



Tarot Revelations

By Joseph Campbell, Richard Roberts

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Tarot Revelations is an analysis of the mysterious philosophy in the ancient cards that became modern playing cards. Citing Dante, C.G.Jung, and early Gnostics and alchemists, Campbell and Roberts reveal a path that has spiritual meaning for everyone. Writing in collaboration with Richard Roberts, Joseph Campbell stated, "We have come to revelations of a grandiose poetic vision of Universal Man that has been for centuries the inspiration of saints and sinners, sages and fools, in kaleidoscopic transformations." According to Richard Roberts, "In the 22 cards comprising the Major Arcana, we have a genuine document of the soul's initiation into higher consciousness. As such the Major Arcana may be interpreted as a Western Book of the Dead."

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Introduction by Colin Wilson: "For two centuries now, the human spirit has been in revolt against the world of the Gradgrinds, and their obsession with "facts, hard facts." The Romanticism of the 19th century was one long shout of defiance. The Romantics exaggerated the problem out of weakness and a sense of vulnerability. And people like Dick Roberts and Joseph Campbell are restoring it to perspective, and bringing about a reconciliation that is based on insight and strength. If they succeed, the intellectual perspective of the 21st century could be more exciting than anything we can imagine."(Colin Wilson)

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Foreword by Joseph Campbell " . . . for what in the Marseilles deck had most excited my imagination had been its reflection of what I thought I recognized as a tradition expounded by Dante in his *Convito*. A single philosophical strain, it seemed to me, could be recognized as supporting, on one hand, the mighty edifice of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and, on the other, the enigmatic imagery of a contemporary pack of cards.

Whereas the imagery of the Waite deck is of a strikingly different style and source. Richard Roberts, accordingly, has pointed, in his analysis of the symbolism of the Waite-Smith deck, not only to its background in esoteric astrological, gnostic, and alchemical traditions, but also, by anticipation, forward to the archetypology of Jung - who, in developing his insights, was significantly influenced (as he everywhere lets us know) by the same gnostic and alchemical texts from which the members of the Order of the Golden Dawn drew inspiration.

So that in our separate examinations of the Waite-Smith and Marseilles Tarot decks, Richard Roberts and I have found ourselves continually breaking into areas of much greater expanse and richness than either of us had anticipated when we started.

But in the end, always, we have come to revelations of a grandiose poetic vision of Universal Man that has been for centuries the inspiration both of saints and of sinners, sages and fools, in kaleidoscopic transformations. It is our hope and expectation that our readers, too, may be carried through the picture play of the magic of THE MAGICIAN's wand and guidance of THE PROPHETESS, to insights such as may lead, in the end, to the joy in wisdom of THE FOOL." (Joseph Campbell)

Symbolism Of The Marseilles Deck by Joseph Campbell

"The earliest set of Tarot cards of which actual examples survive was prepared in 1392 for King Charles VI of France by the painter Jacquemin Gringonneur. Seventeen of their number are preserved in Paris in the Bibliotheque Nationale, and the imagery resembles that of the Marseilles deck.

What the set of four suits represents are the four estates, or classes, of the medieval social order. The Swords signify the nobility; the Cups, suggesting the chalice of the Catholic Mass, are for the clergy; the Coins, for the merchants, or "third estate", the townsmen, the burghers; while the Staves, Clubs, or Batons, stand for the "churls," the peasantry and servants.

We notice, first, that the opening card, The Magician, is of a juggler manipulating miniatures of the signs of all four suits: Swords in the form of knives, small cups for the Cups or Chalice, dice and coins for the Coins, and for the Staves or Clubs a wand. He is in control, that is to say, of the symbols of all four social estates, able to play or conjure with them, and so, represents a position common to, or uniting, them all,

while leading - as we shall very soon see - beyond their highest grades. Twenty numbered picture cards follow, which have been arranged here in five ascending rows of four cards each, to suggest the graded stages of an ideal life, lived virtuously according to the knightly codes of the Middle Ages. And then, beyond and outside of this numbered series, comes The Fool, whose card, like our Joker Wild, is unnumbered. I have placed him outside and at the end of the set, to signify his freedom to roam as a vagabond, beyond as well as through all of the numbered stations, trumping them all."

"And so we are brought to the condition. . . of *The Fool*, the wandering mendicant saint or sage, known to himself as that intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere. . . And we passed, then, through death-to-the-fear-of-death; whereupon he portal opened of the way to the knowledge of that mystery which, in theological terms, would be known as the Image of God within us. Plato recognized the sensible world as a reflex of the intelligible. What is known as above is thus here below, and what is not here is nowhere.

