

Tarot Basics

The Tarot deck is 78 cards, divided into two parts - the Major Arcana, and the Minor Arcana. Each card is full of symbols, but what does it mean? In this document, I review the configuration of the tarot deck, the elements, the basic numerical meanings of the Minor Arcana, and some thoughts on the Court Cards.

Minor Arcana/Pip cards:

The Minor Arcana consists of 56 cards. It is divided into 4 different suits, numbering from Ace to 10, then 4 court cards - similar to a standard playing card deck.

The Elements:

The four suits of the Tarot deck correspond to four divisions of energy and activity:

Wands/Rods -

Wands/Rods correspond to the male element of fire. They represent energy, creativity, passion, and spirit. Wands are also closely associated with career and work situations.

Pentacles/Disks -

Pentacles/Disks correspond to the female element of earth. They represent money, material matters, and physical well-being.

Cups -

Cups correspond to the element of female water. They represent emotions, relationships, love, and intuition. The shielding nature of a cup also associates it with things hidden.

Swords -

Swords correspond to the element of male air. They represent the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict.

Numbering:

The ace is the earliest, most primordial form of the element, and the ten of each suit is the maximum manifestation of the quality of the element. Two through nine are valuable lessons which nurture a slow evolution or ripening, as the individual gains in control and consciousness within the activities of the element.

* Wands build towards constructive passionate energy.

* Pentacles build towards physical security.

* Cups build through emotional fulfillment.

* Swords build through increased wisdom and knowledge.

Numeric Significance:

* Ace - beginnings, the arrival of something new and untempered

* Two - choices, decisions, early combinations

* Three - planning, preparing, expansion, manifestation

* Four - stability

* Five - challenges, adapting, movement, changes

* Six - realization of patterns, cycles, peacefulness, rest

* Seven - individual efforts, developing one's own style through experimentation, spirituality

* Eight - organizing ideas and efforts, structuring, delegation

* Nine - expansion, development, giving to others

* Ten - fulfillment, maximum manifestation

Thoughts on Court Cards:

There are a few different ways to interpret the court cards if they come up in a reading. One way is to interpret them as the physiological or zodiacal representations of people, using the same credentials as choosing a significator (see below). Another is to interpret the court cards as representing stages in personal development with regards to the element.

- * Page - risking, daring
 - * Knight - focusing, intensity
 - * Queen - mature, competent
 - * King - completion, ready to let go or move on
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Choosing or recognizing a Significator:

Some people choose a card to represent the questioner and lay down the spread around that card. It is not necessary to choose a significator, or to even restrict your choices to the court cards. Here are a few common methods for choosing a significator from the court cards.

* Zodiac - The signs of the zodiac are divided along the 4 elements as well.

Determine what sign the questioner is, and then use the court cards of the representative suit.

* Wands - Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

* Pentacles - Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

* Cups - Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

* Swords - Gemini, Libra, Aquarius

* Physical Appearances - A significator can also be chosen by the questioner's physical appearance. The correspondence between the suits and complexions is below.

* Wands - blond hair and blue eyes; red/auburn hair and green/Hazel eyes; fair complexion

* Pentacles - black hair and dark eyes; dark complexion

* Cups - light brown hair and brown/Hazel eyes, light complexion

* Swords - medium to dark brown hair, brown eyes; medium complexion

* Sex/Age - After selecting the appropriate suit, choose a card most fitting to the questioner's age and sex. If the sex of the questioner is different than the sex of the character portrayed on the card, but that card seems to be the most fitting - go with the card. Use sex only as a guide.

There are two main organization schemes for the court cards:

* King/Queen/Knight/Page

* King - mature male

* Queen - mature female

* Knight - young adult, usually male

* Page - youth or young adult female

* King/Queen/Prince/Princess

* King - mature male

* Queen - mature female

* Prince - young adult/youthful male

* Princess - young adult/youthful female

The Elements and the Tarot Suites

To best understand the workings of the Tarot, one should have a comfort level with the underlying aspects of the divination technique. While it is workable to memorize meanings of the cards, one does not have a full appreciation of their workings if the archetypes and metaphysical symbologies are not understood. There are symbologies of numerology and elements present in the minor arcana. This set of notes will focus on the elements and their associated genders.

There are four traditional elements in the Western metaphysical world. These are: earth, fire, air and water. These elements are the basis of most every magical/metaphysical working and belief. So, it is not surprising that the elements are also present in the Tarot. The Major Arcana provides an insight into archetypes that is interpreted through the elements by using astrological associations. The elements are directly embrace the Minor Arcana, with each suite representing an element.

All creation starts from a single source, a seed. This is true in the use of the elements. The entirety of the universe represents the oneness of the elements. All the metaphysical expressions of the universe are presented by one, or a combination, of the elements. As thinking creatures, the idea of an infinite oneness is not palpable to us. It is said that to name a thing is to both know it and change it. At the risk of changing the oneness, mankind does name it, divide it into parts to create a thing that seems finite and understandable.

The oneness of the Universe is then divided by two. A duality is created. The female division provides the creative potential of life and the male division provides spark that moves the creation forward. Below is a chart of symbolic roles:

Female	Male
Lasting	Short-lived
In Charge	For Show
Covering and Hiding	Revealing and Exposing
Eternal	Cyclical
Passive	Active
Inner	Outer
Dark	Light

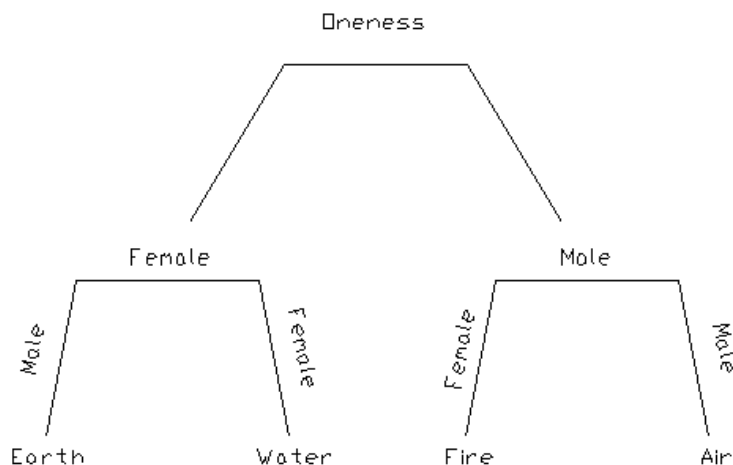
Roles of the Genders

While it may seem that the genders contradict each other, they are actually complimentary. If a system is completely female, it becomes stagnant fuel/potential with no movement. If a system is completely male, it burns itself out with no fuel available to maintain the spark. A mixture of the two is needed to provide the fuel (female) and the spark (male) to the light of life.

To properly read the both the minor arcana, and their associated Court Cards, one must have a grasp of these mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. Male energies are fast and sudden. The price for the bursts of energy are paid through short duration and non-lasting effects. Given their shorter life cycles, male energy is associated with completion and readiness to let go or move on. We shall see later that the elements of fire-wands and air-swords are male centric. Both forces of fire and air require much energy to maintain. When the energy is removed, the elements are still and inert. A forest fire or hurricane are elemental examples.

Female energies are slow and steady. This does not make female energies weak. Their slowness allows for constant application of power. Much effect can be gained with little effort. Due to the slowness of the female energy and its inability to quickly shift focus, the effects can be seen as "controlling" and "domineering". When grossly stereotyped, the mystic female energy is that of the smothering mother rather than the female's "right to change their mind". Again, as we shall see later, the elements of earth-pentacles and water-cups are female centric. When placed in or on an object, these elements require little or no energy to maintain their resulting force or enveloping qualities. The sand dunes of the desert, or the valley carving stream, are elemental examples.

The genders are next split in two, creating four states of being in the elements. The split represents a duality of Inner and Outer. A male and female pair embraces an energy that is expressed inwardly, in ways associated with the single system or individual. The other male and female pair embraces an energy that servers or focuses on those things outside of a single system or individual. So, there is defined a "female-male" element, a "female-female" element, and so one. This is a very important differentiation, and should be understood.



Divisions of Universal Oneness

Traditionally the elements interact with each other using rigid rules: Fire and Water are enemies, therefore weaken each other Air and Earth are enemies, therefore weaken each other. The interesting point with this rule is that elements of the same "gender" don't work together. Water and Fire are both female in orientation, and their combination leads to a passiveness that does not prosper. Likewise, Air and Earth are both male in orientation, and their combination burns out and does not prosper.

Below is a chart outlining the qualities of the elements:

Element	Gender	Focus/Direction	Duality	Expression	Traditional Meaning
Fire	Male	Inner /Self	Female/Male	energy, creativity, passion, and spirit	actions
Water	Female	Inner /Self	Female/Female	emotions, relationships, love, and intuition	emotions, feelings
Air	Male	Outer/Others	Male/Male	the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict	indication of trouble and problems
Earth	Female	Outer/Others	Male/Female	represent money, material matters, and physical well-being	material things

Now that we have an understanding of the origins of the elements, each element will now be correlated to their Tarot suite, and the suite will be examined in detail. After much discussion, now the Tarot suites are presented:

Suite	Element	Gender (Main)	Gender (Secondary)
Wands/Rods	Fire	Male	<i>Female</i>
Cups	Water	Female	<i>Female</i>
Swords	Air	Male	<i>Male</i>
Pentacles	Earth	Female	<i>Male</i>

Table of Suite Correspondences

SOME NOTES:

The outline presented here is the mainstream traditional view of the genders and the suites. It should be noted that there is another group of opinion that the Wands and Swords are switched. That is, that Wands are associated with Air and Swords are associated with Fire. If this is done, the rest of the material presented holds true. The switch is based on metaphysical philosophy, and offers an example that there are no set rules. Astrology breaks down the Elements once more into three modes of operation: Cardinal, Fixed, and Mutable. As the four elements are split into three modes, the basis for the twelve astrological zodiac houses is formed.

THE SUITES - THEIR ENERGY AND MODES OF OPERATION

WANDS: FIRE

Wands/Rods correspond to the male element of fire. They represent energy, creativity, passion, and spirit. Wands are also closely associated with career and work situations. The element of Fire adds passion and energy to the foundation created by the element of Earth. The natural rhythms of the planet are usurped by outside influences. The result is new creations and ideas. The goals created are not dependent on the timing of the planet. As events are accelerated, the natural balance is sometimes overthrown. The result is competition, seen most vividly in the sixth through ninth cards. The passion of the Wands is a force largely devoid of emotions. It is neither cold hearted nor full of anger. The volcano is an analogy in that it can destroy existing land, plants, and animals as it creates new land. There is no motivation of destruction. Transformation, a function of death and birth, is a balanced force of nature.

We refer to the element of fire as the force of Spirit. This means that through the expressions of fire, the primal forces of creative expression are manifested. Fire is the desire for life, the will to be, and the act of individualizing the self from the rest of Mankind. It is the element of fire serves as the animating force behind an individual's self-assertions.

CUPS: WATER

Cups correspond to the element of female water. They represent emotions, relationships, love, and intuition. The shielding nature of a cup also associates it with things hidden, as true emotions usually are. The element of Water adds emotions to the minor arcana. Water is a substance that flows to the lowest places, and it can be calm or stormy. Water can be represented by shallow puddles or by bottomless oceans. Emotions take on all of these qualities. The shape and status of water is dependent on its container and temperature.

We refer to the water element as the force of Soul or Emotion. Soul is, in part, the element of human nature which provides understanding and compassion for the feelings of others. People who are extremely connected to the water element are extremely sensitive to human sentiment and artistic expression. They can seep into the subconscious of others and instinctually, if not intellectually, understand the motives behind other people's actions

SWORDS: AIR

Swords correspond to the element of male air. They represent the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict.

The element of Air adds intellect and conscious thinking to the minor arcana. The element of air is the most removed from the element of Earth. Fire is dependent on Earth for fuel. Water is dependent on Earth for a place to rest. Air can exist without Earth. This nature analogy can be extended to the realm of our being. One can make decisions, and have thoughts, that are not based on reality, or grounded in practicality. The thought that begins as a breeze quickly becomes a tornado, or escapes into the emptiness of space. Air is the most difficult element to contain, control, and quantify. The more we try to control our thoughts, the wilder they become. Meditation brings our thoughts back to a stable form. The purest forms of meditation seek not to contain, control, or quantify thoughts. Zen meditation instead acknowledges a thought, and allows for its natural departure. There is no counting of thoughts, no tally sheet of grievances and hurts.

The suite of Swords has traditionally had the darkest of reputations. There are more bad cards than good cards. It is my belief that this is a reflection of the turmoil people experience from the stresses of the mind. Thoughts are egocentric, and cannot join with others. When a person is operating in the realm of Air, they are furthest from the soothing womb of the Earth.

We refer to the air element as the force of the Mind. People who are strongly influenced by the airy signs can be calm and refreshing as a cool breeze. But if their temper is raised, they react with galelike force, shattering the tranquility of the world around them. Air is necessary to convey the words which one person uses to speak to another. It is in its aspect as a communicating and collectivizing agent that air has its most important function in astrology. Through air, Man can reach for ideas in the intuitive mind, and apply them in the realm of human experience. Mind is man's most important tool and the greatest danger at the same time.

PENTACLES: EARTH

Pentacles/Disks correspond to the female element of earth. They represent money, material matters, and physical well-being.

The element of Earth is expressed through the direct experiences of our five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. This suite is one of action and reaction. When I sell somebody an item, they will give me money. When I eat ice cream, it will taste good. When I drink too much, I will have a hangover. The functions are uncomplicated. When somebody lives at an Earth level, life could be as slow and steady as the seasons turning and the crops growing. Paganism feels very much in touch with these cycles, and celebrates them on Full Moons and quarters of the year.

We refer to the earthly element as the force of Form (or Body). Man's strongest instinct is the will to be and the first manifestation of that desire is to create something out of matter to prove his existence. Earthly people do this through the gathering of material possessions and the actual building of the physical aspects of Man: his industries, his homes, and his physical body. It is the element of earth in a horoscope behind the needs to be practical, cautious, and very understanding of Man's ambitions toward material security and physical pleasures.

The Suite of Wands

To best understand the workings of the Tarot in general, and the Suites in particular, one should have a comfort level with the underlying aspects of the divination technique. While it is workable to memorize meanings of the cards, one does not have a full appreciation of their workings if the archetypes and metaphysical symbologies are not understood. There are symbologies of numerology and elements present in the minor arcana. This set of notes will focus on the specific suite/element of Wands/Fire. There are four traditional elements in the Western metaphysical world. These are: earth, fire, air and water. These elements are the basis of most every magical/metaphysical working and belief. So, it is not surprising that the elements are also present in the Tarot. The elements directly embrace the Minor Arcana, with each suite representing an element.

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The oneness of the Universe is then divided by two. A duality is created. The female division provides the creative potential of life and the male division provides spark that moves the creation forward. Below is a chart of symbolic roles:

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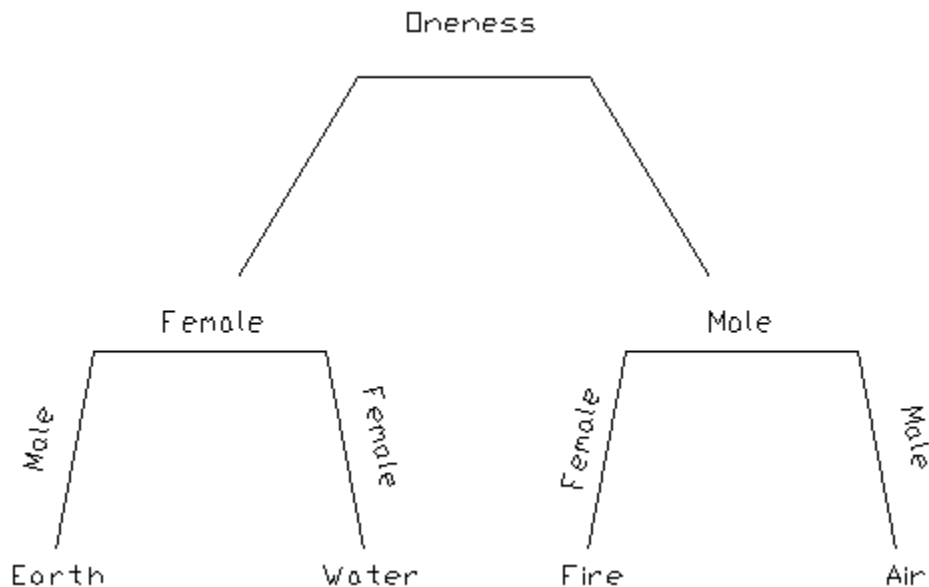
Roles of the Genders

While it may seem that the genders contradict each other, they are actually complimentary. If a system is completely female, it becomes stagnant fuel/potential with no movement. If a system is completely male, it burns itself out with no fuel available to maintain the spark. A mixture of the two is needed to provide the fuel (female) and the spark (male) to the light of life.

To properly read the both the minor arcana, and their associated Court Cards, one must have a grasp of these mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. Male energies are fast and sudden. The price for the bursts of energy are paid through short duration and non-lasting effects. Given their shorter life cycles, male energy is associated with completion and readiness to let go or move on. We shall see later that the elements of fire-wands attest to this. The forces of require much energy to maintain. When the energy is removed, the fire are still and inert. A forest is an elemental example.

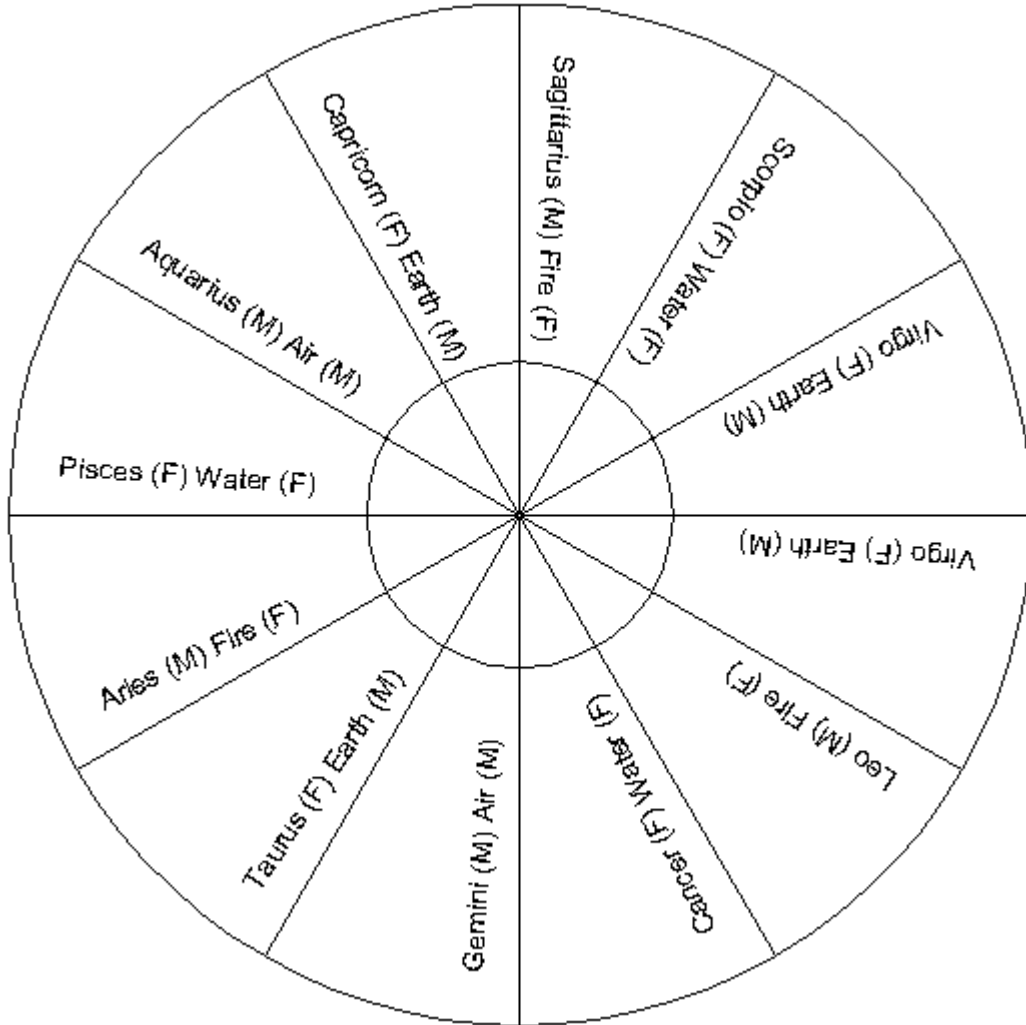
The genders are next split in two, creating four states of being in the elements. The split represents a duality of Inner and Outer. A male and female pair embraces an energy that is expressed inwardly, in ways associated with the single system or individual. The other male and female pair embraces an energy that servers or focuses on those things outside of a single system or individual. So, there is defined a "female-male" element, a "female-female" element, and so one. This is a very important differentiation, and should be understood.

Divisions of Universal Oneness



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Likewise, Air and Earth are both male in orientation, and their combination burns out and does not prosper.



Below is a chart focusing on the suite/element of Wands/Fire:

Element	Gender	Focus/Direction	Duality	Expression	Traditional Meaning
Fire	Male	Inner /Self	Male/Female	energy, creativity, passion, and spirit	actions

Now that we have an understanding of the origins of Fire, the element now be correlated to its Tarot suite, and the suite will be examined in detail.

