

A Conversation

between

Enrique Enriquez and Jean-Michel David

New York – Melbourne :: May 2010

this conversation was recorded for Enrique's site: *tarology (beta)*

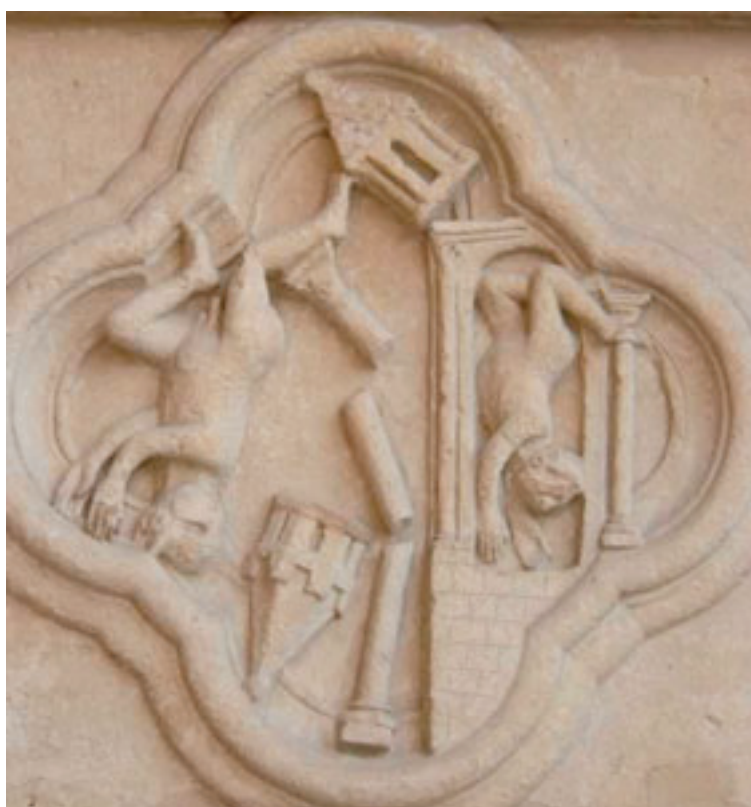
Enrique Enriquez: Is there any of the tarot images you have never recovered from?

Jean-Michel David: Interestingly, yes!

It's really the single card that has cost me thousands of dollars (literally), and had me hunting down a number of false leads. It's also the single card that initiated my deeper interest in tarot's history and the meaningful connections within each image...

...let me tell you a little (true) story:

In the 1980s, a single caption to an image in Fred Gettings's 1973 *The Book of Tarot* managed to make two incorrect references: the caption reads "Illustration to the Golden Legend. Reims Cathedral". The image is fantastic – and I have since referenced it many times. At the time, the internet did not exist, and even in the first few years of the 21st century, not that much was really available.



source: JMD's photo collection

In 2000, my wife and I were in France on the way to a pedagogical conference, so we detoured and spent a couple of days in Reims, searching all around the exterior and interior of the building for this image. The Siberian frosty winds had just started, and we were whipped with fine particles of rain – something I remembered and 'enjoyed' as a young child growing up not far from Chartres. This time, however, it made the wild goose chase rather tedious... and after having spoken to all the guides I could find, and looked through the numerous books in the various shops, I finally had to admit defeat.

Before admitting total defeat, however, we looked around the city in case there was perhaps another Cathedral (a rarity, but it does happen). To no avail.

I thought that perhaps the image was rather small – perhaps no more than a hand's breadth – and in some nook or cranny of that Cathedral, and that even the locals I had access to were simply ignorant of the same.

Similarly for the *Golden Legend*. I had gone through a copy of it in English translation, to no avail. So I also bought myself a 'complete edition' in French whilst in Paris, and again, after going through it, wondered what I had missed!

It wasn't until my return to Melbourne that I happened to come across similar quadrefoils surrounding other images in a totally unrelated book. The reference therein was not to Reims, but rather to Amiens Cathedral! Now Amiens is North of Paris, Reims East!



By this stage, I assumed that the Reims reference was incorrect, and with the new reference, was indeed able to locate the image from art books and the slowly emerging internet. Having located the image, it wasn't difficult to also reference the image as stemming not from the *Golden Legend*, but rather from what are called *Infancy Gospels* depicting, in this case, the flight to Egypt. And from this was also able to find another similar image, this time in the South of France on the Moissac Abbey Church.

So the 'Maison Dieu' – so often translated as the 'Tower' – has made a rather deep impression!

... and in 2005, we spent a number of days in sweltering heat in Amiens, took hundreds of photos, and realised how large the petroglyph in fact is. How Gettings was able to make those two major errors in such a short caption I still find incredible!

E.E: That is a great story! First, I am fascinated by the idea behind the “cost” of an image. I love that idea of acknowledging the amount of time, effort and money that knowing an image may take. The act of getting to know an image equals owning the image. Why is important to pursue an image until you can own it?

JMD: In my local courses, I usually bring along an accurately weighed replica of a mediæval sword. Similarly, in both my online and local courses, I suggest going to a zoo (or, better if you have the opportunity, a safari) to actually observe and behold a lion. To visit, when opportunity arises, European museums and come as close as possible to an actual Imperial crown – and to wear a replica, or even a real one, and be seated wearing such. To engage in *Lectio Divina*.

