

An ASTROLOGICAL JOURNEY through the MAJOR ARCANA

Astrological Archetypes and the Tarot Trumps

An Astrological Tarot

Embedded in our night sky are archetypal images, symbols and stories that have enchanted the human soul for eons. Onto this sanctuary of the sky the ancients projected their imagination using star-patterns to animate their myths, creating a skyscape that immortalized their deities and heroes. Before history, the screen of the heavens reflected the archetypal experiences and yearnings of the human psyche serving as a storybook for countless generations.

Another imaginative narrative is the Tarot whose engaging illustrations have captured the human imagination since the Renaissance. Similar to ancient traditions, the Tarot has two mystery initiations: the twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana represent the Greater Mysteries, our encounters with the archetypal forces that underpin life, while the fifty-six cards of the Minor Arcana reveal the character of our lives. Astrological archetypes represented by the twelve zodiacal signs and the ten contemporary planets have been associated with the 22 Major Arcana cards. Like transits or progressions, a card can have a profound meaning to an individual at significant times of transition. When viewed sequentially the Major Arcana cards also depict the soul's development through a series of identifiable archetypal initiations.

The Fool's Archetypal Journey

The Fool is the soul's surrogate who travels the path marked out by the Major Arcana. As a pilgrim on life's journey the Fool is the projection of the incarnate soul facing the tests and trials of life. Throughout the 22 cards of the Major Arcana, the Fool personifies encounters with archetypal forces that help shape character and influence destiny. Each card demarcates a rite of passage, a life stage or change familiar to all travelers on the path of individuation. The Major Arcana brings these passages to consciousness through its twenty-two illustrations, the identical number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet's twenty-two paths of wisdom. Not only does the Tarot help to identify these pathways but it also offers insight in recognizing and dealing with each stage. The added dimension of the astrological images awakens the imagination to bring a greater clarity to the Tarot journey.

0 THE FOOL: Uranus, Herald of Change

Innocent and unaware of the initiations and lessons that lie ahead, the Fool is poised to step into the abyss that marks the first stage of his unfolding journey into self-understanding. He is ready to follow a dream, a hunch or a sign wherever it might lead. His card is numbered zero, as he is outside the 'pack', marginal to the world of form and substance, still spirit with unlimited potential and endless possibilities. Not yet encumbered with possessions or weighed down by earthy attachments the Fool is free to explore the new world in front of him. The Fool personifies the conception and emergence of a new path of being.

Uranus is the cosmic spirit that guides the Fool. Sudden and unexpected, disembodied and future-directed, energetically Uranus uproots the past to make way for progress. Preferring spiritual ideals and altruistic principles the individual is inspired to take a risk and rebel against the status quo. Uranian energy disengages from attachments seeking a world of perfection, possibility and utopia. Craving freedom and space in the environment, the Uranian atmosphere often feels cold and disconnected. Separation is a hallmark of this archetype; its urge to progress and willingness to jump into new adventures is far greater than its need to remain static. While this need to separate is motivated by the urge to discover the self, others may experience it as pushing away, disengaging, cutting off or being aloof. Attachments, routines and possessions are becoming liberated. Uranian separation is not necessarily literal as in a separation from a person, a place or a career. More often the separation is from old habits and programs, past thought patterns and ways of being, generally experienced as a relief since it liberates time and energy to pursue new paths. When Uranus unexpectedly bursts into our life it significantly alters our everyday reality. While the journey may often feel like a roller coaster ride the path that unfolds leads to greater self-awareness and authenticity.

Until the late eighteenth century Saturn marked the boundary of our Solar System. In 1781 amidst an atmosphere of revolution the planet Uranus was discovered heralding a new order of science, industry and technology. Like the Fool, Uranus is marginal to the pack of visible planets. When the Fool appears it suggests a new age filled with unexpected changes, a fresh start with challenges lying ahead. The atmosphere is charged with the electricity of excitement and the thrill of adventure. Anything is possible. The Fool suggests a turning point and a beginning.

I THE MAGICIAN: The Mercurial Guide

Leading the sequence of the Major Arcana is the Magician. Traditionally this card evolved from an earlier depiction of a juggler and conjurer into later images of a magus and shaman, two extremes of Mercury, the quicksilver messenger of the Gods. Astrologically the planet Uranus is referred to the higher octave of Mercury as both govern the intellect and its powers. However, Mercury's sphere is not as altruistic, often fraught with trickery, mischief and sleight of hand. Mercury initiates the Fool into the game of life by endowing him with the skills necessary not only to play, but also to outwit his opponents. At hand are Mercury's numerous gifts to navigate the new territory.

The Magician highlights the need to become conscious of goals as well as the will, ingenuity and intellect needed to pursue them. As thief, trickster, boundary-crosser and master of the occult, mythological Mercury has guided the evolution of knowledge from the magic-wielding seers of antiquity through the wonder-working alchemists of the Middle Ages to the artificial intelligence used today. With knowledge we inform ourselves, become more conscious of our goals and masterful with our creations. This is the Magician's role and when he appears it suggests time to take charge of our life by consciously creating something out of the possibilities surrounding us.

Astrologically Mercury is associated with the process of learning, communicating, and the sharing of ideas. It rules Gemini and Virgo, which reflects the duality and dexterity of Mercury's approach to learning. Gemini is the quicksilver ability to gather and adapt ideas while Virgo digests and analyses the information into a coherent formula. Along with other intellectual processes such as rationale, logic, reflection and communication, the Magician's skill helps us understand our motives and urges, not solely reliant on instinctual and subjective responses. Mercury encourages objectification so separation can lead into a broader social network. His skill guides us to the right place. When the Magician appears it stresses the need to be objective and conscious of the path ahead. Mercury is never static, always in motion and it is necessary to be flexible and open to generate the power to move forward.

As a patron of youth Mercury as Magician reminds us that we are filled with possibilities and the power to pursue them. With his knowledge of herbs, healing and hypnosis his caduceus is also his magician's wand used to induce a trance. But now his wand heralds the new possibilities that lay ahead for the traveler. This card signals the momentum of a new phase filled with youthful spirit and synchronicity. A creative process is underfoot and the god Mercury is ready to guide us across the threshold of change.

II THE HIGH PRIESTESS: The Inner Mysteries of Moon

Mercury is the hermetic guide to the threshold of the inner world. At the portal is the High Priestess, the spirit of the Moon. Astrological wisdom has always linked the guiding principles of Mercury and the Moon together as co-rulers of the mind. Both are lifelong guides; Mercury informs the way we communicate to the world around us, while the Moon remembers every nuance of the human experience. Mercury recalls the outer journey while the Moon records our inner biography. Contained by the Moon are the mysteries of life: what has past, what underlies the present and what destiny lies ahead of us. Like the Moon, the High Priestess governs the night, the dark world whose wisdom is revealed through dreams, feelings, responses, intuitions and visions, reaching underneath the corporeal world and beyond linear time.