After much discussion, now the Wands of the fire element is presented:

Suite	Element	Gender (Main)	Gender (Secondary)
Wands/Rods	Fire	Male	Female

Table of Suite Correspondences

WANDS (Leaf, Wands, Tree-Branches, Twigs)

Symbolism/Interpretation: Fire, inspiration, intellect, creativity, glory, air, feasting, dawn, childhood, animation, growth, will.

Wands/Rods correspond to the male element of fire. They represent energy, creativity, passion, and spirit. Wands are also closely associated with career and work situations. The element of Fire adds passion and energy to the foundation created by the element of Earth. The natural rhythms of the planet are usurped by outside influences. The result is new creations and ideas. The goals created are not dependent on the timing of the planet. As events are accelerated, the natural balance is sometimes overthrown. The result is competition, seen most vividly in the sixth through ninth cards. The passion of the Wands is a force largely devoid of emotions. It is neither cold hearted nor full of anger. The volcano is an analogy in that it can destroy existing land, plants, and animals as it creates new land. There is no motivation of destruction. Transformation, a function of death and birth, is a balanced force of nature.

We refer to the element of fire as the force of Spirit. This means that through the expressions of fire, the primal forces of creative expression are manifested. Fire is the desire for life, the will to be, and the act of individualizing the self from the rest of Mankind. It is the element of fire serves as the animating force behind an individual's self-assertions.

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Meanings of the Numbers and Cards

Number	Meaning
Ones (Aces)	New beginnings
Twos	Relationships, duality, balancing of two Wands: as far as can go alone need collaboration to move forward
Threes	Synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, expansion, fulfillment – except Swords where this is missing. Wands: fulfillment of creative ideas, blending of three approaches, strengths and success from good partnerships, ships coming in.
Fours	Foundations, stability, status quo Wands: stability of a permanent committed relationship, marriage card, stability in life
Fives	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes Wands: competition, combat and strife, heated arguments, challenge that calls for patience and courage – can win

Sixes	Assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better Wands: insight and inspiration, brought about by some force, ending of a cycle and the unfolding of the soul
Sevens	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight Wands: position of advantage, ability to succeed against opposition or competition, victory through courage
Eights	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization Wands: swiftness, good messages of all kinds
Nines	Completion and fulfillment of each suit, maximum intensity of each suit in the cycle, completion, fulfillment Wands: watch and wait, prepared for further attacks, strength in reserve, support and help time of conflict, ground work laid
Tens	Renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery. Wands: stress and pleasure, heavy burdens and responsibilities

The Suite of Pentacles

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All creation starts from a single source, a seed. This is true in the use of the elements. The entirety of the universe represents the oneness of the elements. All the metaphysical expressions of the universe are presented by one, or a combination, of the elements. As thinking creatures, the idea of an infinite oneness is not palpable to us. It is said that to name a thing is to both know it and change it. At the risk of changing the oneness, mankind does name it, divide it into parts to create a thing that seems finite and understandable.

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Roles of the Genders

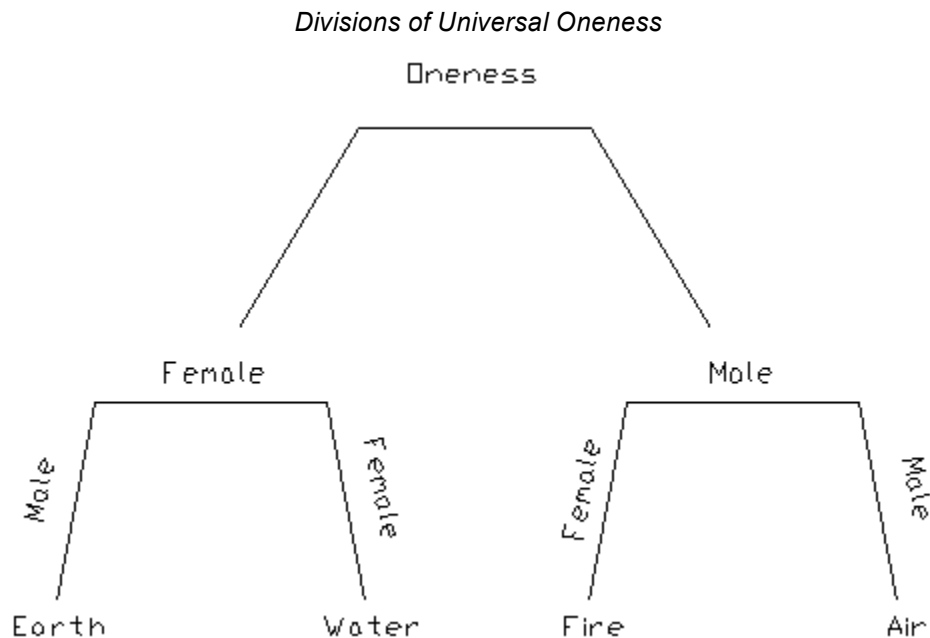
While it may seem that the genders contradict each other, they are actually complimentary. If a system is completely female, it becomes stagnant fuel/potential with no movement. If a system is completely male,

it burns itself out with no fuel available to maintain the spark. A mixture of the two is needed to provide the fuel (female) and the spark (male) to the light of life.

To properly read the both the minor arcana, and their associated Court Cards, one must have a grasp of these mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. Female energies are slow and steady. The price for this fixed state is paid through inability to move in cycles of completion and quick readiness. We shall see later that the elements of pentacles-earth attest to this. The forces are fixed, remaining inherently inert and passive unless a male element is introduced.

The genders are next split in two, creating four states of being in the elements. The split represents a duality of Inner and Outer. A male and female pair embraces an energy that is expressed inwardly, in ways associated with the single system or individual. The other male and female pair embraces an energy that servers or focuses on those things outside of a single system or individual. So, the re is defined a "female-male" element, a "female-female" element, and so one. This is a very important differentiation, and should be understood.

As the "female-male" element, Earth is inherently fixed, but still has an element of movement and completion in it. This is seen through the cycling of the seasons, and the ever changing mantle that makes up our planet. Material things may not be transient like Fire or Air, but they do have an ability to pass into and out of our lives with male qualities.



Traditionally the elements interact with each other using rigid rules: Fire and Water are enemies, therefore weaken each other. Air and Earth are enemies, and therefore weaken each other. The interesting point with this rule is that elements of the same "gender" don't work together. Water and Fire are both female in orientation, and their combination leads to a passiveness that does not prosper. Likewise, Air and Earth are both male in orientation, and their combination burns out and does not prosper.

Below is a chart focusing on the suite/element of Pentacles/Earth:

Element	Gender	Focus/Direction	Duality	Expression	Traditional Meaning
Earth	Female	Outer/Others	Male/Female	represent money, material matters, and physical well-being	material things

Now that we have an understanding of the origins of Pentacles, the element can now be correlated to its Tarot suite, and the suite will be examined in detail. After much discussion, now the Pentacles of the earth element is presented:

Suite	Element	Gender (Main)	Gender (Secondary)
Pentacles	Earth	Female	Male

Table of Suite Correspondences

EXAMINATION OF PENTACLES IN LIGHT OF "GOOD" AND "BAD" CARDS

The association of a card as being good or bad is a distinction that I find to be based on a pessimistic approach to the cards. The dualistic tags of "good" and "bad" are relative sides of the same coin. It said that all good things must come to an end. When this end occurs, the "bad" side of the coin appears. The seeds of the "bad" are present in the "good", just as the full potential for "good" is present in "bad". When one operates on the basis of "good" and "bad" concepts, there exists no balance. There is always striving for what is not possessed, and sorrow for what is lost.

I instead encourage a holistic approach to the cards that allows one to accept the "good" cards as a respite, and the "bad" cards as opportunities for growth and movement. The nature of the cards is not judged by relative labels of dualism. Instead, the cards are appreciated individually – moments of being where only opportunity is present. The idea of non-dualistic identification of the cards is challenging. To fully examine the philosophy behind the minor arcana, I will continue to use the tags of "good" and "bad". When you see these words, instead think "opportunity" and "opportunity".

I feel that there are two kinds of "bad" cards: challenge and warning. The first category, those of challenge, contains those cards that indicate change and spiritual examination. The second category, those of warning, contains cards illustrating human short comings. Ironically, these short-comings are promoted when change or spiritual insight is not embraced

Card #	Pentacles	Wands	Cups	Swords	# of Good	# of Bad
1	G	G	G	G	4	0
2	G	G	G	G	4	0
3	G	G	G	B	3	1
4	B	G	B	G	2	2
5	B	B	B	B	0	4
6	G	G	G	G	4	0
7	B	B	B	B	0	4
8	G	G	B	B	2	2
9	G	G	G	B	1	3
10	G	G	G	B	2	2
# of Good	7	7	6	4		
# of Bad	3	3	4	6		

The suite of Pentacles – Earth – is only seen in a bad light when there is too much of it (4), and when there is change of a mundane (5) or spiritual type (7). These are expected, and should be avoided in the case of the number four, or welcome in the cases of five and seven.

Pentacles (Coins, Shields)

Symbolism/Interpretation: generally represent money, trade, fortune, business.

Pentacles/Disks correspond to the female element of earth. They represent money, material matters, and physical well-being.

The element of Earth is expressed through the direct experiences of our five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. This suite is one of action and reaction. When I sell somebody an item, they will give me money. When I eat ice cream, it will taste good. When I drink too much, I will have a hangover. The functions are uncomplicated. When somebody lives at an Earth level, life could be as slow and steady as the seasons turning and the crops growing. Earth-based religions feel very much in touch with these cycles, and celebrates them on Full Moons and quarters of the year.

We refer to the earthly element as the force of Form (or Body). Man's strongest instinct is the will to be and the first manifestation of that desire is to create something out of matter to prove his existence.

Earthy people do this through the gathering of material possessions and the actual building of the physical aspects of Man: his industries, his homes, and his physical body. It is the element of earth in a horoscope behind the needs to be practical, cautious, and very understanding of Man's ambitions toward material security and physical pleasures.

Meanings of the Numbers

Number	Meaning
Ones (Aces)	New beginnings
Twos	Relationships, duality, balancing of two Pentacles: two \$ making ventures
Threes	Synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, expansion, fulfillment – except Swords where this is missing. Pentacles: mastery of skill, achievement of expertise, fulfillment of craft
Fours	Foundations, stability, status quo Pentacles: security though finances, good financial foundation, holding onto \$
Fives	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes Pentacles: insecurity, unemployment, left out of things, being out in the cold, loneliness
Sixes	Assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better Pentacles: financial aid, benefactor, the power of the Universe to provide in magical ways, generosity, prosperity
Sevens	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight Pentacles: new business perspective, labor produces, new inspiration about future projects, surprisingly good news
Eights	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization Pentacles: education, learning new skill, apprentice, creation
Nines	Completion and fulfillment of each suit, maximum intensity of each suit in the cycle, completion, fulfillment Pentacles: comfortable home, beautiful environment, often solitary comfort, comfortable with one's self
Tens	Renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery. Pentacles: material prosperity, sense of happiness and contentment beyond financial riches and security

The Suite of Swords

To best understand the workings of the Tarot in general, and the Suites in particular, one should have a comfort level with the underlying aspects of the divination technique. While it is workable to memorize meanings of the cards, one does not have a full appreciation of their workings if the archetypes and metaphysical symbologies are not understood. There are symbologies of numerology and elements present in the minor arcana. This set of notes will focus on the specific suite/element of Air/Swords. There are four traditional elements in the Western metaphysical world. These are: earth, fire, air and water. These elements are the basis of most every magical/metaphysical working and belief. So, it is not surprising that the elements are also present in the Tarot. The elements are directly embrace the Minor Arcana, with each suite representing an element.

All creation starts from a single source, a seed. This is true in the use of the elements. The entirety of the universe represents the oneness of the elements. All the metaphysical expressions of the universe are presented by one, or a combination, of the elements. As thinking creatures, the idea of an infinite oneness is not palpable to us. It is said that to name a thing is to both know it and change it. At the risk of changing the oneness, mankind does name it, divide it into parts to create a thing that seems finite and understandable.

The oneness of the Universe is then divided by two. A duality is created. The female division provides the creative potential of live and the male division provides spark that moves the creation forward. Below is a chart of symbolic roles:

Female	Male
Lasting	Short-lived
In Charge	For Show
Covering and Hiding	Revealing and Exposing
Eternal	Cyclical
Passive	Active
Inner	Outer
Dark	Light

Roles of the Genders

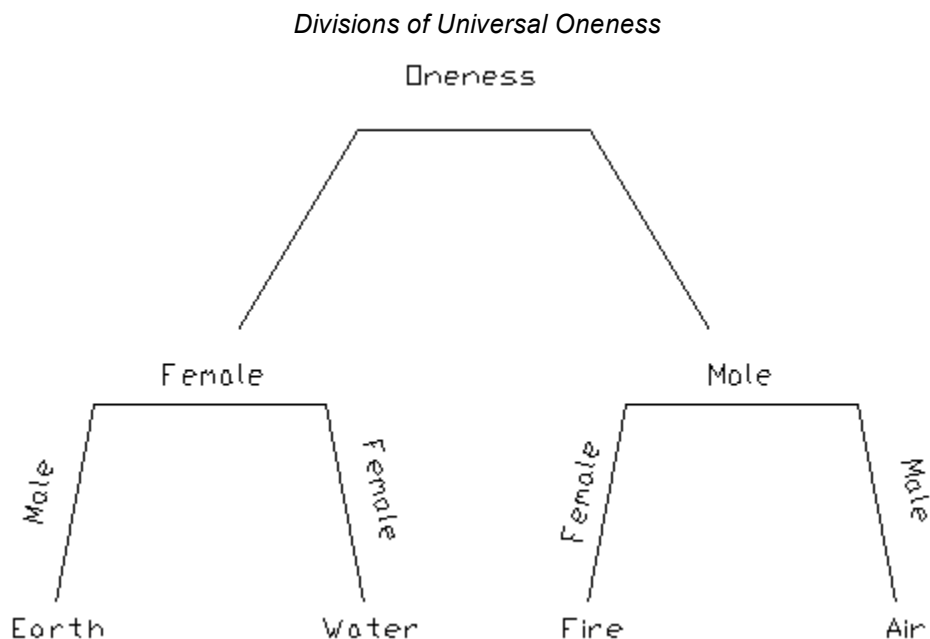
While it may seem that the genders contradict each other, they are actually complimentary. If a system is completely female, it becomes stagnant fuel/potential with no movement. If a system is completely male, it burns itself out with no fuel available to maintain the spark. A mixture of the two is needed to provide the fuel (female) and the spark (male) to the light of life.

To properly read the both the minor arcana, and their associated Court Cards, one must have a grasp of these mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. Male energies are fast and sudden. The price for the bursts of energy are paid through short duration and non-lasting effects. Given their shorter life cycles, male energy is associated with completion and readiness to let go or move on. We shall see later that the elements of air-swords attest to this. The forces of require much energy to maintain. When the energy is removed, the air no longer exists as a force.

The genders are next split in two, creating four states of being in the elements. The split represents a duality of Inner and Outer. A male and female pair embraces an energy that is expressed inwardly, in ways associated with the single system or individual. The other male and female pair embraces an energy that servers or focuses on those things outside of a single system or individual. So, there is

defined a "female-male" element, a "female-female" element, and so one. This is a very important differentiation, and should be understood.

As the "male-male" element, Air is always in motion and is always being spent and then reborn to continue on. Never resting, never settled, it is no surprise that the suite associated with this element is seen to be martial and decisive in the majority of its faces.



Traditionally the elements interact with each other using rigid rules: Fire and Water are enemies, therefore weaken each other. Air and Earth are enemies, and therefore weaken each other. The interesting point with this rule is that elements of the same "gender" don't work together. Water and Fire are both female in orientation, and their combination leads to a passiveness that does not prosper. Likewise, Air and Earth are both male in orientation, and their combination burns out and does not prosper.

Below is a chart focusing on the suite/element of Air/Swords:

Element	Gender	Focus/Direction	Duality	Expression	Traditional Meaning
Air	Male	Outer/Others	Male/Male	the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict	indication of trouble and problems

Now that we have an understanding of the origins of Swords, the element can now be correlated to its Tarot suite, and the suite will be examined in detail. After much discussion, now the Swords of the air element is presented:

Suite	Element	Gender (Main)	Gender (Secondary)
Swords	Air	Male	Male

Table of Suite Correspondences

EXAMINATION OF SWORDS IN LIGHT OF "GOOD" AND "BAD" CARDS

The association of a card as being good or bad is a distinction that I find to be based on a pessimistic approach to the cards. The dualistic tags of "good" and "bad" are relative sides of the same coin. It said

that all good things must come to an end. When this end occurs, the "bad" side of the coin appears. The seeds of the "bad" are present in the "good", just as the full potential for "good" is present in "bad". When one operates on the basis of "good" and "bad" concepts, there exists no balance. There is always striving for what is not possessed, and sorrow for what is lost.

I instead encourage a holistic approach to the cards that allows one to accept the "good" cards as a respite, and the "bad" cards as opportunities for growth and movement. The nature of the cards is not judged by relative labels of dualism. Instead, the cards are appreciated individually – moments of being where only opportunity is present. The idea of non-dualistic identification of the cards is challenging. To fully examine the philosophy behind the minor arcana, I will continue to use the tags of "good" and "bad". When you see these words, instead think "opportunity" and "opportunity".

I feel that there are two kinds of "bad" cards: challenge and warning. The first category, those of challenge, contains those cards that indicate change and spiritual examination. The second category, those of warning, contains cards illustrating human short comings. Ironically, these short-comings are promoted when change or spiritual insight is not embraced

Card #	Pentacles	Wands	Cups	Swords	# of Good	# of Bad
1	G	G	G	G	4	0
2	G	G	G	G	4	0
3	G	G	G	B	3	1
4	B	G	B	G	2	2
5	B	B	B	B	0	4
6	G	G	G	G	4	0
7	B	B	B	B	0	4
8	G	G	B	B	2	2
9	G	G	G	B	1	3
10	G	G	G	B	2	2
# of Good	7	7	6	4		
# of Bad	3	3	4	6		

The suite of Swords has traditionally had the darkest of reputations. There are more bad cards than good cards. It is my belief that this is a reflection of the turmoil people experience from the stresses of the mind. Thoughts are egocentric, and cannot join with others. When a person is operating in the realm of Air, they are furthest from the soothing womb of the Earth.

THOUGHTS ON MAGICAL WORK:

In the area of magic, it would seem that Earth based workings are preferable. The suite of Pentacles – Earth – is only seen in a bad light when there is too much of it (4), and when there is change of a mundane (5) or spiritual type (7). These are expected, and should be avoided in the case of the number four, or welcome in the cases of five and seven.

The other suites begin to exhibit issues when they are worked with in a magical way. Wands – Fire - have unfocused, non-regenerating qualities when pushed to an extreme. Cups – Water – suffer from the unstable nature of the medium. Swords – Air – provide an egocentric method that gives potential pain for its results.

An interesting note is that general Ceremonial and Enochian magic focus on the area of Swords. Based on this, I would discourage only a hearty few from this path. At the other extreme, the neopagan religions – including Wicca – follow the path of the Pentacle. It is of no coincidence that the preferred medallion of Wiccans is the pentacle.

Swords

Symbolism/Interpretation: generally represent courage and boldness, strife and aggression, even hatred and enemies.

Swords correspond to the element of male air. They represent the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict.

The element of Air adds intellect and conscious thinking to the minor arcana. The mind is sword that cuts through ignorance, and it also slays a person and others.

The element of air is the most removed from the element of Earth. Fire is dependent on Earth for fuel. Water is dependent on Earth for a place to rest. Air can exist without Earth. This nature analogy can be extended to the realm of our being. One can make decisions, and have thoughts, that are not based on reality, or grounded in practicality. Thoughts are like air: invisible, swift limitless. The thought that begins as a breeze quickly becomes a tornado, or escapes into the emptiness of space. Air is the most difficult element to contain, control, and quantify. The more we try to control our thoughts, the wilder they become. Meditation brings our thoughts back to a stable form. The purest forms of meditation seek not to contain, control, or quantify thoughts. Zen meditation instead acknowledges a thought, and allows for its natural departure. There is no counting of thoughts, no tally sheet of grievances and hurts.

The suite of Swords has traditionally had the darkest of reputations. There are more bad cards than good cards. It is my belief that this is a reflection of the turmoil people experience from the stresses of the mind. Thoughts are egocentric, and cannot join with others. When a person is operating in the realm of Air, they are furthest from the soothing womb of the Earth.

We refer to the air element as the force of the Mind. People who are strongly influenced by the airy signs can be calm and refreshing as a cool breeze. But if their temper is raised, they react with gale-like force, shattering the tranquility of the world around them. Air is necessary to convey the words which one person uses to speak to another. It is in its aspect as a communicating and collectivizing agent that air has its most important function in astrology. Through air, Man can reach for ideas in the intuitive mind, and apply them in the realm of human experience. Mind is man's most important tool and the greatest danger at the same time.

