot in the water, left on the land, grounded in both feminine elements. She pours water from a silver cup in her left hand into a golden cup in her right. A long, simple white robe is her only attire. This bears a triangle within a square embroidered on the breast. A golden, solar disk adorns her forehead. Behind her, the stream winds upward into cloud-shrouded high country. To the witness, the highlands behind are open. Above her head spans a rainbow, the spectrum or continuum between dualistic, black-or-white extremes. She may be cutting wine with water. This may be the original act depicted in this card, which has remained fairly constant in design. But this is not abstinence, as more modern meanings of temperance suggest. The word means 'to moderate, bring to a proper or suitable state, to modify some excessive quality, to restrain within due limits, to mix correctly in due proportion, regulate, or manage.' In this, the idea has ancient support from both the Stoics and the Epicureans. We take a hand in the quality of our own experience. This sovereignty could be represented by the crown that appears in the card's background. She might also be mixing measured amounts of the right ingredients in some due proportion, culminating the alchemical ideal of turning lead into gold, darkness into light, or ignorance into wisdom.

Moderation for its own sake is a fairly new meaning for Temperance, and abstinence is an incorrect one. Temperance (*Sōphrosynē*), as one of four cardinal virtues, has always involved restraint and self-control or self-management, but this is not for the purpose of muting or damping down our experience. Rather, we are optimizing our lives by learning to combine life's various elements in better, more effective proportions. Temperance is a Middle Path, not unlike the Buddha's *majjima patipada*, or Middle Way, between the extremes of self-mortification and sensual gratification, or nihilism and eternalism. It's a search for the golden mean, *ne nimium*, not too much, of any one side. There exists an etymological connection to the word temperament, which back in the Renaissance times concerned balancing the four humors. There is also an earlier, less clear etymological root in the word *tempus*, or time, which might suggest that proper timing, with both patience and readiness, or synchroning our operations up with the rhythms that be. Doing things in their due season is also an important side of this virtue. Taken together, these aspects seem to imply a looking ahead to better outcomes than might be had if absent this virtue, and the requisite learning and techniques involved in directing such improved outcomes. This in turn implies a kind of science. Higher aims, higher purposes, transcendence of the current conditions, or sublimation of baser or coarser forces, may also be implied. We take charge of preconditions and raise ourselves on purpose.

The list of ingredients or properties which might be combined or better combined with this card is long. It would have to include such complements as head and heart, light and force, yin and yang, sanguine and melancholy, image and energetics, angels and demons, fire and water, electricity and magnetism, physical and spiritual, flexibility and firmness, male and female, thesis and antithesis, and perhaps even wine and water. The important thing to remember is that the desired outcome is not the enhance-

ment of either side of the pair at the expense of the other, nor something so simple as compromise or conciliation, but a tertium quid, a third thing, and frequently one that exists on some higher kind of level than the inputs. When the outcome is on the same level we have a simple synthesis, the reintegration of a dualism, the resolution of a paradox, the settling of an argument, the balancing of an equation, the solving of a puzzle, even the genetics of a child. The third thing here can usually be understood with a knowledge of the constituent parts. When the outcome is on another level we have synergy, something greater than the sum of the parts. When this is wholly unlike the parts, we have what is called emergence. The color blue, emerging out of the structure of the eyeball and the activities of the brain, is a classic example of emergence. Consciousness may well be another. Some emergent properties, like blue, are wholly unpredictable from a knowledge of the parts. This is called strong emergence. Others, like chemistry emerging from physics and molecular structure, might be extrapolated given adequate knowledge of the inputs. This is called weak emergence.

Arthur Koestler tried to define creativity itself in terms of the outcomes of juxtaposing dissimilar matrices or combining disparate elements, satisfying the preconditions or doing the setup that allows the results to happen. We might have a good idea of what to expect in the outcome, in which case we have techniques to put the parts together, or we might just want to see what will happen, in which case we have an experiment that might move us closer to science some day. On an internal level, we can learn to take charge of own internal states with a kind of alchemy, and then to take aim at more suitable or interesting states, like blending reason and wonder, for instance. Or memory and forgiveness. We can take a thing like a craving, add some understanding, and emerge with an intention. We have the power here to change our minds, to liberate ourselves by making altogether new states of mind. We can also manage our cognitive resources according to higher and longer purposes. We can use this for self-direction and agency, instead of just being the results of our old internal conflicts. We dissolve our parts and recombine them: this is the alchemical formula of *solve et coagula*.

The higher aim of this card is transcendence, liberation from lower or prior conditions, releasing tension and pressure, freeing our potential, raising ourselves and making things better on purpose, aiming a little bit higher. It is a kind of science. An important part of this, however, is letting go of the antecedent conditions. One who casts spells combines an image with a charge, but the spell must be cast away or let fly, and then forgotten. As the Bard noted, "Peace, sisters, the charm's wound up." The archer combines his aim with the tension in his bow, but he isn't much of an archer if he tries to hang onto the arrow. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 40, Release or Deliverance, the letting go that follows a building up of tension. Like the link twixt Temperance and Sagittarius, this also uses images from archery. It also speaks of forgiveness. The Chinese character pictures a tool used to untie knots, hence undoing the knots that we've tied ourselves into, or the solving of our puzzles and problems.

Key Words:

admixture, aims, alchemy, alloying, amalgamation, amelioration, balanced temperament, blending, breeding as an art, calculated results, coalescence, combination, composition, compounds, concoctions, consummation, control of preconditions, coordinating cognition and affect, coping skills, creative visualization, deferring gratification, dispatch, due proportion, emergence, energy of fusion, experimentation, extrapolation, far horizons, golden mean, great work, higher aims or aspirations, higher education, higher learning, higher standards, ingredients, integration, joining, juxtaposition, knowing when to stop, liberating creative energy, measured action and response, metacognitive behavior, middle path, moderation,

modification, negation of either-or, negotiated outcome, optimization of available forces, optimum combinations, prearrangement, proportionality, putting it all together, recombination, reconciliation of opposites, rectification, regulation, resolution, resolving, right timing, salvation, self-management, self-mastery, skillful combination, solving puzzles, *sōphrosynē*, spell casting, sublimation, subordination to higher purposes, symbiosis, synching, syncretism, synchronization, synergy, synthesis, temper as blending of humors, tempering extreme states, theory becoming practice, timing, transcendence, transformation, transmutation, using extremes to create a third thing, verification.

Warnings and Reversals:

adulteration, apathy, cacophony, clash, competing interests, compromise, contamination, corruption, dispassion, dissonance, discord, excess, excessive moderation, imbalance, impatience, incompatibilities, inept handling, internal discord, nullification, numbness, oil and water, unfortunate combinations, win-lose issues, wrong ingredients, wrong timing, zero sums.

Components:

Temperance is assigned to the ninth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Samech, in its turn assigned to Sagittarius and the 9th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Mutable/Cadent and Fire in Astrology, as well as Kan (Mutable) below Zhen (Fire) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sagittarius, Kisle; Mutable/Cadent Fire, Ninth House, Patron: Jupiter. The quest beyond the known, extrapolation and reaching. Horizons, distancing, abstractions, breadth, the big picture. Cross-cultural journeys, vacations, sabbatical leave. Exposure, unfamiliarity, open-mindedness, understanding. Release, transcendence, going beyond, the human potential. Exploration, discovery, panorama, overview. Aim and release, the dynamics of delivery, realizing the vision, higher wisdom. The search for what survives change. Reorganization, reformulation, redemption.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Samech, the ninth of the twelve zodiac attributions, tradition-ally assigned to Sagittarius. I can't make much sense of Samech as a prop or support, relative to the meaning of Temperance. Not all of these symbolic alphabet associations are useful without an excessive stretch of the imagination.

Yijing: Gua 40, Jie, Release, Deliverance. Bagua Kan (Mutable, Cadent) below, Zhen (Fire) above. "Thunder and rain create. Release. The young noble pardons transgressions and is broad-minded regarding offenses." Tension from opposing forces builds up and releases. Liberation, relief, letting go of stress. "Worthwhile west to south. Without a place to go, a coming return is promising. With a place to go, promptness is promising." Resolution of things out of order or in the wrong place. Readjustment, disentangling, reconciliation, synthesis, alleviation, sublimation, redemption, forgiveness. Delivery, deliverance, dispatch, discharge.

The Devil

#15, Il Diavolo, Le Diable, Dweller on the Threshold without the Mystical Garden,
The Lord of the Gates of Matter: The Child of the Forces of Time
Near-sightedness, Ignorance, Delusion, Fear

Image: A large, horned satyr, in the neo-mythical figure of Baphomet, the Sabbatic Goat or Horned Goat of Mendes, is squatting on a stone plinth or pedestal, his right hand raised in some wicked benediction mocking the Hierophant's gesture, his left hand holding a torch pointing downward. He has the obligatory inverted pentagram on his forehead, pointing to his third eye. Chained to the base of his pedestal are a naked man and woman, seeming to suffer greatly, but one notes that the chains around their necks are loose enough to slip off at will. For an alternate image, a mean-looking, goat-foot demon, not Pan, sits atop the far railing of a small wooden pen or corral amidst a pastoral setting, taunting a smaller human couple, naked and cringing against the nearer railing. With one hand the demon entertains a huge erection, leering lecherously at the humans, perhaps about to break out in sadistic laughter, while his captives worry over who will be sodomized next. One may get the idea that they were out here building a pen to contain their goats, and this demon happened by, looking for sport. Out of fear and myopia, the humans accept domestication without contract, trapped in a self-limited reality, rather than simply hopping the fence, for this god has waxed mighty in his role as scapegoat. He has become all of the enemies gods, and all of their enemies guilts and fears. But he's only a fantasy, not the real evil. The real evil is simply human blindness, obsession, ignorance, delusion, fear, cowardice, and voluntary bondage, having turned pathological and against this life, perhaps all life, and this world.

Along with the Tower card, this was the last card to join the present deck. To begin with, there are a couple of things that this card is not. The Devil is not the evil here, although evil puts down important roots into the pathologies represented here. Nor is the Devil card a depiction of Cernunnos, Faunus, or Pan, the hoofed, satyr god embodying the forces of nature and sexuality, the pagan and hairy side of ourselves, the Earth god, groom of the Mother, lord of the world's libido. However, it may still depict a caricature of Pan made into a scapegoat for our human failures. This is the Devil that's painted by human immaturity, the Bogyman conjured to frighten children into obedience. He's the enemy that leaders like to use to control their subjects. He's the adversarial attorney who wants us to see only one side of things. He's our saintly perversion, turning us *contra naturam*, against our own nature. He's our demonized flesh and our sensations, our denunciation of the very material that brings us into being. He is Saturn, lord of our limitations, twisted into Satan the liar. He's mankind's bedeviling characteristics and influences. Sometimes in doing his worst, he does us great favors. And sometimes a minion, as *advocatus diaboli*, makes excellent arguments against anthropocentric human self-righteousness.

We look at the limits to our vision here. In our ignorance, we act and react on limited information, but do so with an arrogant certainty. It's not matter that drags the soul down: there is nothing inherently wrong with matter or the material world. But it does have the problem of being opaque. We have a hard time seeing past what's right in front of us. Our vision is limited by the nearest surface and horizon. All that we see are the limits to our vision, and so what we see is too often all that we get. This is what culture builds on, forgetting the far horizons, so that limited human culture becomes the whole world. We live by fake needs and false assumptions. We live for the latest fashions and fads. We move according to short-term trends. We get bewitched and fascinated by trinkets and baubles. We judge by surface appearances, facades, and

hypocrisies. We are glamored. This is the core of the Yijing counterpart, Gua 22, Adornment, showing the light of the flame blocked at the foot of the mountain, lighting up the valley and the local terrain, but nothing else. This leads to the advice to make only small and local decisions, to enjoy the adornments, but to understand their limits. This connection will be more challenging to someone who has understood this as Wilhelm's weak idea of Grace. But the core problem is nearsightedness, with possible slips into a more pejorative short-sightedness. These goatish images, however, from both this card and Capricorn, suggest that nearsight can still be useful, as the goat must know precisely where he stands, with total concentration, if he is ever to get to the top of the canyon wall, where the big views await. Local activity is only a prison when context, the big picture or far horizon is lost.

In a way, a fearful reaction to this card is itself the core meaning. The self-reflexive and negative emotions like fear, intimidation, guilt, and shame have all cemented a generally appropriate place in primate and human evolution, but they are also easily perverted and subverted. It starts at the edge of self, as fear for the boundary comes with the boundary. Of these, fear may be the most easily played, and enemies most easily painted. Nietzsche suggested that "everywhere that a culture posits evil, it gives expression to a relationship of fear, and thus a weakness" (*WTP* p. 530). Then, by way of naming these devils, the culture attempts its conquest. Thus, when we want to understand a culture's weakness, we might first take a look at its devils. In the West of the Abrahamic religions, evil is often the material world, nature, gender differences, the flesh, sensuality, eros, and sexuality, and then secondarily, all of those cultures that disagree with ours, the ones we wish to conquer. An antipathy to life is the first weakness here, then our approach to diversity. Our cultural paranoia is playable in both its delusions, of persecution and of grandeur. Our devil is our own shadow, which, as Jung explains, "personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly: for instance inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies" (*CW* 9 i, par. 513). At bottom, the Devil is our cowardice, fear, shame, and delusion, born of our ignorance. Then we can find no better way to excuse our failures to than to simply imprison ourselves and claim helplessness, to blame our compulsions and addictions, temptations and seductions, our fate and circumstances, our puppet masters and upbringing, our victimizers, our diseases, tyrants and devils, as just the way things are. We chain ourselves, but still hold the keys.

Liberation is in large part a question of where new light is shed, and bigger pictures for bigger minds. We get outside the hall of mirrors, we come to understand our projections and reflections on the surfaces of things. We stop running from the material from which we emerge, and understand our problem was not loving matter or life enough. Perhaps we find the courage to confront our demons. Alcoholics might call alcohol cunning, baffling, and powerful, although it's none of these. The problems are in us. Neither will their fears let them see that a cold-turkey withdrawal is no worse than the next two scheduled hangovers. Victim and disease mentalities abdicate our power to change, even where they might hold some truth. Remember that the biblical Satan is a lawyer, wanting you to see only his own side of things.

"Get thee behind me Satan" really means that he still has value, but that we are finally ready to lead. Ironically, the Satanists, by taking on the point of view of the adversary or the other, in whatever psychodrama they play with whatever cultural props, wind up with a richer picture of things than the ones who fear their devil out of their fear of a god. It's really all about exploring and crossing the boundaries set by cultural fears. Even the Catholics employ their Devil's Advocate. Finally, of course, we need to take a look at the Devil's playful side, his devilishness, his mischievousness,

his eagerness to show us the silliness of our limited ways. The old goat Capricornus is the root of the word caprice, whimsy, even if that dates back to when he was just a kid. To sport with the Devil is educational play. Evil is something else. Evil is dragging your son to the altar to kill him to prove your faith, and then convincing your people that that was a good thing. Did you know that the name Isaac meant laughter?

Key Words:

acknowledging limits, acting locally, *advocatus diaboli*, allure, attachments, bedevilment, beguilement, blind impulse, blinders, boundaries, caprice, captivity, chthonic deity, concentration, courage to look and see, density, devil's advocate, disenchantment and disillusionment as positive outcomes, distortion, distraction, diversion, entanglement, enthrallment, enticement, facade, false needs, fascination, fashion, glamor, glamoring, hard facts, fixation, ignorance, illusion, immediacy, inability to see error, incomplete information, inhibition, insight into shadows, instinct, liberation, limitation, limited horizons, limited options, limited reality, limiting beliefs, local activity also needs global outlook, losing sight of long views, materialism, materiality, mischief, monkey traps, myopia, narrowed options, nature, near horizons, nearsightedness, need bigger picture, opacity, ornament, panic, phobia, preoccupation, projection, psychodrama, realism, reflection, restriction to fashion, scapegoating, seduction, self-deception, self-limitation, shortcomings, speciousness, sure footedness, surface value, throwing the chains off, transgression's usefulness.