The Moon religiously records, reflects and reveals each heartbeat, every breath and nuance of primitive life as it moves through its monthly phases. It is the memory bank for everything we have ever wanted, touched, tasted, smelt, the barometer of our feelings, the receptacle of repressed traumas, the touchstone of our earliest impressions. Throughout life the Moon absorbs the imprints of the veiled world, representing the feeling memory embedded in our emotional responses, somatized in our bodies and personified through our dreams. Therefore the oracle of the High Priestess is encoded in our feelings and moods, our aches and pains, muscular tension, headaches, stress and revealed through dream images and symbols. She speaks the poetic language of the soul through image, story, myth, symbol and metaphor, unveiling herself when we engage in her mystery and uncertainty. The High Priestess honors this way of knowing through the wisdom of the body and its cycles, as well as through intuition and feeling responses.

Lunar wisdom is instinctual, born from knowing moods and cycles. Therefore the appearance of the High Priestess encourages this path of knowing by being attentive and receptive. Prepare a space to invite insight by quieting the self. Dialogue with the inner world of symbol and fantasy, explore the image of the dream, and acknowledge your intuition and responses. On an oracular level the appearance of the High Priestess invites us to be more aware of symbols and signs, feeling responses, bodily aches and pains, emotional reactions, mood swings, in general the inner life. Insight and revelations are aspects of the High Priestess and the card suggests you will become more aware of the right path by listening to the inner voice.

III THE EMPRESS: The Bountiful World of Venus

In the astrological pantheon the personal feminine is symbolised by the Moon and Venus, archetypal symbols that personify the anima; the Moon being Mother, Caretaker and Provider while Venus reflects the Other, Sister, Lover, Equal. The Moon represents first love or mother love, attachment figures and nurturers, while Venus' urge is equal love, based on her desires and values. Developmentally the Moon governs infancy and childhood while Venus rules the transition into puberty when passions are awoken and independence flourishes. Appropriately Venus governs the Empress, the card following the lunar domain of the High Priestess.

As goddess of love, sexuality and beauty, Venus' origins are rooted in the Near East. To the Greeks she was Aphrodite whose cult of worship was brought to Cyprus by the seafaring Phoenicians. While her cult was imported she became uniquely Greek, a goddess who often conflicted with the emerging culture and tradition. Later the Romans claimed Venus as their patroness being mother to Aeneas, the ancient founder of Rome. In Greece she was known as *Aphrodite Urania*, who represented heavenly and spiritual love as well as *Aphrodite Pandemos*, the goddess of physical and sensual love.

Astrologically we see the duality of Venus represented by her domiciles of earthy Taurus and heavenly Libra. Taurus carries the earthy, sensual, fertile and resourceful sides of the goddess while Libra reflects her heavenly sides of culture and beauty. United in her image they reflect her passion for beauty, love and life and the Empress embraces this duality. Her heavenly side inspires peace and tranquillity easing differences through reconciliation and acceptance, demanding equality and harmony. Attending the goddess is her emissary Eros. As the force of love Eros bursts into our lives to change the way we relate and share. Once struck by one of his arrows nothing will ever be the same! Similarly, the Empress symbolises an alchemical process of change as she passionately transforms any situation she encounters.

Venus as mother of Aeneas and Eros also represents motherhood, another aspect of the Empress. The card may signify maternal urges or represent a mother figure or nurturing atmosphere. As Empress, Venus represents the spectrum of mature femininity encompassing the desire for pleasure and abundance accompanied by responsibility for what she creates. The Empress asks the question "what area of your life needs abundance, fertility and creativity?" She also points to a relationship which needs nurturing and love. On an oracular level the Empress predicts a phase of growth and abundance, a desire to be creative and an urge to be involved both physically and cerebrally.

IV THE EMPEROR: Aries and the Mythic Motif of Kingship and Conquest

Aries, the leading sign of the zodiac, derives its inspiration from the constellation of the Ram, the archetype underpinning the Emperor. Egyptian myths connected this constellation with their ram-god, Ammon. Later the Greeks associated Ammon with Zeus, their kingly god and Emperor of the Olympian deities. Even the early Christians likened the ram of Aries to the Lamb of God, personified as Christ, the King of kings. A rich mythic tradition associates the ram of Aries with supremacy and kingship.

When the tropical zodiac was systematized in the 2nd Century BCE the zodiacal year began at the vernal equinox in Aries. To the ancients the Vernal Equinox marked the rise of spring, fertility, and the reanimation of life. The equinox in the stars of Aries paralleled the gradual triumph of masculine values during the Roman Empire. The mythic founder of the Roman Empire was Romulus, the son of Mars, the ruler of Aries. Unconsciously the powerful mythic ram of Aries had been woven into the character of the emperor, the god-like king. Earlier when the Greeks assigned a myth to this zodiacal constellation, they retold the story of Jason's quest for its Golden Fleece. Aries is a heroic sign and associated with the Emperor suggests the quest of individuation.

Jason's birthright of kingship was taken away from him, which led him to his destiny. . Like the mythic hero we may need to quest to reclaim this heritage. Hence this card suggests that a particular sphere of our lives may need control or governing. When this card appears the unconscious is acknowledging the necessity to establish authority in the outer world by taking command of a situation needing direction.

To continue on the path of individuation a strong ego is necessary in order to take control of the external forces and anchor ourselves in the world. To be in charge of our destiny we need to develop our authority and leadership backed by the pillars of our own internal wisdom and unique psychological makeup. On an oracular level the card may be referring to a particular situation that needs management or control, where we may need to be more focused and authoritative. Drawing this card suggests the unconscious aspects of the present situation need to be more aligned with the ego-identity and its desires. With this card we are given permission to have dominion over the current situation and are empowered to be in control. However, like the Arian temperament we need to be more adventuresome, confronting and assertive to truly become emperor of the situation.

V THE HIEROPHANT: The Powerful Bull of Taurus

The Hierophant brings the mythic pattern of Taurus and the bull, the most revered and powerful animal in Indo-European myth, to light. Throughout Mediterranean cultures the bull was a symbol of potency, wealth, strength and sexuality. For the Babylonians the Great Bull of Heaven represented power and fertility and for the ancient Greeks and Egyptians it was an important sacrificial animal. Greek myths included many bulls especially those connected to the successive generations of the dynasty of Crete.