Meanings of the Numbers

Number	Meaning
Ones (Aces)	New beginnings
Twos	Relationships, duality, balancing of two Swords two opposing forces, stalemate, forces balanced
Threes	Synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, expansion, fulfillment – except Swords where this is missing. Swords: separation and heart break, crisis in relationship, deep suffering, lack of harmony, triangle growth through pain.
Fours	Foundations, stability, status quo Swords: rest, respite, period of recuperation, need for inactivity
Fives	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes Swords: instability caused by betrayal, arguments, battles, trickery, manipulation
Sixes	Assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better Swords: assistance, turning point, struggle and strife subsiding, solving problems, passage to a higher state, finding understanding
Sevens	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight Swords: mistrust, may mean a need to move onwards and leave part of past behind, head-on-attack disastrous, care and cunning needed or mistrust and betrayal
Eights	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy,

	organization Swords: restriction, blockage, fear, trapped from exercising control
Nines	Completion and fulfillment of each suit, maximum intensity of each suit in the cycle, completion, fulfillment Swords: high anxiety, worry over the outcome, worry, depression, sleepless nights
Tens	Renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery. Swords: disaster, failure, loss of perspective, overacting to problems, losing one's mind... insanity

The Suite of Cups

To best understand the workings of the Tarot in general, and the Suites in particular, one should have a comfort level with the underlying aspects of the divination technique. While it is workable to memorize meanings of the cards, one does not have a full appreciation of their workings if the archetypes and metaphysical symbologies are not understood. There are symbologies of numerology and elements present in the minor arcana. This set of notes will focus on the specific suite/element of Cups/Water. There are four traditional elements in the Western metaphysical world. These are: earth, fire, air and water. These elements are the basis of most every magical/metaphysical working and belief. So, it is not surprising that the elements are also present in the Tarot. The elements directly embrace the Minor Arcana, with each suite representing an element.

All creation starts from a single source, a seed. This is true in the use of the elements. The entirety of the universe represents the oneness of the elements. All the metaphysical expressions of the universe are presented by one, or a combination, of the elements. As thinking creatures, the idea of an infinite oneness is not palpable to us. It is said that to name a thing is to both know it and change it. At the risk of changing the oneness, mankind does name it, divide it into parts to create a thing that seems finite and understandable.

The oneness of the Universe is then divided by two. A duality is created. The female division provides the creative potential of life and the male division provides spark that moves the creation forward. Below is a chart of symbolic roles:

Female	Male
Lasting	Short-lived
In Charge	For Show
Covering and Hiding	Revealing and Exposing
Eternal	Cyclical
Passive	Active
Inner	Outer
Dark	Light

Roles of the Genders

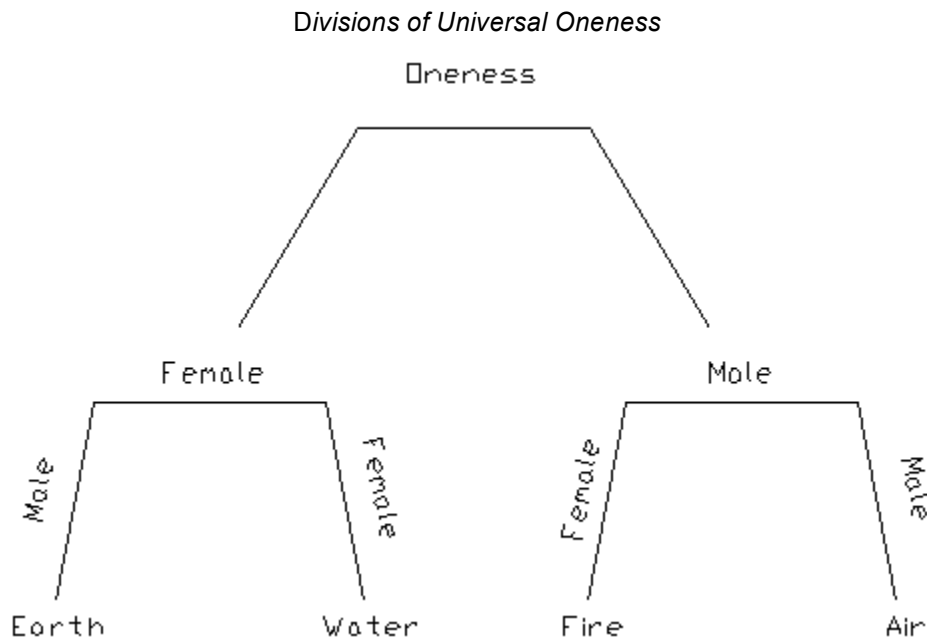
While it may seem that the genders contradict each other, they are actually complimentary. If a system is completely female, it becomes stagnant fuel/potential with no movement. If a system is completely male, it burns itself out with no fuel available to maintain the spark. A mixture of the two is needed to provide the fuel (female) and the spark (male) to the light of life.

To properly read the both the minor arcana, and their associated Court Cards, one must have a grasp of these mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. . Female energies are slow and steady. The

price for this fixed state is paid through inability to quickly move in cycles of completion and readiness. We shall see later that the element of water/cups attests to this. The forces are fixed, remaining inherently inert and passive unless a male element is introduced.

The genders are next split in two, creating four states of being in the elements. The split represents a duality of Inner and Outer. A male and female pair embraces an energy that is expressed inwardly, in ways associated with the single system or individual. The other male and female pair embraces an energy that servers or focuses on those things outside of a single system or individual. So, there is defined a "female-male" element, a "female-female" element, and so one. This is a very important differentiation, and should be understood.

As the "female-female" element, water embraces all of the qualities of the female energies. The element of water covers a majority of our planet, hiding the face of the earth from the view of all but a very few. The surface of dark pond hides depths that are not known. The still waters can be a few feet deep, or hundreds of feet deep. An emotional analogy can be drawn to this image. Emotions are very difficult to judge by what is on the surface. Loves and hatreds can run very deep, and be very resistant to change.



Traditionally the elements interact with each other using rigid rules: Fire and Water are enemies, therefore weaken each other. Air and Earth are enemies, and therefore weaken each other. The interesting point with this rule is that elements of the same "gender" don't work together. Water and Fire are both female in orientation, and their combination leads to a passiveness that does not prosper. Likewise, Air and Earth are both male in orientation, and their combination burns out and does not prosper.

Below is a chart focusing on the suite/element of Water/Cups:

Element	Gender	Focus/Direction	Duality	Expression	Traditional Meaning
Water	Female	Inner /Self	Female/Female	emotions, relationships, love, and intuition	emotions, feelings

Now that we have an understanding of the origins of Cups, the element can now be correlated to its Tarot suite, and the suite will be examined in detail. After much discussion, now the Cups of the water element is presented:

Suite	Element	Gender (Main)	Gender (Secondary)
Cups	Water	Female	Female

Table of Suite Correspondences

EXAMINATION OF CUPS IN LIGHT OF "GOOD" AND "BAD" CARDS

The association of a card as being good or bad is a distinction that I find to be based on a pessimistic approach to the cards. The dualistic tags of "good" and "bad" are relative sides of the same coin. It said that all good things must come to an end. When this end occurs, the "bad" side of the coin appears. The seeds of the "bad" are present in the "good", just as the full potential for "good" is present in "bad". When one operates on the basis of "good" and "bad" concepts, there exists no balance. There is always striving for what is not possessed, and sorrow for what is lost.

I instead encourage a holistic approach to the cards that allows one to accept the "good" cards as a respite, and the "bad" cards as opportunities for growth and movement. The nature of the cards is not judged by relative labels of dualism. Instead, the cards are appreciated individually – moments of being where only opportunity is present. The idea of non-dualistic identification of the cards is challenging. To fully examine the philosophy behind the minor arcana, I will continue to use the tags of "good" and "bad". When you see these words, instead think "opportunity" and "opportunity".

I feel that there are two kinds of "bad" cards: challenge and warning. The first category, those of challenge, contains those cards that indicate change and spiritual examination. The second category, those of warning, contains cards illustrating human shortcomings. Ironically, these shortcomings are promoted when change or spiritual insight is not embraced

Card #	Pentacles	Wands	Cups	Swords	# of Good	# of Bad
1	G	G	G	G	4	0
2	G	G	G	G	4	0
3	G	G	G	B	3	1
4	B	G	B	G	2	2
5	B	B	B	B	0	4
6	G	G	G	G	4	0
7	B	B	B	B	0	4
8	G	G	B	B	2	2
9	G	G	G	B	1	3
10	G	G	G	B	2	2
# of Good	7	7	6	4		
# of Bad	3	3	4	6		

An examination of the "bad" cards in the suite of cups reveals the challenges of the suite/element.

#	Quality of Number	Expression in Cups	Analysis
4	Foundations, stability, status quo	apathy, boredom, ignoring the growth possibilities, status quo because of apathy	The still, fixed state of water/emotions becomes assuming and unwilling to change even in the face of decay and need for progress
5	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes	regret, pessimism about the future, difficulty of letting go, all is not lost can soon be rebuild, loss and sadness, relationship ending	Change is never welcomed, and the cups are not an exception to this rule.
7	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight.	imagination, lots of choices, fantasizing, may indicate confusion, mystical experience, positive visualization	This card carries a warning that choices must be made carefully in the face of emotional changes. Emotions do not change easily, and when they do there is much force. A natural example is flooding water from an overflowing river.
8	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization	emotional withdrawal, writing on the wall, moving on	Emotions, relationships, and loves cannot be controlled and mastered by a group or organization. The retreat from control is the emotional reaction to an attempt of mastery.

Cups

The minor arcana brings universal themes down into the practical arena to show how they operate in daily events. The Cup cards represent the concerns, activities and emotions that make up the dramas of our everyday lives

Symbolism/Interpretation: Cards in the suit of Cups generally represent relationships, love, and intuition, emotional activity, feeling, spiritual experience, the subconscious mind, beauty, desire, spirit, fertility, abundance, happiness, the emotional fulfillments life can offer. The downside of the symbolism is that it represents all emotions, including anger, hate, and fear.

Cups correspond to the element of female water, and to the yin, or feminine principle. The shielding nature of a cup also associates it with things hidden, as true emotions usually are. A full cup is emotional fulfillment. A dry cup means emotional depression. A cup runneth over represents emotional abundance. A closed cup is lack of emotional expression.

The element of Water adds emotions to the minor arcana. The cabbalistic association of water is that of the Creative World, the level of intellect, of the Archangels. Water is a substance that flows to the lowest places, and it can be calm or stormy. Water can be represented by shallow puddles or by bottomless oceans. Emotions take on all of these qualities. The shape and status of water is dependent on its container and temperature. The ability of water to flow and fill up spaces, to sustain and to reflect changing moods makes it the ideal symbol of the Cups suit.

We refer to the water element as the force of Soul or Emotion. Soul is, in part, the element of human nature which provides understanding and compassion for the feelings of others. People who are extremely connected to the water element are extremely sensitive to human sentiment and artistic expression. They can seep into the subconscious of others and instinctually, if not intellectually, understand the motives behind other people's actions

Meanings of the Numbers

Number	Meaning
Ones (Aces)	New beginnings
Twos	Relationships, duality, balancing of two Cups friendship, romantic partnership
Threes	Synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, expansion, fulfillment – except Cups where this is missing. Cups : fulfillment (in love), harmony, good luck, celebration... harmony in love cause of celebration, pregnancy
Fours	Foundations, stability, status quo Cups : apathy, boredom, ignoring the growth possibilities, status quo because of apathy
Fives	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes Cups : regret, pessimism about the future, difficulty of letting go, all is not lost can soon be rebuild, loss and sadness, relationship ending
Sixes	Assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better Cups : pleasant memories from the past, children, ideals from the past, a gift
Sevens	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight. Insight often spiritual in nature Cups : imagination, lots of choices, fantasizing, may indicate confusion, mystical experience, positive visualization
Eights	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization Cups : emotional withdrawal, writing on the wall, moving on
Nines	Completion and fulfillment of each suit, maximum intensity of each suit in the cycle, completion, fulfillment Cups : wish fulfillment, wish come true, emotional happiness, satisfaction and pleasure are on the way
Tens	Renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery. Cups : love, true love, happiness in person relationships, joy, prosperity, family life goes well

The Magic of Tarot

Tarot Applications

The tarot cards are commonly used for divination of the past, present and future. The cards are pulled randomly during divination, with the synchronicity of the moment determining the outcome through interpretation of the "random" results.

The tarot is also a tool unique tool for meditation on the many archetypes present within. Most every action and reaction mankind is possible of is present in the major and minor arcana. Contemplation of these archetypes reveals the inward movements of the self and soul. The placement of the cards for meditation can be done deliberately or they may be cast randomly to receive the messages of the divine. Another application of the tarot cards is used with less frequency than the first two. The tarot can be used as a tool for working magic. What is magic? How is tarot used? How does it work? What can be expected? All of these questions will be answered in this paper.

The Way of Magic

The term "magic", whatever the spelling, has been used in many practical and fanciful ways. It is seeped in ritual and mystery. The many ways that magic is described clouds the basic definition of the word:

Magic is the act and outcome of intent and focus.

With this definition one can both perform magic and say that magic happens. Act and outcome are easily understood. The crux of magic, what makes it really work or not work, is the intent and the focus applied. As an exploration of intent and focus let's work with an analogy of dropping a ball. The act is the releasing of the ball and the outcome is the ball falling downward. This sounds very simple. However, there are many variables. These include the initial velocity of the ball, the initial trajectory, the physical qualities of the ball, and the media that the ball is falling through. These can be broken down into even smaller designations. Assuming that air is the media that the ball is falling through, the temperature of the air and the wind speed can affect the ball dropping depending on the weight, initial speed, and composition of the ball. Gravity (or lack of it) will determine the speed and direction of the fall. So, in this analogy, we've seen the simple dropping of a ball become very complicated. This is the nature of intent and focus in the workings of magic.

While the precise working of magic is illustrated to be difficult to calculate, the general nature is very easy. Another statement can be suggested:

Every act and thought done with intent is magic.

With this statement I've created a reality that every purposely performed action, those actions done with intent and focus, is magic. The creation of the previous sentence was an action of magic because I considered my words and put them down. Some thing was created, and that sentence was the creation. The ripples from your reading the sentence and considering its meaning is also a magical result. This has broad ramifications. Most every thought and action becomes a form of magic, and magic is removed from the occult and fantastic as it is placed into everyday life.

Consider another analogy. A person calls your name and motions you to come to where they are. You do so. Is this magic? Yes. They performed magic on you. How is this different from summoning an earth elemental? Summoning an element is an action of calling them to where you are. Their name is called. When done properly they arrive. The keyword here is *properly*.

The Workings of Magic

We will continue the analogy of calling a person. If a person is not in a room with us, and we call their name, will they come? Perhaps not. If they are out of the range of our voice they will not hear us and cannot respond. What if we shout or use a megaphone? We would be heard across a larger area. What if they were in a different town? We could use a telephone and they could come. The use of the telephone requires we know their number and requires that they be available to receive the call. There is the possibility that the person is deaf and cannot hear us even if they are in the same room, or they may be capable of hearing and choose to ignore directions.

Considering the potential difficulties in calling a person to come to your side, what of the summoning of an elemental? First they must be a "real" entity. They must be available, and we just have the means to communicate to them. Lastly, they must have the desire to come when the command to arrive is given. What do the calling over of a friend and the summoning of an elemental have in common? The person creating the magic has:

Awareness of their surroundings – who/what is there and where

The knowledge of how to communicate

The understanding of how to combine the awareness and knowledge

A relationship with person/elemental that will facilitate a response

These four building blocks are just as necessary while operating a microwave, driving a car, operating a VCR, or drawing down the Moon. The harmonious or effective combination will make things happen. The improper combination will result in nothing happening, or worst, an unwelcome outcome.

Lets work with the analogy of the microwave. Putting a metal dish in a microwave, the incorrect awareness of the surroundings, can be very dangerous. The microwave must be programmed for the appropriate amount of time; this is the knowledge part. Lastly, the person working the microwave must bring together the awareness (proper dish, food) and knowledge (correct amount of time) to properly heat a dish. What about the relationship? If the person cooks beets and they don't like beets, than their properly executed magical act still has an unwelcome outcome.

The Outcome of Magic

Magic, both mundane and esoteric, typically has an outcome. The exertion of energies without an outcome it is not possible. Every action has a reaction. It is not possible to work magic and not have a result. The reaction may not be readily visible in the same moment and place, but it is there. The outcomes of magic ripple through the physical, energetic, and spiritual planes. All of these are not visible to use. We have a hard enough time seeing what is really happening in the physical plane. The less visible planes of energy and spirit can hide a battleship to unseeing eyes.

The theory of karma comes into play here. If karma is the reaction of the universe to our actions, than every act of magic not only has a result, it also has a karmic reaction. What is karma? Karma comes from the root kri, "to do". The principal is based on the idea that actions determine your destiny. One becomes good by good action and bad by bad action. Each karma, or action, generates a vibration that continues to vibrate in the mind. These vibrations are subconscious impressions. Like attracts like. Love attracts loving acts; malice attracts malice. The attraction and reaction is non-judgmental, and does not involve the operation of morality or a single divine judgement.

So magic results in both the outcome desired (hopefully) with a dash of karma thrown in. The outcome is visible, and the karma is much less visible. An example of this is throwing a rock into a pond. You see the splash and the ripples on the surface. In murky water you don't see what is happening under the water. Dynamite thrown into the water makes a big splash. Later the dead fish float to the surface, killed by the shock waves underwater. The initial splash is the outcome and the dead fish are the karma. The effects of karma may linger long after the outcome of the magic is felt. Indeed, the original act of magic may be long forgotten while the subtle workings of karma are still affecting us. An example of this is that fishing may be very poor for years to come after we dynamite the local fishing hole.

Magic has results both seen and unseen. The results will affect the person working the magic, the object the magic is directed toward, and all things around the magical working. Everything is connected whether the bond is seen or unseen. While the seen effects of magic are a concern, the unseen should be considered also. In the microwave analogy, it is nice to produce a dish we like (not beets!), but it is equally important not to use a microwave with faulty wiring, and thus burn down the building at some point in the future as the wiring is damaged by each use of the microwave. Because the wires are hidden behind the wall, we don't know if the day of destruction will be immediate or sometime in the distant future.

Given the ramifications of our actions, do we choose not to perform magic? Is this possible? No. Unless we are a vegetable, we do perform acts of intent. Indeed, the act of becoming a vegetable so we will not perform magic would be an act of magic, and it would have rippling ramifications that would make mute our personal future nonaction.

The Ethics of Magic

Magic will be performed. What can we do? The answer is to perform our acts of magic in an ethical fashion. Volumes of books have been written about ethics, and each group has their own interpretation of what is proper ethics. I would suggest two approaches. The first would be to consider the Golden Rule :

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This rule appeals to the selfish ego side of our human natures. It puts in check many of the destructive tendencies of the ego. It is a simple rule, one that is driven more out of survival than compassion. The ego tells us to behave ethically from the fear of itself being hurt. This is not a bad thing. Indeed, it is one of the most basic survival tools we humans have. The second approach is more compassionate and more difficult. It asks us to put aside our selfish egos and instead see things from a divine and spiritual point of view. This is simultaneously very difficult and very easy. We all have sparks of divine god in us. We are capable of knowing what the right action is. However, this voice may be very quiet compared to the ego. The right action may not be compatible with the correct action called for by the ego. This is applicable for what would be considered good and bad actions. It is compassionate to know when to be good and when to be bad. Sometimes, with divine oversight, we are asked to do things that are viewed as bad. How is the challenge of compassionate divine oversight accomplished? Listen to the divine spark through intuition. Put the ego aside and ask "what is the correct path?" The answer may surprise you.

A principle that is difficult for the ego to learn is when not to do "good". Healing is an act of magic. Healing is not always appropriate. Sometimes people are suffering for a reason. A healing that is done at the wrong time will be harmful to the energetic or spiritual growth of the person even while their body recovers. The immediate outcome of a healed body is not important compared to the harm done by the arresting or restarting of a spiritual journey prompted by the suffering. Experienced healers learn to listen to their intuition or their guides on when to heal and when not to heal. The ego would say, "I would like to be healed if it were me." The divine self says, "it is not time."

Which is more important? Is it the need to survive or the need to act through a divine plan at the apparent detriment of survival? This is an age-old question, but as we are spiritual beings having a human experience instead of human beings having a spiritual experience, the answer is clear. When we are in harmony with the divine, survival is a harmonious part of the divine plan.

The use of magic clearly asks for much responsibility. Living is magic, and living asks for the same responsibility. One cannot say "this is mundane living and this is an act of magic." The two are inseparable. Their togetherness gives us power. Every action and thought has tremendous potential of power behind it, and tremendous responsibility to the ethics of all things.

The Tools of Magic

The fluid execution of magic results from the combination of awareness, knowledge, understanding, and a relationship with the universe. These are all necessary for gaining the outcome we desire. These guide us in choosing the time, place, tools, and actions that we perform our magic in and through. All things have a time and place. Actions are easier in a particular time and place. When we move ourselves far away from that time and place, things just don't turn out that way. Most plants grow well with water, sunshine and good soil. This is a generalization. There are some plants that require, and indeed thrive, on very little water. Some plants need lots of sun and some need lots of shade. Plants have different soil requirements. Some plants need to be planted in the Spring and some need to be planted in the Fall. A gardener learns what each plant needs, and through the application of this knowledge, they grow healthy plants. The same is true with any act of magic. The person performing the magic must know:

What

Why

Who

When

Where

This presents magic as being very mechanistic. This is not the case. There are variables of chaos and hands of incomprehensible divinity in all actions. A person cannot understand or anticipate all of the variables of the material, energetic and spiritual. Magic is instead only part mechanistic. The other part operates on faith. A good analogy is the throwing of a dart. While all variables can be taken into account and factored into the throwing action, at some point you must let go of the dart. Technique, faith, and a bit of fate come together as the dart moves toward the board. Perfection is not achieved by iron fisted control. It is achieved by careful preparation and then letting go with trust. Adjustments can be made in preparation and lessons may be learned from past experiences. The true master of magic, and indeed life, learns that the trick is not in doing something right, but in not doing it at all. The rightness will follow. In this Eastern word twist, the action is still performed, but it is done in that place where the divine is in control while ego merely observes. There is not a duality of incorrect and correct. Instead there is a transcendent place of what is through the reason that it is the only thing that can be.