Warnings and Reversals:

abdication, addiction, adversarialism, *amathia*, anthropocentrism, bait, bewitchment, bogeyman, bondage, captivity, chains, compulsion, deception, demonization of the other, defeatism, denial, delusion, determinism, egocentrism, ensnarement, entrapment, evil, exceptionalism, false evidence appearing real, fascination, fatalism, fate, fear, fetters, glamor spells, graven images and false idols, futility, guilt, gullibility, helplessness, hypocrisy, *idée fixe*, ignorance, indulgence, instant gratification, intimidation, intolerance, lures, Mammon, misplaced loyalties, myopia, narrow mindedness, obsession, obstinacy, overreaction, paranoia, perversion, pettiness, possessiveness, projection, propaganda, repression, seduction, self-imposed bondage, servitude, shackles, shallowness, sham, shame, shortsightedness, slavery, superficiality, suppression, temptation, traps, tyranny, victim mentality, voluntary bondage, willful ignorance.

Components:

The Devil is assigned to the tenth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Ayin, in its turn assigned to Capricorn and the 10th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Cardinal/Angular and Earth in Astrology, as well as Li (Cardinal) below Gen (Earth) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Capricorn, Tevet; Cardinal/Angular Earth, Tenth House, Patron: Saturn. The winter solstice, the worst of the darkness. Local activity, concentrated environment, an acceptance of scale, clarification of local interface, intensification of contrast, givens, due regard, heedfulness. Sure-footedness, knowing where one stands, watching your step, nearsight and the exaltation permitted by surety. Profession, authority figures, mastery, realization. Realism, tough judgment of strength and weakness. Attainment, distinction, challenge, defiance, climbing. Relation to extant powers, due

appraisal, thoroughness. Getting and keeping position. Self-appraisal, self-justification, the following or setting of standards. Tough-mindedness.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Ayin, the tenth of the twelve zodiac attributions, traditionally assigned to Capricorn. The eye symbolism is apt and usable. Perception is limited to the visible surface of things, appearances, projection, and reflections that reverse a picture. Some of the eye's limitations carry no blame, as with the inability to see past the visible light spectrum.

Yijing: Gua 22, Bi, Adornment, Grace, Bagua Li (Cardinal, Angular) below, Gen (Earth) above. "At the foot of the mountain is flame. Adornment. The young noble clarifies numerous policies, but does not presume to execute justice." The limitations to our vision need to be acknowledged so that the real importance of things can be kept in perspective. "Satisfaction. A little worthwhile to have somewhere to go." Proximity has big effects on apparent size or importance. We can dazzle ourselves completely with the superficial and trivial. There is a place for the trappings of culture, elegance, and beauty, but for more important and long-term decisions, we need something deeper and more authentic than fashion and adornment. The cultural artifact is not always substance enough.

The Tower

#16, The Lightning Struck Tower, La Torre, La Sagitta, La Maison de Dieu,
The House of God, Le Feu Du Ciel, Fire from the Sky, The Lightning,
The Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty
Consequences, Deconstruction, Purge, Liberation of Energy

Image: The Tower, a grand minaret or a consummate lighthouse, is shown in about half of its original glory, halfway to heaven or finished. But already it draws some heavy heavenly fire, as a bolt of forked lightning shatters the structure in several places, sending stone rubble, architects and priests, the crown of creation, tumbling towards the ground. The lightning bears no ill will, has no message of vengeance or retribution. This is power behaving as power behaves: it follows its own way, from positive charge to ground. The humans so anxious to rise above forget that heaven begins below, right at their feet. But their doctrine permits no divergence, no heresy, only narrow-minded one-pointedness, monumental ego, and towering ambition. This is beyond a polite wake-up call. They are not building to witness heaven, they want to show heaven how bright and mighty they are. The tower and forked lightning contrast paradigms of convergent (pyramidal) and divergent (dendritic) paths into power, power that has a single high point for a purpose and power that has propagation. The bush outlives the pyramid by branching out and going to seed. Hierarchical structure is a more temporary model than elaboration or diversification. The longer perspective might even celebrate the now much-improved skyline view and the recent production of much useful, recyclable rubble. And now there's an old foundation for archeologists to draw conclusions from.

This is not the Tower of Babel, although this has been a common suggestion. Nowhere in the early literature was this tower struck by lightning, and certainly not in Gen. 11:4-9. Midrashic interpretation does suggest that the top third was burned, but no lightning is mentioned. In other versions it was simply abandoned. Yet Lightning or Fire from Heaven (*Le Feu Du Ciel*) was an early name for this Trump, along with The House of God (*La Maison de Dieu*). Despite this, however, the confusion of tongues and dispersion of peoples is consistent with the core meaning of this card, and so is a deep concern with the pride of man exceeding the limits allowed by the powers that be. Nature has forces that dwarf ours in scope and power, even the tiny forces like erosion and genetic mutation, since these have geological time in which to do their work, while we do not. When our pride, arrogance, and shortsightedness urge us beyond our limits, it is not divine wrath, retribution, or retaliation that we need to watch out for. The simple consequences of human stupidity are apocalypse and havoc enough, backed by natural forces obeying the rules we ignore. We might wonder if any specific tower was on the first card designer's mind. It could have been a wish for the fall of papal Rome. We might also wonder if someone hadn't noticed that the tallest buildings got struck the most often by lightning, and that those were the houses of the Lord with their proud, erect steeples. But it's physics plus ignorance, not divine wrath.

This Trump was already well along in its existence when it picked up the astrological planet Mars for a correlation and patron. Here, we also add a similar correspondence with Bagua 4, Zhen, Thunder. This altered the meaning some, internalizing or 'subjectivizing' the card, making it easier to identify with the lightning instead of the tower or its overthrown inhabitants. But we can still find ourselves on the wrong end of this process. What we might want to do to avoid this is find enough humility to integrate some physical science into our plans to express our towering magnificence and glorious erections, and use sturdier stuff than self-congratulation for foundation

stones. Among the ideas we can draw from physics is that power seeks a grounding, and that power is more easily drawn than produced, and more easily conducted than contained. We can note that the jagged edge of the lightning actually tracks its shortest route, since this goes where resistance is least. Power likes gradients and differentials, so we can be more careful where we build up our charges. Where passing through resistance, things are going to heat up. And all of our efforts at combating gravity are only grants of potential energy to the forces of collapse. To make the most of our linking with Mars, we want to be thinking more in terms of our empowerment than our personal power, and maybe reread Sunzi's *Bingfa*, and even take a course in jujitsu or aikido.

Playing the warrior here suggests there is something in opposition, something to purge or overcome, something to deconstruct or dismantle, clear away or open up, or help to fall, or ground. Maybe we open up some possibilities, or clear away some errors, or indict some malefactors. Righting a wrong or an error is not a disaster, except to the wrong or erroneous. We will be more effective here if we side with powers greater than those we oppose, and belong to the larger forces of liberation and evolution. This might remind us of JFK's words, "Those who make peaceful evolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable." Our defensive walls are also prisons, rigid structures are brittle and build up forces, restrictions create sin, prohibition organizes crime, and resistance makes heat. Mars at his best will move like a fluid. Changes will be as abrupt as the thing which is changed is off course, and unpleasant in proportion to the distance of a thing from where it needs or ought to be. And in the end, we will want to move with the time, as the Spanish say: "*El tiempo y yo, contra cualquiera de los dos*: Time and I, against any two." Much of our delusion these days will use the word sustainable incorrectly. Nature and natural law will define what this means, although it might take ten-thousand years, and this will be the last word, and will deconstruct what doesn't belong. The best defense and security is good health and good practice, in accord with *ius naturale* or natural law.

The Lightning Struck Tower is an education for us. It can be a sudden revelation or an exposé, even an apocalypse. As the great Anonymous wrote, "A mistake that humbles you is preferable to an achievement that makes you arrogant." This will usually involve some unlearning on somebody's part. One might rediscover glasnost and perestroika. Or a paradigm might collapse and cause a sea change in science. From one side this might be called a calamity, from another, a big relief. It's probably best to go with relief when we want to take the long view and learn how to build better structures. Anything unexpected here is due to imperfect expectations.

Key Words:

accumulated stress, adrenaline, asking for it, assailability, baptism by fire, bolt from the blue, breakdown as exothermic, breaking free, breakthrough, catharsis, challenge, change of belief structure, channeling, clearance, clearing of a channel, collapse, conducting, consequences overdue, corrective force, crisis, critical mass, deconstruction, demolition, destruction, disrupting routines, drawing down power, elimination, emergency, end of illusion, energy of potential, eradication, eureka moment, exasperation, excitement, exhilaration, exigency, exposé, exposure, grounding, hierarchical structure, indictment, indignation, instability, inviting the flash, jolt, learning process, least resistance, leveling, liberation of energy, lightning rods, market correction, metabolic heat, natural forces reasserting themselves, negative selection, nullification, overambitious design, paradigm shift, pent up energy, pique, potential energy, premises fail, punctuated change, purgation, purification, radical shift, radical surgery, radical transformation, reactions, realignment, reality check,

rearranging, repercussions, revelation, shakeup, shattering insight, shock, shock value, snapping, starting over, startle, structural failure, surprise, unsustainability, unsustainable infrastructure, untenable constraints, upset, voltage as potential.

Warnings and Reversals:

arrogance, assailability, bankruptcy, bedlam, blowout, breakdown, brittle belief, cascade failure, chastisement, collapse, crash, critical defect, debacle, defensiveness, dispersion, engineering failure, evacuation, false permanence or security, havoc, hubris, imperfect expectation, lack of resiliency, negative charges, ossification, overthrow, presumption, pride comes before a fall, pride of man, reactions to restriction, resistance, rigidity, rude awakening, ruin, rupture, security becomes a prison, seeking peace by preparing for war, separateness, structures built on faulty premises and weak foundations, unsustainability, upheaval, violence, wreckage.

Components:

The Tower is a straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with its associations to Mars, Geburah, and now Zhen, and second-tier astrological associations to Aries and Scorpio and the 1st and 8th Houses.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Mars, Madim; Thermodynamics, drive, manipulation, and dominance. The muscular system, kinetics, metabolic heat. The warrior within, the force of character, courage, assertiveness, competition and challenge, control, gamesmanship. The battery or arsenal of survival techniques, learned and innate stratagems, ego as a backfire of the need for viability. The worth of survival. Finding energetic alternatives to wrath or anger, as the martial doesn't need wrath or even enmity. Power as force effected with sense, dynamic imbalance, assertion, stamina, perseverance, effort, self-motivation. Pep and enthusiasm.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Phe. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Phe with various other Planets, with little agreement. Phe as Mouth might be connected to a voice of command, and also the motivating force of appetite. And who is to say that a good warrior isn't allowed to bite?

Yijing: Bagua 4, Zhen, Thunder, Arousal. Zhen, as Thunder, symbolizes stimuli by which we are called to action. This can be thunder from within, such as the primary needs or drives for movement and exercise, to express energy, to relieve tension, or to manipulate the immediate environment. Or the thunder can come from without, as an impact, or a surprise, a shock to the system, a jump start, an awakening of the fight-or-flight or startle responses and the resultant flood of adrenaline. How this force strikes one is a function of learning and maturity, as well as of our readiness to seize and make use of this fresh, raw energy. Thunder, by tradition, slept underground in winter, awoke in springtime. This is the second half of the third dimension, energy, and its vectors. Awakening, shaking up, impulse, discharge, exhilaration, quickening, storminess.

The Star

#17, Le Stella, L'Etoile,

The Daughter of the Firmament, the Dweller between the Waters,
Idealism, Inspiration, Implementation, Intelligibility

Image: A young woman kneels in starlight in the nude at a stream bank, with her right foot in the water, left knee on the land, not unlike the bank seen in the Temperance card. Overhead are eight eight-pointed stars, one of them much larger than the others. The woman holds a small urn in each hand. With the right she returns water to the stream, propagating concentric circles, with the left she pours water on the land and watches it return as a tributary, perhaps a tribute. The background is lush, as stream beds are wont to be, and on a low tree branch an ibis stand watch. This could be a cleansing ritual or an offering, or it could depict a moment of epiphany, as when the process of irrigation was discovered by a humble water bearer, who was or soon became a divinity. It could speak to the discovery or creation of new ideas in general. It could also be thought to contrast yet two more paradigms of power, propagation (ripples in the stream) and convergence (watershed). Other than these attempts at explanation, it's a challenge to see this woman as doing anything useful here. But irrigation is a good model for what understanding and science can do. The card could celebrate this discovery. The Star can also symbolize the thing we look up to, or look to for guidance and inspiration, the ideals that guide us.

Mythological attributions for the water bearer vary widely, from Electra, the missing sister of the seven Pleiades, to Ganymede, to Hapi, the androgynous deity of the annual Nile flood, vital to crop irrigation, to Hebe, who became the young male cupbearer to the Greek gods. We may find it sufficient here to allow this young woman her humanity, perhaps seeing her as performing a rite combining a ritual cleansing and an offering. It is unclear whether the stars represent real stars. This is not the star of the Magi. While much mention is made of both the Pleiades (in Taurus) and Sirius (in Canis Major), these two aren't close enough to be called an ogdoad. The Egyptians, however, set their flood calendar by the rising of Sirius with the Sun. This at least suggests that we have learned something about the timing of celestial or sidereal events with the seasonal happenings on Earth, connections between the above and below. This refers to real scientific discovery and the original clockworks, and not merely astrology. This may also suggest the word con-sider-ation, being with the stars, as opposed to dis-aster, going against them. The eight-pointed star is reminiscent of the seasons and their midpoints, and the compass, orientation in time and space, and the regularity of our cosmos. Moving with the stars, giving things their due season, is only interpreted as favor or grace, but ultimately it's about intelligibility and intelligence that perceives it. The Ibis in the RWS deck is sacred to Hermes and Thoth. We know not what the nudity might mean here, unless this acknowledges a virtue in truthfulness, or having nothing to hide, and this being perfectly fine, and art on the higher planes.

Higher and lower planes of existence are contrasted here, and a degree of connection or attempted connection between them is suggested. We aren't going to assert here that there is a higher or astral plane of ideas, or mysteries of some higher divine thought, but there are certainly higher or more intellectual levels of abstraction that we use to understand our cosmic context and what this means to us down below. We also perform rituals to put our minds into these higher spaces, rituals of cleansing and purification, of baptism and consecration. We try to recombine thought with feeling, as we do with hope, giving focus and a point to feeling, and content or some charge to thought. We seek to bridge the gulf between high and low, the disconnect that we make

between the planes of our existence, between the ideal and the real, between wishing and wanting. But we have yet to learn the unwisdom of severing the pure white lotus from its roots way down in the muck. This connection is what needs to be restored. The spirit of the lotus didn't descend from the stars, it emerged from the muck, which is made from the dust of exploded stars.

The Star presents us with challenges accompanying farsightedness. This point of light may give us guidance or direction, but it also sheds little light on the path before us. There is information here that may be useful in the long-term, but it's not accompanied by specific, practical advice. There is also little warmth or energy. This of course is a common critique of idealism. The mindset may even ignore the nearby completely, and do its thinking in meaningless sound bites, formulae, and platitudes with no practical application. The distant view is also more general, and more easily met with consensus. The stars and the sky look very much the same from the other ends of the earth. Without parallax, there is less relativity between points of view. As such, the Star can refer to ideas that bring large numbers of people into agreement. There are also larger scales involved, literally light years, and longer time horizons, when the great clockworks is pondered. Expanding our horizons extends our possibilities, as the scientific view has done. This contributes to grander thinking, which is still a good context for looking at our local and short term endeavors. As the slogan goes, think globally, act locally; or as someone added, think galactically, act terrestrially. Yet farsightedness remains a vision problem if we cannot make the adjustment to the local and practical.