Underneath the Cretan palace, hidden in a labyrinthine chamber, was the Minotaur, the shameful shadow of the Minoan clan. Two generations earlier, Zeus shape shifted into a beautiful white bull to seduce the young Phoenician princess Europa. Possessed with desire to know the bull, Europa climbed upon its back. Slowly he took her step-by-step across the meadow towards the sea and with the power of a great god the bull strode the waves. Europa clung tightly as she rode farther and farther away from her homeland. Zeus had made his conquest. He took Europa as his lover, fathering three children by her; one was Minos the founder of the Cretan dynasty. To bless the new dynasty Poseidon lavished a sacred white bull on Minos. The bull was so regal and powerful, Minos decided not to sacrifice it to the gods and substituted another prized white bull. Outraged at the deceit Poseidon placed a curse on the house of Minos. His wife fell pregnant and gave birth to the monstrous Minotaur, who had the head of a bull and the body of a man. Filled with shame, Minos built a labyrinth in the depths of the palace to hide the monster. The Taurean bull locates the intersection of our spiritual heritage and worldly desires.

Greed and failure to respect the laws of the gods produced a monster that had to be buried beneath the surface of the family. Buried shame, repressed trauma, unexpressed grief that lurks beneath the family atmosphere eventually surfaces, often through the next generation. This became evident through the fate of Minos' daughters Ariadne and Phaedra whose earthy passions and desires expressed the bull archetype of Taurus. Yet, mysteriously underpinning the Bull is the Hierophant, the priest who reveals the sacred mysteries. He understands the great Bull that abducts us into the pleasures of the outer world, the desires of the body and the rapture of our passions. Behind the feelings of shame, worthlessness, and self-incrimination is the Hierophant, the ancient one whose essence centers our passions, secures our self-doubt and distills our worldly experience. The Hierophant is the inner priest, mentor or spiritual father who initiates us into the quest for self-knowledge, beckoning us to journey beyond our comfort zone. On an oracular level the appearance of the card illuminates the necessity to channel our passions towards self-knowledge and understanding while remaining grounded in the world.

VI THE LOVERS: Gemini's Search for the Twin Soul

Gemini is the first zodiacal experience of another and the appearance of this card focuses on equal relationships be it a twin, a soul mate, a sibling, a partner or a friend. The card reveals the need to be mindful of relationships, aware of the sense of separateness, and cognizant of different agendas within partnerships.

Two stars in the constellation of Gemini, Castor and Pollux, have been recognised as a pair for nearly eight millennia. The twin stars inspire this constellation with the numinous image of twins, an archetypal motif throughout comparative mythologies. Pollux, the divine twin, is the brighter star; Castor is less bright, reflecting his mortal stature in Greek myth. Their story of fraternal love, devotion and loss engender Gemini with a deep awareness of the pain of attachment and separation. Central to the Greek myth is the motif of the powerful bond of love between the twins Castor and Pollux. As young men they were inseparable. However when Castor was mortally wounded the painful truth of their individual destinies was revealed. Mortal Castor must die whereas Pollux's divine blood rendered him immortal. Pollux's grief at his loss was so intense he felt he could no longer live. The twins, once fused and bonded together, were now eternally separate echoing the devastating impact of consciousness that Gemini describes. However the myth offers another suggestion: consciousness of differences has been awoken facilitating the twin's experience of the opposites within themselves.

The twin motif was so important that the Greeks deified Apollo and Artemis, twin souls who were closely attached to each other. To the ancients the relationship of brother-sister was also a template for love, devotion and marriage. Hera received a special dispensation to marry her brother Zeus. When the Lovers card is chosen the consciousness of partnership and equality will be awoken; however, this will also be accompanied by a sense of separateness, duality and individuality. The Lovers reveals a reflection on our relationship patterns and their complexities. While we may be looking for a soul mate to reflect our own self we need to become aware of the compulsions underlying this longing. In order for the choice about a relationship to be made we first must feel the conflict and opposition in ourselves. On an oracular level the card may predict that a relationship will fulfill our urge for an equal; however, both the joy and the pain of relating may be ignited. On an inner level it reflects paradox, duality and separateness, alerting the individual to find a balance rather than swing back and forth between the poles of separateness and togetherness. With the Lovers an inner synthesis of soul and body is taking place, which may be projected out onto relationship.

VII THE CHARIOT: Cancer, the Mother and the Hero

The Chaldeans named the constellation of Cancer ‘the Gate of Men’ since they believed it represented the entranceway for souls to incarnate into their human bodies. From an ancient perspective it was associated with a type of womb, albeit a metaphysical one. To the Greeks the constellation of Cancer was the crab Hera elevated into the night sky for its service to the goddess during Heracles’ battle with the Hydra. During Heracles’ second labor, associated with the sign of Cancer, the hero confronts the overwhelming dark force of the feminine by confronting the monstrous water snake polluting the fertile plains of the Argolid. While Heracles was in the midst of battling the Hydra a fierce crab, sent by Hera, began to attack him. The crab bit at his feet and ankles trying to divert Heracles’ attention from the Hydra. Heroic Heracles was able to obliterate the crab by squashing it under foot while still engaging the Hydra’s wrath. Ironically Hera was the hero’s fiercest adversary, yet Heracles, the name given to him by the Delphic oracle, means the glory of Hera. Heracles’ fate is forever interlinked with Hera. Their antagonistic relationship ironically spurred him on to become the greatest hero and at the end of the Herculean myth Hera actually becomes his mother-in-law.

While we astrologically know Cancer as the nurturer, the caring mother and the familial alembic, Cancer’s myth reminds us of another dimension of this archetype. Here in the swamps of the unconscious lay a darker, foreboding feminine presence that the hero must behold. The myth describes the heroic skill needed to face the terror and wrath of negative attachments. Cancer is the first water sign of the zodiac and addresses the primal, archaic and deeply unconscious fear and trepidation of facing emotional darkness. Yet this side embodied by the Hydra and her helpmate, the crab, actually inspires heroism. At the ‘Gate of Men’ or the Hydra’s swamp, Cancer constellates a darkly womb out of which we emerge, hopefully heroically.

The Chariot calls to the heroic aspect of ourselves to challenge the monsters that stand in our way. When the Chariot appears the individual may feel dependent or stuck in a situation that feels anti-heroic or non-creative. To initiate the momentum to move heroically towards a new horizon the individual must relinquish old attachments. When the card of the Chariot appears the unconscious is appealing to the inner hero to use will and strength to confront an old emotional situation. On an oracular level the card suggests that it is imperative to take rein of the emotional life and purposely direct it forward. Inertia needs to be overcome to glimpse a new horizon of possibilities. This initiatory process is like leaving home, letting go of a worn out security blanket or giving up an old habit!