Enter the Tarot

This is a paper about the tarot isn't it? Let us see where it drops in. The tarot is a tool for focusing intent. The focus of intent results in magic. Each card has a vibration programmed by either the user or by some universal archetype. The vibration is a factor in both the direct outcome and the karmic repercussions. The mixing of cards and other tools such as candles, stones, oils, etc., create a mix of vibrations are sympathetic to the outcome of the magic. Positive energies produce positive results. Negative energies produce negative results. The results are weighed on a universal scale, with the quite hidden and subtle hand of Spirit determining the relative affects.

Magic, and the life from it derives, is very powerful. The visible effects may be manifest powerfully or with little force. The invisible effects are also there, and it could be said that the less visible the visible, the more powerful the invisible.

Work your tarot magic with ethical responsibility. Do so with understanding. May the divine powers bless your workings and may you receive the results you wish.

Tarot, Karma and Reincarnation

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.

We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Karma and Reincarnation

Karma comes from the root kri, "to do". The principal is based on the idea that actions determine your destiny. One becomes good by good action and bad by bad action. Each karma, or action, generates a vibration that continues to vibrate in the mind. These vibrations are subconscious impressions. Like attracts like. Love attracts loving acts, malice attracts malice. The attraction and reaction is non-judgmental, and does not involve the operation of morality or a single divine judgment.

Fate and Karma are very different. Fate means that one's life has been predestined. Karma is exactly the opposite. With Karma, your destiny is completely under your control, be it for good or for bad. The basis by which the two work is something of a paradox, and is suggested as a further area of study.

Karma works hand in hand with reincarnation. Reincarnation means rebirth of the soul into a new body based on the soul's spiritual level, for the purpose of learning certain life lessons. It is a journey of the soul, simply put. The soul makes a choice about the lesson it will learn during a physical incarnation, and the lesson(s) are largely based on the karma built up during past incarnations.

There are three "psychological" ways to gain an awareness of past lives.

1. *Dreams* - It is possible in dreams to get glimpses of previous lives. If you're in a dream, but with a different body, it could be one of your previous incarnations. Dreams are an interesting way to relive past life events. While dreaming, you temporarily lose touch with your worldly life. This is the time where your buried past life memories have a chance of surfacing because you're more free to experience them.

2. *Hypnosis or Past Life Regression* - With this method, you are put into a hypnotic state in an attempt to free past life memories and identities. Under hypnosis we are more relaxed and able to look back at our past lives; we don't have the inhibitions that normally keep us from having such memories during regular consciousness.

3. *Meditation* - If we are able to meditate deep and to a certain level, we can access past life memories. Again, by meditating, we lose our worldly concerns and inhibitions and are more receptive to the complete truth.

The soul can be described as the eternal energy that sustains your body and makes your body seem real. The soul contains all of the intelligence that allows your body to function. It is the only constant in your many incarnations. Your body is like a mask, hiding your true self, the soul. You really don't die. Upon leaving the physical plane, you first go through a resting period where you are in a very deep sleep. People have described this as much, much deeper than your deepest sleep while on Earth. After you have refreshed and recharged yourself, you then enter a new world where things are different than the physical plane. This world is called the astral plane. At this level, the rules are different in some big ways. There is no real concept of time on this level. In addition, you are given the power of thought projection, the power to create things from your thoughts. Also, the body needs no sleep or food. The basic theme of the astral plane is that since you've shed your physical body due to bodily death, you can learn more about your astral body. This astral body lies under your physical body when you're in the physical plane. After remaining a certain amount of time in the astral plane, most of us reincarnate back into the physical plane. We have to choose the appropriate situation and birth mother for our next incarnation. Then the cycle is complete.

Outside of the psychological ways of investigating karma, evidence of the operation of karma can be viewed in the ancient "arts of divination". The arts include but are not limited to: astrology, numerology, palmistry, and rune systems.

Astrology

Astrology provides the clear evidence of karma. The natal chart outlines the traps or temptations, special talents, self defeating techniques, and love partners that are partly or wholly influenced by karma. The path of karma running through your life is most clearly revealed in the natal (birth) horoscope. A natal chart, cast for a person's birthplace and time, provides a microcosmic application of the macrocosm overhead. In the modern Western world, this chart takes the form of a circle made up of twelve portions. The planets are placed in the circle, their position relative to each other forever fixed in time. As the birth of a person happens only once, the natal chart is frozen, a blueprint of karma – the strengths and weaknesses inherent in a person's being.

Astrological event charts look at the nature of time – its possibilities and potentials – at any given moment. The goal of the event chart is to understand the way that the momentary energies interact with the innate karma of the natal chart. Transits are a way of seeing how life unfolds. Transits give insights into the tides of karma. The tides cannot exist without the sea, and the affects of the moving planets require the sea of our natal karma to come into being. Transits can mark times of crisis and triumph, chances to advance, and times of transition, danger and hope. It could be argued that moments of "fate" take place when there are strongly planetary/energetic interactions with our natal karma.

Numerology

Each day of the year has a unique energy created by the combination of the energy of the numbers that make it up. The same is true for the name that is given at birth. Each letter has an energy, and their sum represents a natal "energetic" blueprint. The day of birth and the name given on that day are not accidents. They are determined by karma and reincarnation pre-birth choice. Unlocking the secrets of the numbers reveals why a person is here, what their lessons will be, and where their karmic challenges will lie. Some dates and names carry heavy atonement for karma.

The most heavily karmic names for women are Ruth, Victoria and Huette while the most heavily karmic names for men are Rudy, Victor and Hugh.

The Connection of Astrology and Numerology

Both astrology and numerology share a similarity that they can both be natively calculated and recorded. A person's natal "blueprint" for karma can be locked into an astrological chart or a diagram of numbers and letters. The process follows a pre-defined, "scientific" approach. The natal chart and numerological numbers are not obtained intuitively. The procedure can be documented in a book or programmed into a computer.

The procedural method of astrology and numerology is both a strength and a weakness. The strength flows from the fact that anybody can do it with the proper training and/or tools. Analysis after the factual creation of the karmic maps can be very standard too, not requiring intuitive intervention. The

relative absence of intuition is also the weakness of these methods.

Intuition

Webster's defines intuition as "quick and ready insight;" and "the act or process of coming to direct knowledge without reasoning or inferring." It is derived from the Latin word "intueri" which means "to see within." It is a way of knowing, of sensing the truth without explanations.

Intuition is something that we are born with and use everyday. Intuition is present in everyone because it is a survival skill, not a spiritual intention. In this form it is an unconscious tool, an extra sense outside the analytical, logical and rational side of the brain. In an untrained form intuition is very powerful. Intuition warns us who is "dangerous", when to be fearful, and when to jump into a situation. It can become a more reliable and valuable tool when the language of intuition is understood and developed. Untrained intuition can be confused with emotional desires and fantasies. Accurate intuition enables you to gain vital and valuable insight into yourself, family, friends, business associates and the world around you. More importantly, intuition provides you with guidance so thoughts and actions are nurtured to produce hopes and dreams.

The three psychological ways to gain an awareness of past lives, and the karma associated with them, share a traits of:

You temporarily lose touch with your worldly life.

You don't have the inhibitions that normally keep you from having such memories during regular consciousness.

You lose your worldly concerns and inhibitions and are more receptive to the complete truth.

The rote and standard of astrology and numerology do not easily fit these traits. Intuition works best when the three traits are practiced. Intuition then flows, revealing the sensing of truth without explanations. From this sensing the revealing of past reincarnations and the path of karma begins.

Tarot

The goal of tarot is to momentarily disengage the individual from the control of the mind so their soul can get a message through. Throwing a cluster of objects to produce a specific result is normally beyond the mental capabilities of most people and so this lets the soul take charge. The cards bypass the mind by having the person pick cards as directed by spirit. The tarot enables the individual to tap into their own intuitive abilities by serving as a focal point for spiritual intervention.

The symbols in the tarot are like symbolic clues we receive throughout life. Events in the world that occur seemingly at random, such as a gust of wind or a falling leaf, are symbolic guideposts of impending events. The tarot reading is simply the intentional allowing of synchronism to furnish a sign. The tarot is a navigation tool for our lives. Symbols in the framework of a tarot deck provide direction.

A "reading" of tarot symbols gives you information about the present. Since the present is a seed for the future, the reading offers a vision of a "probable" future. Once the future has been glimpsed, it can be altered to either insure or deter what is seen. The tarot gives feedback about one's location along life's journey. The reading shows the possibilities, giving us choice and greater control over the destiny.

The application of tarot's "in the moment" reading ability to the karmic/reincarnation based past and future is possible if one believes that the past, present and future are all happening at the same time. The paradox of fate and karma appears. As with any metaphysical paradox, there is an answer to it, but we cannot immediately grasp it if we think in terms of our physical, time based reality.

In consultation of the tarot, one can ask anything in any way. You can ask why, what, how, when, and where about any issue, decision, or aspect of your inner or external life – past, present, and/or future. Your questions may be specific or general. The tarot can respond to whether you should, can, will, or are. Karma and reincarnation questions are as valid as any.

The tarot cards can communicate in a combination of two ways: symbolically and intuitively. A symbolic reading is also known as a "book" reading. An accepted, predetermined meaning is applied

to the card. The quality of a symbolic reading is determined by the reader's understanding of card meanings/symbology, both alone and along with other cards. The symbolic reading is kin to the procedural methods of astrology or numerology, but the element of spirit "picking" the cards in the moment adds an energy factor that the others do not have. The soul/spirit picks the cards at the moment of the question, when intuition can be focused, instead of at the moment of birth or the time of naming.

The second method of reading is via intuition. When the cards are read intuitively, they "speak" to the reader, and there is no knowledge of underlying symbology required. The intuition of a reader picks up on the pictures in the cards or some other unclassifiable method. Some intuitive readers don't require the cards, and use them only as a backdrop to answering a querent's question. Other intuitive readers use the cards as a "jumping off point", and the reading moves forward from the first impression received from the cards. An analogy of this is being shown on a map that one is somewhere in the Southern United States, and then determining the probable climate based on the time of the year.

Most readers use a combination of symbolic and intuitive reading.

Tarot Spreads

Questions are often structured in the tarot through a spread, or layout. This is a symbolic pattern of positions, each with a given meaning. A card-symbol is selected for each of these positions and interpreted in relation to the assigned meaning of the position. Individual spreads lend themselves to different questions.

A spread is like a map. It is a preplanned structure that the seemingly random, but synchronous events, can fall. The maps can be very defined or very rough. An analogy is if one considers the position of Greenville SC to Atlanta GA. The "mapping" between the two can be at these possible levels:

- . They exist (*this is a very valid starting point!*)
- . They exist in this dimension
- . They exist on planet Earth
- . They exist in the United States
- . They exist in the Southeastern part of the United States
- . Greenville is north of Atlanta
- . They are both located on HWY 85
- and so on

The more defined the spread, the more specific the answer will be. The drawback of a very specific spread is that the universe does not like to be pigeonholed. The right question and the right spread is important. Spirit, however, may or may not cooperate fully with the intended "map", and if other information is supplied, the answer will make no sense if plugged into a question with the supplied "map".

Why will Spirit seem to not cooperate? There are a variety of ways to get a "wrong" or non-understandable answer.

The question is not important compared to something else going on in the querent's life. The analogy is that the querent is asking what color shoes they are wearing while a truck bears down on them.

The answer seems wrong, but the person is just not open to hearing the reply. The querent wants to hear another answer.

The parameters of the question were too largely defined, and it is not know what question or person the cards are referring to.

The parameters of the question were too small, and the answer is bigger than the box provided.

Multiple questions were asked, and multiple answers are given.

Confusion results.

The question has been asked many times, and Spirit is just tired of answering. Another tact is being tried by the spiritual guides/soul, and we haven't figured it out yet.

And there are more. This is only a sampling. Practice and being open to the voice of the divine are the paths through these difficulties.

Summary

Tarot, karma and reincarnation have no special link. Tarot is merely a tool, a good tool, that can be used to explore the realm of karma and reincarnation. The advantage of tarot over astrology and numerology is the ability to tap deep into the intuition to discover answers. This presents both a difficult challenge and a wonderful opportunity. As spreads are the voice of the tarot, one will be presented next for further exploration. The proper use of spreads on the potentially tricky and paradoxical questions of karma/fate and reincarnation requires planning, practice, and a will to listen to answers that aren't expected.

Suggested Spreads

Two wonderful spreads for determining the karmic implications of a question and the past-life information of a querent can be found at the URLs below::

http://www.tarotmoon.com/articles/Past_Life_I/past_life_i.html

http://www.tarotmoon.com/articles/Past_Life_II/past_life_ii.html

Tarot Card Cycles

In my studies of the tarot, I have found there to be something I call tarot card cycles. These are groups of cards that are related to each other in some way. Below are my notes on this interesting field of study. Feel free to leave me an e-mail if you have any questions!

Tarot Card Cycles

For your consideration, here are some generally accepted cycles associated with the major arcana:

a) "Inner" cycle of cards 1 through 9

"Outer" cycle of cards 10 through 18

"Transcended" cycle of cards 19 through 21

b) Cards 1 through 6 - Path of Balance (harmony)

Cards 7 through 12 - Path of Life's Lessons and Opportunities (Cause and Effect)

Cards 13 through 18 - Path of Rebirth (Transformation)

Cards 19 through 21 - not account for in text on these cycles, but they would appear to be a transcended triad.

c) Splitting of the 21 major arcana into triads. There are many different definitions relating to a triad. One I recently encountered is associated with degrees of the mystery schools. It defines the triad as: 1) knowing, 2) doing, 3) being. *Knowing* is the book learning needed for entry into the mystery schools. *Doing* is the practice of practicing what is learned during *Knowing*. *Being* is the responsible use of the tools gained during *Doing*. This triad model corresponds nicely with the triad model of maiden, mother, crone.

When the 21 major arcana cards are split into triads, they form major and minor triads. Cards 1 through 9 have a three major triads (1-3, 4-6, 7-9) with a minor triad in each

major triad. The second cycle of 10 cards again for three major triads with minor triads in each major triad. The last three cards (19-21) form a separate triad. I have tagged this separate triad with the title of "transcended". However, the form and function of the last three cards deserves further investigation.

One possibility is that there are three "super" triads in the major arcana. The first is associated with cards 1-9, the "inner" cards. During this first cycle one develops the tools of *Knowing*. A full cycle of 9 is used to emphasize the many steps required during the first stage of the triad. The "inner" cards show the archetypes associated with gaining and enhancing knowledge. Much of this work is inward, and hence the association.

The second phase of the "super" triad are cards 10 through 18. The "outer" cards show the archetypes associated with the exercise of knowledge in the practice of *Doing*. The effects are external, and will affect others. Many of life's biggest pitfalls (The Devil) and lessons (The Tower) are present here.

The last phase is very short. It consists of only three cards instead of the ten. Why? The *Doing* function of the triad gains no new knowledge or techniques. Everything that is needed has already been established. The emphasis is instead on the proper, or "transcended", use of powers during the act of *Being*. The World marks the end of the final triad. The World represents the full maturity of being. It is the archetype of one who has mastered all inner and outer trials. With this total mastery, one is ready to begin again. Hence, the placement of the Fool, and the being of the path again at The Magician as the triad recycles.

Examination of Inner and Outer card associations:

The "inner" and "outer" have cards that correspond to each other. Below is a chart that gives my personal interpretation of their relationships.

#	Inner	#	Outer	Relationship
1	The Magician	10	Wheel of Fortune	Wheel of Fortune reflects the good, but unpredictable, outcomes of the use of power in The Magician. The Wheel of Fortune has public consequences, while The Magician can work internally. The Wheel of Fortune reflects the outcome of the lots thrown by the Magician.
2	The High Priestess	11	Justice	Both cards speak of judgment. The difference is that The High Priestess is inward, or unspoken. Justice is very outer and public. Justice exposes the privately held beliefs of The High Priestess.
3	The Empress	12	The Hanged Man	The abundant harvest of The Empress leads to spiritual contemplation. The outer card as a check to the raw energy of the inner.
4	The Emperor	13	Death	Death is the rebirth of the unmoving, static energy created by the Emperor. This appears to be another "checking" type relationship.
5	The Hierophant	14	Temperance	The Hierophant is a card of guidance, focus, and growth. The Hierophant has a reputation of rigidity even though it is an

				agent of change. Temperance checks the rigidity by offering a blending of energies as it also changes and grows.
6	The Lovers	15	The Devil	The Devil represents is both a warning and result of the outward energies of The Lovers. The choice made in The Lovers is extended to a choice of whether to break from the bondage of The Devil.
7	The Chariot	16	The Tower	The progression of The Chariot to The Tower an interesting one. It would appear that the victorious journey taken by The Chariot has not gone far enough. The Chariot, ruled by Cancer, is associated with the crab. The crab carries its home on its back. The Tower seems to forcibly separate the crab from it's home, forcing it to mature and find a new shell. Seven is also a spiritual number. If the inner spiritual path is not successful, the outer will force spiritual growth.
8	Strength	17	The Star	The transition from Strength to The Star appears to be a "good" one. The self control of Strength flows into the hopes and wishes of The Star. Perhaps the check here is a warning of too much self confidence. The Star can also speak of being blinded by illusions and dreams.
9	The Hermit	18	The Moon	The Hermit seeks knowledge, and finds more than what was expected. When the introspection of The Hermit moves outward, new and disturbing truths are discovered.

figure 4

Associations of Cards by Groups of Ten:

#	Inner	#	Outer	#	Transcended
1	The Magician (<i>optional</i>)*	10	Wheel of Fortune	19	The Sun
2	The High Priestess	11	Justice	20	Judgment
3	The Empress	12	The Hanged Man	21	The World
4	The Emperor	13	Death	22	The Fool (<i>optional</i>)
5	The Hierophant	14	Temperance		
6	The Lovers	15	The Devil		
7	The Chariot	16	The Tower		
8	Strength	17	The Star		
9	The Hermit	18	The Moon		

Astrology and Tarot

Suites - Their Element, Expression, Ruling area, and Zodiac Signs

Suit	Element	Jungian Expression	Rules	Signs
Wands	Fire	Intuition	Creativity and Drive	Leo, Aries, Sagittarius
Cups	Water	Feeling	Emotion	Pisces, Cancer, Scorpio
Swords	Air	Thinking/Relationships	Mental	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
Pentacles	Earth	Sensation	Manifestation (money and things)	Taurus, Capricorn, Virgo

Associations of Court Cards with Zodiacal Signs

Sign	Element	Court Card	Quality
Aries	Fire	Queen of Wands	The Seer
Taurus	Earth	King of Pentacles	The Builder
Gemini	Air	Knight of Swords	The Decider
Cancer	Water	Knight of Cups	The High Flyer
Leo	Fire	King of Wands	The Seeker
Virgo	Earth	Knight of Pentacles	The Healer
Libra	Air	Queen of Swords	The Crystallizer
Scorpio	Water	King of Cups	The Rebirther
Sagittarius	Fire	Knight of Wands	The Revolutionary
Capricorn	Earth	Queen of Pentacles	The Succeeder
Aquarius	Air	King of Swords	The Thinker
Pisces	Water	Queen of Cups	The Feeler

Associations with Major Arcana and the Zodiacal Signs

Sign	Keyword of Sign	Tarot Card
Aries	I am	The Emperor
Taurus	I have	The Hierophant
Gemini	I think	The Lovers
Cancer	I feel	The Chariot
Leo	I will	Strength
Virgo	I analyze	The Hermit
Libra	I balance	Justice
Scorpio	I desire	Death
Sagittarius	I perceive	Temperance

Capricorn	I use	The Devil
Aquarius	I know	The Star
Pisces	I believe	The Moon

The Major Arcana Cards, Their Planets and Zodiac Associations

#	Inner	Planet	Meaning	Zodiac	Meaning
0	The Fool	Uranus	Radical; Revolutionary	Universe	Universal
1	The Magician	Mercury	Swift		
2	The High Priestess	Moon	Subconscious, Self-aware		
3	The Empress	Venus	Love, Happiness, Generosity		
4	The Emperor	Mars	Assertive, fiery, outgoing	Aries	Sowing new seeds, spring, fathering
5	The Hierophant	Venus	Enlightener, Illuminator	Taurus	Dependable, Solid, Stable
6	The Lovers	Mercury	Swift and constant change	Gemini	Duality, Twins and opposites
7	The Chariot	Moon and Jupiter	Moves expansively and courageously to undefinable	Cancer	Emotionally sensitive, Protective of Feelings
8	Strength	Sun	Influential, Wide-ranging impact	Leo	Self-assured, Confident, Flamboyant
9	The Hermit	Moon	Mysterious, Loner, Dreamer	Virgo	Perfectionist, Organized
10	Wheel of Fortune	Jupiter	Expansionary, Moving onwards and upwards		
11	Justice	Venus	Beauty, Proportion	Libra	Order, Balance, Harmony
12	The Hanged Man	Neptune	Deep habit patterns		
13	Death	Pluto	Underworld, Transition	Scorpio	Committed to raising the spirit from the depths to the heights.
14	Temperance	Jupiter	Growth, Progress	Sagittarius	Bridger, Weaver, Communicator
15	The Devil	Saturn	Celebration of the Harvest	Capricorn	Persistence, Ambition
16	The Tower	Mars	Doing battle, Struggle, Turmoil		
17	The Star	Star	Beauty, Magnetism	Aquarius	Compassion, Charity, Service, Humanitarian
18	The Moon	Moon	Romance, Fascination, Illusion and Delusion	Pisces	Lost in Emotions
19	The Sun	Sun	Leadership, Center of Things, Responsibility		
20	Judgment	Interplanetary	Transition, Influences and direction are under determination		

21	The World	Saturn	Harvest, Abundance, Fulfillment	Universe (all constellations)	Realization of the universe within oneself, Becoming universal.
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Minor Arcana Suites and Their Zodiac and Planet Associations

Suite	Cards	Zodiac	Planets
2,3,4	Swords	Libra	Moon, Saturn, Jupiter
5,6,7	Swords	Aquarius	Venus, Mercury, Moon
8,9,10	Swords	Gemini	Jupiter, Sun
2,3,4	Cups	Cancer	Venus, Mercury, Moon
5,6,7	Cups	Scorpio	Mars, Sun, Venus
8,9,10	Cups	Pisces	Saturn, Jupiter, Mars
2,3,4	Earth	Capricorn	Jupiter, Mars, Sun
5,6,7	Earth	Taurus	Mercury, Moon, Saturn
8,9,10	Earth	Virgo	Sun, Venus, Mercury
2,3,4	Fire	Aries	Mars, Sun, Venus
5,6,7	Fire	Leo	Saturn, Jupiter, Mars
8,9,10	Fire	Sagittarius	Mercury, Sun/Moon, Saturn

Resources:

"The New Age Tarot" by James Wanless, Ph.D.