Clarity of vision is the first of three aspects of the usefulness of this card. While some have mentioned insight and introspection, this is more like oversight and extrospection. There is an objectivity here that handles the perceptions, turning them this way and that until they make the most sense. While this process may be unconscious and spontaneous, it isn't innocent. The lenses that we use do things to the light. We will have our signs of cosmos and promise of order, even if we have to turn the truth inside out. The second part is turning this vision into a goal, the use of the Star for guidance, and sometimes for our skyhook, or *deus ex machina*. *Ad astra per aspera*. Assuming that all of our problems will have a techno-fix is one example of this. We turn the distant light into a hope or a plan, a better example, a new lease on life, a ruling thought, or a rallying point around which to pull ourselves together. Sometimes we pick the wrong star, or follow for all the wrong reasons, and bright prospects lead to dim futures. Sometimes we learn to do better, and still the stars do not applaud. At least we sometimes make an effort to set our sights above ourselves, on higher standards and purposes, and seek higher wisdom in earnest. The third part is to draw down this higher wisdom into the physical plane. The irrigation pictured in the card is a model of what understanding and science can do, the place of insight or genius, and its ability to change the world. But the big vision is of the distant and not the nearby, where its applications are. Like the dim starlight above, cognitive resources are not themselves energy, and starlight is lacking in knowhow. What we learn must be applied, with our lowly biological forces, before we can call it real. Our biology must adopt it and put it to work or into play. Regardless of how we might think of ourselves, no matter how our philosophers and poets might praise us, human is as human does. A higher vision might lift many of us up, but it won't do much to elevate the hypocrites and the parasites. The wisdom that we get from above must be lived and practiced, or else it means nothing.

Key Words:

ablution, abstraction, affirmations, appointments, aspiration, bright idea, charged

thought, clarification, clarity, cleansing, connecting the dots, consecration, contemplation, contrast, cosmos, creative visualization, deep time, definition, discovery, distant goal, distinctness, dreaming, elegant idea, envisioning, eureka moment, exemplars, extended possibilities, faith, farsightedness, focal point, focus, frames of reference, futurity, generalization, goal, guidance, high-lights, higher aim, higher meaning, higher-order thinking, hope, horizons, icons, idealism, ideal as skyhook, ideas, ideation, ideology, illumination, imagination, implementation, indication, inspiration, instrumentality, intelligibility, intent, knowledge of resources, long-term goal or process, longer view, lucidity, luminosity, metasolution, mindset, natural law, navigation, objective, optimism, orders of magnitude, organization, orientation, overview, perceived order, point of emphasis, point of reference, possibility, prediction, promise, prophesy, prospect, purification, purpose, rallying point, ray of hope, redemption, reference, renewal, resolution, resolve, resourcefulness, revelation, techne, transcending vision, utility, vision in common, vision of the future, visionary.

Warnings and Reversals:

crisis of faith, deceived hope, devaluing smaller successes, disappointment, disconnect, haughtiness, high-mindedness, illusionment, impatience, impracticality, inapplicability, lost purpose, mindset ignores the near, mirage, misguidedness, overgeneralization, narrow views, pessimism, reifying analogy or idea, resignation, wishful thinking.

Components:

The Star is assigned to the eleventh of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Tzaddi, in its turn assigned to Aquarius and the 11th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Fixed/Succedent and Air in Astrology. In the Yijing, Fixed Air is one of the Four Xiang, Shao Yang, which may be represented by the Wu Xing of Metal.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Aquarius, Shevat; Fixed/Succedent Air, Eleventh House; Patron: Saturn. The crystalline winter sky, resolution, stark thought, thought as a vessel, instrumentality, the fixed idea as tool or means, science, navigation, references, mindset, resolution, resolve, vision, visualizing the goal, entertainment of thought, hopes and fears, social and natural order and organization, structures, objectives. Future tense of lifestyle, social coalition and organization around shared objectives, goals and expectations, *cause célèbre*, rallying point, platform.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Tzaddi, the eleventh of the twelve Zodiac attributions, attributed to Aquarius. Tzaddi as a Fish Hook is an implement, a sort of a skyhook, drawing fish upward.

Yijing: Xiang 2, Young or Shao Yin. The Four Xiang or Emblems have been assigned in this system to the four Kerubic or most elemental signs of the zodiac, the fixed signs of each element. Xiang 2, Young Yin, is problematic as Metal because it comes from a forced fit of the Chinese Scale of 5 or Wu Xing, to the Scale of 4 Greek Elements. Still, metal works as air in Tarot, especially by way of its association with Swords. Metal is said to concern conformation, direction, application, abstraction, cognition. It's incisive, idealizing, appraising, defining, dividing, reflective, analytical and investigative. This is inconsistent with Astrology's notion that Aquarius is a masculine sign. In correlating systems, there are nearly always a few minor inconsistencies like this.

The Moon

#18, La Lune, La Lune, Twilight,

The Ruler of Flux and Reflux: the Child of the Sons of the Mighty
Ebb Tides, Low Light Conditions, Primitive Mind, Instinct

Image: This trump depicts a dreamscape, dimly lit by a waning crescent moon, just hours before dawn. Most cards show an astronomically impossible moon: horns should point up and to the right, away from where the sun will rise. The dreamer approaches the eastern shore of an estuary or slough, at ebb tide or low flow. A crayfish crawls onto the land towards the dim light. There seems barely enough water for the crayfish to live in, but hints of the fish of Pisces still further down ripple what little water remains. From the bank, a path winds upward into the distance, through a forbidding landscape, passing first between a wolf or jackal and a domestic canine, tame and wild both howling at the moon, then between two ziggurat towers, with battlements, forbidding in their lack of light from within. Ahead on the path, almost between the towers, is a female figure, robed, and carrying a longbow. This path seems the only way out, and the moon seems hungry for souls who make it this far. The feeling is chthonic and spooky. But note that this is still a Trump, or a mode of triumph. It speaks to our unfathomably long and nearly blind evolutionary struggle towards the light, from unconsciousness into sentience, and to the amazing subliminal brain that we've grown in the process. The sense is, in Tennyson's words, "As if some lesser god had made the world, but had not force to shape it as he would." Life has to find its own way out of here, like a soul ascending through the unconscious. Evolution will find its own way to emerge into the light, through irritability, then sentience, then consciousness, and then perhaps spirit. Our exalted status notwithstanding, life remains subject to ebb tides and low-light conditions, and sometimes when it runs low on sunlight, it needs to fall back on more primitive modes of cognition, long adapted to murkier conditions, but much less clear about what we can know.

There are light and dark sides to the symbolism of the Moon, just as there are to the planetoid sphere. Developers of the Tarot have persistently gravitated towards the High Priestess to represent the White-Goddess or Diana's side of the meaning, and so, half counter-intuitively, left the Moon card to represent the dark side and eventually the sign of Pisces. This in its turn provides the most obvious clue to look to the natural Houses of the Signs for sympathies with their Trump assignments. In this case we have the Twelfth house, the darkest of them all, with its self-undoing, secrets, delusions, undercurrents, and hidden enemies. Spooky. This house is physically where the waning crescent moon is before sunrise, as depicted on the card. While the alphabet symbolism from the Kabbalah isn't always very relevant, the association here to Qoph, as the back of the head, is useful, as it suggests the older, more primitive and instinctive portions of our brains, the fish, lizard, and early mammalian cortices that we still carry with us, with their basic cognitive functions and fuzzier logic, together with the fight-or-flight feelings. And as dim as these functions are, they at least kept single every one of our ancestors alive long enough to successfully breed the next generation, and did so through several mass extinction events. And even today, most of our decisions are made in the lower brain and unconsciously, by feelings and emotional reactions, many of which are our fears and insecurities. The unconscious is far more than a burial, compost, or septic pit for things discarded or forgotten. More goes on in darkness than in light. It's this ancient mind that's waking up in this card, at least as well as it can. But we will probably be reminded that we are still not all that evolved. Instinctual intelligence is hasty and approximate at best, almost reflexive, and largely projection

and guesswork. It jumps to conclusions. This is the mind that strings our flashes of dream parts together into coherent dreams. It's the mind thrilled by Lovecraft and Poe. It's also the mind that divines, and does mysteriously well at times. When we lose or remove the oversight of our higher cognitive functions, this is what we fall back on. We are back in the tide pools of our deep past, and here we must again face all those ghosts from our earlier days, the creatures from the id, and the demons from our scariest dreams, without the aid of reason, logic, and language. This happens in madness, or lunacy, of course, and depression, but it also happens during our ebb tides, and in periods of exhaustion. As Nietzsche wrote, "When we are tired, we are attacked by ideas we conquered long ago."

Low flow, low tide, and low-light conditions characterize this card. It's our inconstant moon. This may show us ourselves in a much diminished state, groping our way through shadows and phantasms, wading through the muck, in used or half light, perhaps having lost our orientation, direction, or purpose. The primordial depths of the psyche come to the surface, but that's all that seems to be rising up here, because the surface is falling. The feelings that kept us buoyant may have sunk into a depression, leaving just broody moods. Reason and words aren't helping. We just question and exaggerate everything, and need to be reminded that it's no time for big decisions. The Yijing counterpart is Gua 47, Exhaustion or Oppression. The waters are drained out of us. We have little left to defend ourselves with. We're beset by the world around us. The texts of the lines have a lot of fun with this, trying to tease us back into lightening up, advising us to lose the speeches and the complaints, to shut up, to mistrust what we see and hear, and just rest, or wait for rising waters to return. We could also have some fun in the tide pools. We could stomp in some of those puddles. This is, after all, where we came from, so long ago, or not so long ago. We are not descended spirits or angels. We began in these pools. We can still dream ourselves around, and learn to direct our dreams as long as we are having them. We could take a little journey through that crack between the worlds. Yes, we are in a suggestible state, but suggestion can work both ways. There are still good times to be had at low tide. At least pain and suffering might be optional, and a little rest could be welcome.

Today we think we've outgrown the dark ages, the passing age of Pisces. But if we had, we might appreciate mystery more. The deep remains the final frontier, the benthos of the ocean as well as the benthos of the mind. On the whole, humans are still quite superstitious. We get into these depths and panic instead of explore. We still fear our ancient selves and call them beasts. We still fear the unclean things that hide in the womb, and act out our mental illnesses on young girls and women. We are haunted by our own origins. We will persecute midwife and medicine man, instead of giving them chickens and goats in trade for their gifts. Our repression leads to sepsis. We have yet to master the crises of faith, the sloughs of despond, the dark nights of the soul, the *weltschmerz*, the existential nausea. To think that we are not angels come down from on high is cause for great nihilism and despair. The succubus and incubus still make the blood run cold. But because of these fears, the dark side of the Moon must be faced and explored. Because of this, we must make friends with our witches. It's our cowardice that gives us reason for despair.

Key Words:

affective substrata, apophenia, apparitions, approximations, chaos, cracks between the worlds, crisis of fate [sic], dark ages, deep cycles, deep past, deep time, dim suspicion, diminished states, dimness, divination, drawing or tugging forces, dreaming, earliest emergence, early evolution, ebb tide, eeriness, exaggeration, fight or flight, fishing the unconscious, fluctuation, foreboding, fuzzy logic, groping forth, heightened emotions,

hidden forces, imagination, inarticulation, instincts, insufficient light, integrating the shadow, lack of clarity, *levatus de profundo*, limbic brain, liminal or threshold awareness, low bat rays, low flow, low light, lower consciousness, lucid dreaming, maya, moodiness, murk, mystery, native heuristics, nebulousness, netherworlds, obscurity, occult forces, older brains, organic knowledge, paresthesia, perplexity, phantasms, pre-rational cognition, preconsciousness, premonitions, primal nature, primitive mind, primordial depths, projection, psychoanalysis, runaway imagination, sleepwalking, spookiness, strangeness, subconsciousness, subliminals, substrates, suggestibility, suggestion, the misunderstood unconscious, tidal forces, tide pools, tugging or pull of the moon, twilight, uncertainties, uncharted psyche, unclear guidance, unconsciousness, undercurrents, vagueness, wilds, wilderness, wildness.

Warnings and Reversals:

bewilderment, bewitchment, bias, bitterness, confusion, cowardice, deception, dejection, delirium, delusion, depression, despair, disorientation, distortion, downward spirals, dredging, error, exhaustion, existential nausea, false friends, fearfulness, futility, gloom, hallucination, hauntings, hungry ghosts, hysteria, illusion, inconstancy, inherited modes of self-deception, insanity, irrationality, lunacy and lunatics, misunderstanding, mood loops and swings, morass, nihilism, obscuration, old injury or insult, pessimism, phobia, repression, runaway affect, runaway imagination, scandal, self-deception, superstition, vicious circles, *weltschmerz*.

Components:

The Moon is assigned to the twelfth of the twelve simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Qoph, in its turn assigned to Pisces and the 12th House. By way of this, we can make a portmanteau study of the components Mutable/Cadent and Water in Astrology, as well as Kan (Mutable) below Dui (Water) in the Yijing.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Pisces, Adar; Mutable/Cadent Water, Twelfth House, Patron: Jupiter. The uncertainty principle, experience for its own sake, capable of any form. The vastness of the world made even less determinate by the powers of feeling, empathy, belief, credulity, reflection, reverie. Impressions. Life in spite of inertia and entropy, the unknown, what is overwhelming. Ripe destiny and self-undoing, karma. Recourse to the subliminal, the mysterious, the undercurrents. Anonymity, uncertainty, inadequacy, the battered self. Survival of the liquid, feeling one's way, the path with heart. The chaos of compost and mulch, existence as nutrient-rich.

Qabalah: The Simple Letter Qoph, the twelfth of the twelve zodiac attributions, traditionally assigned to Pisces. Qoph as the Back of the Head may be associated with the older, lower, or more primal parts of the brain.

Yijing: Gua 47, Kun, Exhaustion, Oppression. Bagua Kan (Mutable, Cadent) below, Dui (Water) above. "A lake without water. Exhaustion. The young noble invokes a higher purpose to carry out intentions." When we are drained or beset by circumstances, we need to reach even deeper down and higher up for resources. "Exhaustion. 'Fulfillment,' 'Persistence,' for the mature human being, a promise, not a mistake. But having the words is not the conviction." Words are not helping. Exhaustion means that a recharge is needed, not explanations. Indulging in such states is not helpful. We need to take charge like a battery does. The first step is to plug up the leaks, quit moping about, lighten up, maybe laugh at ourselves, and rest, recharging our bat rays.

The Sun

#19, Il Sole, Le Soleil, The Lord of the Fire of the World
Existence, Emergence, Diversification, Moment

Image: Two children, a boy and a girl, both in their early stages of puberty, play and dance naked, holding hands and facing each other, with a mid-morning sun shining on them in approval. If old Sol had a face he might be winking. One can assume that their parents would not be winking, if they knew. But these children know who and what they are, to themselves and to each other: familiars, innocent, and shameless. They play in an old *temenos*, a magic circle or sacred place, in front of the ruined wall of a church, now overcome by flora, heliotropes, overcome like the graves beside the ruined church. The sunflowers face the Sun, not the reader, but what they are is clear enough. The solar fire is irrepressible, and those who doubt it, beyond hope. We are born good, and the first things we want are affection and play. These children are righteous and guiltless, life as life was born to be. They are safe in the circle, too: paradise still means a walled garden. This is more than just the Apollonian side of life. It's light as life has learned to use it, as a celebration of energy and sentience that requires a degree of self-organized energy and negative entropy. The idea that negentropy is local and requires a bounded system can be the symbolism of the circle and the wall. This card is also Iliaco, the genius of the energy of Light, one of the three vital cosmic powers, along with Chronico and Cosmico, the geniuses of Time and the World, who were all portrayed in the old Mantegna tarot. As Harold Morowitz wrote, in *Energy Flow in Biology*, "The flow of energy through a system acts to organize that system." This is how the Light learns.

This is perhaps the simplest card in the deck, and certainly the happiest. Waite took Eliphaz Levi's suggestion and turned away from the image of two children playing, which had been canon since the Marseille tarot, replacing them with a single child astride a white horse, sporting a red scarf. This was a mistake, and it's not even worth a short discussion. The card should depict two naked children, who should perhaps be far enough into puberty to make you start to question either the appropriateness of the depiction or that of your own cultural attitudes. Just for your edification, these kids have already been playing doctor for years now, and are still innocent. They are simply better informed than most cultures would want them to be. As with the Star, having nothing to hide is a virtue. Transparency and sunshine laws are two ways that we have adopted this in our saner cultural structures. We have other names for the virtue of shedding light on things, like candor, frankness, sincerity, honesty, disclosure, discovery, *xediantropia*, *parrhesia*, openness, and *glasnost*. Sunshine or sunlight is also the greatest antiseptic, a purifying as well as an organizing force. In both of these senses, and in both mental and physical realms, it will mean better health. The light will clean, dispel, purge, flush out, burn off, purify, revitalize, regenerate, and reorganize what is failing for want of robustness, resilience, and energy. The sun gods are always the healers, at least the healers who don't need to study techniques, for whom health is the natural state.