But have we not noticed, also, that The Magician is holding in his left hand the same wand that the World Dancer holds in hers, while in his right, instead of the conch, there is a coin - of philosophical gold? Little wonder if the clergy of those days were at pains to warn their flocks against the unauthorized lesson lurking in these cards!"

PREFACE by Richard Roberts

In the following pages I shall demonstrate: 1. That the Keys of the Tarot Major Arcana depict numerical archetypes, which stand as the pre-formative powers behind material manifestation.

2. That the pictures on each Key are geometrical reflections of the numerical archetype of each Key.

3. That the Magic Nine layout of Keys reveals the way in which the numerical archetypes interact with one another, and, hence, presents the most profound interpretation of the Major Arcana.

4. That Tarot is an alchemical revelation, revealing the descent and ascent of Hermes/Mercurius/Thoth.

5. That the path of this descent/ascent follows the traditional Ladder of Souls, or Stairway of Planets, disguised as seven triads of Keys, Zero (The Fool) transcending the sequence of 21 Keys.

6. That since the Stairway of Planets was the path of the descending and ascending soul of man, the Tarot Major Arcana constitute a western Book of the Dead.

7. That if the spiral of serpent or caduceus is followed through the Major Arcana, alternatively regenerating and returning to unity, like the expanding and contracting rhythm of the cosmos, further revelations appear in which we may read the monomyth of the world's religions, the Monad's descent from Above to Below, and the consequent ascent to Above.

8. That this descent from Above represents spirit's incarnation into the elemental world, from the mineral kingdom to man, demonstrated by the correspondence of the four suits to the four Grail hallows and the four fixed signs of the zodiac.

9. That in addition to the alchemical conjunction or sacred marriage of King Sun and Queen Moon, the Major Arcana reveal an astrological correspondence to the conjunction of Sun (Leo) and Moon (Cancer) at the summer solstice of 2000 B.C.

Chapter IX: THE CADUCEUS AND ASTROLOGY: Yet another symbol of the Great Myth is the sacred wand of Hermes, encircled with the evolving serpents, linking rod and staff to World Tree, Stairway of Planets, and the numinous symbols of the East and Near East, Mountain, Tree, and *djed* pillar. Originating in the 4th millennium B.C. the concept of World Navel/Tree is the sense of a Center, or Axis, which extends from the macrocosm, where the sun's serpentine course is from pole to pole during the year, to the microcosm, the cells of the human body which bear the spiral coils of DNA, carriers of genetic evolution. The true Fool may read in the caduceus symbol, therefore, his own initiation into the mystery dimension of cell and psyche, where Above and Below merge infinitely.

Finally, through our spiral reading of the Major Arcana, we followed the path of the cosmic uroboros, expanding and contracting, regenerating and returning to unity, also the microcosmic double helix of DNA, preserver of our ancient psychic history, at once vehicle and pathway for archetype, god and devil. The Major Arcana, as a contemporary Book of the Dead, reflect Western man's aversion to death and the material power which the Devil exerts over him through the credo that *his material form is the limit of his autonomy*. Thus the body is not easily forsaken, nor easily enjoyed during the lifetime, since the tenacious clinging to materiality is graceless because it is motivated by fear.

The Hermetic alternative view enables one to play the life as a kind of drama of one's own creation, a dream, perhaps, that the dreamer dreams. Mechanistic chance, cause and effect, are not operative in this view of the universe; hence, joy, vitality and dynamic interplay between man and cosmos manifest in daily experience. When tragedy manifests, such a man displays his heroic potential, for he realizes the tragedy - like the joy - is his personal creation, a test for his further expansion of consciousness. Whether joyous or tragic, man and cosmos hold a dialogue in which the One grows in one, and one evolves in the One. This, then, is the ultimate sense of a Book of the Dead: return to the splendid, shining consciousness of the golden One, who during the lifetimes was being born within, or rather, maturing, since the One had created the egg/child/man. To die, then, is to exchange form for non-form, energy transformed or stepped up to a higher level. But mind, spirit, soul - called the Ineffable what you will - is that aspect of eternity which Divinity shares with us, and we with That.

And at the end of time, when the serpent uroboros grasps his tail in his mouth, then the infinite dimension of the cosmos shall be swallowed as if by a Black Hole, matter shall collapse, galaxy on galaxy, until All That Is is contained once more within the still point of the Monad.

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