VIII STRENGTH: Leo, the Lion Hearted Heroine

'King of the beasts' is a common epithet for the lion, the totem emblematic of royalty since antiquity. From the earliest records Leo, the heavenly lion, has been associated with royalty, the Sun and strength. Traditionally the card Strength depicts a young woman taming a lion, contrasting the brute force of the lion's body with the innocence of the virginal spirit. This combination of virgin and lion were united in various cultures' iconography and reflected in the constellations, Leo and Virgo, which are side-by-side on the ecliptic. In Egypt the Sphinx represented the amalgam of the lion's body with the virgin's face. Representing the virgin taming the lion in Greek myth is the huntress Atalanta.

Atalanta had been warned by the Delphic oracle not to marry. Virginitude was a mythic prerequisite for her to remain skilled as a warrior and huntress and to be true to her essential self. Mindful of the oracle's warning she agreed to marriage only if she lost a foot race against a suitor. Skilled at running fast, Atalanta was able to defend herself against marriage until the day that she fell in love. The love was mutual, as Hippomenes had also fallen in love with Atalanta having asked Aphrodite for help. The goddess granted the petition giving Hippomenes three golden apples along with instructions on how he should use them in the race. Each apple was to be thrown in the path of Atalanta. As she stopped to pick them up Hippomenes was able to gain speed eventually winning the race and marrying her. However, in their first moment of passion the lovers forgot to sacrifice to Aphrodite. In her wrath the goddess transformed the lovers into lions and yoked them to her chariot. Losing contact to her 'virginal' aspect meant Atalanta had lost control of the fierce instincts of the lion that were now tied to the goddess' chariot. During Leo's first phase of love we might lose our sense of self, but the myth of Atalanta reminds us that will power can both control and utilise the instincts to develop the self. Generally emblematic of moral strength, control of the instincts and confidence, the Fool's journey has come to the stage where self control and will are necessary for the journey forward.

Atalanta's myth also speaks of the disempowerment when self is lost in relationship. Leo represents adolescent love or the experience of being in love. Underlying Leo is often a broken heart or the loss of innocence brought about by the pain of first love. The card of Strength implies the need to manage narcissistic feelings for we cannot afford to be devoured by infantile rage, hurt or shame. On a divinatory level this card implies the individual is experiencing an initiation into their own strength by finding the will and courage to contain difficult and dark feelings. The card suggests that these feelings are to be confronted in a feminine way by befriending and taming the outrage and hurt.

IX THE HERMIT: Virgo, the Wise Virgin

After Strength we meet the Hermit, the Tarot card associated with Virgo, the largest zodiacal constellation. From earliest records this constellation has been associated with the harvest and the harvest maiden, intertwining the paradoxical themes of fertility and purity. Spica, the brightest star in this constellation, represents the wheat sheaf, the gift of cultivation disseminated by the goddess. Virgo is ancient and instinctual, craving sanctity and ritual in everyday life. Embodying the young winged maiden with flowing garments she represents cultivation. Wheat is reminiscent of the great goddess of agriculture, Demeter, and her daughter Persephone whose abduction into the underworld was the motif for the great mystery initiations at Eleusis. The Eleusinian mysteries initiated pilgrims into facing and accepting the inevitable experiences of loss and death. Before Persephone's abduction into the dark realm of her uncle, Hades, she was known as Kore, the maiden, a fitting representative of Virgo. Her myth is an agricultural metaphor for the cycle of the harvest when the creative life force disappears into the underworld, a seasonal motif replicated by many other cultures.

Virgo is a complex image that has undergone a considerable transformation since antiquity. Ironically it implies an image of freedom and independence, a woman in relationship to her internal self, contained and autonomous, in charge of her own desires. It did not originally mean chaste, quite the reverse. Her image is centered in the fertility of nature and the freedom of the great goddess to revel in her own creation. Therefore Virgo is the paradoxical archaic image of the pregnant virgin immortalized by Christians as Mary the Madonna and mother of Christ. Over time Virgo has been trivialized astrologically as we culturally continue to lose connection with the cyclical nature of the goddess and no longer honor her mysteries and rituals. When the card appears the Hermit, represented by Virgo, suggests her wisdom of cycles needs to become consciousness.

In the seasons of the psyche the harvest has come, it is time to withdraw to prepare and reflect. Like all feminine representatives of Virgo, the Hermit embodies the wisdom of cycles and a respect for fate. When the Hermit appears the psyche is calling us to embrace a period of silence, to be still, alone, so what is inevitable may be known. The Hermit augurs a period of mediation where the inner world is fortified to prepare for a major shift on the life path. To meet the Wheel of Fortune we need to be prepared by strengthening inner resources. This is accomplished through retreat from the frantic demands of the external world, patience and respect for ritual, sacredness and *kairos*, psyche's time.

X THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Jupiter and the Round of Fate

With the 10th Major Arcana the Fool is called away from solitude and led into the corporeal world. Fortuna's Wheel is introduced and the possibility of sudden fortune or a meteoric rise to success tests our ability to remain centered and focused. The Wheel symbolises Fate's roundabout, sweeping us up in its ceaseless and irreversible motion. The Moirai are the trinity of sisters who embody Fate and watch over the turning of the wheel. Once the sisters have set the pattern in motion, it cannot be altered, not even by Jupiter the greatest of all gods and the governor of the Fool's outer journey. The Moirai weave the pattern of our life into the family fabric, designing each family member's fortune and fate. When this card appears it is wise to remember that changes in our fortunes also reverberate throughout our familial and social circles.

Jupiter represents expansion and growth on physical, mental and spiritual levels. Energetically Jupiter represents vision and prophecy and it is time to use these gifts in order to foresee the changes ahead. As Jupiter also presides over the sphere of justice it is necessary to expand both our philosophical vision and ethical values. Ultimately one of the greatest gifts bestowed by Jupiter is the blessing of faith and the inner knowing there is a divine reason underlying the necessary change. Optimism and trust in the process of life are Jupiterian boons, which keep the human spirit aloft even when misfortune strikes. On a divinatory level this card suggests that the fortunes of the individual's life are shifting often without their choosing. Whether they are helpful or not is unimportant; what is important is that the changing circumstances are embraced. It is not even necessary to understand why the change has taken place but to accept that it has in order to move on and engage in a new level of understanding. As Jupiter oversees the change it is helpful to remember that the god of abundance often leads us to an unexpected windfall or good fortune.