We are all taught that energy is conserved in its many transformations from one form into another, and this card depicts the excitement of these transformations. Where these happen, we have the possibilities of self-organization, like negative entropy and life, for example, or energy that is learning. It is not the case that sunshine is the sole source of energy for all of life on Earth: there are other tellurian and chemical forces, and nuclear energy deep in the core. But sunshine powers most of our plant and animal life. Sunshine gets locked up in sugars by plants, and sugars are used to make structures,

cellulose, and alcohols used to make lignin. When any of these catch fire, the light and heat that come out is the same old sunlight that first went in, now getting free again. One of the ways to catch fire is our metabolism, and one of the manifestations of this is the energy used in the nerves, that lights up our minds as the process called consciousness. This is sunlight become aware. It may then become aware of itself or remain in flow, spontaneous and unselfconscious. The sense that we have of ourselves is none other than sunshine itself, in the process of moving on, still journeying into the night. This is not what was meant in Isaiah 40:6 by “All flesh is grass,” but we can still use this for that. But it is what was meant in the Zhouyi by “attending the cow is good fortune,” as this is the chapter of Li and the Sun. The cow will become our awareness as the log becomes our fire. Light is food and food is light.

We gather the light and store it in our fuel and potential. We depend on our sources and causes for what we are to become. We charge matter up with the light. We slow the light down so it stays put until we need it. This is the core of material and materialism. It's not a thing to be flown from, or a thing for angels to escape, but more of a thing to be cared for. We don't love and respect our matter enough. This moment that they say is all that really is, is only our minds catching fire, lighting matter back up. We and our moments are fountainheads of light. We don't seem to celebrate this as well or as often as the flame that dances around on the log, released at last from its colder and lowlier states. This point of release is all that we really have or are, as the rest is still asleep and unaware, just another part of the material world at large. Life is as good as it gets when we're setting lots of light free. We call this by many names: zest, brio, elan, exuberance, enthusiasm, play, living it up, vivacity, vitality, vibrancy, fun in the sun, high spirits, enlightenment, and lightheartedness. Even post-pubescent old folks can have this.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this moment is that this is the only time that we can choose where the light will go next. Radiation, by definition, is moving outward, emerging, evolving, diverging, opening up to the options, rising up and outward. To stand out is what 'exist' means. Light, having learned, learns to keep learning. It does this by choosing a direction and having an experience, and then experiencing the consequences of choosing that direction. It's quite a system. By this it gets ever more lucid and clear, brighter and better informed. Some of humanity's gravest errors come from interfering or intervening with this process while thinking that we already know best. This is the whole point of liberty or freedom, this moving point of choice that we have. We learn by doing, and learn much less by being told what and what not to do. Herbert Spencer wrote, “The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.” We need the authority to act, the sovereignty, dignity, autonomy, license, and freedom to act, and then we need, every bit as much, both the courage to face the consequences and an inability to deny or look away from those consequences. Human is as human does, so we only get better by learning how to do better. This is a card of Liberty.

Key Words:

adventure, affirmation, antisepsis, arising, assurance, attention, awakening, awareness, basking, bounded systems, brightening, brio, burning, carpe diem, charging, clarification, cleansing, consciousness, dawn, dawning, daylight, disclosure, discovery, disinfection, diversification, divulgence, elan vital, emanation, emergence, energy gradients, energy learning, enlightenment, eudaemonia, evolution, existence, expansion, experiment, explosion of options, exposure, expression, exuberance, flame on, frankness, freedom, fresh outlook, fun in the sun, glasnost, glory days, growth, harmonious relationship, healing, health, heliotropes, illumination, innocence,

intelligence, joie de vivre, joy, liberation, liberty, life, light of day, lightheartedness, lighting up, living it up, lucidity, luminosity, matter as fuel, metabolism, moment, negative entropy, negentropy, opening up, openness, outwardness, *parrhesia*, play, primordial light, purging, recharging, raising consciousness, regeneration, reinvigoration, renewal, restoration, revelation within, rising to grace, self-fulfilling optimism, self-organization, shamelessness, shed light, shining example, sincerity, source, sunny disposition, sunshine laws, systems theory, the moment now, things looking up, tolerance, transparency, vigor, vitality, vividness, warmth, wellness, wholeness, youth, zest.

Warnings and Reversals:

blindness, blindness, counterproductive constraints, coverup, delusion, disrespect, facade, false enthusiasm, fear of clouds, fear of night, fog, hyperactivity, ignorance, light on ugliness, loneliness, mania, narcissism, over-maturity, overstimulation, performance anxiety, projection, religious moralizing, repression, secrecy, sepsis, shadows, shame, suppression, vanity.

Components:

The Sun is the most straightforward symbol in the deck, and is almost not even a symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with its associations to Sol, Tipareth, and the Bagua Li, and second-tier astrological associations to Leo and the 5th House. All suggest a world of energy in motion, transforming, moving around, coming alive, waking up, spreading out, evolving, diversifying.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Sol, Hammah; Sentience, the inner light, the sense of being alive, the spark within or elan vital, vital force or essence, spirit like horses have. Attention, awareness, sentience, self-consciousness as a flame, the release of energy trapped by photosynthesis, with better organization than a typical flame, light that's learning. Individuality, character. The personality's fuel or favorite mode of expression. Deep self as an energy system, with basic drives for wholeness, health and identity. The conscious will or willingness, affirmation. Self-direction, liberty, personal authority.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Resh. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Resh with various other Planets, with little agreement. Resh as Head is a useful symbol here as the central locus of cerebroception or consciousness, the location where our metabolic fires burn brightest.

Yijing: Bagua 5, Li, Fire, Arising or the Clinging. Li, as flame and sunlight, might be thought of as symbolic of the energy which powers, organizes, lights and informs living beings, except that this is not symbol but reality: fire is spirit's face. Energy which now is awareness, or a campfire, was yesterday trapped in a plant's complex sugars, the day before, light, on the way to photosynthesis. Tomorrow this may be invested again, in creation, memory, knowledge, or friendship. Li encompasses both perspectives: on one's sources or resources, and on one's present transformation, on both on the fuel and on the flame's application in the greater beyond, on convergence and diversification. This is the fourth dimension, a being's transformative track or trail through time: then, now & when. Shining, articulating, individuating, renewing, transforming, metabolizing. Intelligence, clarity, vision. Burning, combustion. Identity, spark, departure. Health, healing, hearth.

Judgment

#20, The Angel, Il Giudizio (or L' Angelo), Le Jugement (Lo Angelo or Gabriel),
The Last Judgment, The Aeon, the Spirit of the Primal Fire
Choice, Resolve, Calling, Awakening

Image: This trump is traditionally depicted as the Last Judgment, featuring the angel Gabriel sounding the seven notes on his trumpet from above, as a varying number of the reanimated dead arise joyfully from their newly-opened coffins to meet their maker and respective eternities of reward or punishment. While most of the trumps evolved with the times, in proportion to how much they needed to change, this one has somehow resisted the pressure. Yet the meaning, as usually depicted, is the most childish and delusional of fantasies, and this has always been the card most in need of an upgrade. This is especially ironic, since the core meaning of this card is a moving on from a past that hasn't been working, and setting out on a newer and superior path. This plea for a change in design is not a novel proposal here. Crowley took the lead on this with his Aeon card, and the idea behind it has much to recommend it. His Thoth deck shows a new Aeon or zeitgeist taking the place of or overthrowing an older era of humanity. Unfortunately, his solution was bound fast to his less-than-universal, personal mythology. At least he had a very amusing take on the eschatology of it: that the world had already been destroyed by fire, back in the otherwise bucolic 1903, so now it was time to quit fretting and just get on with creating the new era, using better judgment this time. Robin Wood drew an even better idea by depicting this card as a female phoenix, re-arising from her own embers. This image is also consistent with the Hebrew Mother Letter Shin, representing the element of fire. A new being arises from the flames or ashes of one who went before. If a revised image were to capture both this phoenix and reawakening humans, these humans might be emerging from prison or sepulcher-like structures to greet this phoenix figure painted in the clouds across a dawn sky. Life begins again today. This is a rebirth and not a reincarnation, a distinction that even most Buddhists fail to understand. It does concern what survives an older version of us.

The broader idea of Judgment can remain in place here, particularly if it simply means making better choices, based on better information, especially if these are hard choices that alter our direction in life. The fundamental idea of apocalypse, ἀποκάλυψις can also stay in place: this simply means the dis-closure or dis-discovery of something hidden. Associations between these and the end times, or eschatology, are separate, and much of this can be dismissed here, unless specifically speaking of a discontinuous transformation in our development or evolution, the ending of a way of life, the replacement of a central paradigm, starting a new chapter, a major plot twist, or a rebirth that abandons old ways. Here we might find Nietzsche's idea the 'man is something to be surpassed.' Resurrection simply means to rise again, and so also applies to the phoenix image. Even the symbolism of a wake-up call being sounded still fits, although it need not be a clarion call, fanfare, or reveille. And the calling can be our own inner voice, conscience, or higher purpose, the drumming that we hear, which can be a heartbeat. If we want to be real about salvation, however, we can abandon the whole Western idea of this as a quick and easy fix, already purchased by a human sacrifice and drinking magic blood. It makes a lot more sense to shift towards Buddha's opinion that salvation means a lifetime, or more, of heedfulness and diligence. The old question remains about what ends in death and what might go on. Here we are probably safest, if not most comforted, by reexamining what we are in

terms of processes and the propagation of the consequences that arise from our judgments and decisions, the real meaning of karma.

Not all of our crossroads or choice points will lead to large-scale transformations, but the whole of our pasts converge in every moment, and the big ones, in hindsight, didn't always look like much. The best we can do is live and learn, and play the probabilities we've learned, being heedful, paying attention, and using our best judgment. We can also *aprender en cabeza ajena*, or learn in another's head, or pick some wisdom up from third parties and cultures. This may require ignoring some rapid platitudes about not being judgmental or how we are already perfect. We have to make decisions and choices, weigh things and discern, discriminate and evaluate, or else live among the sleepwalkers and simply move with an indeterminate crowd. Judgment is assertiveness, which can also work against us when asserting inferior judgment. If the way our lives are going suggests a new direction, a radical change or departure, or moving on from past behavior, we might seek out paths that go in different directions. Sometimes the path we ought to be on crosses ours at right angles, in which case we are often knocked sideways by life and kept off our balance. This might be the case for most of us. We move at cross-purposes to the paths of our real power. We live our lives out of balance. The association made here between this card and astrology's Uranus, with its surprising and radical transformations, discontinuities and broken causal chains, refers to this common need to get back on track, and then to our common failure to do so. Sometimes, too, we are better attuned to the powers at play in our lives, and we get to see a shining path that shows us which way to turn to live to our best advantage. This is the best of blessings when it shows us the best and the worst at once. Such a moment is called *samvega* in Pali. It makes choices easier.

Just desserts, the consequences of good and bad judgment, reaping the sown, or coming into one's due, don't need to be the judgment of another, or of society as a whole. We can hold ourselves accountable, pay our own debts, make reparations and amends, forgive, redeem, and even save ourselves, with some difficulty, of course. We need not be ethical cowards in this, whether passing this off to some savior or waiting for the next lifetime. These failures, too, go onto our permanent records, even though few ever look into these. To repent is to really change, after truly sensing what harm we have done, what pain we may have caused, and atonement is repairing the world, *tikkun*, and paying our rent for the privilege of living here in this world. Forgiveness is what we must do for ourselves, since we can't turn ourselves around with the whole past as baggage.

In the end we come down to two decent choices. We have a chance to emerge into a better life for ourselves, to blow ballast and surface into the light and fresh air, to be twice born, having passed through our fires and trials, to shed our cocoons, transformed, and ready for some of those higher dimensions, to create and fulfill our personal purposes in life, to actualize ourselves. Or we can take a still higher and sometimes more dangerous path and serve a higher purpose, something beyond our own selves, lives, and lifetimes, sometimes so transpersonal, so far beyond ourselves, that we cease to matter at all. This of course requires better judgment than most folks can manage, as many will mistake this for following flags into war, and other senseless acts. Good judgment here is more akin to *satyagraha*, holding true to some higher order of being, obedient first to higher laws and our own conscience. Our highest and best higher purpose is still the Great Work, the transformation of mankind, because, once again, man is something to be surpassed. For all that we owe the world, we still have a valid potential above and beyond earth and nature, and possibly even in space. This assumes, of course, that the consequences of our various judgments will ever allow us to transition into such states before we destroy ourselves with bad judgment.

Key Words:

accountability, alternate futures, apocalypse, apotheosis, atonement, awakening, blowing ballast, break from past, calling, change in essential nature, change of state, choice point, closure, conscience, conversion experience, creative problem solving, critical mass, crossroads, definite steps, discernment, disclosure, discontinuity, discontinuous change, discovery, epiphany, far-reaching decisions, final assessment, final decision, final exam, getting on track, graduation, growing up, higher perspective and purpose, history as art, large-scale transformation, liberation, life beyond death, metalevel jump, metamorphosis, momentous decisions, moving on, new era, new chapter, new identity, new lease on life, on-switch, outside the box, paradigm shift, plot twist, quantum leap, radical change or departure, radical moves, reawakening, rebirth, recognition, reckoning, reconfiguration, redefinition, redemption, *renovatio*, rescue, resolution, resolve, resurrection, revision, revolution, rite of passage, *samvega*, self-determination, self-directed behavior, shining path, starting over, strong emergence, sudden enlightenment, summons, surviving death, *tikkun*, tipping point, transcendence, transition to new order, verdict, vocation, wakeup call, waking the dead, willpower, won't power, wrapping up.

Warnings and Reversals:

bad judgment, bias, corrupted life, doomed to repeat history, ethical cowardice, failure, going sideways, hard choices, hard consequences, intolerance, judgmentalness, karmic reckoning, koyaanisqatsi, lack of judgment, life out of balance, off track, out of step, out of synch, postponement, procrastination, regret, remorse, retribution, self-love as merely unconditional narcissism, stagnation, unwillingness.

Components:

Judgment is a fairly pure conception. In the system used here, the planet Uranus has been stripped from the Fool and reassigned here. The Fool gets no assignment, as explained on that page. Uranus might be thought to have some lingering meanings in common with the sign of Aquarius and the Eleventh House, which are given more direct assignments to the Star card.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Uranus. Self as a path through cosmos, the intelligible universe, only a place where powers meet for a time, a knot, network or nexus. The fulcrum of radical change, choice-point sensitivity, destiny, large scale transformation from an action in the right place and time. Suddenness or discontinuity in life as a function of the distance of self from its path of power, or its lack of attunement. The magick current, the energy of one's real gifts. Metalevels, creativity, dynamic reorganization of the world view, remodeling deep structure, liberty, hazard. The transit opposition is the 42-year midlife crisis. Uranus is relocated here from its incorrect Golden Dawn assignment to the Fool. Case (Oracle 62) suggests 'undercurrents of force not easily determinable, or appearance of unexpected elements' and yet he still did not catch the Uranus connection.

Qabalah: The Mother Letter Shin, for the element Fire as the part of a triad, with Air and Water. Shin is symbolized both by fire and by a tooth. A tooth has bite. Fire, which transforms, is more useful than tooth, although a flame also has some bite.

Yijing: Bagua 7, Qian, Creating. Qian, as Heaven or Sky, is the symbol of higher order(s) in nature. This is the heaven which the astronomer inquires into, and not that of Western religions, and yet it is both sacred and divine, worthy of wonder, reverence, and gratitude, but not a god, and not needing worship. Uranus was the original sky god

in the west. Although it's a grand design, it's still self-organizing, lacking a designer. It's orderly and moves with direction, but it lacks both purpose and plan. It's intelligible, but without presupposing an intelligence. It protects the righteous when upright people choose to live within the order of things, in harmony with the natural law. Both accident and luck do exist here, but longevity tends to favor the true. This is the first dimension, length and direction. Resolution combining both vision and drive, resolve, design, perseverance, intention, direction, purpose, higher purpose.