The Fool's Journey

This is my attempt to describe the cards' significance in a sequential semi-story that will help to understand, or make it easier to remember, their meanings. This is a general description, and is by no means all-encompassing. The story is of a simple man... well, specifically, The Fool.

0. FOOL

As this is the beginning of the major arcana, so the fool represents the beginning of a journey. Experience is no where to be found in this card, just a trust or suspicion that everything is going to turn out a-OK.

I. MAGE

As the Fool journeys on, and he becomes more familiar with his surroundings, he is able to make distinctions in the world around him. The Fool starts to recognize patterns within, and break down into basic elements the environment as it is revealed to him - becoming both student and master of it. Raw power is manifested at this stage. However, it is a power potentially without conscious or ethics. The Fool should remember the mother's warning: "be careful with that stick, you may put an eye out with it!".

II. HIGH PRIESTESS

The Fool has started to manipulate the elements of his external world, now he must discover the components of his inner world, the Self. As he learns about his abilities, boundaries, and potentials, he becomes a master of himself and begins to trust his intuition. This place for The Fool may be lonely, as the introspection is self directed.

III. EMPRESS

With the knowledge of the world without and the world within comes the urge to create a place for oneself. Ideas are spawned and nurtured, encourage to grow and develop into a meaningful manifestation. The Fool is witness to the son born of Mage and High Priestess.

IV. EMPEROR

After the Fool forms his ideas for what his part in the world should be, he works to make them a reality. Master and architect of his personal space, he works to maintain it and give it strength and tangibility. The Fool observes the prodigy of the Empress become both the father and the son, Mage and Emperor. A trap is set for The Fool in this place of foundation. The cycle of inner creation is established, but The Fool must press on.

V. HIEROPHANT

After the Fool's pattern has been established, it becomes less of a goal or means to an end, and graduates to the realm of inner truth. This truth becomes a higher guide to living, and it is from this understanding that the Fool's

views are explained to others. The potential of the High Priestess is revisited as an outward guide of change. Her inner duality is replaced by the many choices. The Fool finds no rest in this place, and moves on.

VI. LOVERS

With the formation of an inner pattern of thinking, and the outer extension of these personal ideas, a union in thinking emerges. The Fool uses his own impressions of himself and the reflections of himself from the outer world to find a place where the two mesh ideally to create a unity of being. The Fool again faces a trap that offers a final resting stop. Breaking free, The Fool moves on to explore beyond the peace of The Lovers.

VII. CHARIOT

Finding the union between the inner and the outer selves, the heart and the soul, the self and the other, a new feeling of mastery over the world emerges. The victories on the Chariot are often spiritual in nature. This sense brings a confidence with it that, if one's will is strong enough, anything can be accomplished. The movement and victories of the Chariot are a time of learning and knowing.

VII. STRENGTH

The sense of mastery and confidence found in the Chariot beings about a new strength of mind and will. Doing becomes second hand. The mastery offers another resting place. The Fool declines, and travels on.

IX. HERMIT

As the Hermit, the Fool stops to reflect upon the initial actions of his personal development. This is a time to pause and look inward to gain perspective upon the Self and actions taken to complete it. Inner work close to complete, and an accounting is made. the Fool may provide illumination for others following, or seek the wisdom offered by the lantern. Being becomes the focus of The Fool.

X. WHEEL

The Wheel represents the turning point in thought where, upon comfortable with the Self, the Fool turns his focus more to how to integrate himself with the external world. Events that were started with the Fool's very first step to self-discovery have come around, like the turning of a wheel, and will continue to do so until completion.

XI. JUSTICE

With the Hermit's reflections and the turn of focus, the Fool finds it time to measure up the fruits of his actions to decide what is working, and what is not. Under Justice's gaze, the Fool makes choices and distinguishes between what is proper and what is not, to carry out his efforts. The private moments of introspection spent with the High Priestess are brought forward in a public display.

XII. HANGED MAN

The Fool has the realization, after the distinguishing of Justice, that he does not yet have everything he needs to complete his goals. Something more than simple reflection is needed, as this involves more than just the Self, so the Fool subjects himself to the very external world he is trying to integrate into in hopes of finding answers. The Hanged Man is the first of several steps in which the energy of the inner journey is checked or transformed by the influences of the external. In this case, The Fool considers the power of the Empress' manifestation to the external.

XIII. DEATH

The revelations of the Hanged Man bring about a state of transformation, as the old, ineffective views and ways of thinking 'die' within you to make room for new ideas. The foundation established by the Emperor is transformed.

XIV. TEMPERANCE

A careful blending of internal and external qualities is needed in light of the new way of thinking brought about in Death. Where the Fool sought union with his Self in the Lovers, he seeks union with himself and the rest of the world. The potentially "selfish" energy of the Hierophant is expressed externally in a blending in Temperance.

XV. DEVIL

In the Devil, the Fool realizes the needs for boundaries and standards as he starts to categorize the world into 'good' things and 'bad' things. Things are reconsidered one or the other relative to how they reflect upon and affect the Self and its social role.

XVI. TOWER

The Fool, after qualifying the world, gazes upon his actions up to this point and analyzes himself. The elements deemed bad or unwanted are broken down, and the Fool rebuilds his life according to the standards he has created.

XVII. STAR

Hope, inspiration, and ideals are expressed in the Fool's new pattern of thought. There is a strong optimism that this new pattern will bring about a more harmonious future.

XVIII. MOON

The Moon is a reminder for the Fool not to be so carried away by his hopes and inspirations that he cannot see the paths to betterment that he has forged for himself in the Tower. Under the moon's shifting light, the Fool must look at things closely and not go on initial appearances.

XIX. SUN

After careful discernment through the Moon's illusory light, the path the Fool must follow to reach his goals is as clear as day lit by the Sun.

XX. JUDGMENT

The Fool reaches the end of his path and looks back to evaluate his past actions, with regards to himself and the world around him. He judges himself as a fully integrated being, this time, and makes the final adjustments to his life.

XXI. WORLD

With the World, the Fool has reached the goals he set out for himself, in the fullest sense. Ultimate completion, the Fool is totally in harmony with the World.

Personal Tarot Cards

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PERSONAL TAROT CARD
YEARLY TAROT CARD
GROWTH TAROT CARD
CHART: NUMBER AND TAROT CARD
CHART: ZODIAC SIGN AND TAROT CARD
CHART: YEAR QUICK LOOK-UP

The purpose of this exercise is to calculate a person's personal tarot card, yearly tarot card, and growth tarot card. Feel free to leave me an e-mail if you have any questions!

To calculate birth number:

Add month, date, and year components of the birth date separately. Reduce each down to number between 1 and 9. Do not reduce if result is 11, 22, 33 or 44. Add reduced numbers together. If sum is more than 22, reduce it to a number between 1 and 22.

Examples:

Birthdate: 6/20/1965

birth number = $(6) + (2 + 0) + (1 + 9 + 6 + 5)$

= $(6) + (2) + (21)$

= $(6) + (2) + (2 + 1)$

= $(6) + (2) + (3) = \mathbf{11}$

Birthdate: 12/25/1966

birth number = $(1 + 2) + (2 + 5) + (1 + 9 + 6 + 6)$

= $(3) + (7) + (22) = 32 \Rightarrow 3 + 2 = \mathbf{5}$

Determination of Tarot Personal Card(s):

The birth number will be between 1 and 22. Find the corresponding number in figure 1. A birth number can have up to three associated personal tarot cards. For example:

- 1) birth number = 2; personal tarot card is The High Priestess
- 2) birth number = 11; personal tarot cards are The High Priestess, and Justice
- 3) birth number = 20; personal tarot cards are The High Priestess, Justice, and Judgment

The larger the value of the birth number, the more complex the associated personal tarot cards are. An additional personal tarot card is added corresponding to the zodiac sign that the person was born under. Figure 2 show the tarot cards associated with each zodiac sign.

Correspondence of Birth Number and Personal Tarot Card

#	Inner	#	Outer	#	Transcended
1	The Magician (optional)*	10	Wheel of Fortune	19	The Sun
2	The High Priestess	11	Justice	20	Judgment
3	The Empress	12	The Hanged Man	21	The World
4	The Emperor	13	Death	22	The Fool (optional)*
5	The Hierophant	14	Temperance		
6	The Lovers	15	The Devil		
7	The Chariot	16	The Tower		
8	Strength	17	The Star		
9	The Hermit	18	The Moon		

figure 1

*: see "Some Thoughts" paragraph.

Correspondence of Zodiac Sign and Tarot Card

Quality	Zodiac Sign	Tarot Card	Dates
Sight	Aries	The Emperor	3/21 - 4/20
Sound	Taurus	The Hierophant	4/21 - 5/20
Smell	Gemini	The Lovers	5/21 - 6/20
	Cancer	The Chariot	6/21 - 7/20
Taste	Leo	Strength	7/21 - 8/20
Touch	Virgo	The Hermit	8/21 - 9/20
	Libra	Justice	9/21 - 10/20
	Scorpio	Death	10/21 - 11/20
	Sagittarius	Temperance	11/21 - 12/20
	Capricorn	The Devil	12/21 - 1/20
	Aquarius	The Star	1/21 - 2/20
	Pisces	The Moon	2/21 - 3/20

figure 2

Determination of Yearly Tarot Card

The year number is calculated by taking the month and date of birth, and adding them to the number of a given year. The resulting number is reduced to a value between 1 and 22. For example:

For a person born 12/25/1966, their yearly card of 1997 would be:

$$\begin{aligned}
 12/25/1997 &= (1 + 3) + (2 + 5) + (1 + 9 + 9 + 7) \\
 &= (4) + (7) + (26) \\
 &= (4) + (7) + (2 + 6) \\
 &= (4) + (7) + (8) = 19
 \end{aligned}$$

The yearly number is looked up in figure 1. In our example, the yearly tarot card would be The Sun. For the yearly tarot card, only the card assigned to the number is considered.

Determination of Growth Tarot Card:

The major arcana of the tarot is a cycle of 22 states of being. The growth card shows where a person is in the cycle, and how many times the cycle has been previously repeated. To calculate the growth card, subtract the closest multiple of 22 from a birthday. The resulting number will be between 1 and 22.

examples:

- 1) Age 18: growth card = $18 - 0 * 22 = 18$ (Ages 1 - 22)
- 2) Age 32: growth card = $32 - 1 * 22 = 10$ (Ages 23 - 44)
- 3) Age 50 growth card = $50 - 2 * 22 = 6$ (Ages 45 - 66)
- 4) Age 70 growth card = $70 - 3 * 22 = 4$ (Ages 67 - 88)

If one feels that The Fool (card 22) is not appropriately placed in position 22, the growth card can be determined with cycles of 21.

Some Thoughts:

There is a school of thought that states that the Magician, and possibly The Fool, are innate states for all beings. That is, these cards are with us all. The raw power and potential of The Magician, and the innocence of The Fool are with everybody's reach.

The ramification of this statement is twofold. The first is that birth numbers equal to 10 or 19 only have Wheel of Fortune and Wheel of Fortune/The Sun as their personal tarot cards respectively. The Magician is excluded. The second is that the cycle of 22 cards is reduced to a cycle of 21 with the exclusion of The Fool as a state of being. If a person has their birth number equaling 22, it would reduce down to 4.

Year Quick Reference Chart

Year	#1	#2	Year	#1	#2	Year	#1	#2	Year	#1	#2
1964	20	2	1974	21	3	1984	22	22	1994	23	5
1965	21	3	1975	22	22	1985	23	5	1995	24	6
1966	22	22	1976	23	5	1986	24	6	1996	25	7
1967	23	5	1977	24	6	1987	25	7	1997	26	8
1968	24	6	1978	25	7	1988	26	8	1998	27	9
1969	25	7	1979	26	8	1989	27	9	1999	28	1
1970	17	8	1980	18	9	1990	19	1	2000	2	2
1971	18	9	1981	19	1	1991	20	2	2001	3	3
1972	19	1	1982	20	2	1992	21	3	2002	4	4
1973	20	2	1983	21	3	1993	22	22	2003	5	5

Tarot and Numerology - The Connection

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- Associations of Suites
- Meanings of Numbers
- Associations of Cards

A study of the major and minor arcana of the tarot would not be complete without a thorough understanding of the numbers behind the scenes. Numerology, the study and use of numbers, assigns a meaning and nature to each of the numbers from one to nine. Each number has a meaning, and all the cards associated with that number, both in the major and minor arcana, have an interpretation connected to this meaning.

All numbers above nine can be reduced by adding the digits of the numbers. For example, 14, the card number of the card Temperance, can be reduced to five. This is accomplished by adding one and four ($1 + 4 = 5$). Thus, the Tarot's fifth card, the Hierophant, has a connection to the card Temperance. Their connection is that they are both cards of change and instability. The charts below list the general meanings of the numbers, and each card's connection to that meaning. The second chart groups the cards under the number they are associated with. The generally held interpretation of each card is given, and the numerological connection of the cards is also given.

Those that have learned the method of associating the numerological meaning of number with

the Tarot cards have a short cut to quickly interpreting the cards. This is especially true with the minor arcana. Instead of learning the textbook meanings of forty cards (though this is still a good thing to do), one only needs to know the meaning of the number, the quality associated with the suite, and then draw a conclusion from the two.

For example: if I drew the three of Cups, I would know that threes are associated with expansion and collaboration. Cups are associated with relationships. From this combination, I would say that the three of Cups is interpreted as the blooming of a relationship, or possibly it indicates a party or celebration.

I hope this information is of help to you. My good friend Tyra GoldenWolf receives the credit for originally compiling this information. I learned much from her when I attended Tarot Talk - a tarot discussion group, in Atlanta GA. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions .

Sean

The Suites:

Wands/Rods

Wands/Rods correspond to the male element of fire. They represent energy, creativity, passion, and spirit. Wands are also closely associated with career and work situations.

Pentacles/Disks

Pentacles/Disks correspond to the female element of earth. They represent money, material matters, and physical well-being.

Cups

Cups correspond to the element of female water. They represent emotions, relationships, love, and intuition. The shielding nature of a cup also associates it with things hidden.

Swords

Swords correspond to the element of male air. They represent the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict.

Meanings of the Numbers

Number	Meaning
Ones (Aces)	New beginnings
Twos	Relationships, duality, balancing of two
Threes	Synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, expansion, fulfillment – except Swords where this is missing.
Fours	Foundations, stability, status quo
Fives	Change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt to unpleasant changes
Sixes	Assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better
Sevens	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight
Eights	Control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization
Nines	Completion and fulfillment of each suit, maximum intensity of each suit in the cycle, completion, fulfillment
Tens	Renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery.

Associations of the Cards

The Ones

Magician	New opportunity to shine and use skills
Connection	A new start with all – Magician says to use skills to be successful... all the elements are included. For each of the aces the beginning is in a particular area, raw energy, with the magician all the elemental energies are at his/her disposal, with each suit a particular elements raw energy is available.

The Twos

Priestess	experience and wisdom combined with intuition
------------------	---

Justice	balance, harmony, equity
Judgement	integration of one's higher self, consciousness in to everyday life. Centering with inner peace, balancing karma
Cups	friendship, romantic partnership
Pentacles	two \$ making ventures
Swords	two opposing forces, stalemate, forces balanced
Wands	as far as can go alone need collaboration to move forward
Connection	balance of two things – major are more spiritual in nature

The Threes

Empress	growth, abundance, prosperity, fruitfulness, pregnancy, birth
Hang Man	enlightenment gained through sacrifice, temporary suspension while gaining deeper meaning of life. Fruition through deeper meaning and sacrifice
World	synthesis, ability to blend the best qualities of the elements and the zodiac... full circle, completion, harmony fulfillment moving on, end of an ear. A new beginning. Triumph in the end..
Cups	fulfillment (in love), harmony, good luck, celebration... harmony in love cause of celebration, pregnancy
Pentacles	mastery of skill, achievement of expertise, fulfillment of craft
Swords	separation and heart break, crisis in relationship, deep suffering, lack of harmony, triangle growth through pain.
Wands	fulfillment of creative ideas, blending of three approaches, strengths and success from good partnerships, ships coming in.
Connection	fulfillment, harvest time, except for swords – opposite, growth, the Hanged Man indicates a period of sacrifice before fulfillment

The Fours

Emperor	order, male stability, masculine force, strong partner or husband, achievement, practical knowledge
Death	change, transformation, situation ends endings and new beginnings, turning point
Cups	apathy, boredom, ignoring the growth possibilities, status quo because of apathy
Pentacles	security though finances, good financial foundation, holding onto \$
Swords	rest, respite, period of recuperation, need for inactivity
Wands	stability of a permanent committed relationship, marriage card, stability in life
Connection	stability, status quo, foundations except Death – opposite

The Fives

Hierophant	spiritual rules, tradition, marriage, period of introspection – maybe holding onto old beliefs, wise counsel
Temperance	moderation, the right mixture, peace, patience, inner harmony, optimism, balance between earthly and heavenly concerns, creativity
Cups	regret, pessimism about the future, difficulty of letting go, all is not lost can soon be rebuild, loss and sadness, relationship ending
Pentacles	insecurity, unemployment, left out of things, being out in the cold, loneliness
Swords	instability caused by betrayal, arguments, battles, trickery, manipulation
Wands	competition, combat and strife, heated arguments, challenge that calls for patience and courage – can win
Connection	change and instability - the Hierophant suggest inner change and instability inside (rigid appearance to keep control, the rules). Temperance is the end of change and instability and finding the balance

The Sixes

Lovers	the attraction of the choice, the urge to experience duality though the opposite sex, relationship based on intense attraction, passion, choosing the correct path
Devil	temptation, giving into a weakness, unnecessary guilt feelings, bondage to the past or to a situation which is no longer relevant. Sex.
Cups	pleasant memories from the past, children, ideals from the past, a gift
Pentacles	financial aid, benefactor, the power of the Universe to provide in magical ways, generosity, prosperity
Swords	assistance, turning point, struggle and strife subsiding, solving problems, passage to a higher state, finding understanding
Wands	triumph, victory, realization of goals, good news on the way, perfection, ideals realized maybe through the help of others, balance restored...
Connection	except the Devil – bondage, not perfection problems overcome insight and inspiration, brought about by some force, ending of a cycle and the unfolding of the soul

The Sevens

Chariot	action, assertiveness, will power, motivation, purpose, triumph, bringing opposing forces together
Tower	an awakening which brings enlightenment, catalyst for change, sudden change, end of the old system, the beginning of the new, sudden realization
Cups	imagination, lots of choices, fantasizing, may indicate confusion, mystical experience, positive visualization
Pentacles	new business perspective, labor produces, new inspiration about future projects, surprisingly good news
Swords	mistrust, may mean a need to move onwards and leave part of past behind, head-on-attack disastrous, care and cunning needed or mistrust and betrayal
Wands	position of advantage, ability to succeed against opposition or competition, victory through courage
Connection	Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight

The Eights

Strength	quiet confidence and self reliance, ability to cope, gentleness, healing, and inner strength, patience, endurance, confidence
Star	sense of purpose, inspiring wishes and dreams, faith in the future, making plans, light at the end of the tunnel, promise of a bright future
Cups	emotional withdrawal, writing on the wall, moving on
Pentacles	education, learning new skill, apprentice, creation
Swords	restriction, blockage, fear, trapped from exercising control
Wands	swiftness, good messages of all kinds
Connection	power, taking the necessary steps to move forward to gain control except for swords where the fear keeps you from moving

The Nines

Hermit	guidance, draw strength from one's own inner awareness and insights or a teacher from outside. Self discovery through inner reflection
Moon	hidden forces, psychic ability, dreams, behind the scenes activity, unspoken messages, a warning, deception, intuition succeeds where reason might fail, romanticism, knowledge best not known
Cups	wish fulfillment, wish come true, emotional happiness, satisfaction and pleasure are on the way
Pentacles	comfortable home, beautiful environment, often solitary comfort, comfortable with one's self
Swords	high anxiety, worry over the outcome, worry, depression, sleepless nights

Wands	watch and wait, prepared for further attacks, strength in reserve, support and help time of conflict, ground work laid
Connection	attainment in love, self, \$. For wands and Moon – completion comes from watchfulness, with swords there is worry over the completion... distress

The Tens

Wheel	coincidences, good luck, synchronicity, changing cycles, destiny, end of troubles in sight, starting a new cycles of events
Sun	joy, honor recognition, fulfillment of goals, success, creative self-expression, childlike exuberance for life
Cups	love, true love, happiness in person relationships, joy, prosperity, family life goes well
Pentacles	material prosperity, sense of happiness and contentment beyond financial riches and security
Swords	disaster, failure, loss of perspective, overacting to problems, losing one's mind... insanity
Wands	stress and pleasure, heavy burdens and responsibilities
Connections	mastery of situation, elements self-completion of a cycle... negative with swords the loss of mastery, with wands there is mastery but also the heavy burdens that come with it

The Mythic Tarot Mythological Analogies

Table of Contents:

- Background
- The Major Arcana
- Review of the Minor Arcana's Elements
 - Suite of Cups
 - Suite of Wands
 - Suite of Swords
 - Suite of Pentacles

Background:

The Mythic Tarot offers mythological analogies that will speak volumes to those students of mythology. The author offers insights into both the major and minor arcana. The major arcana is represented by gods and goddesses. Each of the minor arcana's suites tells a story from mythology. For each card, the name, the mythological reference, and the generally accepted meaning are given. Enjoy!