In antiquity the hero who opposed his Fate or challenged the authority of the Gods was stripped of his power. This ancient theme underpins the Wheel of Fortune for no matter how much prestige, fortune and support we are able to possess in the outer world the course of our life is still dictated by patterns the Moirai have woven. While we might stride the Midheaven, the highest pinnacle on the Wheel of Life, with one turn of the wheel we fall below the horizon into obscurity. With each turn of the wheel we are alerted to the repetitive patterns of our life experiences and more aware of the fate underpinning these events. Less attached to the outer world and more aware of the Self we understand that Fortuna is at the hub of our internal world and that free will is our choice to cooperate with the Wheel of Fortune.

XI JUSTICE: Libra and the Quest for Equality

With Justice we meet Libra, the seventh sign of the zodiac. While the Egyptian scales which judged the souls of the dead was an early motif it was not until the second century BCE when Libra, symbolizing harmony and balance, became part of the zodiac. Roman myth identified Astraea with Libra. No longer the Greek goddess of natural law, the Romans identified her as civic law and justice. Personified as civilized law the Romans depicted her holding the scales. Confusion arose to where Astraea governed, as she vacillated between the natural law of Virgo and the civilized law of Libra, in itself a Libran dilemma! As the sole inanimate icon of the zodiac, Libra reflects the evolution from instinctual life to culture, echoing the European development from natural values towards more refined ones.

Like Libra at the midpoint of the zodiac, the card Justice is at the midpoint of the Major Arcana. At this crossroads are two orders of justice; one is the instinctual order, which upholds familial and tribal values, while the other is a rational order promoting reason and civil law. The older order is influenced by feeling, the new by rational judgment. When Justice appears we are at a crossroads in our own judgment: are we influenced by old feelings, desires and traumas or are we able to judge the situation in its own right using reason? Are we responsible for our own decisions and accepting of their outcome, or do we blame the system for its corruption and lack of support?

Themis was a Greek goddess associated with Justice. As a consort of Zeus, she was his confidant, advisor, equal, as well as mother to his children the Horae, who preside over seasonal change and the natural order of growth and decay. The trinity included Eunomia, Dike and Eirene who personified Law, Justice and Peace, the three aspects of civic virtue that are embedded in the card of Justice. Themis received the gift of oracular insight from the Delphic oracle, an attribute she used wisely in her judgment. Oracular insight or divining the will of the gods was originally an integral aspect of justice.

The card of justice reflects the quest to balance two orders or modes of being. Themis is the wisdom of justice who holds polarities, differences and disagreements in balance weighing both sides of the situation in order to resolve the conflict in the most equalitarian way. However the process demands the ability to reflect and consider the other point of view. It is necessary to be mindful of the whole situation, not only ego's point of view, being courageous enough to accept the outcome. On an oracular level the card is signaling a crossroads in a situation that needs resolution. However it is crucial to have thought through the situation from all angles and be prepared to take responsibility for the outcome.

XII THE HANGED MAN: The Initiation of Neptune

The Hanged Man is a cross-cultural motif appearing in numerous mythologies and rituals. In certain ancient mysteries being reborn was often enacted by hanging upside down. In similar fashion the alchemists and the Yogis believed standing on the head redressed the initiate's spiritual perspective. Neptune, the astrological god who oversees the vast expanse of the collective unconscious personifies the archetypal process underpinning the Hanged Man. Through the process of suspension the Hanged Man turns his focus towards the unconscious to experience Neptune. Holding on to heroic ideals or an outer identity is impossible when confronted by Neptune's seascape, as the ego loses its grip on worldly attachments. The god demands we enter into the process of suspension by sacrificing our worldly tasks and surrendering to the process at hand. Perhaps this may demand a sacrifice of the thinking function and the way we normally know things, or a relinquishment of outer world projects.

The Greeks knew this god as Poseidon, whose domain is the sea. His unfathomable realm with its untapped life force is the sphere the Hanged Man confronts as he turns himself 180 degrees away from his everyday world. As he sacrifices his potency in the outer world the libido flows into the mysterious realm of the unconscious. Gods of the sea are insightful and oracular; however, they also are known for their ability to shape shift and deceive. The dark face of the Neptunian archetype is deception and contamination. Neptune represents dissolution of ego boundaries and the universal yearning to merge with the Divine. When involved in Neptune's process boundaries become blurred. Subjective impressions are informed not only by our intuition and feelings but also our fantasies and wishes, therefore it is necessary to be more attentive and actively wait for the process to complete itself before major decisions are made. When the Hanged Man appears it suggests we are more receptive to the nuances of the psychic world and more attuned to the symbols and language of the unconscious. On an oracular level the Hanged Man suggests the time to sacrifice an outer world attachment in order to become more attuned to the authentic self.

When the Hanged Man appears it confronts the individual with what outmoded behaviors and attitudes need to be relinquished. Remaining attached to old patterns, habits or addictions perpetuate the endless cycle of martyrdom and victimization. Therefore the Hanged Man's wise counsel is to perceive the situation from a different vantagepoint by turning our perspective upside down. With the Hanged Man we are called to prepare ourselves for a descent into the self. Like all initiates we must suspend judgment and control in order to recognize the pattern.

XIII DEATH: The Regenerative Cycle of Scorpio

Hecate, an attendant of Persephone and a goddess of the nether world who knows the wisdom of cycles, is our guide into the underworld terrain of Scorpio whose primary totem is the scorpion. However Scorpio is also associated with snakes, even spiders, dragons, and the legendary phoenix which rises out of the ashes of destruction. The ancients observed that when the Sun was in Scorpio the solar force was waning and dying, preparing for winter. Scorpio marks the time when the heroic ego is no longer triumphant and the Sun must journey into the dark nether world. Scorpio marks the entrance to the underworld where the ghosts, secrets and denials of the past are buried. The monstrous forces the hero must now fight are the taboos, denials and secrets that fuel his compulsions. In Scorpio we engage in a feeling realm of great depth. Scorpio plunges the depth of human emotions embracing the full spectrum of feelings from love to hate. When the card Death appears, underlying feelings of outrage and betrayal may be ready to surface. This is also the terrain of death, finality and letting go. Scorpio rules the cycle of death and rebirth and its intelligence knows that by letting go a transformation will occur.