The World

#21, Il Mondo, Le Monde, the Universe,
The Great One of the Night of Time, The End of the World
Worldliness, Emergence, Homecoming, Wholeness

Image: A goddess, who is nude except for a loosely-draped, strategically-placed veil, is shown in mid-dance, weightless, holding a wand in each hand. Behind her is the full Earth, and behind that, the oval form of an elliptical galaxy, like our own Milky Way, all against a background of the Night of Time. Her veil is not worn out of shyness: it's part of the dance, 'the only dance there is,' Lila, a divine playfulness. She is Gaia, the wife of Uranus, or *Anima Mundi*, the World Soul, *Shekinah*, the Presence, *Malkah* the Queen, and *Kallah* the Bride. This card represents an emphatic denial of dualism, or a recovery from duality through a reunification with reality at large, at really large. In particular, this card denies the idiotic assertions that things worldly, material, and fleshly are profane, unspiritual, or unholy. As with the Wheel, the corners of the card are occupied by the Kerubs of the four elements, showing a full circle of seasons, each in its full glory. The oval of the galaxy, formerly a laurel wreath, carries the golden 1.618 ratio, and it also suggests both the cosmic egg and a *vesica piscis*. Some commentators wish to call the figure androgynous or hermaphroditic, but despite the overall theme of unity of this card, there is just too much to suggest the goddess Gaia, as a grand, emergent being, created out of the synergetic interaction of the material world and the living biosphere. A woman has all the DNA needed to make a being.

There exists some pressure and valid rationale for renaming this card 'the Universe,' to acknowledge the more extended horizons that modern culture has found. This push is in part to accommodate newer associations with Saturn, who needs to be remembered as the outermost planet for most of astronomy's very long history, and therefore symbolic of the outer limits of existence, and human finitude. But there are too many purely local aspects to this card's meaning to develop such a grandiose concept, beyond reminding us that the larger universe is out there. For now, this card needs to imply that we have a home here, when we are ready to more fully inhabit it. A core idea here is that we need to come to terms with this world, as our reality, to accept and to live within our limits cheerfully, to respect that we already have a great generational ship for exploring the stars, to drop the delusional nonsense about being angels descended from elsewhere to walk around in puppets of meat. As cited before in the context of the number Ten, this is Alan Watts' wisdom, 'You did not come into this world, you came out of it, like a wave comes out of the ocean. You are not a stranger here.' Here we affirm our life incarnate, and that we end here where we began. Or, in the words of T.S. Eliot, 'We shall not cease from exploring, and the end of our exploring will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time.' This is literally a card for the worldly. However, the world is really big, much bigger than dreamt of in our philosophy, and we only sense a few narrow bands of her much broader spectra. It requires states of mind far more expansive than those we are used to in order to fully appreciate the world we have here. We spend most of our lives with this world at our feet, but seldom really arrive. We take the world for granted, but its ordinariness is just a thin layer of dust that's hiding the magic of it all. The dullness is in us. The ordinariness just rubs off, and the sacred shines through.

The most mundane interpretations of this card simply suggest that we have completed a task or journey, that something is now attained, that a matter has reached its conclusion, or that a process has culminated. At the least, things are now in their

final stages and we make ready to wrap these things up. The prognosis is usually good, ignoring the world's frequent disobedience to our will, and that our outcomes are sometimes those we deserve instead of the ones we wanted. There is also frequent mention of an ultimate fulfillment, finality, or perfection. This may come from people who live in some world other than this one. Sometimes we just need to find ways to think of things as complete. Sometimes we just have to accept the things we cannot change. The Saturnian element can be useful here to recommend a cheerful realism, acceptance of the limits, the givens and facts, as the most sensible place to begin from, regardless of how high our ambitions may be. We take a comprehensive view, see the things we would rather not see, because care and respect will set us on solid ground. We might, to no ill effect, immerse and involve ourselves in material matters, participate in creation, roll up our sleeves, work hard, sweat and get soiled. We might also learn to acknowledge the damage we do, and that we are not immune to the world's reactions as consequences of our own.

Such a materialistic and worldly view will still admit a number of respectable, human states of mind which might be termed mystical, and yet these particular states remain available to scientists, and philosophers armed with critical thinking skills and Occam's razor. While often claimed by religions, they belong to human evolution, and may even be better off in the care of neuroscientists. Pantheism describes one such understanding, although to call all the world 'God' serves only the purpose of making our friends less uneasy about our souls. Panentheism is just that transcendent god trying to weasel his way back in. Emergence might be the most useful idea, the idea that the world can give birth to unexpected things, qualia, like the color blue, or consciousness, and maybe even spirit, things that might still become real, even if not original parts of the world. Einstein famously noted, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom the emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed." Some of us make awe into awful, perhaps wanting a much smaller and more manageable world. But to manage all that we can see, we can also just limit our worlds, lock ourselves up in cabinets, and only claim what little we own.

We want to remember that cosmic consciousness is not the end of the search: it's only one door to go through, the sooner the better. It's not the same thing as having arrived. Getting to the ordinary is vital as well, and seeing it as sacred is a bigger step than you'd think. One version of this particular journey was penned by Qingyuan Weixin, "First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is." In Zen lore, the Ten Oxherding Pictures depict the ten steps to enlightenment, which culminate 'back in the world, with gift-giving hands.' The goal is not ascension into white light, it's coming home. Of course we should also be thinking in terms of kalpas and light years, and regard these as special as well. The real world must also be a world without you in it, or with an insignificant or long-forgotten you, or a place where you must ask if you still really exist at all. This is unavailable to those who are too big and full of themselves. Humility of scale gives us better horizons, beyond those of our playpens and nations. Reverence requires neither a church nor a deity, and it helps us to remember to care and respect. Albert Schweitzer's 'reverence for life' is a great start, but we should also save some reverence for waterfalls, thunderstorms, and clean air too. Gratitude is a fine state as well, and reminds us to give a little something back, to be more than parasites on this world of wonders. We can be OK with finitude and mortality: it's really all we born to deserve. As Vonnegut reminds us, we were mud that got to sit up and take a look around. Lucky mud.

Key Words:

acceptance, adventure, affirmation of this life incarnate, *aham brahmasmi*, appropriate wonder, as full as it gets, arrival, attainment, big picture, belonging here, bounty beyond any acquisition, broadened or expanded horizons, closing the circle, coming full circle, conclusion, completion, comprehension, consummation, creation, culmination, ecstasy as 'out of stasis,' elegant solutions, emergence, eternity, exploration, extension, finality, finding a home here, finitude and system constraints, fully expanded horizons, Genius of the World (*Cosmico*), globalization, gratitude, great mandala, greater scheme of things, having it all, higher consciousness, homecoming, horizons, immanence, immersion, infinity, integration, involvement, liberation from self, limitations, micro and macrocosm, materialism, microcosm in macrocosm, moksha, multi-dimensionally, mundane affairs, nature, not man apart, Pan, pantheism, reabsorption, realism, reality, realization, realms, re-homing, reintegration, rejoining the universe, resolution, reunification, sacredness of the ordinary, samadhi, satisfaction, scale, suchness, sum of manifest things, synthesis, system comprehension, systems thinking, *tat tvam asi, tiānxià*, thinking globally, totality, ultimate imperfection, unitive experience, universality, vastness, wholeness, world egg, worldliness, worldly concerns, wrapping up, yugen.

Warnings and Reversals:

cascade failures, delay, distraction, entropy, fear, fugue, greediness, heaviness, hostile environment, ingratitude, insatiability, jadedness, metastasis, misuse, narrow horizons, negligence, nihilism, parasitism, pessimism, poverty, quitting midway, self-limitation, stagnation, stasis, terminal ego, thoughtlessness, waste, weight of the world, world-weariness.

Components:

The World is a straightforward symbol. Portmanteaus may be made with its associations to Saturn, Tau, Kether, Daath, and now Yang, but no second-tier astrological associations, except perhaps for the Earth itself. There is a mysterious connection here between Kether and Malkuth as groom and bride, who are reunited through *Tikkun Ha'Olam*, repairing the world.

Correspondences:

Astrology: Saturn, Shabbetai; Self as the difference or remainder, the universe minus the not-self, defined in terms of the other, in terms of what it is not. Living at the boundary, touch and abrasion, pain as a sign of resistance. Learned limits of self-assertion, the skin and psychological integument, the edge of vulnerability, of self as most narrowly defined. Restraint, discipline, trials. Realistic and even cheerful acceptance of limitations. Saturn in the higher forms as a working interface between self and other. Concentration on the immediate moment. Authenticity, realism, knowing one's limits. The quality of validity to which one reduces experience. The realm of the search for meaning.

Qabalah: The Double Letter Tau. The Jewish Kabbalists associate Tau with various other Planets, with little agreement. Tau, as a mark or T cross, is a signature or a seal, a mark made by a witness.

Yijing: Hsiao 1, Yang, the Active, Banners in the Sun. This association was a challenge. Yang's original meanings concern light, sunlight or energy, and even before there was Yin-Yang theory, it contrasted with Yin, the shade. And here we have the material world, usually thought of as darkness. But even the heaviest matter is just slow, frozen light. And if we could journey to the darkest part of space, our eyes would

be filled with the starlight passing through. There is really no escaping the light. This is energy, nature, activity, and life, nearly always in motion in some way or other. Even heavy, old lead is loaded with zippy little electrons.

The Symbols of Western Astrology

A Primer

Note to the reader: I wrote this in the late 80s, just over 30 years ago, and have done only minimal revisions, corrections, and updates here.

It isn't our purpose here to praise, study, or belittle the efforts of astrologers to justify this old tapestry as respectable science. Neither is whether, how, or why astrology 'works' of any concern, yet. This much we know: at least since history began, some form of astrology more complex than the simple measurement of time and season has accompanied every major civilization. During these millennia, human beings have subjected themselves to complex, confusing, and unnatural forms of psychological stress, leaving themselves in need of a way of looking at themselves (psychology) which did not yet exist. The prototypical psychologist, then called shaman, wizard, or priest, needed three things in order to deliver on his society's need for counseling: a) a science of his own to understand the machinery of the mind and its interface with its ecosystem, b) a simple language to use as a vehicle for delivering his observations, and 3) a powerful mystique to instill credulity (a more pressing need than credibility) in the minds of those in need of advice. Clearly, the most powerful and mysterious thing in the universe was the universe. And he had ready-made divisions of the grand scheme in the systems developed for timekeeping and agriculture. All he had to do was embed the notion "as above, so below." These needs constituted and still describe the context of astrology's youth. At least this was the need underlying the evolution of the system, even if it was rarely, if ever, perceived as such until recently. The significant point is that astrology has had thousands of years to adjust, adapt, or attune itself to our human needs, regardless of its metaphysical accuracy. It is foremost a language constructed for the purpose of guidance through times of doubt and stress. The credulous, however, continue to invest it with a much grander reality and mystique. But rather than use these arguments to refute astrology as science, the believer can still make use of the work here to further refine the basic concepts of the discipline for the purposes of more specific or rigorous testing.

The compulsion to go too far in extrapolating deductively from a simple cognitive system has been as active in astrology as anywhere else. The permutations of inventible ideas exceed the scope of the human mind, as the great mounds of books on the subject will attest. This mass of available conjecture presents an ominous challenge to the novice and threatens to preclude an understanding of the simplicity of the basic system. We will attempt at least a partial remedy here by presenting, as concisely as possible, definitions of astrology's most fundamental concepts and operations. A thorough understanding of these is sufficient both to interpret a chart and to use the symbols outside of astrology's purview and contexts. Some aspects of both ancient and modern astrology won't be discussed here. The system of 36 Decans, adopted by the Golden Dawn to add a more mysterious patina of antiquity to its Occult Tarot, will be ignored as irrelevant, even to Tarot. We can go so far as to call it silly and offend some believers. Progressions won't be discussed. Relative to other systems of correspondence, particularly to the Hebrew Kabbalah and the West's Qabalah, some innovations from the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley will be corrected, dropped, or otherwise altered.

Astrology is a language. The chart is a paragraph. A planet in a sign and a house is a complete sentence, which is connected to other sentences in a paragraph by aspects.

Unlike English paragraphs, the sentences or clauses don't follow one another in a linear sequence, but relate to each other reciprocally and simultaneously as a gestalt. A second major difference between astrology and English is that its limited vocabulary of less than a hundred words is defined connotatively instead of denotatively: the concepts evoke and accrue meanings and key words around a core or key meaning which cannot be simply described with a single word. The four major parts of speech (planet, sign, house and aspect) and the rules for combining them constitute the language's grammar. This is not analogy or metaphor. Some may argue that such a purely linguistic approach divorces the "science" of astrology from the sky and places the responsibility and the purview of the science purely within the human psyche. It perhaps even suggests that the science is an invention and not a discovery. But there are no lines between the stars, and the sky is not divided. There are no twos, threes, fours or twelves up there. They are not needed or useful above - only below. The mesh of the net we have cast across the deep of the cosmos can only be drawn around make-believe fish.

The Planets are the subjects of the sentences and clauses. It may help to view them as verbs or gerunds instead of nouns. Ultimately, they are huge, complicated rocks in orbit around our star, upon which we projected our gods. Even in the beginning, these gods were part of ourselves, our "I" diffracted into a multiplicity of aspects. The planets in astrology symbolically divide an entity into functional parts, kinds of personal identity, dimensions of experience, potentials for action or modes of personal being (e.g. desiring, empowering, incorporating, etc.), and to some, these are parts of the soul.

The Signs of the zodiac are akin to adverbs, or more specifically, intransitive adverbial predicates. The twelve signs divide life's ways of behaving into twelve types or qualities of behaving, much as matter may be said to burn, ooze, blow, blow up, be boring, etc. As adverbs, they describe a planet-subject's propensities or preferences for ways to come into play (affectively, cognitively, behaviorally, etc) its modus operandi. This is the planet's how, its most comfortable means of expression, its recurrent character or its favorite feeling.

The Houses are akin to prepositional phrases (specifically, transitive prepositional predicates). These twelve divide life's objective realms into where's, twelve typical classes of contexts (e.g) selfhood, home, relationship, vocation, etc.). As prepositional predicates they describe a planet-subject's wont, propensity, or preference for certain situations, contexts, issues or places to manifest. They tend to be its favorite outlet or channel of expression. This does not mean that the planet will be successful in or adapt to these realms, only that the issues will tend to recur.

Three tenses are embedded in the meanings of both the twelve signs and the twelve houses. These are the three "qualities." Through the signs they are called cardinal, fixed and mutable, and through the houses, angular, succedent and cadent. These do not equate with our more familiar tenses of past, present and future except by a stretch fit. They are compounds of both synchronic (same time, left, right, and center) and diachronic (through time, past, present, and future) elements and are defined by a conglomerate of notions. The first tense tends to concentrate on origins, the second on present states and maintenance, and the third on changes wrought.

Four genders are also embedded in the meanings of both the signs and the houses. There are the four classical elements of fire, earth, air and water (in the zodiac order) and the four "Quadruplicities," unnamed, through the houses. Symbolic quadruplicities are nearly universal across human cultures, although specific assignments may vary. Among other things, these are Jung's four personality types, intuiting, sensing, thinking and feeling, in the order above.

The planets, or parts of the self, operating through the energy of a sign, in the realm of a house, form the complete but dependent clause of the paragraph. It still remains for us to weave these together into a whole paragraph.

The Aspects are akin to conjunctions (specifically, hypotactic interdependent modes) which work in both directions. They relate the dependent clauses one to the other, simultaneously and reciprocally in specific ways (e.g. cooperates with, at cross purposes to, etc.). Unaspected clauses should be viewed as paratactically conjoined (as by a semicolon), not really independent, since self is not really split into parts. The aspects thus describe the integration of experience within and among the various dimensions of selfhood. They may refer, for instance, to the way the mind relates to the heart. If the planets represent one's personal dynamics, then the aspects represent the biomechanics operative prior to personal output.

The Ascendant or rising sign ties the entire grid of of houses and points to a separately rotating wheel of the zodiac. This is astrology's equivalent of the theme sentence introducing a paragraph. It sets an interpretive tone for the entire gestalt. It's the equivalent of selecting and establishing a reference coordinate system in the language of analytic geometry.

Lastly, the paragraph is peppered with assorted forms of punctuation, interjections, modifiers, and complex logical loops. The most significant of these are discussed below in the contexts of the parts of speech to which they most apply.

The above grammar, given practice, should enable one to assemble the elements of a chart's vocabulary into a meaningful whole or gestalt. As a final note, a reader should always be on the lookout for features of unusual coincidence, such as groupings of planets in a quadrant, house, element or sign, or the lack or dominance of a particular element. In such a case, some specific term or structural component of the language can assume as much importance as a clause.