Cards of the Mythic Tarot – Major Arcana

The Fool

Dionysus

A new phase in life begins, a risk must be taken, a need to abandon the old and start something new.

The Magician

Hermes

New skills and potentials available, opportunities and adventures unfolding.

The High Priestess

Persephone

Thirst for knowledge of an esoteric nature, secrets to be revealed, potential abundant but as yet unfulfilled.

The Empress

Demeter

Fertility, creativity, abundance, marriage or relationship, children.

The Emperor

Zeus

A need to make something solid, to concertise and idea, to build something with firm foundation.

The Hierophant

Chiron

Need for spiritual purpose, the search for a personal philosophy or spiritual values.

The Lovers

The judgement of Paris

A love affair with trial or choice attached.

The Chariot

Ares

Conflict within, struggles and battles, but potential for victory and resolution of quarrels.

Justice

Athene

Need for clarity of mind, impartial judgement, and a balanced intellect.

Temperance

Iris

Harmony within relationships, co-operation resulting in happy marriage or partnership.

Strength

Hercules

Need for strength, courage and self-discipline. Potential for moral victory and mastery of life.

The Hermit

Cronus

A time of withdrawal, silent meditation and solitude. Patience is needed to confront one's inner world.

The Wheel of Fortune

The Moirai

Change in fortune, new beginnings, a new chapter in life starting. The Wheel makes a new turn.

The Hanged Man

Prometheus

A sacrifice must be made to gain something of greater value, time in suspension.

Death

Hades

The end of something which has been lived out, transformation, new beginnings to follow.

The Devil

Pan

A confrontation with the inner world. Facing fears and inhibitions to foster growth.

The Tower

The slaying of the Minotaur

Breaking down existing forms, changing false structures and finding true values.

The Star

Pandora's Box

Hope, inspiration, faith and belief in a new and better world.

The Moon

Hectate

Fluctuation, uncertainty, confusion. Time for passivity rather than action.

The Sun

Apollo

Optimism, time of positive action, energy in abundance, a time for clear vision.

Judgement

Hermes, the Psychopomp

Time for reaping rewards for past actions, time for reaching conclusions and summing up situations.

The World

Hermaphroditus

Success, achievement, attainment, the realization of a goal or the completion of a cycle.

Review of the Minor Arcana's Elements:

Cups

Cups correspond to the element of female water. They represent emotions, relationships, love, and intuition. The shielding nature of a cup also associates it with things hidden.

Wands/Rods

Wands/Rods correspond to the male element of fire. They represent energy, creativity, passion, and spirit. Wands are also closely associated with career and work situations.

Swords

Swords correspond to the element of male air. They represent the mind and intellect, communicating, and conflict.

Pentacles/Disks

Pentacles/Disks correspond to the female element of earth. They represent money, material matters, and physical well-being.

Minor Arcana of the Mythic Tarot – Cups

Ace of Cups

Aphrodite

Upsurge of feelings and emotions, new relationships.

Two of Cups

The meeting of Eros and Psyche

Commitment to romance, partnership or friendship.

Three of Cups

The marriage of Eros and Psyche

Celebration, time for rejoicing.

Four of Cups

Psyche's jealous sisters breed discontent

Boredom, depression, discontent, and resentment.

Five of Cups

Psyche finds out the truth and is abandoned by Eros

Regret over past actions, loss or betrayal in love or marriage.

Six of Cups

Psyche remembers the past with nostalgia

Past effort may bring present rewards or an old lover may reappear.

Seven of Cups

Psyche must beg for assistance from Aphrodite

There is an exceptional choice to be made with many options open. Careful decisions must be made.

Eight of Cups

Psyche must make the perilous journey to the Underworld

Leaving the past behind, abandoning or relinquishing hope.

Nine of Cups

Psyche and Eros are finally reunited with Aphrodite's blessing

A wish of paramount importance will come true.

Ten of Cups

Psyche gains immortality and joins Eros in Olympus

Happiness and contentment, with a sense of permanence and future purpose.

Minor Arcana of the Mythic Tarot – Wands

Ace of Wands

Zeus

An upsurge of creative energy, great potential for success.

Two of Wands

Chiron has revealed his birthright to Jason

Courage and initiative available to overcome obstacles.

Three of Wands

Jason confronts King Pelias and is inspired by a quest for the Golden Fleece

A stage of initial completion of a creative project, with new ideas forming on the horizon.

Four of Wands

Jason celebrates with his fellow Argonauts as the building of their ship is complete

A time to pause for celebration after hard efforts.

Five of Wands

Jason does battle with the dragon guarding the Golden Fleece

A time of struggle, petty obstacles constantly appear and cause difficulties.

Six of Wands

Jason is triumphant after his successful battle with the dragon

Public acclaim, promotion, qualification, recognition for work and effort.

Seven of Wands

After the fight with the dragon, more battles ensue

Stiff competition must now be faced. Renewed determination and courage are necessary.

Eight of Wands

After the fierce battles are won, the Argonauts are in a smooth stretch and sailing swiftly home

A period of progress after a delay or struggle.

Nine of Wands

The final stage of conflict before Jason can reach his ultimate destination

Strength in reserve can provide enough energy to win the battle, although resources seem exhausted.

Ten of Wands

Jason has reached his goal but in striving towards another victory he lose everything

There is danger implied in taking on more than one can cope with.

Minor Arcana of the Mythic Tarot – Swords

Ace of Swords

Athene

A card of strength in spite of adversity, and indication that out of apparent evil, good will come.

Two of Swords

Orestes finds himself between his warring parents

Stalemate; nothing can move or change, a situation of great tension. An impasse has been reached.

Three of Swords

Clytemnestra and her lover murder King Agamemnon

Quarrels and conflict, a period of stormy weather for relationships. Also relief from tension has been released.

Four of Swords

Orestes in exile

A need for rest or retreat after stress, a time of convalescence after physical or emotional tension.

Five of Swords

Apollo reveals the truth about Agamemnon's murder

Pride must be swallowed, and limitations accepted, before further progress can be made.

Six of Swords

Orestes sets sail for Argos, where he will carry the will of Apollo

A period of calm after great anxiety, release of tension, a peaceful journey towards smoother waters.

Seven of Swords

Orestes returns at night to his mother's palace to murder her

A need for evasion and avoidance of direct confrontation in order to reach an objective.

Eight of Swords

The full implication of his dilemma dawns on Orestes

A fear of moving out of a situation of bandage, paralysis, a "no win" position.

Nine of Swords

Orestes is driven mad by the Furies

A time in which the mind is tormented by fears of impending doom.

Ten of Swords

Athene calls a halt to Orestes' suffering

The end of a painful situation or state. There emerges an ability to see a situation realistically.

Minor Arcana of the Mythic Tarot – Pentacles

Ace of Pentacles

Poseiden

Material achievement is possible, financial aid may be available for the beginning of a new enterprise.

Two of Pentacles

Daedalus, a master craftsman, embarks on a new career

Change and fluctuation in financial matters, but harmony within the change.

Three of Pentacles

Daedalus receives acclaim for his first achievements

Initial completion of work, a basic structure is built which still requires finishing touches.

Four of Pentacles

Daedalus realizes that his nephew, Talos, is more talented than he

There is danger in clinging too tightly to what one has earned. Nothing is lost, but nothing is gained.

Five of Pentacles

Daedalus flees Athens, leaving behind all he has worked on

Loss of financial stability. Loss on a deeper level; of esteem, or faith in oneself and in life.

Six of Pentacles

Daedalus finds a benevolent friend in King Minos of Crete

Help from a generous friend or employer, a situation in which there is money or good fortune is shared.

Seven of Pentacles

Daedalus is confronted with a new dilemma in the form of a request from Queen Pasiphae

A difficult decision must be made, between material security and uncertain new opportunities.

Eight of Pentacles

Daedalus is obliged to start over once again, this time in Sicily

The apprentice, training or starting over anew in a another profession.

Nine of Pentacles

Daedalus is at last able to enjoy the fruits of his labors

A card of great satisfaction and pleasure, reward for effort, and material benefits.

Ten of Pentacles

Daedalus as an old man is able to put down firm roots and found his dynasty

Financial stability and foundation for home and family.

Tarot: "Good" and "Bad" Cards of the Minor Arcana

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- Comments on "Good" and "Bad" Cards
- Chart of "Good" and "Bad" Card Associations
- The Suites: Their Energy and Mode of Operation
- An Examination of the Numbers
- Thoughts on Magical Work

COMMENTS ON "GOOD" AND "BAD" CARDS

The association of a card as being good or bad is a distinction that I find to be based on a pessimistic approach to the cards. The dualistic tags of "good" and "bad" are relative sides of the same coin. It said that all good things must come to an end. When this end occurs, the "bad" side of the coin appears. The seeds of the "bad" are present in the "good", just as the full potential for "good" is present in "bad". When one operates on the basis of "good" and "bad" concepts, there exists no balance. There is always striving for what is not possessed, and sorrow for what is lost.

I instead encourage a holistic approach to the cards that allows one to accept the "good" cards as a respite, and the "bad" cards as opportunities for growth and movement. The nature of the cards is not judged by relative labels of dualism. Instead, the cards are appreciated individually – moments of being where only opportunity is present. The idea of non-dualistic identification of the cards is challenging. To

fully examine the philosophy behind the minor arcana, I will continue to use the tags of "good" and "bad". When you see these words, instead think "opportunity" and "opportunity".

I feel that there are two kinds of "bad" cards: challenge and warning. The first category, those of challenge, contains those cards that indicate change and spiritual examination. The second category, those of warning, contains cards illustrating human shortcomings. Ironically, these shortcomings are promoted when change or spiritual insight is not embraced

CHART OF "GOOD" AND "BAD" CARD ASSOCIATIONS

Card #	Pentacles	Wands	Cups	Swords	# of Good	# of Bad
1	G	G	G	G	4	0
2	G	G	G	G	4	0
3	G	G	G	B	3	1
4	B	G	B	G	2	2
5	B	B	B	B	0	4
6	G	G	G	G	4	0
7	B	B	B	B	0	4
8	G	G	B	B	2	2
9	G	G	G	B	1	3
10	G	G	G	B	2	2
# of Good	7	7	6	4		
# of Bad	3	3	4	6		

THE SUITES - THEIR ENERGY AND MODES OF OPERATION

A review of suites shows an unequal distribution of good and bad cards. The suite of Pentacles has the most good cards, while the suite of Swords has the least good cards. Why? There is a widely held philosophy that a return to earth – to simplicity – is a preferred path. Pagan religions promote unity with Mother Earth. Eastern religions – Taoism and Buddhism - also encourage a return to living simply, and basing our lives on what is experienced by the senses.

PENTACLES: EARTH

The element of Earth is expressed through the direct experiences of our five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. This suite is one of action and reaction. When I sell somebody an item, they will give me money. When I eat ice cream, it will taste good. When I drink too much, I will have a hangover. The functions are uncomplicated. When somebody lives at an Earth level, life could be as slow and steady as the seasons turning and the crops growing. Paganism feels very much in touch with these cycles, and celebrates them on Full Moons and quarters of the year.

The suite of Earth has the fewest bad cards, and the most good cards. This is explained by the suite's simplicity and approximation to the natural unity.

WANDS: FIRE

The element of Fire adds passion and energy to the foundation created by the element of Earth. The natural rhythms of the planet are usurped by outside influences. The result is new creations and ideas. The goals created are not dependent on the timing of the planet. As events are accelerated, the natural balance is sometimes overthrown. The result is competition, seen most vividly in the sixth through ninth cards. The passion of the Wands is a force largely devoid of emotions. It is neither cold hearted nor full of anger. The volcano is an analogy in that it can destroy existing land, plants, and animals as it creates new land. There is no motivation of destruction. Transformation, a function of death and birth, is a balanced force of nature.

The suite of Wands is same as the suite of Pentacles in the number of good and bad cards. However, the good cards are slightly less "good". The introduction of Fire creates new, formally unknown, things and disrupts natural cycles. This movement from the foundation of Earth would account for the stirring of forces seen as "bad".

CUPS: WATER

The element of Water adds emotions to the minor arcana. Water is a substance that flows to the lowest places, and it can be calm or stormy. Water can be represented by shallow puddles or by bottomless

oceans. Emotions take on all of these qualities. The shape and status of water is dependent on its container and temperature.

The suite of Cups has one more bad card than the suites of Pentacles and Wands. The higher number of bad cards is a function of Water's variability.

SWORDS: AIR

The element of Air adds intellect and conscious thinking to the minor arcana. The element of air is the most removed from the element of Earth. Fire is dependent on Earth for fuel. Water is dependent on Earth for a place to rest. Air can exist without Earth. This nature analogy can be extended to the realm of our being. One can make decisions, and have thoughts, that are not based on reality, or grounded in practicality. The thought that begins as a breeze quickly becomes a tornado, or escapes into the emptiness of space. Air is the most difficult element to contain, control, and quantify. The more we try to control our thoughts, the wilder they become. Meditation brings our thoughts back to a stable form. The purest forms of meditation seek not to contain, control, or quantify thoughts. Zen meditation instead acknowledges a thought, and allows for its natural departure. There is no counting of thoughts, no tally sheet of grievances and hurts.

The suite of Swords has traditionally had the darkest of reputations. There are more bad cards than good cards. It is my belief that this is a reflection of the turmoil people experience from the stresses of the mind. Thoughts are egocentric, and cannot join with others. When a person is operating in the realm of Air, they are furthest from the soothing womb of the Earth.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE NUMBERS

Number: Ace (one)

General Meaning: new beginnings and potential

Comments: This number has all good cards. The tools on the table in the major Arcana's Magician are separated into the four suites.

Number: Two

General Meaning: relationships, duality, balancing of two

Comments: This number has all good cards. This emphasizes the positive nature of balance and the acceptance of duality. These two qualities are the basis of all relationships.

Number: Three

General Meaning: synthesis, collaboration, self-expression, fulfillment

Comment: All suites are favored by this number except for the Swords. In the Swords, the collaboration seen in the other suites becomes arguments and disagreements. The nature of Swords is exposed: there is little room for unity in the egocentric realm of air.

Number: Four

General Meaning: foundations, stability, status quo

Comment: All suites are favored by this number except for the Pentacles and Cups. When there is too much of something, excessive abundance, the result is negative. When one amplifies the earthy foundation of Earth, there is no room for any movement or accommodation of others. Nature becomes suspended, and the natural cycles cannot move forward. In the suite of Cups, the stability of emotions allows them to become stagnant and complacent.

Number: Five

General Meaning: change, instability, volatile, necessary to adapt unpleasant changes

Comment: It would seem that change is universally unwelcome. All suites have bad cards for this number. Human nature finds some form of peace in stability. Even a known bad situation would seem to be better than an unknown situation. Instead of taking this traditional reading of the suites, a person should greet new opportunities and challenges. Change is a natural part of nature, and change can be the servant instead of the master when change is accepted.

Number: Six

General Meaning: assistance, idealism, perfection, and a change for the better

Comments: All suites are favored by this number. Six represents a place of rest after the changes of the number Five. However, one should realize that Six is merely a place to visit, and not the destination. Esoteric theory of the tarot hold that the number Six is the point at which a suite has evolved into a functional state. There is form, foundation, motion, and a sense of time. There is not a sense of spirituality or an appreciation of the finality of things. These come later.

Number: Seven

General Meaning: Unexpected change, perception, insight, new awareness and perspective, change brought about by insight.

Comment: All suites have bad cards for this number. The culprit is again change. Change is now driven by insight and spiritual awareness. The Pentacles ask one to be patient and spiritual about material things. The Wands speak of a competition requiring new skills of reasoning and perception. Cups ask for a decision between multiple options. Swords warn against complacency and deceit by ourselves or others.

Number: Eight

General Meaning: control, power and mastery over a situation through self-reliance and autonomy, organization

Comment: Cups and Swords do not fair well under this number. The traditional meaning for the suite of Cups is abandoned success or ability not to see what is available. The warning for the Cups speaks of the nature of emotions when controlled and directed. The traditional meaning for the suite of Swords is one of entrapment. The issue of the Sword's egocentric nature is repeated. Power and mastery traps the participant or others.

Number: Nine

General Meaning: Completion and fulfillment of each suite, maximum intensity of each suite in the cycle, completion, fulfillment.

Comment: In this number, the suite of Swords is given the title of "Nightmare". The outcome of complete focus in the area of Swords – the intellect – is seen. At this point, one feels no comfort from the Earth Mother. The other suites fair much better. The competition of Wands is successfully concluded and Pentacles and Cups reap generous benefits.

Number: Ten

General Meaning: renewal through a new cycle. Many lessons have been learned regarding the suit in question – mastery

Comment: The male suites of Wands and Swords are ill favored in this number. The cause is rooted in the nature of male and female energy. Female energy is nurturing, lingering, caring, controlling, and restricting. Peace is found in female energy, and thus in the suites of Pentacles and Cups. Male energy is outgoing, brash, quick, short, and open. These qualities, the basis of the male Wands and Swords, is not a solid foundation for a renewal of cycles.

THOUGHTS ON MAGICAL WORK:

The qualities of suites have been explored. In the area of magic, it would seem that Earth based workings are preferable. The suite of Pentacles – Earth – is only seen in a bad light when there is too much of it (4), and when there is change of a mundane (5) or spiritual type (7). These are expected, and should be avoided in the case of the number four, or welcome in the cases of five and seven.

The other suites begin to exhibit issues when they are worked with in a magical way. Wands – Fire - have unfocused, non-regenerating qualities when pushed to an extreme. Cups – Water – suffer from the unstable nature of the medium. Swords – Air – provide an egocentric method that gives much pain for its results.

An interesting note is that general Ceremonial and Enochian magic focus on the area of Swords. Based on this, I would discourage only a hearty few from this path. At the other extreme, the neopagan religions – including Wicca – follow the path of the Pentacle. It is of no coincidence that the preferred medallion of Wiccans is the pentacle.

Tarot Spread Theory and Useful Tarot Spreads

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General Theory
Three Card Spreads
Celtic Cross
Choice Spread
Wheel Spread
The English Spread

Tarot Theory

The tarot is a navigation tool for our lives. Symbols in the framework of a tarot deck provide direction. A "reading" of tarot symbols gives you information about the present. Since the present is a seed for the future, the reading offers a vision of a "probable" future. Once the future has been glimpsed, it can be altered to either insure or deter what is seen. The tarot gives feedback about one's location along life's journey. The reading shows the possibilities, giving us choice and greater control over the destiny. The symbols in the tarot are like symbolic clues we receive throughout life. Events in the world that occur seemingly at random, such as a gust of wind or a falling leaf, are symbolic guideposts of impending events. The tarot reading is simply the intentional allowing of synchronism to furnish a sign.

Questions of the Tarot:

In consultation of the card-symbols, one can ask anything in any way. You can ask why, what, how, when, and where about any issue, decision, or aspect of your inner or external life – past, present, and/or future. Your questions may be specific or general. The tarot can respond to whether you should, can, will, or are.

The tarot cards can communicate in a combination of two ways: symbolically and intuitively. A symbolic reading is also known as a "book" reading. An accepted, predetermined meaning is applied to the card. The quality of a symbolic reading is determined by the reader's understanding of card meanings/symbology, both alone and along with other cards.