Like all deities associated with death, Hecate was demonized becoming associated with terrifying ghosts and night terrors. When the card of Death is drawn the reaction is often fear or terror. However the card reminds us that we are at a crossroads where we must go beyond what is known, discard what is outmoded and listen to our unconscious language. To do this it is necessary to relinquish what no longer supports life. This implies facing what is emotionally incomplete. Repressed thoughts, feelings, fantasies, traumas and disappointments may be released during this transition in order to emotionally clear the way forward. Death is the absolute conclusion; however once we are able to enter into its initiation a new cycle can begin. The dynamic nature of death and rebirth is the essence of Scorpio. Equally Scorpio reminds us that it takes integrity and honesty to successfully deal with letting go.

When the Death card is drawn an ending is indicated, a period of change is imminent. It is an opportunity to let go of habits, emotional patterns, psychological complexes and relationships which no longer serve our journey forward. In order to do this there may be a dark night passage to face our fears and terrors. The card suggests a guide is invaluable and it may be wise to seek guidance on the best route forward. Scorpio represents self-mastery and the emergence of a more authentic self. The card of Death suggests a powerful initiation through the experience of loss and endings, the precursors to a renewed energetic response to life.

XIV TEMPERANCE: The Spirit of Sagittarius

Zodiacally Sagittarius follows Scorpio as it represents the rebirth into the realm of spirit. Sagittarius embraces spiritual values, morality, ethics, justice and temperance, virtues underpinning this card. The Greeks associated Crotus, the inventor of archery and a favorite of the Nine Muses, with Sagittarius, whom Zeus honored by elevating him into the constellation. This myth was a later edition, but nonetheless places the arts and sciences of higher education, represented by the Muses, under the auspices of Sagittarius. The pursuits of knowledge, understanding and wisdom are virtues for Sagittarius. As a goddess of nature and the wild, hunting and childbirth, Artemis is also associated with this sign. With the bow and arrow in her capable hands, she is a perfect spokeswoman for Sagittarius, poised between the instinctual forces of nature and spirit. A common theme underlying the myths associated with Sagittarius contrasts the barbaric, stormy, wild side of the archetype with the pursuit of higher vision, knowledge and ethics. Similarly the card Temperance implies moderation and balance, finding the middle path, and discerning between right and wrong.

Over time the constellation evolved into a hybrid of man/animal holding a bow and arrow. The Greek archer Crotus was a satyr, an amalgam of man and goat. Alternately the hybrid was also seen as a Centaur and since the Roman period this became the main totem of the sign. In the Greek tradition centaurs opposed the pursuits of beauty, culture and refinement. Centaurs violated social customs and denigrated the sanctity of marriage. The mythic motif of the battle with the Centaurs portrayed the continuous conflict of opposites: culture versus nature, civilized versus savage, man versus beast etc., motifs familiar to Sagittarius' continual struggle to socialize the wild instinctual forces. When the card Temperance appears the individual could be struggling between instinctual desire and morality. The spirit of Sagittarius is to reason and judge clearly, not from a self-interested perspective but from a holistic point of view.

Temperance suggests a phase of spiritual awakening and learning. To move forward temperance and reflection are needed to discern right action. Balance is required as there are conflicting forces drawing the individual in opposite directions. One is regressive, back to the instinctual life, the material world, the ego and its desires. The other direction is progressive towards the spiritual life. What matters are motives, intentions and ethical actions. To discern the right course the arrows need to be pointed at the heart of the situation. We are called to differentiate the barbaric from the refined, the wild from the moderate and to choose the path aligned with our highest ideals and ethics, the domain of Sagittarius.

XV THE DEVIL: Capricorn's Instinctual World

Capricorn was recognised as either a horned or sea goat as early as the second millennium BCE. The Greeks found a correlation to the stellar image in Pan, who when frightened by the monster Typhon jumped into the sea and transformed himself into a sea goat. However they also linked Amaltheia, the goat-nymph who nursed the young Zeus, to this constellation. Amaltheia was immortalized in the heavens as the constellation of Capricorn by a grateful Zeus who took one of her horns and filled it with the fruits of the harvest. The Cornucopia, or the Horn of Plenty, is an emblem that reminds us of the abundant resources underpinning Capricorn. As the winter solstice the sign marks the turning of the Sun when the year's darkest moment has passed and the torchbearer, the new solar hero, emerges heralding the end of the old order. At the darkest point another cycle begins. As we approach the nadir of any cycle the ego often reacts by imposing sanctions and limits to control and insure the situation remains 'safe', static and unchanging. This reaction is the work of the Devil as it considers life from a state of fear and homeostasis, which imprisons the individual in depression and powerlessness. Tradition and the past need honoring, yet not to the extent of imprisoning the new order that must emerge.

The goat became an iconographic representation of evil and lust. After centuries of sin projected onto the goat it became aligned with the Devil who was depicted with the horns and feet of a goat, similar to Pan. However Pan was not evil. When born the other Olympian immortals rejoiced at his birth naming him Pan or 'All'. Enchanted by the sweet sound of the reeds Pan tied them together to make his beautiful instrument the panpipes. Pan's music reminds us that the creativity throughout nature is instinctual and embedded in our being. When natural creativity is not allowed expression, devoured by fear or literalism, the Devil appears. Unexpressed creativity keeps us locked in a two-dimensional materialistic world where power is gained through status and possessions. Imprisoned in that world Pan, or 'pan-ic' the Devil, arises leading to compulsive behavior.

The card may suggest being stuck in an unfulfilling job, bound to an endless cycle of despair, trapped in a loveless relationship or driven by compulsions. It confronts our unexpressed creative possibilities and our need to break free from the cycle of depression and lethargy. To break the cycle of being bound to the Devil, we need to move beyond the materiality and literalism that imprisons us. Pan's excesses do not make him the Devil; he has become the Devil through our projections of un-lived potentialities and creativity, which are now necessary to redeem. As the adversary of life (*devil is lived spelt backwards*) the Devil confronts our capacity to choose freedom over bondage.

XVI THE TOWER: Mars and the Forward Journey

Another title for the 16th Major Arcana is 'The Lightning-Struck Tower', and in the Rider-Waite deck the pinnacle has been struck by lightning dislodging the crown at the top of the tower. Fiery flames rage out of the crater where the crown has toppled and two people are being hurled out of the tower. Ancients revered lightning as the awesome fire from heaven, which struck swiftly and unexpectedly either to destroy or to fertilize. Lightning symbolised either the god's destructive face or positive qualities of inspiration and renewal. Mars the war-god is both a destroyer and a Tower of Strength.