The basic vocabulary of astrology is presented below in thesaurus form. The thesaurus is by no means complete.

The Planets

Sol and Luna - the Lights

The source and manifestation of the vital forces, the light divesting of matter, and light investing in form, Genius and Psyche, the fiery spirit and the watery soul.

Sol:

QBLH: #6, Tipareth, Resh

Tarot: The Sun, the Sixes

Yi: Bagua Li, flame

Cycle: 1 year geocentric, 365-1/4 days

Sentience, the inner light, the sense of being alive, the spark within or elan vital, vital force or essence, spirit. Attention, awareness, self-consciousness as a flame, the release of energy trapped by photosynthesis, with better organization than a typical flame, light that learns. Deep self as an energy system, with basic drives for wholeness, health and identity.

Powers: integrity, individuality, character, self-direction, conscious will or willingness, affirmation, liberty, personal authority.

Feelings: spirited, hearty, radiant, luminous, alive, vital, shameless, sunny, energetic, lively, bright, entitled.

By sign: the personality's fuel or favorite way of expressing

By house: one's favorite stage or sense of personal domain

Luna:

QBLH: #9, Yesod, Gimel

Tarot: The High Priestess, the Nines

Yi: Bagua Kan, water

Cycle: 27.32 days sidereal

Readiness, responsiveness, sensitivity to impression, nurture, the cumulative past, including the ancestors, inherited and accumulated functions and behavioral forms, the embodiment as soul, apperceptive mass and perceptual inertia. Nourishment, growth, assimilation, absorption. The ability to receive. Memory, imagination, dream as basis.

Powers: waiting, adapting, learning, letting go, surrender, fertility, gestation, sympathy, empathy, involvement,

Feelings: receptive, protean, impressed, impressionable, fertile, moody, vulnerable, mysterious, borrowed, welcome, present.

By sign: methods and manners of growing, absorbing, changing

By house: the sense of at-home-ness, the comfortable environment

Lunation Cycle: Interrelates the meanings of Sol and Luna's personality types, according to lunar phases. $\pm 22-1/2$ degrees

New: Projective

Crescent: Assertive

1st Q: Forceful

Gibbous: Questing

Full: Objective

Disseminating: Demonstrative

3rd Q: Institutive

Balsamic: Distributive

Mercury and Venus, the Personal Planets

Thought and feeling, logos and eros, objective and subjective modes of perception, the nerves and the glands, the electrical and the chemical senses.

Mercury

QBLH: #8, Hod, Beth

Tarot: The Magician, the Eights, Beth

Yi: Bagua Xun, the Gentle, Penetrating

Cycle: 88 days, always within 28 degrees of Sol

Mentation, the structure of perception and communication, the nervous system, information and networking, logistics, discernment, assessment, association, making connections. Cognitive tools, repertoire, skill, familiarity, repeatability. Nimbleness, quickness, dexterity, cleverness, craft, precision, mental agility, the trickster and illusion, creative problem solving.

Powers: versatility, vicarious trial and error, skills, models, analogy-making, language both in cognition and communication,

Feelings: Alert, exacting, intelligent, light, subtle, supple, informed, lively, ambivalent, fast, changeable, mobile, mutable.

By sign: mode of analysis, method of inquiry, mindset.

By house: practical fields of interest, studies, applied learning.

Venus

QBLH: #7, Netzach, Daleth

Tarot: The Empress, the Sevens

Yi: Bagua Dui, the Joyous (departure from Crowley)

Cycle: 224 days, always within 48 degrees of Sol

Aesthetics, the creativity of perception, the beholder's eye, the endocrine system, chemical communication, attraction, desire, personal hydraulics, hedonics, hunger, appetite, satisfaction. Valences, the readiness to combine, valuation, motivated love, chosen responsiveness, acquisitiveness, interrelation, cohesion. Good attitude as a personal conquest, the ability to satisfy desire.

Powers: approval, consent, preference, valuation, taste, reciprocity, giving, celebration, tact, appreciation, communion.

Feelings: Eager, graceful, elated, joyous, sensual, passionate, permissive, erotic, tender, elegant, attractive, worthwhile.

By sign: energy of bewitchment, the feeling of feeling good.

By house: focus or locus of emotional value, where the heart is.

Dual Natures: The personal planets appear either behind or ahead of Sol at dawn and sunset. From this come dual natures and zodiac domains.

Mercury Epimetheus (Virgo) Hindsighted and conservative.

Mercury Prometheus (Gemini) Foresighted and progressive.

Venus Hesperus (Taurus) Sensible, response as a value.

Venus Lucifer (Libra) Emotions lead, response is a choice.

Mars and Jupiter, the Social Planets

Dynamics and equilibrium, kinetics and proprioception, power and poise, *thelema* and *agape*, survival and dominion, muscle and mind, will and love.

Mars

QBLH: #5, Gevurah, Pe

Tarot: The Tower, the Fives

Yi: Bagua Zhen, the Arousing

Cycle: 687 days, 57 days per sign

Thermodynamics, drive, kinetics, the muscular system, metabolic heat, manipulation and dominance, the warrior, force of character, assertiveness, competition and challenge, courage, control, gamesmanship. The battery or arsenal of survival techniques, learned and innate stratagems, ego as a backfire of the need for viability. The worth of survival.

Powers: as force effected with sense, dynamic imbalance, assertion, perseverance, stamina, effort, self-motivation.

Feelings: Bold, decisive, emphatic, charged, exuberant, piqued, potent, proud, robust, urgent, dynamic, vigorous.

By sign: favorite energy for pep and enthusiasm, get up and go.

By house: the playing field, the home turf and choice of weapons.

Jupiter

QBLH: #4, Chesed, Kaph

Tarot: the Wheel of Fortune, the Fours

Yi: Bagua Gen, Stillness (departure from Crowley)

Cycle: 11.86 years

The higher power of grace, majesty and command, being on top, The bestowing virtue, equanimity, sitting pretty, balance, equilibrium, poise. Self as the sum of its extensions, projects and probes, expansion, diastolic awareness, exploration. Self defined from within in positive terms, confirmation, what we get away with. Internal cohesion, order

among the pantheon of selves. Being motivation.

Powers: Stillness, optimization, trusting in life, goodwill, validation, bestowing honor, economy, extravagance.

Feelings: jovial, convivial, prosperous, fortunate, honored, paternal, generous, complete, solvent, adventuresome.

By sign: mode of incorporation, criteria deciding aptness.

By house: one's domain, purview, tenure, dais or soapbox.

Retrogradation is an apparent backward motion of planets through the zodiac from the geocentric point of view. Sol and Luna are never retrograde, Venus and Mars only rarely. Turns a portion of a planet's "output" self-consciously inward, like a governor on an engine, intensifying experience, diminishing efficacy unless used. Stationary planets are more reliably focused faculties.

Saturn and Pluto, the Planets of Finitude

Finality in life and the finality of death or greater reality. The limitations of selfhood and the preposterousness of the notion of self, Kronos and Soma, Time and Being.

Saturn

QBLH: #3-4 Daath, Kether on its highest order (Disagrees with Golden Dawn), Tau
Tarot: The Universe, the Aces

Yi: Xiao Yang

Cycle: 29.5 years, 2.7 years per sign

Self as the difference or remainder, the universe minus the not-self, defined in terms of the other, in terms of what it is not. Learned limits of self-assertion, the skin and psychological integument, the edge of vulnerability, of self as most narrowly defined.

Life at the boundary, touch and abrasion, pain as a sign of resistance. Restraint. Trials.

Powers: Authenticity, realism, consolidation of position, concentration on the immediate moment, knowing one's limits.

Feelings: heedful, scheming, rigorous, humbled, ballasted, disciplined, accountable, alone, abridged, grounded.

By sign: the quality of validity to which one reduces experience.

By house: the realm of the search for meaning, the challenge.

"As the last visible planet in the solar system, it is the symbol of limits, discipline, examinations and natural consequences. On a higher octave, Saturn is our representative of nature's immutable laws." (Payne-Towler)

Pluto

Losing Pluto as a "real" planet was both a loss and a gain to Astrology. Since we're not concerned with real planets here, we can at least present what it came to mean.

QBLH: #10 Kelipot (The mother letter Aleph alone has no location in this system)

Tarot: Not the Fool (given no astrological correspondence here), the Tens

Yi: Xiao Yin

Cycle: 248.4 years, 20.7 years per sign

Self as nothing when thinking itself apart, force majeure, universal momentum or inertia, the resistance to the will. Mass and critical mass, violence due to constriction.

The senselessness of it all. Cultural attempts at immortality, institutions, legacies, dynasties, religions, and self's means of coping with humanity's, submission or rebellion.

Powers: Refocalization, rethinking identity, building mass, elimination of the old, often painfully, personal evolution.

Feelings: Inadequate, powerless, swept along, mortal, small, responsible, anonymous, alienated, driven, wasted, unused.

By sign: a generation's identity, cultural-political movement.

By house: escape route to sanctuary or effective involvement.

Satan and the Saturn Return

Finitude, being a distasteful notion to the ego, tends to acquire subtle and bizarre connotations. But these are the reflections of man's ego on the face of the abyss, no reflection on the abyss itself. Limits can be viewed positively instead, as places to begin on *terra firma*, and cheerfully so. The Saturn return at age 29 brings new chances to do this.

Uranus and Neptune, the Planets Beyond

Nexus and nebula, cosmos and chaos, the path of power and the field of options, the sorcerer and the mystic, convergent and divergent awareness.

Uranus

QBLH: #2, Chokmah, Wisdom (Disagrees with Golden Dawn and Crowley), Shin

Tarot: Judgement, the Twos (Disagrees with Everybody)

Yi: Bagua Qian, Heaven

Cycle: 84.02 years, 7 years per sign

Self as a path through cosmos, the intelligible universe, only a place where powers meet for a time, a knot, network, or nexus. The fulcrum of radical change, choice-point sensitivity, destiny, large scale transformation from an action in the right place and time. Suddenness or discontinuity in life a function of the distance of the self from its path of power, its lack of attunement.

Powers: metalevels, creativity, dynamic reorganization of the world view, remodeling deep structure, liberty, hazard.

Feelings: Brisk, radical, primal, unique, willful, explosive, strategic, free, masterful, executive, resolved, electric.

By sign: the magick current, the energy of one's real gifts.

By house: the field through which one's path of power runs.

Neptune

QBLH: #3, Binah, Understanding (Disagrees with Golden Dawn and Crowley), Mem

Tarot: The Hanged Man, the Threes

Yi: Bagua Kun, Accepting

Cycle: 164.8 years, 13.7 years per sign

Self as a wake through chaos, the mysterious universe, a place where impressions are left, writ in water. One's reference feeling within greater environments, life, region, world. Processes of universalization, dissolution, embrace. The edge of measurability, the doors of perception, unification. Failure of definition and fact. Ocean and Gaia in the blood. Not so much the Neptune who was pissed off so much of the time.

Powers: belief, unbelief, hallucination, hypnotics, dreaming, mystic sensitivity, sense of undercurrents, direct experience.

Feelings: affiliated, enchanted, compassionate, imaginative, formless, elusive, tractable, prophetic, vague, tentative.

By sign: the zeitgeist, spirit of the times, tap to humanity.

By house: fertile mystic environment, career as a tributary.

The Slow-Moving Planets.

The outer or collective planets, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, stay in the same sign for years. These planets-in-signs indicate waves of age groups or generations. Purely personal relevance is found in house placement. By sign describes self only as a factor in greater worlds beyond selfhood and anthropomorphism. Mankind as a diachronic vector.

Dragon's Head and Pars Fortuna

Mathematically derived entities, treated interpretively as planets but void of innate capability or power. Places in the person to build character or a new faculty.

Dragon's Head, Caput Draconis, the Moon's North Node

Tarot: The Four Princesses, by Element

This is the point in the Zodiac where Luna's orbit, seen as a continuous locus, crosses the ecliptic, or Sol's "orbit" moving North. Luna's orbit remains within 5 degrees 17 minutes of Sol's, meaning Luna is higher in the sky in the winter and lower in the summer. Called variously "the symbolic mouth of the self" point of intake and integration," and "karmic significance of one's destiny in life," the dragon's head denotes the character (by sign) and the field (by house) of lessons to be learned, a new faculty to be developed, a promising project in personal psychology - an alternative to purely innate talent. An area of special freedom to act or create.

Pars Fortuna, the Part of Fortune, the First Arabian Part.

This is a point in the Zodiac bearing the same angular relationship to the Ascendant as Luna bears to Sol in the natal horoscope, or the lunation cycle projected through the Ascendant. The Part of Fortune denotes a self-image or identity particularly pleasing to the point of view. A point of deep personal interest, a magnetic attraction to a promise of well being, fertile ground for growth and the expression of a persona, a prime candidate for invocation and affirmation. An ideal state, lady's luck, baited hook. opportunity's knock, our own sword in the stone, a better mousetrap. The call of success, access to wherewithal.

Transits

The planets in the present sky, as placed within the zodiac, are said to have an effect on the planets in the natal horoscope when they fall within a specified number of degrees of an Aspect, especially a conjunction or opposition. The present-day sky is superimposed over the natal chart or paragraph with the same relationship of signs to houses. The transiting or present-sky planet is said to present objective aspects or experiences, according to its nature, to the subjectivity of the natal planet. The house of the transiting planet shows where to look for the influence, its sign shows the form of energy the influence will come in, its aspects show which of the faculties it will speak to. The two best-known transits are transiting Saturn conjunct natal Saturn (Saturn Returns at roughly 29.5 and 59 years of age) and transiting Uranus opposite natal Uranus (Midlife Crisis at roughly 42 years of age).

Signs of the Zodiac

The ecliptic is a circle drawn across the sky representing the apparent path of Sol through the year. This is coplanar with Earth's orbit. The Zodiac is a group of twelve constellations lying within a band of sky centered on the ecliptic, through which Luna and the Planets appear to pass.

The Signs of Spring.

Vernal Equinox 0 degrees Aries. Mid-Spring, Beltane, 15 degrees Taurus, Kerub of the Bull

Aries, the Ram, Cardinal Fire,

Patron: Mars

QBLH:: He

Tarot: The Emperor, the King of Wands (These all disagree with the Golden Dawn and Crowley, who use a system of Decans and their planetary rulers. The system here relates the Kings, Queens, and Princesses to the qualities of Cardinal, Mutable, and Fixed, respectively, while the Princesses are represented by the North Node's Element)

YI: Gua 55, Abundance

Images: spring thunder, the seed germinating, quickening.

The primal spark, burning to exist, prime directive of beings, feedforward movement, still needing to develop both sense and structure. The spirit of enterprise, initiative, vim and vigor, drive, impetus, adventure, courage, spiritedness, willfulness.

Projective, pioneering, assertive, aggressive, creative. Executive, expeditious, bold, urgent, ambitious, fierce, rash, blunt, headstrong, impatient, selfish, impulsive. Tunnel vision for immediate aims, problems, tasks at hand.

Taurus, the Bull, Fixed Earth

Patron: Venus Hesperus

QBLH: Vav

Tarot: The Hierophant, Prince of Pentacles

YI: Xiang Wood

Images: the ploughed field, a greening earth, budding life

The processes of consolidation and substantiation, work and worth, methodical attention to growth, perseverance. The authentic beauty of substance, suchness, uncut gems, uncarved wood. Work as its own reward, concrete values.

Patient, steady, enduring, determined, diligent, industrious, reliable, consistent, solid, conservative, reasonable, grounded, sensible, practical, tangible, palpable, productive.

Acquisitiveness, incorporation, integration of the identity.

Gemini, the Twins, Mutable Air

Patron: Mercury Epimetheus

QBLH: Zain

Tarot: The Lovers, Queen of Swords

YI: Gua 59, Huan

Images: life in full flourish, diversification, wind in the grass, pollination

Branching out, exploration, perceptual mobility, curiosity, the broadening of horizons and relationships, social involvement. Appetite for experience, access and accessibility, familiarity. Intelligence, association, patternment, encoding. learning, education.

Breezy, ubiquitous, volatile, restless, superficial, inquisitive, lively, expressive, animated, eager, unstable, unpredictable, subtle, crafty, witty, communicative, versatile, sharp, quick, clever.