The second method of reading is via intuition. When the cards are read intuitively, they "speak" to the reader, and there is no knowledge of underlying symbology required. The intuition of a reader picks up on the pictures in the cards or some other unclassifiable method. Some intuitive readers don't require the cards, and use them only as a backdrop to answering a querent's question. Other intuitive readers use the cards as a "jumping off point", and the reading moves forward from the first impression received from the cards. An analogy of this is being shown on a map that one is somewhere in the Southern United States, and then probable climate based on the time of the year.

Most readers use a combination of symbolic and intuitive reading.

Spreads:

Questions are often structured in the tarot through a spread, or layout. This is a symbolic pattern of positions, each with a given meaning. A card-symbol is selected for each of these positions and interpreted in relation to the assigned meaning of the position.

Individual spreads lend themselves to different questions. Below is a chart with suggest spreads for different readings:

Type of Reading	Spread
Quick Answer	1 or 3 cards
"Probable Outcome"	Celtic Cross
"What is going on"	Wheel
Choices	Choice or English

THREE CARD SPREAD



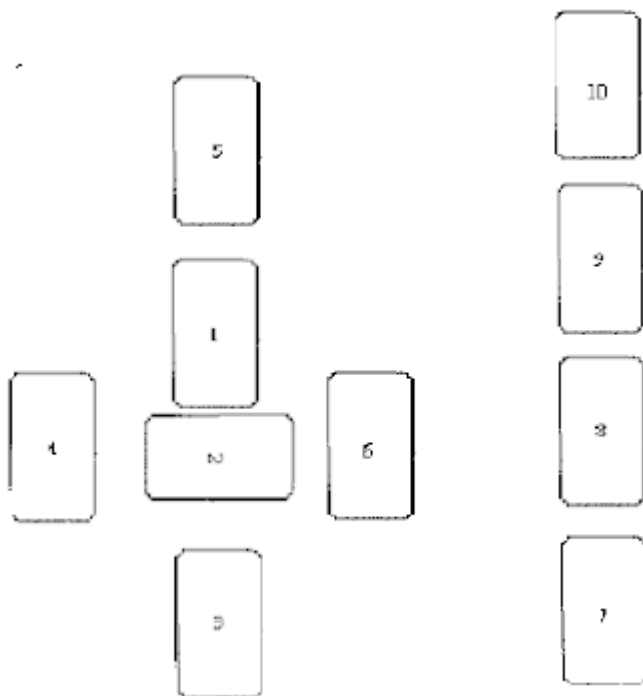
A three card spread is typically used in many ways. When a reader wants a quick answer to a question, the cards can provide the answer when read as a story, starting from the left and moving to the right. The first card plays on the second, and so on.

A three card spread can provide insight into very specific questions when predetermined meanings are given to each card. The chart below has some examples of meanings that can be pre-assigned.

Method	Card #1	Card #2	Card #3
<i>Time</i>	Past	Present	Future
<i>Opinions</i>	Person's #1 Outlook	Person's #2 Outlook	"Divine" Outlook
<i>Conditions</i>	Situation	Present Status	Outcome

CELTIC CROSS

With two future oriented cards, this is an excellent spread for looking at



probable outcomes to events and situations. Below in the table I have some traditional meanings of the card positions. The "outcome/future" cards are in bold.

Card Position	Meaning
1	Significator – Gives overall tone for reading
2	an indication of the energies directed at the overall tone of the reading
3	basis of the past – those things that affected the past, and may be carrying into the present and future

4	past events
5	basis of the future
6	future events
7	what the querent thinks about the question/situation
8	what other people think about the question/situation
9	querent's hopes and fears regarding the question
10	outcome of the question

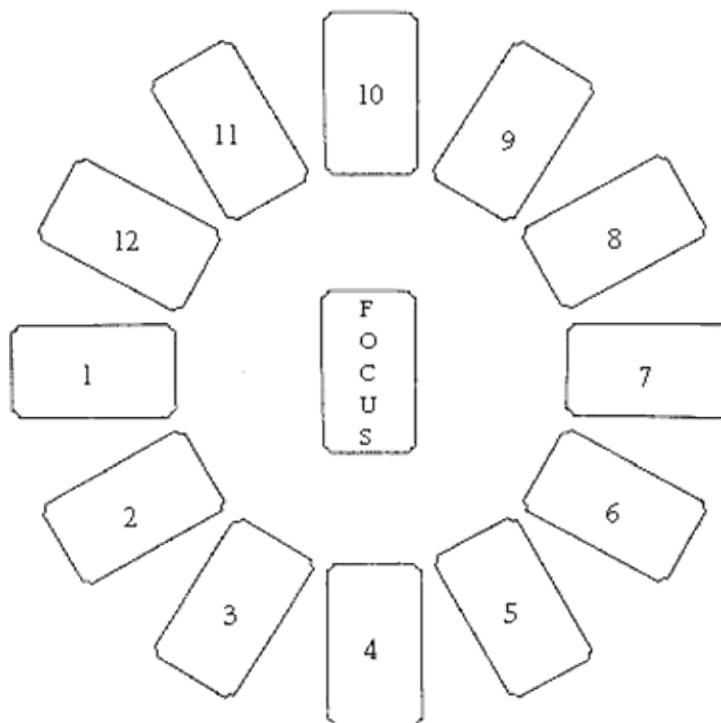
CHOICE SPREAD



It's a five-card spread for use with specific questions. The reader asks the querent to shuffle the cards. The reader takes the cards and asks the querent to chose five numbers; the first one has to be between one and 78, the second between one and 77 and so on. The reader picks the card from the deck (starting from the top) that corresponds with each number. Lay them out in a horizontal line from left to right.

The first card on the left is the situation as it stands now; what will happen if the querent takes no action and continues on the present course. The second card represents what the querent could do to change that situation, whether for better or worse. The third card represents why the querent is in this situation. The fourth card represents forces (internal or external or both) that can help or hinder the querent. The fifth card is what the outcome will be if the querent follows the changes represented by the second card.

THE WHEEL SPREAD



BACKGROUND:

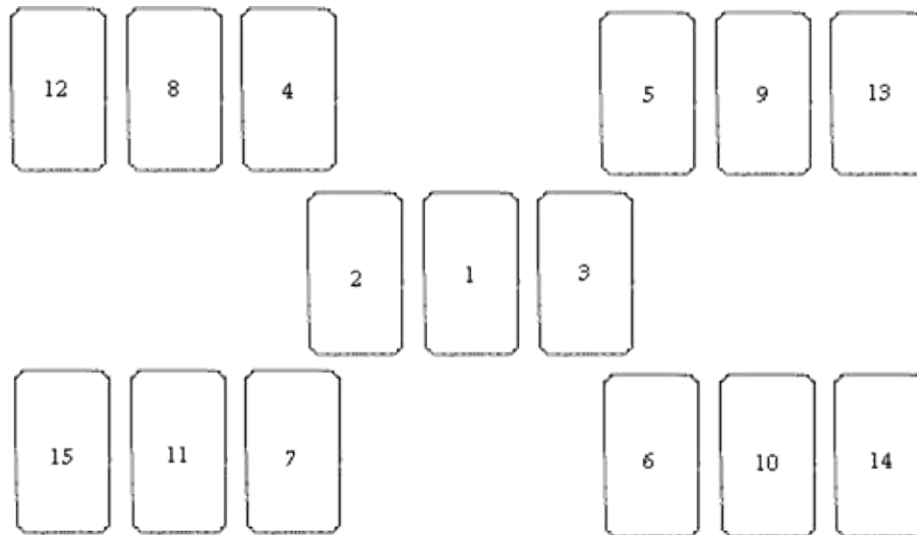
The Wheel Spread is used when there is no specific question. The strength of this spread is that it provides information about all areas of a person's life.

INTERPRETATION:

The twelve cards represent the twelve zodiac houses. When a card is interpreted, it is done so in the meaning of the house the card is placed in. The meaning and sign association of the house are:

House	Ruler	Glyph	Reading of Card
1	Aries		Self Identity
2	Taurus		Values, Possessions
3	Gemini		Communication Skills
4	Cancer		Home, Security
5	Leo		Creativity, Self Expression
6	Virgo		Service, Health
7	Libra		Partnerships
8	Scorpio		Rebirth, Sex, Death, Taxes
9	Sagittarius		Exploration, Expansion, Learning
10	Capricorn		Public Recognition, Career
11	Aquarius		Group Consciousness, Uniqueness
12	Pisces		Subconscious, Secrets

THE ENGLISH SPREAD



BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of this spread is to provide information on choices in a querent's life. It is made up of five groups of three cards. The numbers on the cards show their order of placement. In the four quadrants, the spread is read from the outside cards to the inside cards. When the cards are read, they are done so in a story book fashion. For example, if the following cards were present:

12: King of Swords

8: Two of Cups

4: Eight of Wands

These cards could be read: A man, one of thinking and intellect, will make a proposal to you in the very near future.

INTERPRETATION

Card One: This represents the Querent, the problems surrounding them, their present situation and primary influences. This position is a card of summation, telling the nature of the entire spread.

Cards Two and Three: These in conjunction with card One, are the key cards of the spread. They give extended information on the situation of the Querent, and provide clues on the outcome of the paths indicated.

Cards Twelve, Eight, and Four (Upper Left): These show one direction in the Querent's life. If desired, the position can be the possibilities for alternate action, which may be desirable or undesirable, depending on the other cards in the spread.

Cards Thirteen, Nine, and Five: These show another direction in the Querent's life. If desired, the position shows the direction the Querent's life will naturally follow, unless some action is taken to change this course ("The Stars impel, they do not compel").

Cards Fifteen, Eleven, and Seven: These show what cannot be changed. In all lives, there are events that are out of our control. To be aware of these events keeps one from wasting energy and time.

Cards Fourteen, Ten, and Six: These cards show where the Querent has leverage in life. This can indicate a strength, or provide a warning about events that can be changed.

Tarot: Some Spreads for Your Use!

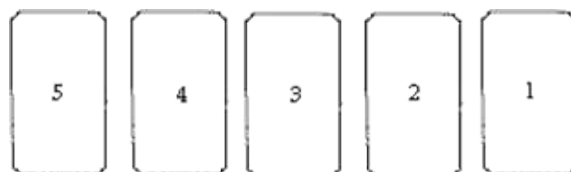
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Choice Spread

Wheel Spread

The English Spread

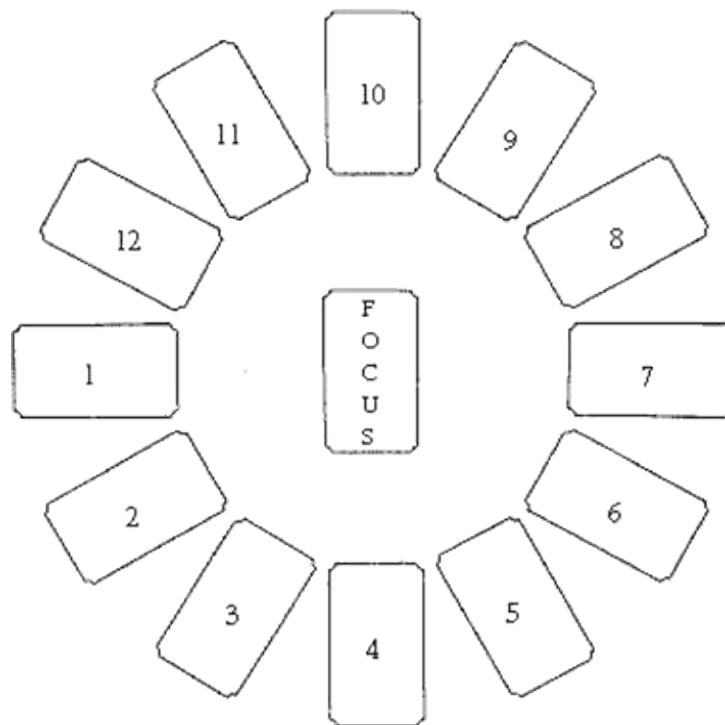
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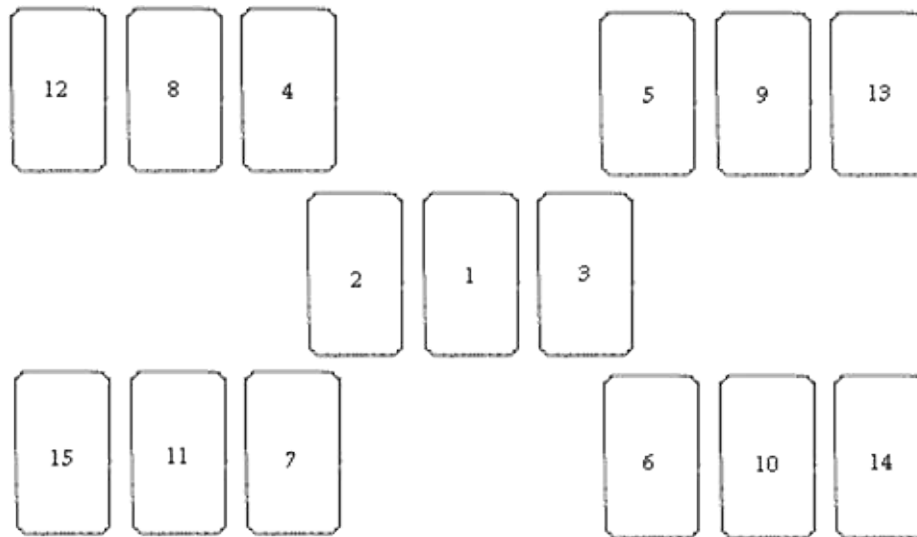
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Tarot: Listing of the Court Cards

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DESCRIPTION OF EACH TYPE OF COURT CARD
PENTACLE COURTCARDS
WAND COURTCARDS
CUP COURTCARDS
SWORD COURTCARDS

INTRODUCTION

The information presented here is a compilation of my research across the years. It is impossible to note all associations of the court cards. I only present only some common ones. The zodiac and "role" associations are from Jame Wanless' book "New Age Tarot: A Workbook and Glossary of Symbols". I highly recommend this book for any collection. If you would like a copy, check my tarot used book section to see if there is one in stock.

For further information on methods of reading the court cards, check out my webpage "Reading the Court Cards".

Sean

DESCRIPTION OF EACH TYPE OF COURT CARD

Pages/Princesses/Daughters

Pages signal the need to look at a matter - to study it, to be open to "messages" or a new ways and ideas. They act as catalysts for change, indicating an opportunity present. They take risks and are open to new possibilities. They indicate an actual child or your own "inner" child - naive and innocent, learning. Sometimes they come into your life as messengers.

Knights/Princes/Sons

Knights act on, are involved in, and committed to the things indicated by the ir suit. They represent pure energy and often show where you are putting your energies. Focused but active, they display purpose, courage, and courtly attitude. They are sometimes headstrong, rash, thoughtless, and self-centered. For women, knights often represent an animus figure, especially a romantic one. They represent your need to challenge something or go adventuring yourself. They can indicate travel.

Queens/Priestesses

Queens represent the inner and personal, rather than worldly, control. They have the ability to nurture and develop things indicated by the suit. They represent mothers and mothering, habits and cultural integration. They administer and channel the power. They rule from the heart. "She" can be the inner self in a man, or the sense of self in a women.

Kings/Shamans:

Kings show mastery, ability, and authority in the field represented by the suit. They represent experience, power, authority, status. Secure but rigid, limited by the rules they have established. Court Cards often signify both yourself and another in a reading. The King can be a boss, your father or some other authority figure. "He" can also represent the animosity in a women, or a sense of serf in a man.

PENTACLE COURTCARDS



The Page of Pentacles

The Princess of Echoing Hills;
The Rose of the Palace of Earth

Elemental Name: Earth of Earth

Sign: n/a

Role: n/a

Dignified: A thrifty and conscientious person. A preserving scholar. Gracious, careful and kind.

Ill-Dignified: A wasteful and prodigal person, over-meticulous in small things. Depending upon other cards: unfavorable news regarding financial matters.



The Knight of Pentacles

The Lord of the Wild and Fertile Land;

The King of the Spirits of the Earth

Elemental Name: Fire of Earth

Sign: Virgo

Role: The Healer

Dignified: A practical person of conventional virtues or views. Patient, hardworking, and clever with material things, but rather slow, and inclined to lack awareness of feelings of others.

Ill-Dignified: An avaricious and grasping person, complacent and rather timid. Depending upon other cards: monetary affairs at a standstill or break-even.



The Queen of Pentacles

The Queen of the Thrones of Earth

Elemental Name: Water of Earth

Sign: Capricorn

Role: The Succeeder

Dignified: A shrewd, sensible and down-to-earth women, but loving splendour and personal display.

Ill-dignified: A changeable women, narrow in outlook and suspicious of what she does not understand.

Grasping and careful and yet a spendthrift in matters that concern her.



The King of Pentacles

The Prince of the Chariot of Earth

Elemental Name: Air of Earth

Sign: Virgo

Role: The Healer

Dignified: A steady, methodical and reliable man, loyal, trustworthy and patient, but slow to think and act.

Depending on other cards: increase of wealth, establishment in a profession or large corporate entities

Ill-Dignified: A dull and materialistic person. An obstinate, heavy-handed and sometimes tyrannical person.

WAND COURT CARDS



The Page of Wands

The Princess of the Shining Flame;

The Rose of the Palace of Fire

Elemental Name: Earth of Fire

Sign: N/A

Role: N/A

Dignified: A resourceful and ambitious person who has great enthusiasm and vigor. A person who is quick to respond emotionally; either with love or anger. Depending upon surrounding cards: (i.e., the Eight of Wands) a messenger bringing exciting and stimulation news.

Ill-Dignified: A domineering and superficial person who wants to achieve much by the shortest possible route and so can be untrustworthy and deceitful. Depending on surrounding cards: a bearer of bad or disappointing news.



The Knight of Wands

The Lord of Flame and Lightning;

The King of the Spirits of Fire

Element Name: Fire of Fire

Sign: Sagittarius

Role: The Revolutionary

Dignified: An unpredictable or impetuous person, who is swift to act and enjoys action. Depending on surrounding cards, this card may signify sudden departures, hasty decisions, or change of residence.

Ill-Dignified: A narrow minded and contentious person, a bigot, and a lover of discord for its sake.

Depending on surrounding cards: journeys delayed, a procrastinator.



The Queen of Wands

The Queen of the Thrones of Fire

Elemental Name: Water of Fire

Sign: Aries

Role: The Seer

Dignified: A generous women, practical and kind, and capable of independent thought and action, but home loving. A country-women. Depending on surrounding cards, the success of a venture.

Ill-Dignified: A jealous and domineering women, obstinate and tending to imagine wrongs. A women who allows her loved ones no independence or resorts to emotional blackmail.



The King of Wands

The Prince of the Chariot of Fire

Elemental Name: Air of Fire

Sign: Leo

Role: The Seeker

Dignified: An honest and conscientious person, loyal and generous, loving traditional ways and family life. A just and enterprising man of authority. Dependent upon surrounding cards, a mediator, or arbitrator.

Ill-Dignified: An autocratic and in intolerant person, prejudiced, ruthless and lacking in the feeling of others.

CUP COURT CARDS



The Page of Cups

The Princess of the Waters;
The Lotus of the Palace of Floods
Elemental Name: Earth of Water

Sign: N/A

Role: N/A

Dignified: A quiet, reflective and artistic person, gentle and kind, but dreamy at times. Dependent upon other cards: a messenger bringing news of a birth, engagement, or marriage.

Ill-dignified: A selfish and idle person, given to lies and harmful gossip. Dependent upon other cards: a deception will be uncovered.



The Knight of Cups

The Lord of Waves and the Waters;
The King of the Host of the Sea

Elemental Name: Fire of Water

Sign: Cancer

Role: The High Flyer

Dignified: An amiable and intelligent person, but a dreamer and easily led or discouraged. Dependent on other cards: propositions, invitations, offers, and opportunities.

Ill-Dignified: An idle person, and a congenital liar. Dependent on other cards: trickery, embezzlement and fraud.



The Queen of Cups

Queen of the Thrones of the Water

Elemental Name: Water of Water

Sign: Pisces

Role: The Feeler

Dignified: An imaginative, affectionate and gifted women, but lacking in common sense. Highly intuitive and sometimes psychic, but dreamy and easily influenced by other people, events, 'atmospheres'.

Ill-Dignified: An unreliable women who cannot be trusted or depended upon, as her opinions change swiftly and without logical or just reason. A perverse women, or one inclined to hysteria.



The King of Cups

Prince of the Chariot of the Waves

Elemental Name: Air of Water

Sign: Scorpio

Role: The Rebirther

Dignified: A man of business or law. A skilled negotiator, kind, considerate and responsible, but ambitious. A man of ideas and agility of mind.

Ill-Dignified: A dishonest or unscrupulous man, likely to be double dealing. A violent and treacherous man.

SWORD COURT CARDS



The Page of Swords

The Princess of the Rushing Winds;

The Lotus of the Palace of Air

Elemental Name: Earth of Air

Sign: N/A

Role: N/A

Dignified: A person of grace, dexterity, and vigilance. Very acute and subtle, a negotiator. Depending on other cards: a message presaging change.

Ill-Dignified: A devious, frivolous and cunning person, possibly vindictive and two-faced. Depending on other cards: ill health or unforeseen events causing changes in pain.