The Greeks knew Mars as Ares who was associated with war or in psychological terms, the aggressive and sexual instincts. The Romans embraced him as Mars, amalgamating the Greek god of war with an indigenous agricultural god; hence he was often associated with spring or the rising of the sap, fertility and new growth. Sacrifices were made to Mars to avoid natural calamities and to promote a bountiful harvest and encourage prosperity amongst their herds. In classical astrology Mars is lord of two zodiacal spheres, Aries and Scorpio, reflecting the dual paths evident in the Tower. Aries represents the renewal of life, beginnings, adventure and self-motivation. Aries has the will and instinct to continue forward and like the Emperor carries the sword of power and discrimination. Scorpio is the season when nature dies and goes underground. It represents what lies underneath the conscious experience of life. Like Death we may need to re-enter this phase of experience to embrace shadow aspects of the self which may still be holding us back. When the Tower appears the unconscious reveals an important crossroads. For some it may be the time to journey forward as the old structures have liberated a more authentic path. Having journeyed into the shadow regions of the psyche and confronted the Devil the individual is empowered to move beyond the material world. Mars represents aspiration, courage, enthusiasm, energy and will, qualities that can be resources during this period. For others it may suggest a time to reconsider their position and address what needs to be relinquished. It may be necessary to delve into the self to confront the terror of what keeps us bound to the collapsing structures

Mars symbolises brute strength and the aggressive instincts. On a divinatory level the appearance of Mars as the Tower suggests that an instinct is operating to tear down old structures, which may have been supporting an established way of being. The more rigid the structure, the more violent the upheaval needed to dislodge the concrete form. The Tower implies that it is time for the collapse of the old, whether we willfully or not cooperate with the dynamic. Having encountered the Devil the initiate is ready to destroy the imprisoning defenses and structures and turn towards the future, the Star.

XVII THE STAR: Aquarius and the Manna of Heaven

In contemporary astrology Aquarius represents change, revolution and rebellion. However Aquarius was not always associated with upheaval and social change. To the ancients Aquarius was the power of flowing, often flooding water. To the Babylonians it was an overflowing water jar and later a female water divinity. The flood of water was connected to the rains, which would come when the Sun transited Aquarius, the ancient herald of the winter solstice. The card of the Star represents both strands of Aquarius: it heralds a revolutionary new way of being after a period of turmoil or suppression and also represents a wellspring of hope and renewal. Aquarius' innovative and creative new vision is reflected in the Star, a welcome downpour after the disruption and chaos of the Tower.

To the Greeks the water bearer was a Cupbearer. They associated the young Trojan prince, Ganymede with the 11th zodiacal constellation. Many mythic personalities associated with Aquarius are also connected with heaven. Its ruler Uranus is the initial god of heaven. Prometheus, the first revolutionary cultural hero to storm into heaven, exemplifies its humanitarian spirit. Zeus takes Ganymede, the embodiment of Aquarius, to heaven. Heaven is an important ideal for the Aquarian. It is a multi-dimensional symbol of transcendence; the spirit of the sacred, infinity, eternity yet also has a creative and life giving power as it pours rain over the earth. It also suggests awareness, the ability to see from afar. When the Star appears it suggests there is a new perception, a transcendent ability to perceive the road ahead and perhaps a clear intuition to inspire and guide us. A common urge for Aquarius is to transcend the mundane in order to serve the gods of heaven. Aquarius' altruism and idealism strives to bring the lofty ideals of heaven down to earth. However in Aquarius the quest for equality seeks to be integrated into all its social experiences.

Aquarius is progressive, altruistic, egalitarian and ingenious wishing to pour its creative gifts over mankind to inspire progress for all. The Star shines light on the path forward, full of hope and promise. On an oracular level the Star implies that many of the worldly trials have been faced, the critical period is passing and the destruction caused by the collapse of the Tower has ushered in a period of calm. The dreams and potential of the past can once again be renewed and attended to. Life is renewable and the Star suggests faith in the future. After an illness, a relationship breakdown, financial losses, redundancy, family crises life begins again. This hope is not manufactured by the ego, but arises out of the wisdom gleaned through life's experiential journey. The Star is the light of the Higher Self, which illuminates the inner darkness and heralds the dawn of a hope filled future.

XVIII THE MOON: The Womb of Pisces

Two fish swimming in opposite directions connected by a ribbon of stars is the design woven into the constellation of Pisces. At the beginning of the Christian era the vernal equinox became located in the constellation of Pisces bringing the symbolism of the fish to the mythic forefront. Previously the Babylonians and Arabians had projected the image of the fish onto this constellation, associating the pair with either two goddesses or the fish goddess and her son. Hellenistic Greeks borrowed the mythic plot freely from their Indo-European ancestors using the mother-son combination of Aphrodite and Eros to weave their story into the constellation.

All water signs can be located in their natural environment and Pisces is the sea, the vast, boundless, eternal symbol of the unconscious. Perhaps the best we can hope to do is to be able to sail upon it, or like a mermaid, swim in it. The fish of Pisces remind us of the duality and paradox inherent in water. When the card appears we are in the realm of the Great Mother who asks us to immerse ourselves in her realm and yield to the tides of feelings engulfing us. Like ancient mythologies Christian doctrine drew heavily on the symbol of the fish and the sacrificed son echoing the tradition of mythic sons who were sacrificed to the world. The Greek god who is sacrificed and reborn is Dionysus. Through Dionysus the ecstasy and agony of union with the divine was experienced. Sacrifice and redemption underlie the ethos of Pisces. In Pisces we may be lost in the sea of the divine or enmeshed with the Goddess in an all-encompassing relationship. Either way the mythic images of the sign suggest a powerful fate that draws us into the service of the Divine.

On a divinatory level the Moon suggests we are under the spell of the Moon. Perceptions may shift; uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity may be present, as we swim through the unconscious realms. We are in feminine precincts where outer world concerns are not as pressing as internal ones. It is time to trust in the process, revere the lunar way by listening to the inner voice speaking to us through dreams, feelings, somatic responses and changing body cycles. We may feel as if we are under a veil of illusion and drawn away from our everyday reality. This is a phase of rest, of patience, of waiting. In the card we also see the traditional symbol of the dogs baying at the Moon reminding us that the light of the Moon is needed to calm the instinctual life. We are in the night phase of the journey and need to be hypnotized and enchanted by lunar light. Guidance comes through the intuition and through the symbolic magical realm.

XIX THE SUN: The Radiance of the Sun

As her eternal companion the Sun follows the Moon in the Major Arcana sequence, just as light follows darkness and day follows night. Symbolically they are the world parents, the divine pair that represent the heavenly lights and the marriage of opposites. They mirror the dual realms of consciousness and unconsciousness and are metaphors for feminine and masculine modes of being. Astrologically they symbolise the archetypes of father and mother, while the Sun also represents children. Therefore it is appropriate that the Sun card is often a child or children, generally male and female mirroring one another. 19 years is also the grand cycle of the Sun and Moon known as the Metonic Cycle.