Vicariousness, second-handedness, second nature, possibility.

The Signs of Summer.

Summer Solstice 0 degrees Cancer. Mid-Summer, Lughnasadh, 15 degrees Leo, Kerub of the Lion

Cancer, the Crab, Cardinal Water

Patron: Luna

QBLH: Cheth or Het

Tarot: The Chariot, King of Cups

YI: 49, Ge, Seasonal Change

Images: intense light and shade, protective coverings, molting

Sensitivity and its limits, the readiness to feel, security, expanding the feelings as much as bruises and armor allow. Shelter, home and habitat, comfort, retreat, self-enclosure.

Cohesion, attachment, domestication, agreeableness. Ready, resourceful, consenting, willing, game, sincere.

Fertile, protective, nurturing, caring, filial, amorous, receptive, touched, tender, cautious, giving, sharing.

Letting go, intimacy, closeness, nearness, connectedness.

Leo, the Lion, Fixed Fire

Patron: Sol

QBLH: Teth

Tarot: Strength, Prince of Wands

YI: Xiang Fire

Images: the relentless sun, abundant energy, sport and play. Expression, exteriorization, release from self-containment. the internal pressure to be more in order to burn more or give more. Satiety or surplus as a motive force or a calm of strength.

Assurance, authority, doubtlessness, righteousness, confidence.

Upbeat, optimal, dramatic, lusty, proud, outgoing, sporting, sunny, frank, warm, bright, suffused, enflamed, exuberant, dynamic, pro-creative, excited, peremptory, enthusiastic, sure.

Excessiveness, glut, immodesty, abandon, exaggeration.

Virgo, the Virgin, Mutable Earth

Patron: Mercury Epimetheus

QBLH: Yod

Tarot: The Hermit, Queen of Pentacles

YI: Gua 04, Meng, Inexperience

Images: The bountiful crop in progress, management, weeding. The work of self-acceptance and self-acceptability, the concern for clear identity and identification, diligence, qualification, standards, cutting back on options, pruning, analyzing, criticizing, assimilation, digestion, fitness, fitting in, aptness, specificity.

Incisive, keen, exacting, choosy, prescriptive, demanding, sparing, discrete, discreet, discriminating, meticulous, skillful, adroit, adept, deft, consistent, sparing, economic.

Admission of qualified experience, high quality eros and interaction.

The Signs of Autumn.

Autumn Equinox 0 degrees Libra, Mid-Autumn, Halloween, Samhain. 15 degrees Scorpio, Kerub of the Water Dragon.

Libra, the Scales, Cardinal Air

Patron: Venus

QBLH: Lamed

Tarot: Justice or Adjustment, King of Swords

YI: Gua 37, the Family

Images: harvest readiness, autumn's approach, weighing the season

Objectification of the dyad, recognition of a significant other, balance and adjustment, the economics of interaction, tact, appraisal, evaluation, attunement, mediation, equilibrium. Diplomatic strategies, the mechanics of harmony and perspective. Accommodating, conciliatory, ambiguous, ambivalent, distant, objective, mental, non-committal, mental, circumspect, artful, politic, judicious, liberal, libertarian, reciprocal. Mental processes serving the need to form alliances with the other.

Scorpio, the Scorpion, Fixed Water

Patron: Mars

QBLH: Nun

Tarot: Death, Prince of Cups

YI: Xiang 0, Water

Images: harvest, stockpiling, close of season, thanksgiving

Libidinal worlds, the sub-surface self, undercurrents, hidden communities of subliminal motives. Resources for survival. Import and the emotional means for its amplification, , hypnosis. Facing the end and beyond, raging against the dying of the light, using death as advisor.

Private, personal, inviolate, self-absorbed, cryptic, secret, important, profound, intense, passionate, driven, affective, combative, retaliatory, defensive, visceral, intoxicated.

Emotional ability as potential energy, stress, the energy of steam.

Sagittarius, the Centaur, Mutable Fire

Patron: Jupiter

QBLH: Samekh

Tarot: Temperance, Queen of Wands

Yi: Gua 40, Deliverance

Images: the last thunder and rainbow, migration, transcendence

Metamorphic process, transformation, going beyond the known, exploration, discovery, panorama, overview, cultural hybrids, , mastery, command, delegation, sublimation, creative vision, positivity, postulation, experimentation, speculation, research.

Transient, transitive, moving, colorful, fun, free, idealistic, ranging, expansive, diverse, exposed, broad minded, discursive, learned, proven, experienced, transported, self-surpassing.

Aim and release, the dynamics of delivery, realizing the vision.

The Signs of Winter.

Winter Solstice 0 degrees Capricorn, Mid-Winter, Imbolc. 15 degrees Aquarius, Kerub of the Eagle.

Capricorn, the Goat, Cardinal Earth

Patron: Saturn

QBLH: Ayin

Tarot: The Devil, King of Pentacles

YI: Gua 22, Adornment

Images: the worst of the darkness, concentration of environment, concern or reverence for due regard, clarification of interface, knowing where one stands, positions, givens, local activity, intensification of contrast, acceptance of scale, heedfulness. Sure-footedness, nearsightedness and the exaltation permitted by surety.

Definitive, dogmatic, crystalline, localized, present, finite, tried, tested, unimpeachable, founded, grounded, proficient, vigilant, focused, serious, ambitious, persistent,

challenged.

Instrumentality, means, utility, solid ground, proven perspective.

Aquarius, the Water Bearer, Fixed Air

Patron: Saturn

QBLH: Tzaddi

Tarot: The Star, Prince of Swords

YI: Xiang 1, Metal

Images: the crystalline winter sky, resolution, stark thought, thought as a vessel, the fixed idea as tool or means, science, navigation, references, mindset as a grappling hook, expectations, visualizing the goal, the entertainment of thought, hopes and fears, social and natural order and organization, structures, objectives.

Imaginative, eidetic, visionary, self-destined, consecrative, metaformative, creative, inventive, synergetic, progressive, puzzled, surprised, off-guard, over-expectant, abstracted.

Humanity as an idea needing animation, consensus, cooperation.

Pisces, the Fishes, Mutable Water

Patron: Jupiter

QBLH: Qof

Tarot: The Moon, Queen of Cups

YI: Gua 47, Exhaustion

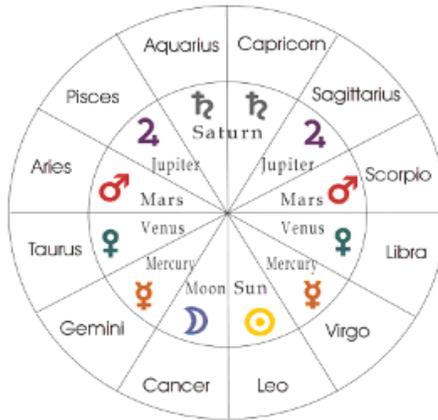
Images: the thaw, wet seeds, first notice of spring, relief, melt, disassembly, psyche, the uncertainty principle, experience for its own sake, fluid, capable of any form, The vastness of the world made even less determinate by the powers of feeling, empathy, belief, credulity, reflection, reverie.

Impressionable, accepting, fused, depolarized, accessible, vague, confused, dreamy, entranced, nebulous, buoyant, attuned, imprinted, misguided, gullible, appreciative, open, drawn.

Redemption of psyche from ocean, liquid self-constitution, wave form.

Dimensions of the Signs

Sign meanings are derived from several sources; a) accretion of myth and fable, b) seasonal association and implication, c) quality, whether a sign is cardinal, fixed or mutable (tense), d) element, whether a sign is fire, earth, air or water (gender), e) each sign must be a unique alloy of quality and element, f) accumulation of key-word associations, g) planetary patronage or rulership, and h) natural houses, as the notion that Aries is most at home in the first house, etc. All of these are fair game in accumulating and extrapolation meanings for the signs. Original sign rulership predates the discovery of the outer planets and has an order to it. The rotation of the natural wheel by 30 degrees is due to the antiquity of this system and the effects of precession.



Original Sign Rulership

Precession of the Equinox or the Great Year

Our Gaia's axis of rotation is 23 degrees 28 minutes from perpendicular to the orbital plane. From this, and not distance from Sol, we get our seasons. This axis wobbles like a slowing top, Relative to the stars (sidereal) the tips of this axis describe a full circle once every 25,868 years. Thus the seasons and the stars, including the zodiac, have an ever-changing relationship, while assignments of points in the seasons, such as the vernal equinox, remain fixed in Western astrology. The Zodiac was affixed to the seasons by the astronomer Hipparchus of Nicaea at some time close to 2150 BCE (even though he was the first to discover the problem of motion). Consequently, Western astrology's zodiac slips backwards from agreement with its original constellations at a rate of one sign every 2155.67 years (one degree every 71.86 years). Thus the common forms of astrology do not refer to the original constellations or the stars any more. Not to be daunted or embarrassed by this, astrologers claim that the movement of the vernal equinox, or 0 degrees Aries, through the more scientific astronomer's zodiac, speaks to us humans of our Ages. If we just randomly assigned Hipparchus' act to 150 BCE, we would have the following approximate dates for these ages. There is no agreement, even in serious astronomical circles, of the actual dates, and even learned opinions can vary by centuries. The influence of each age begins to be felt most seriously three degrees ahead of the dates below:

Cancer: 8780-6615 BCE, end of last ice age, settlement, shelter, clothing, early farming, fences

Gemini: 6615-4460 BCE, widespread migration, abstract symbolism, writing and communication, mythology, craftsmen

Taurus: 4460-2305 BCE, city-states formed around agriculture, social strata, class, dynasty, building, birth of law and order

Aries: 2305-150 BCE, male role in procreation learned, god becomes male, the lawgiver deified, conquest, empire, history

Pisces: 150 BCE - 2005 CE, philosophy and religion, belief, proselytizing, worship, altruism, sacrifice, conviction

Aquarius: 2005- 4160 CE, science and social experiment, non-linear growth, radical change, liberty and responsibility, accountability

The Houses

The First Quadrant, Late Night, Pre-dawn

The emergence of the individual identity, the subjective awareness of self

1st House: natural sign and planet - Aries and Mars

When Sol is here it's just before dawn

Tarot: The Emperor

Yi: Gua 55, Abundance

Selfhood and temperament, the assembly of the person, early formative experience, preparation, both nature and nurture. Appearance, disposition, carriage, posture, manner, poise, constitution, composure, integrity, singleness, individuality. Health as it affects drive, viability, concentration on need, intention, intentness, volition, willfulness, purpose, tenacity. Coherence and persistence of identity, self-structure. Fundamental aloneness, personal responsibility, self-reliance. Birthright, precocity, early prioritization, spiritedness, self-cultivation, self-definition, self-assumption, individual self-expression, self-discovery. personality.

2nd House: natural sign and planet - Taurus and Venus Hesperus

When Sol is here it's time for farmers to rise

Tarot: The Hierophant or High Priest

Yi: Xiang 1, Wood

Wealth and valuation, the satisfaction of fundamental needs, roots and anchoring, concentration, substantiation, stabilization, productive uses of time and energy, sustenance and investment, acquired resources, earning power, solvency, wherewithal, securing the self, foundations, groundedness, meeting of needs. Goods, possessions, property, means and tools, self-worth, self-appraisal, self-assessment, self-inventory. Invested work calling for good choice of goals and values. Deriving the measure of worth, revaluation of value, appreciation. Liberty due to wealth and self-worth, budgeting and management, financial, material possessions and attachments.

3rd House: natural sign and planet - Gemini and Mercury Prometheus

When Sol is here it's after midnight

Tarot: The Lovers

Yi: Gua 59, Huan, Scattering

Education and familiarity, investigation of the environment. The second nature, mentality, inquiry, learning, networking. Exploratory behavior and growth, circulation and savvy. Familiar relationships, siblings, peers, shared environs. Communication, consensual agreements to share perceptions. Communicability, relatability to the environment, co-responsence. Exposure, contacts, access to information, vicarious experience. Skill, craft, hands-on experience, training, practice, knowledge, breadth within local contexts, diversification, reconnaissance. Mindset, orientation to novelty, attention, opening channels, communication, siblings, routine adaptation.

The Second Quadrant, Early-Night

The exteriorization of individual identity, the subjective awareness of not-self.

4th House: natural sign and planet - Cancer and Luna

When Sol is here it's before midnight

Tarot: The Chariot

Yi: Gua 49, Ge, Seasonal Change

Home and security, defining the limits of environment. The creation of worlds permitting feeling without damage. Self-importance relative to smaller worlds and limited activity. Parental influence, protection, nurture, intimacy, vulnerability, belonging. Accumulated environment, things brought home and arranged. Retirement, old age and pension, memories, recourse to pasts. Privacy, sanctuary, asylum, refuge, harbor, fortification. Home base attitudes, indwelling the vehicle, comfort in motion. Shelter, settlement, habitat. Playpens, fence and nations. Chosen influences, limited commitments, pruning and weeding. inner foundation, home, nurturing parent.

5th House: natural sign and planet: Leo and Sol

When Sol is here it's mid-evening

Tarot: Strength

Yi: Xiang 3, Fire

Vitality and expressiveness, the celebration of identity, creation and procreation, the license of the overabundant. Exuberance, fun, enthusiasm, play, optimizing, liveliness, sport and sportiness, competition, challenge, daring. Speculation, risk, hazard, gambling, experimentation, adventure, romance, entertainment, drama, showmanship. Pride, assurance, confidence, self-possession, authority. Children and art, letting go, granting creation life of its own. Offspring and spinoffs, projection, extension, progeny. Outwardness, outgoingness, extroversion, giving, gain, love, play, children, creativity,

6th House: natural sign and planet: Virgo and Mercury Epimetheus

When Sol is here it's after sunset

Tarot: The Hermit

Yi: Gua 04, Meng, Inexperience

Usefulness and aptitude, exploring and filling the niche. Employment, occupation, service, teamwork, coordination. Health, healing, hygiene, nutrition, diet, assimilation. Serviceability, able-ness, adequacy, competence, efficacy. Fitness, aptness, consonance, functioning parts of a whole. Relevance, germaneness, pertinence, meetness, congruity. Worthiness, deservingness, qualification, entitlement, due. Commitment, dedication, work, contribution, participation. Self-care, self-improvement, self-critique, to the best within us. More with less, cutting down options, maximization of results of effort. health, work, service, servants.

The Third Quadrant, Afternoon

The emergence of social identity, the subjective awareness of not-self

7th House: natural sign and planet - Libra and Venus Lucifer

When Sol is here it's before sunset

Tarot: Justice

Yi: Gua 37, Jia Ren, Family Members

Encounter and relationship, recognizing the significant other. Marriage, partnership, face-to face encounter, eye-to eye exchange. Disagreement, open antagonism, debate, contraosition. Interpersonality, dyadics, interplay of disparate perspectives. Contract, covenant, consent, rules for ad hoc agreements. Trust, pledge, good faith. Honesty, candor, frankness, openness. The companion and dominance agreements, interfacing of liberties. Interdependence, complementation, win/lose and win/win games. Coalition of talents and perspectives, consensus, hybrid vigor. Litigation and arbitration, counseling, concession, compromise. Marriage, partnership, conflicts.

8th House: natural sign and planet - Scorpio and Mars

When Sol is here it's mid-afternoon

Tarot: Death

Yi: Xiang 0, Water

Resource and resourcefulness, laying claim to the possible. Capitalization, insurance, taxation, currency, joint finance. Legacy, inheritance, heritage, cumulative social resources. Deep drives and power sources, libido, eros, self-sanction. Regenerative abilities, recovery, adaptability, resilience. Reserves and reservoirs, talent pools, liquidity, liquid assets. Fluidity of perspective, relativity, expedience, self-hypnosis. Inherentness, latent faculties, emotional investments and charge. Mines, source-tapping behavior, plenums, potential wealth. Amplification of import and value, creation of meaning. Death, inheritance resurrection, the occult.

9th House: natural sign and planet - Sagittarius and Jupiter

When Sol is here it's early afternoon

Tarot: Temperance or Art

Yi: Gua 40, Deliverance

Extrapolation and reaching, the quest beyond the known. Horizons, the big picture, abstractions, distancing, breadth. Cross-cultural journeys, vacations, sabbatical leave. Exposure, unfamiliarity, open-mindedness, understanding. The search for that which survives change, for immortality. Release, transcendence, going beyond, the human potential. Philosophy, sociology, anthropology, the common ground. Morality and conscience. Human rights and their abdication. Dreams and visions (not 12th house kind). Decrees and proclamations, the magnum opus. Reexamination, reorganization, reformulation, redemption. Philosophy, religion, long journeys.