The Knight of Swords

Lord of Winds and Breezes;

King of Spirits of Air

Elemental Name: Fire of Air

Sign: Gemini

Role: The Decider

Dignified: An active, clever individual, subtle and skillful, but inclined to be domineering. Depending on other cards: events moving swiftly into and out of the Querent's life, for good or ill.

Ill-Dignified: A deceitful and sly individual, secretive and belligerent. Depending upon other cards: quarrels.



The Queen of Swords

The Queen of the Throne of Air

Elemental Name: Water of Air

Sign: Libra

Role: The Crystallizer

Dignified: An intelligent and complex women, highly perceptive and quick-witted. Often skillful at balancing opposing factious one against another to further her needs.

Ill-Dignified: An unreliable women, deceitful and sly. A narrow minded and intolerant women. A gossip.



The King of Swords

The Prince of the Chariots of the Winds

Elemental Name: Air of Air

Sign: Aquarius

Role: The Thinker

Dignified: A rational man with a logical and inventive turn of mind, but sometimes overcautious and old fashioned. A man of law and upholder of authority.

Ill-Dignified: An obstinate man of calculating and impersonal temperament. Sometimes malicious, unjust and cruel.

Tarot: Reading the Court Cards

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INTRODUCTION

The court cards are often the last item a student of the Tarot grapples with. The titles are familiar, their faces have been seen for years in regular playing decks. The Page (Jack), Knight, Queen and King have been our companions through many a game of poker, spades, or hearts. Then why the confusion and trepidation when faced with reading the royal cards?

The root of reading confusion is the multitude of ways to read the court cards. My answer would be the same if one asked how to read the minor or major arcana cards: find a way, "program" the cards, and stick with the method. Deviate when needed, but have a method and practice that will provide focus during a reading.

COMMON ISSUES

The first requirement of finding a method to read the court cards is both simple and difficult. One can see them as psychological or zodiacal representations of people, an energy of a given situation, or a representation of one's self in the reading. The issue is this: ask three people what their zodiacal and psychological associations are, and you will probably receive three answers. Some of the issues one will face are:

Given there are sixteen court cards, and only twelve zodiac signs, who is left out? The common practices are to not associate a zodiacal association with either the Page or the Knight. I follow the Golden Dawn's methods, and leave the Pages without zodiacal association. Instead they are associated with the four quadrants of the polar regions.

To associate a zodiacal element to a court card, one must decide which element goes with which suite. Some people feel wands are fire, and swords are air. Others feel swords are fire and wands are air. I side with the previous association. There is no "right" selection. Your choice should be based on your training and own experience/opinion.

The court cards can be held strictly to physical types and genders, or they can be loosely read for all people. For example, one may feel that a Queen of Cups always represents a female with golden brown hair and blue eyes. Additionally, one may also feel that the Queen of Cups is always a Pisces. These are common, but not "right" associations given later in this document. Personally, I would normally think a Queen of Cups as a Scorpio woman with dark hair and dark eyes. I would suggest that one take the latter method: loosely reading the cards for all people. Queens and Kings may represent men or women. Someone may be very business-like one day: Queen of Pentacles; and be very practical the next day: Queen of Wands.

ELEMENTAL ENERGIES AND THE SUITES

An understanding of the psychological aspects of the court cards is dependant on an understanding of the elemental energies, and the suites they work through.

Pentacles: Earth

The element of Earth is expressed through the direct experiences of our five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. This suite is one of action and reaction. When I sell somebody an item, they will give me money. When I eat ice cream, it will taste good. When I drink too much, I will have a hangover. The functions are uncomplicated. When somebody lives at an Earth level, life could be as slow and steady as the seasons turning and the crops growing. Paganism feels very much in touch with these cycles, and celebrates them on Full Moons and quarters of the year.

Wands: Fire

The element of Fire adds passion and energy to the foundation created by the element of Earth. The natural rhythms of the planet are usurped by outside influences. The result is new creations and ideas. The goals created are not dependent on the timing of the planet. As events are accelerated, the natural balance is sometimes overturned. The result is competition, seen most vividly in the sixth through ninth cards. The passion of the Wands is a force largely devoid of emotions. It is neither cold hearted nor full of anger. The volcano is an analogy in that it can destroy existing land, plants, and animals as it creates new land. There is no motivation of destruction. Transformation, a function of death and birth, is a balanced force of nature.

Cups: Water

The element of Water adds emotions to the tarot. Water is a substance that flows to the lowest places, and it can be calm or stormy. Water can be represented by shallow puddles or by bottomless oceans. Emotions take on all of these qualities. The shape and status of water is dependent on its container and temperature.

Swords: Air

The element of Air adds intellect and conscious thinking to the tarot. The element of air is the most removed from the element of Earth. Fire is dependent on Earth for fuel. Water is dependent on Earth for a place to rest. Air can exist without Earth. This nature analogy can be extended to the realm of our being. One can make decisions, and have thoughts, that are not based on reality, or grounded in practicality. The thought that begins as a breeze quickly becomes a tornado, or escapes into the emptiness of space. Air is the most difficult element to contain, control, and quantify. The more we try to control our thoughts, the wilder they become. Meditation brings our thoughts back to a stable form. The purest forms of meditation seek not to contain, control, or quantify thoughts. Zen meditation instead acknowledges a thought, and allows for its natural departure. There is no counting of thoughts, no tally sheet of grievances and hurts.

MALE AND FEMALE ENERGIES

To properly read the court cards, one must have a grasp of the mystic associations of "male" and "female" energy. Male energies are fast and sudden. The price for the bursts of energy are paid through short duration and non-lasting effects. Given their shorter life cycles, male energy is associated with completion and readiness to let go or move on. The elements of fire-wands and air-swords are male centric. Both forces of fire and air require much energy to maintain. When the energy is removed, the elements are still and inert. A forest fire or hurricane are elemental examples.

Female energies are slow and steady. This does not make female energies weak. Their slowness allows for constant application of power. Much effect can be gained with little effort. Due to the slowness of the female energy and its inability to quickly shift focus, the effects can be seen as "controlling" and "domineering". When grossly stereotyped, the mystic female energy is that of the Jewish mother rather than the female's "right to change their mind". The elements of earth-pentacles and water-cups are female centric. When placed in or on an object, these elements require little or no energy to maintain their resulting force or enveloping qualities. The sand dunes of the desert, or the valley carving stream, are elemental examples.

METHODS OF READING COURT CARDS

As mentioned previously, the court cards can be read one of four ways: an event or movement, physical aspects of people, zodiacal aspects of people, psychological aspects of people, or psychological aspects of a situation. Additionally, there are some common traditional meanings to be considered.

Court Cards as Event or Movement

The Page and Knight court cards are often read as events or movements. A common reading for the Page cards is that of a message. In my own readings, I draw another card after a Page to discern the message carried by the Page. The Knights can be read as types of movements. Traditionally, a Knight of Wands is change of residence, a Knight of Cups is change in relationships/emotions, a Knight of Swords is change of fortune or thinking, and a Knight of Pentacles is a change of money. When there are many Knights in a spread, this is a sure indicator that changes are on the way, and there will be change in more than one area of the querent's life.

Court Cards as Physical Aspects of People

A common method of reading is to decipher based on what one sees. Under this philosophy, one matches the physical characteristics of a court card to that of an actual person. If the Knight of Wands is pulled, and it has blond hair and blue eyes, the reader would say "there is someone in your life with blond hair and blue eyes". This ties readings to the pictures in a particular deck, or to memorized characteristics of each card. I do not encourage this method of reading court cards. However, I would not rule them out. One should always read intuitively, and reading physical aspects is a valid method when it 'feels right'.

Zodiacal Aspects of People

Another common method of reading a court card is as a person with that court card's zodiacal association. If a Knight of Wands comes up, one reads the card as somebody born during the zodiac sign of Sagittarius. The problem with this method is diversity of systems defining zodiacal associations. I have seen no less than four different ones, and I could probably find a new one for every other Tarot book I open. In this document, I present the associations from James Wanless' book "New Age Tarot: Guide to the Thoth Deck".

Psychological Aspects of People

The method of reading the court cards as psychological aspects is based on an understanding of the elements and nature of the elements' genders. When these are grasped, a psychological aspect of a card can be synthesized. Each type of court card is associated with an element. Pages are paired with Earth, Knights with Fire, Queens with Water, and Kings with Air. Thus, a Page of Wands would be "Earth of Fire". When one sees the "element A of element B" formula, several methods of evaluation may be used. The first is to visualize what happens when the two mix. In our example, a female card is indulging in male energies. The result would be earth existing in fire: lava rocks or charcoal. Charcoal would be a better choice. It represents change, although it is slower than other methods of combustion. In contrast, The Knight of Pentacles would be "Fire of Earth". It would be read as a male card indulging in female energies, and its physical representation would be that of lava. The element mixing and gender interpretations should be personal, and the images derived are based on the individual's background and understanding of psychology of elements and genders.

Psychological Aspects of a Situation

The psychological reading of a situation is done using the same methods as psychological reading of people. The difference is that instead of the cards speaking of an individual, they are focused on an environment, event, or occurrence. The nature of the situation is clarified to the reader.

Some Traditional and Personal Readings

There are some traditional readings of the court cards. One that I am aware of, but do not personally use, is the association of the Page of Swords with a person who is spying. Another is the Page of Wands representing the birth of a child. In my own reading, I often read the Knight of Wands as representing a sexual experience. While these interpretations are often traditional, they are also personal, and may not seem to be based on any "logic". This is part of the Tarot's charm and power.

A CONCLUSION

Having this "tool chest" of reading methods is of little use unless one does two things. The first is to choose a set of methods and to read by the majority of the time. This provides focus for readings, and thus provides a foundation for the Tarot's magic. With a list of rules established, one can read with confidence. The second thing one must do is more important. Use intuition. Know when to bend, break, or even throw the rules out the window. Those who are very intuitive seem to never adopt a set of rules. If they did, they would only end up discarding them. Those of us less talented benefit from the structure of established patterns. However, one should have a goal of reading with maximum intuition, and feeling free to disregard any pre-established methods. The Spirit, be it Goddess, Angels, Guides, or personal divinity, is fully capable of divination in a spontaneous, trusting mode. To draw an analogy, true magic does not require ritual or dogma. It only requires perfect trust and abandonment to the higher powers within/outside ourselves.

Suites - Their Element, Expression, Ruling area, and Zodiac Signs

Suit	Element	Jungian Expression	Rules	Signs
Wands	Fire	Intuition	Creativity and Drive	Leo, Aries, Sagittarius
Cups	Water	Feeling	Emotion	Pisces, Cancer, Scorpio
Swords	Air	Thinking	Mental	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
Pentacles	Earth	Sensation	Manifestation (money and things)	Taurus, Capricorn, Virgo

Court Cards – Their Elements, Type of People, and Special Meanings

Court Card	Element (within Suite)	Type of Person	Special Meaning
Pages	Earth	Children or Young Person	Signifies change or messages
Knights	Fire	Young men under the age of thirty	Comings and goings, changes in status-quo
Queens	Water	Married or sexually mature women	
Kings	Air	Mature Men	

Court Cards – Physical Characteristics

Court Card	Hair Color	Eye Color	Special
Page of Wands	Red or Blond	Blue	Messenger or Postman
Knight of Wands	Blond	Blue or Grey	Change of Residence
Queen of Wands	Red or Blond	Blue or Brown	
King of Wands	Red or Blond	Grey or Hazel	
Page of Cups	Brown	Blue or Brown	Birth of child or engagement in the arts
Knight of Cups	Brown	Grey or Blue	Message, proposition, or invitation
Queen of Cups	Golden Brown	Blue	

King of Cups	Fair	Blue	
Page of Swords	Light Brown	Blue	Message or types of spying
Knight of Swords	Dark	Dark	Coming or going of misfortune
Queen of Swords	Light Brown	Grey	
King of Swords	Dark Brown	Dark	
Page of Pentacles	Rich Brown	Dark	News and message about money
Knight of Pentacles	Dark Brown	Dark	Coming or going of matter of money
Queen of Pentacles	Dark	Dark	
King of Pentacles	Dark	Dark	

Associations of Court Cards with Zodiacal Signs

Sign	Element	Court Card	Quality
Aries	Fire	Queen of Wands	The Seer
Taurus	Earth	King of Pentacles	The Builder
Gemini	Air	Knight of Swords	The Decider
Cancer	Water	Knight of Cups	The High Flyer
Leo	Fire	King of Wands	The Seeker
Virgo	Earth	Knight of Pentacles	The Healer
Libra	Air	Queen of Swords	The Crystallizer
Scorpio	Water	King of Cups	The Rebirther
Sagittarius	Fire	Knight of Wands	The Revolutionary
Capricorn	Earth	Queen of Pentacles	The Succeeder
Aquarius	Air	King of Swords	The Thinker
Pisces	Water	Queen of Cups	The Feeler

Frequently Asked Questions about the Tarot

1. What is a tarot deck?
2. Where can I get one?
3. How do current decks differ?
4. How do I use a Tarot deck to 'tell the future'?
5. How do I use a Tarot deck for meditation?
6. What is the history of the Tarot?
7. Is the Tarot related to Kabbalah?
8. How is the Tarot related to other forms of divination?
9. What books might I read if I wanted to learn more about Tarot?
1. What is a tarot deck?

The Tarot was originally a deck of 78 cards, divided into 4 suits of 14 cards (the standard ace-10, then page, knight, queen, and king) and 22 un-numbered 'triumphs' or 'trumps'. Over the years, the trumps got numbered 1 to 21, with one card (the fool) remaining un-numbered or sometimes being 0. The 4 suits are commonly called the 'Minor Arcana' and the trump cards are called the 'Major Arcana'. More loosely, any deck of cards designed

for 'fortune-telling', divination, meditation, contemplation, or other non-game uses is popularly called a Tarot deck.

The most commonly found suits for Tarot decks are cups, swords, wands or staffs (probably originally polo-sticks), and pentacles (originally coins). The names of the Major Arcana cards frequently change from deck to deck, but historically they've been The Fool (un-numbered or 0), The Magician (I), The High Priestess (originally the Popess) (II), The Empress (III), The Emperor (IV), The Hierophant (originally the Pope) (V), The Lovers (VI), The Chariot (VII), Strength (VIII, originally XI), The Hermit (IX), The Wheel of Fortune (X), Justice (XI, originally VIII), The Hanged Man (XII), Death (XIII), Temperance (XIV), The Devil (XV), The Tower (XVI), The Star (XVII), The Moon (XVIII), The Sun (XIX), Judgement (XX), and The World (XXI). The Major Arcana cards are usually illustrated, frequently the Minor Arcana cards are, as well.

2. Where can I get one?

Most 'new age' or occult bookstores carry a variety of Tarot decks. So do many 'mainstream' bookstores. So do many 'new age' catalogs. So does U.S. Games Systems and a few other card dealers. For a secret source of wisdom from the distant past, it's pretty available.

3. How do current decks differ?

Mostly in artistic style. Tarot decks come in a bewildering variety these days. You can find oversized, undersized, or round decks. Some have more than 78 cards, some less. Some are based on a particular mythic cycle. Some are based on a particular psychological theory. Some are based on channeled information. Some are just hard to describe.

A 'historical' deck has simply one, two, or however many wands, cups, or whatever for the number cards.

A.E. Waite first popularized a deck which has illustrations on all 78 cards (painted by Pamela Colman Smith), which has become the model for the greatest number of other currently available decks.

A. Crowley popularized a deck which had arcane symbols, but not real 'illustrations' on the number cards (painted by Lady Frieda Harris). Decks which follow those basic setups are descendants from these earlier ones.

For the beginner, it is probably best to choose a deck which is stylistically appealing over any other consideration. But it is also probably best to pick a 'standard' deck (78 cards, etc.), if only so that if you later choose to study of other people's writings won't seem hopelessly obscure.

4. How do I use a Tarot deck to 'tell the future'?

Study the cards and learn their meanings. Practice a lot, on yourself, friends, or total strangers as suits your personal leanings. Eventually, you should get pretty good.

Some people prefer to learn the cards intuitively, by studying the illustrations, meditating on them, and carefully recording their reactions to them. Most people just read the little booklet that inevitably comes with the deck. For people who prefer a more detailed learning process, I recommend starting with Butler's Dictionary of the Tarot, which contains a summary of the interpretation each card has gotten from some of the major historical figures associated with the Tarot.

The most common 'spread' for Tarot readings is called the 'Celtic Cross'. It's probably described in the booklet that came with your deck,

but just for completeness, it looks like:

4.	10.
5. 1&2.	6. 9.
3.	8.
	7.

1. Represents where the querent is at the time of the reading.
2. Lies across 1. and represents what holds the querent where they are.
3. Represents the 'base of the question' - why it is being asked.
4. Represents how the querent has been thinking about the question.
5. Represents the 'recent past' (usually considered as 1-3 months)
6. Represents the 'near future' (ditto)
7. Represents what the querent has to bring to the situation.
8. Represents what the situation has to offer the querent.
9. Represents the querent's innermost hopes and/or fears.
10. Represents the final outcome of the situation, unless deliberately changed.

And again, practice, practice, practice.

5. How do I use a Tarot deck for meditation?

One simple technique is to select a card and use it as a miniature mandala. Or put out an array of cards and do the same. Some people pick a card in the morning and use it as a 'focus point' for the day - looking for aspects of that cards meaning in the events that occur to them. Some people have created entire 'guided meditations' that take you through the entire Major Arcana.

6. What is the history of the Tarot?

No-one knows the 'true' origin of the Tarot. The most common myth is that it was brought to Europe by the Gypsies - but this myth come from the fact that very early occultists who used the Tarot fancied that it came from Egypt. They were as wrong about that as they were about the homeland of the Gypsies.

In fact, the Tarot came to Europe about the same time as any other form of playing card, in the early/mid 1300's. It is most closely related to the 'Mamluk' deck of the Islamic world, which had suits cups, coins, swords, and polo-sticks.

The Tarot was originally used for a game called 'tarocchi' in Italy, which is sort of a distant cousin to Bridge. Tarocchi is still played in some parts of the world, not usually with the same decks the 'fortune tellers' use.

The game was quite popular for a time among the royalty in Italy, and sometimes

a duke would commission an artist to create a really nice deck. Some of the earliest surviving Tarot decks come from this source. Plainer decks existed, but were not well made enough, or well thought-of enough, to survive the intervening 600 years.

The Joker of 'standard' card decks is not related to the Fool of Tarot. The Joker was invented as a wild card for Euchre in the 1800's, in a part of the world where the Tarot was virtually or totally unknown.

The Tarot was first associated with the occult by Antoine Court de Gebelin, a relatively obscure Parisian mason who wrote about the deck in 1781. He invented a lot of the standard myths about the Tarot which were later popularized by others (it comes from ancient Egypt, the Major Arcana is related to the Kabalah, etc.). The first big popularizer of the deck was a contemporary of de Gebelin, called Etteilla, who published the first 'revised and corrected' Tarot deck for divination. The fad was caught up

by Eliphas Levi, Oswald Wirth, and Papus, among others. From Papus, the Tarot caught on with some English mystics, such as S.L. Mathers (whose mistranslation of Levi brought us the suit of pentacles), A.E. Waite, and A. Crowley. The Tarot received a lot of attention from these folks, and they created a fairly large body of writing on the use of Tarot. For the most part they thought that divination was a 'lower' use of the cards, that ideally it should be used to put you in touch with eternal verities, usually in conjunction with whatever magickal order they happened to be involved with. But of course, divination was the most popular use for the cards.

Most of the Tarot decks on the market were created this century, most of those in the last 20 years.

7. Is the Tarot related to Kabalah?

de Gebelin fancied that, since there were 22 Major Arcana cards and 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the two must be related. Most of the people who followed him went with this assumption. There's been considerable disagreement as to how exactly this should work (which letter with which card), and if you're interested in using this connection, you should probably just go with whatever correspondance the creator of your deck settled on.

8. How is the Tarot related to other forms of divination?

Basically, it ain't. Historically, at least. But many people who have some skill in one of these other arts have sometimes tried to find correspondences between them and the Tarot. Of the people I've talked to who are skilled in runes/astrology/iching/etc., most of them wish the people who made such decks wouldn't bother. But, some people like them. If you're already familiar with one of these other systems of divination and wish to study the Tarot as well, it may be a worthwhile 'shortcut' to pick one of these decks. For a novice, it is probably more confusing than it needs to be.

9. What books might I read if I wanted to learn more about Tarot?

Below is a subjective, and massively incomplete, list of some of the books about Tarot currently on the market.

Common Sense Tarot by Camden Benares - includes a nice section on how to go into business reading cards.

Dictionary of the Tarot by Bill Butler - lists the meanings of each card given by a number of other authors and includes his own.

Tarot: A Handbook for the * by Eileen Connolly - rather popular.

Book of Thoth by Aleister Crowley - learn about Tarot from the Beast himself.

Complete Guide to the Tarot by Eden Gray - basically follows earlier writers.

Tarot for Your Self, Tarot Constellations, Tarot Mirrors by Mary Greer - another popular series.

Encyclopedia of Tarot by Stuart Kaplan - a three volume series which has the drawback of being somewhat expensive but the advantage of being very nearly complete.

Pictorial Key to the Tarot by A.E. Waite - get back to the roots of the Tarot with this one. Not really a 'fun' read.