Greek myth depicted the Sun god as brother to the Moon goddess. Helios personified the Sun who guided his solar chariot, drawn by majestic white horses across the heavens from east to west. His sister Selene, the Moon, drove her lunar chariot through the night sky illuminating the dark with the reflected light of the Sun. By the later classical period the twins Apollo and Artemis became associated with these two great luminaries. Phoebus Apollo was 'the shining one', the solar deity who also presided over the spheres of healing and divination in the ancient world. As the dispeller of darkness the Sun represents health, spirit and vision permitting the individual to foresee their future direction more clearly. God of light and logic, reason and consciousness Apollo reminds us that a new phase of life has emerged out of the darkness and new light can be shed on the past. When the Sun card is chosen it reveals the individual has undergone a process of self-examination and become more conscious of their internal drives. The card encourages the person to harness their energies towards their vision and goals.

The Sun is also the agent for creative self-expression and the ability to focus talents in order to realize the life purpose. Symbolically the Sun represents confidence and the ability to shine in the world suggesting an upcoming phase where there is a potentiality of success and acknowledgment. Clarity of vision and an ability to think things through to arrive at a more enlightened decision is rising. As the radiant source of light, the Sun promotes optimism and vitality, encourages creative endeavors and dispels the darkness of the passing unproductive and difficult period. Apollo is the life giving energy of the Sun, the ability to heal old wounds, restore faith and renew vitality and resources. On an oracular level the card predicts a phase of creativity and personal growth since obstacles from the past have been left behind. Our desires and impulses are now under rein, being directed to a creative outcome that supports the ability to be centered and directed. It is time to shine or at least, like the Sunflower, turn our face towards the Sun.

XX JUDGMENT: Pluto, the Inner Judge

As the journey through the Major Arcana is ending, preparation for an encounter with the final phase is underway. This trump signals the call to face the future we have created out of the choices made on our timeless journey, including resources not used, roads not traveled and lives not lived. We have arrived at a place where we are more able to clearly judge the wisdom, integrity and authenticity of our past efforts. When this card appears the individual is at the threshold of profound change and yearns to find greater meaning in life. To accomplish this task, the essential aspects of self that have been repressed or forgotten must be redeemed. Here we meet the god Pluto, judge of the dead and memory of the past.

In the Greek myths Pluto was the lord of the underworld and the god of death. He rarely surfaced, however when he did his helmet rendered him invisible to the naked eye; therefore his presence went undetected. In most cases Pluto draws us down into his world to confront the truth lying below the veneer of life. His gaze is fixed, penetrating, engaging. Energetically Pluto demands engagement and honesty. Vulnerable in his presence secrets are revealed, fears are vanquished and shame is exorcised as the initiate is compelled to face the truth of themselves. What was once necessary to repress, to forget or hide naturally falls away, called into the service of the Higher Self. On an inner level Pluto symbolises the judgments we have made which shape who we are. However more importantly the god now delivers a further judgment to release us from the shades of the past. What is buried in the underworld of the individual is awakening ready to energize a new shift in direction and self-perception. Ironically Pluto is derived from Plutus, the rich one, reminding us of the riches and valuables hidden underneath the surface of our selves.

On an oracular level Judgment suggests efforts and experiences of the past are becoming visible. However it also confronts us with the need to be honest and sincere. While painful memories may be rekindled, losses reactivated or betrayals reawakened, they are called to their final judgment to be relinquished and transformed. The inner judge asks the question, 'how true have you been to yourself?' Only the gods and we know the answer. And the extent to which we can be honest with ourselves prepares the pathway to the final initiation of the World. While Pluto was always feared, in this card he holds the riches the individual can mine when venturing into his domain. Ultimately this is the wealth of self-knowledge and self-empowerment, which arises from the confrontation with the unconscious.

XXI THE WORLD: Saturn, At Journey's End

At journey's end we encounter Saturn, the Lord of Karma, acknowledging our hard-won triumphs and heroic battles. To the Greeks he was Cronus, the youngest son of the sky god Uranus. Saturn was the last born who rose up against his father's perfected and disengaged. A new age dawned under Saturn's rule; an epoch so peaceful and prosperous it was coined the Golden Age. The World suggests the completion of a cycle from innocence and naiveté to fulfillment and realization.

Saturn is associated with the sickle, the implement he used to castrate his father. In this context the sickle is a symbol of resolution and differentiation needed for evolution. To accomplish the tasks in the world the hero must cut through illusions and falsehoods. The sickle is the crescent Moon and representative of agrarian deities, emblematic of harvest cycles, death and rebirth. The World card is suggestive of the harvest, a time of self-renewal and of endings and beginnings. Saturn measures the eternal passage of time. Like an hourglass Saturn reminds us that once time has run out, it may be reversed in order to return to let time flow again in an opposite direction. The World card represents the eternal return as now the path of incarnation intersects with the path of spirit. This point in the spiral journey is an end, yet also marks a conception. The planet Saturn marks the edge of the visible solar system and reminds the pilgrim of his earthly and human form, his imperfections, fears and sense of limitedness. Yet beyond Saturn lay the transcendent world of spirit, which contains the images of wholeness, androgyny and union. When this card is chosen the individual has gleaned enough worldly experience and knowledge to author his or her own script and face the consequences of those actions.

The last Major Arcana personifies the sacred circle of the zodiac, the ring of life, encircling the World. With the World card the individual's unconscious is directing them to participate, cooperate and be embraced by the surrounding world. The card augurs a time when soul is evident in the world, not split off from it. The card also implies the individual may be acknowledged for their achievements, recognised for their contributions or personally fulfilled by their hard work and dedication to the task at hand. The goals that have been set have been achieved resulting in a triumphant and rewarding time. The card acknowledges the successful culmination of a process even if the cycle embodies only a short amount of time. Saturn is the natural ruler of the Midheaven, the symbolic pathway into the world and an image of the goal posts we strive to reach in life. As guardian of this domain Saturn is the deity who supports the forging of our character in the world and when this card appears our role in the world will be brought into focus.

The Eternal Return

Every ending conceives of the next cycle. Seeds of the future are inherent in the old cycle as it closes. Similarly the cycle of the Major Arcane begins anew with a higher level of awareness for the next round. Saturn, the patriarch of the World, is the planetary initiation that allows the transcendent experience, as represented by the outer planets, to come to conscious awareness. And the next planetary initiation beyond the world of Saturn is Uranus, the spirit of the Fool. Omega/Alpha. The spiral journey through the Major Arcana is ready to begin again on another level of consciousness.