The Fourth Quadrant, Morning

The exteriorization of the social identity, the objective awareness of self

10th House: natural sign and planet - Capricorn and Saturn

When Sol is here it's late morning

Tarot: The Devil

Yi: Gua 22, Adornment

Vocation and conquest, the getting and keeping of position. Profession, career, expertise, forte, mastery, realization. Prominence, public image, status, reputation, recognition. Attainment, achievement, outstandingness, distinction. Role models, parental and authority figures, superiors. Relation to extant powers, due appraisal, thoroughness. Ambition, challenge, defiance, heroics, planning, climbing. Exemplary behavior, honor, credit, responsibility, accountability. Realism, authenticity, tough judgment of strength and weakness. Self-appraisal, self-justification, following or setting standards. Honor, profession, social status.

11th House: natural sign and planet - Aquarius and Saturn

When Sol is here it's mid-morning

Tarot: The Star

Yi: Xiang 1, Metal

Goals and expectations, the future tense of lifestyle. Social coalition and organization around shared objectives, culture. Friends and selection of friends, common interests, camaraderie. Alliance, coalition, association, agency, ad hoc instrumentality. Visualizing the ends of effort, implementing the vision. Resolution and resolve,

programs, targets, prognostication. The cause célèbre, rallying point, platform, manifesto. Adopted externals, formula, curriculum, law, mythos and mores. Group pressures, consensus, conformity, socialization. Leadership, vanguard, revolutionary congress, utopiation.

Friends, specialized self-expression, hopes.

12th House: natural sign and planet - Pisces and Jupiter

When Sol is here it's after dawn

Tarot: The Moon

Yi: Gua 47, Exhaustion

Finitude and survival, life in spite of inertia and entropy. The unknown, immensity, the overwhelming, obscurity, complexity. Ripe destiny and self-undoing, karma, the final solution. Working with the webs, as spider or fly, or work without a net. Personal solutions, belief, delusion, seclusion, sacrifice. Social solutions, institutions, asylums, reformatories. Recourse to the subliminal, the mysterious, the undercurrent.

Anonymity, uncertainty, inadequacy, the battered self. Survival of the liquid, feeling one's way, the path with heart. The chaos of compost and mulch, existence as nutrient-rich. Karma, confinement, psychic ability, secrets.

The Houses locate the planets and signs in the sky at a specific moment in time. usually at the moment of birth (natal chart). This wheel, with its four cardinal points and twelve segments, is intended to be a section of the sky above and below the horizon, as seen facing south, so that the far left is the eastern horizon, cut through the plane of Sol's apparent orbit around Gaia. To see this in the sky, face south and tilt the top of the chart forward to make the plane align with Sol's orbit (called the Ecliptic). Many cultures in the ancient world drew their maps with a southern orientation, since that is where the Sun spent its days. The far left, towards which Gaia is turning, is on the eastern horizon, where the stars and planets appear to be rising or ascending. The top point is where Sol would be around noon. The far right, at sunset. The bottom most point, at midnight. Many different house systems are used to account for problems with latitude, the shortened winter sky and the lengthened summer sky, but these do not affect point and house meanings.

Angular Houses (#s 1,4,7 &10), like cardinal signs, are areas of life typified by self-originated activity and the direct feedback which is its consequence.

Succedent Houses (#2,5,8 &11), like fixed signs, are areas of life typified by exercise of the energies which self is able to generate and command.

Cadent Houses (#3,6,9 &12), like mutable signs, are areas of life typified by learning and adaptive behavior, the change undergone to assimilate context.

The Quadrants establish a scale-of-four matrix grid based on the permutations of two sets of polarities:

- a) the Southern or objective hemisphere, above the horizon
- b) the Northern or subjective hemisphere, below the horizon
- c) the Eastern or Ascending hemisphere, the world of self
- d) the Western or Descending hemisphere, the world of other

The Horizontal Axis polarizes East and West, self and other, identity and adaptation, individuation and reintegration.

The Ascendant or Rising Sign

Tarot: Kings (Cardinal), Queens (Mutable), Princes (Fixed)

(East) points to signs and planets emerging on the Eastern horizon. By sign this indicates the individual's energy of orientation, the particular quality of experience (one of twelve) to which one looks for meaning. This point is self's earliest and most enduring point of view and root of identity. Rising planets will be fundamental to self-image.

The Descendant

(West) points to descending signs and planets. By sign this indicates the limits of self, with its favorite point of view, pointing to the ascendant's opposite, complement and significant other in the wheel. It is that energy by which one establishes relationships with other, energy sought in other, precious or infuriating feedback. Descending planets are prone to involvement and giving, codependency and service.

The Vertical Axis polarizes South and North, the objective and the subjective, the manifest and preparatory, output and input.

The Midheaven

Medium Coeli or MC (South Up) points to signs and planets directly overhead. By sign this indicates the energy with which one values and fulfills objectives, the energy admired in one's avatars and heroes, and by emulation, the face one would show to the world. This is the outer character of the individual and acknowledged self. Planets at the midheaven openly proclaim their own natures.

The Nadir

Imum Coeli or IC (North Down) points to signs and planets behind ones heels and on the far side of the world. By sign this points to the quality of energy in which self is rooted or grounded, through which one seeks nearness and relevance, nourishment for personality and character, solace and security from the vastness of it all. Planets at the Nadir are private fountains in inner gardens.

The Aspects

Aspects are described as certain degrees of angular relationship between planets (or between planets and constructs and points) within the 360 degrees of the zodiac. Orbs are the range of effectiveness of the aspect, perceived as bell curves of intensity centered on the exact degree by which the aspect is named. The orbs vary from astrologer to astrologer. Those below, given in degrees, are considered tight:

	Lights	Planets	Constructs
Pure Aspects	±8	±6	±4
Major Aspects	±6	±4	±2
Minor Aspects	±3	±2	±1

The Pure Aspects derive their meaning without recourse to number or artifice beyond the simple notion of polarity or syzygy.

Conjunction: 0 degrees ±orb. Planets will share the same sign and house or be significantly close (on the cusp) to doing so. Thus they are said to co-operate or reinforce each other, or intensify each other. Although they do not fuse the talents represented by each, it may be difficult to distinguish between them. Other key words: prominence, facilitation. Three planets conjunct, or more loosely, three planets sharing the same sign and house, is called a Stellium, a bright spot.

Opposition: $180 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. Planets will occupy opposite signs and houses, thus sharing the same polarity and triplicity. This indicates a fission between the subjects, an extreme internal dichotomy, a polarization tending to heightened self-consciousness and mutual objectification by the subjects. Tension and contrast lead to attention. Enmity is not the rule here. An opposition divided by a planet forming squares between poles is a T-Square. The key to this is tension that should look to the opposite midpoint for release.

Parallel: The equatorial is an extended plane through Gaia's equator. Planets appear to move south or north of this plane (latitude) with the season., most notably Sol from winter to summer. When two planets are within one degree of each other in latitude (especially both south or both north in conjunction, or opposite north to south in opposition) they are said to be in parallel. These are the conditions for an eclipse. Redoubling the intensity of a pure aspect, even fusion, is the result.

The Major Aspects derive their meanings from the numeral elements in the zodiac, specifically, sixes, fours and threes.

Sextile: $60 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. Planets will share the same polarity. This indicates an opportunity to develop a close working relationship between subjects, but in a way requiring effort, coordination, practice, or other learning experience. Analogous to the reciprocal granting of easements or rights. Adjacent sextiles joined by a trine minimize this effort.

Square: $90 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. Planets will share the same triplicity, but less compatible polarity and sign. Subjects operate at cross-purposes, inhibiting, checking, and balancing each others activities. This inherent conflict or rivalry can mean schism, crisis and stress, or concentrated motivation. Four combined squares is a Grand Square, with a key phrase being "make or break."

Trine: $120 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. Planets will share the same element or quadruplicity. This is the most harmonious of the aspects. Subjects tend to enable each other. Solutions to mutual challenges come with little work or effort, and herein is the principle problem of trines: talent can be taken for granted and never developed with effort. Three joined Trines is a Grand Trine, with a key phrase: remembrance of gifts.

The Minor Aspects

These aspects derive their meanings purely from number without reference to the internal dimensions of the zodiac.

Semi-sextile: $30 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. One twelfth of the circle. Sequential proximity gives subjects an older-younger sibling relationship. and a sense of growth or cumulative challenge. Key: accessibility.

Semi-square: $45 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. One eighth of a circle, half a season out of step, subjects can prod, provoke and irritate each other, demanding broad work on system logistics. Key: friction.

Sesqui-quadrate: $135 \text{ degrees} \pm \text{orb}$. Three-eighths of a circle, an objectified version of the semi-square, wherein friction breaks into rivalry, agitation and clumsy coordination. Key: discipline.

Inconjunct or Quincunx: 150 degrees ± orb. Five-twelfths of a circle. An objectified version of the semi-sextile, but subjects are "worlds apart" begging for broader notions of self. Key: surprise.

Quintile: 72 degrees ± orb. One fifth of a circle. Subjects relate or interface with dynamic energy but without common interest. This is like heat to be harnessed by a third device or outlet. Key: energy.

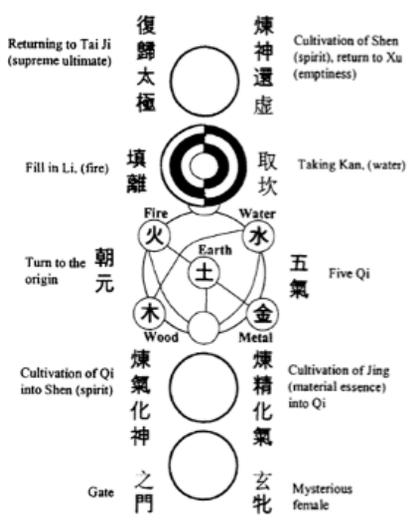
Septile: 51 degrees 26 minutes ± orb. One seventh of a circle. Subjects form unpredictable partnerships with non-rational results ranging from magical abilities to deviant behavior. Key: creativity.

Notes on Relationships to the Hebrew Kabbalah and the West's Qabalah

The original Trees of Life, 9th Cent CE China (Chen Tuan) and 10th (Zhou Dunyi)1516, the first known graphic illustration of the Tree of Life appears on the

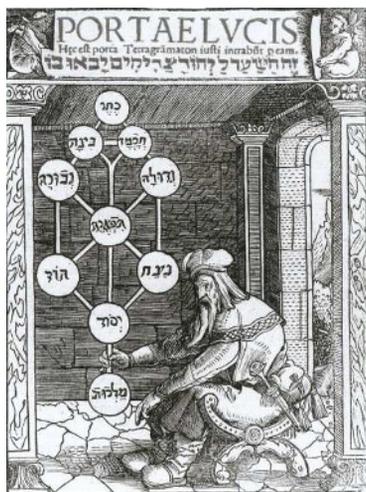


Zhou Dunyi's *Taijitu*

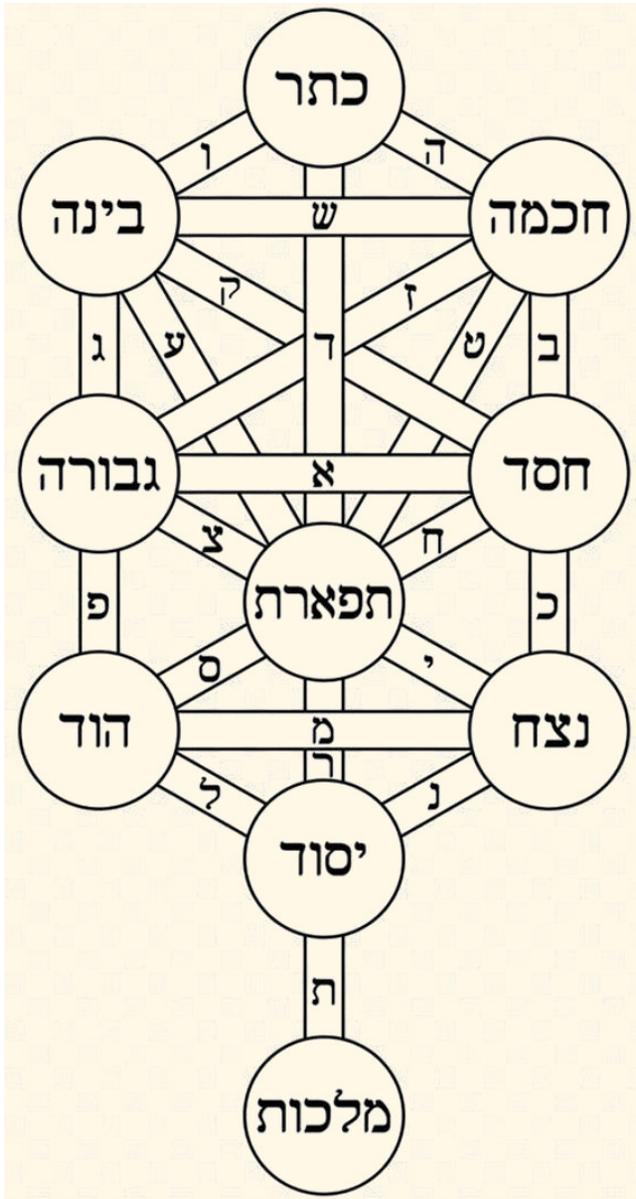


Chen Tuan's *Wujitu*

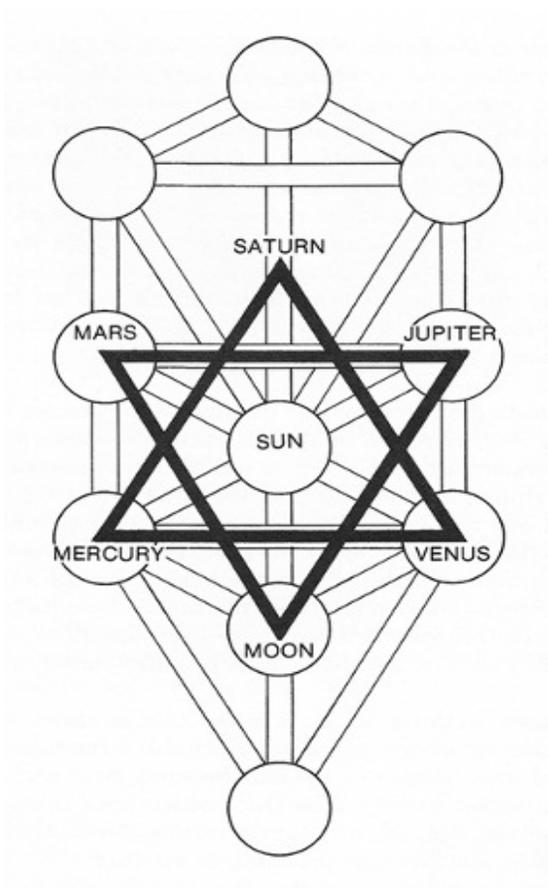
1516, the first known graphic illustration of the Tree of Life appears on the cover of Paul Ricci's translation of Joseph Gikatilla's *Gates of Light*, around the beginning of the Safed school of Kabbalah.



Isaac Luria (1534-1572), the Ari, published a graphic version of the Tree of Life. Ari's Tree of Life had paths that differed from Kircher's, published later. Luria revived Gnostic imagery in Kabbalistic terms. Note that the Mother, Double, and Simple Letters, or the Scales of 3, 7, and 12, as presented in the 6th Century CE (?) Sefher Yetzirah are significant in this version. This original system is adopted here, while the Kircher system, adopted by the Western Qabalists, is abandoned here.



This Hexagram formula is the source of the Golden Dawn's and Crowley's Planetary assignments to the Sephiroth of the Tree. Things later went awry with the discovery of the outer planets, and they were never fit properly onto the top three Sephiroth and Daath. This correction is made in the texts above.



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Trumps, but his grasp of the Minor Arcana is as poor as anyone's before him, and certainly poorer than Ms. Smith's. His apology for not revealing more of "the secrets" seems disingenuous, but he could neither see nor admit that the Tarot was still evolving)

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