There’s no way that the suit of swords, or, in order of those cards I just mentioned, Fortitude; the Empress or Emperor; or the Papesse, remain imagery of something remote. Seeing the card image anew becomes a living experience, in the same way that looking at a familiar photo taken during a highly memorable occasion or trip retains a quality, for that person, that remains otherwise detached and relatively meaning-less for others.

E.E: See? that is exactly what I mean when I say that meaning is experiential. Those emotional, and psycho-physiological hangers that compose the actual experiece of a thing end up embedded in our brain, so we can hook back on them any image, word, or notion that is brought up. But I tend to feel that people dismiss that experiential quality of meaning. It seems easier, or safer, to think that meaning, and memory, are a matter of reason, as if the body’s own mnemonic system, that of the senses, were as trustworthy as our intellectual recalling of some words or ideas. Why do you think that is?

JMD: It is, I think, often very difficult to talk about or describe experiential knowledge or even, for that matter, emotions: in these areas, our language has simply not developed sufficient subtleties – or perhaps it’s more that most of us (myself included) have not paid sufficient attention to these subtleties as they may be expressed in language. Try describing the subtleties of an Inuit’s experience of a particular type of snowstorm around the time of the winter solstice in broad mid-day darkness within the arctic circle to someone who has lived all their life on the tropical Australian eastern coast. Or the taste and texture of a witchetty grub or a steak tartare to a tibetan monk coming from a strict vegetarian Buddhist family. Or indeed what it’s like to ride a bicycle. In each case, what we’re actually asking is for the person to enter imaginatively an experience vicariously, and in the process fill in so much that’s missing not only of their own personal life experience, but also overcoming biases. It is of course possible – at least to quite an extent – to develop the imaginative-contemplative faculty to ‘experience’ these.

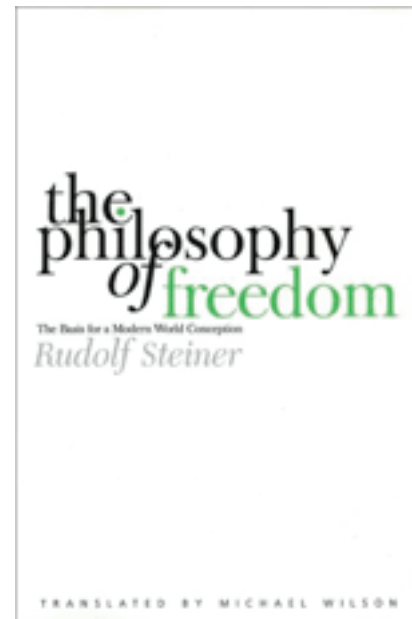
I suspect that it’s not only that the ‘body’s mnemonic system’ is here are stake – though I take your point – but also that entering these *experientially* makes them far more living within one’s conceptual life and, importantly, insight-enriched and meaning-filled.

E.E: But then, there is the quest for meaning in that precise image: La Maison Dieu. I guess that there are images that question us, and images that don’t. If I look at the image of a dog, or a boat, I will probably take them as that: a dog, a boat. But I feel that the images in the tarot are always questioning us.

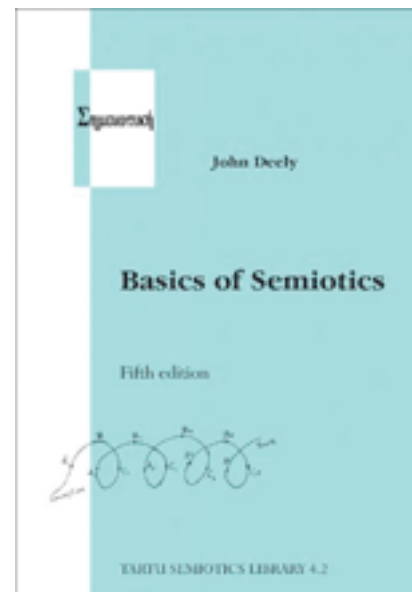
Do you think that the meaning of an image existed prior to the image itself?

JMD: That's a deep question – or perhaps I'm understanding it with all its philosophical ramifications.

Let me address the example first, and then move on to the question proper. If I see a dog or a boat, its 'meaning' will itself have developed for each of us in different ways, even if speaking the same language. Let me give you an example taken (and modified) from Quine's philosophical classic *Word and Object* – though I realise that I am changing the example a little from one of language to something a little broader: imagine being in a foreign land and the native speaker points to a running hare and calls 'gavagai!'. What may this actually mean, and how does its meaning even influence the manner in which we view the event? For example, it could 'mean' (and thus be *seen* as) 'tonight's dinner', or 'look how gracefully it runs', or 'animal-hare'. So what it even 'means' to take the image of a dog or a boat as 'just that' is not at all obvious, but is rather informed by our own usually unconscious personal biography located within a specific language in a particular socio-cultural location and epoch.



To take the image of a boat again as example, its very imaging will have been selected by the artist: it's even quite a different 'meaning' to have the boat as depicted in Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's 'Le Pauvre Pêcheur' to a photograph of a boat lying on a beach following a tsunami. In neither case, I would suggest, is the boat simply taken 'as just that', but is rather filled with meaning that invites to be reflected upon and discovered. Most of the time, we simply do NOT reflect and seek to further understand: our world remains as 'the currently unquestioned', or *assumed*, reality.



This whole question is really a wonderful opening to get into two of my favourite philosophers and philosophical areas: Rudolf Steiner's epistemology and John Deely's semiotics... but that may digress too much, so better hold back!

So... you mentioned that you feel that in the tarot the images are always questioning us: I agree – at least when we allow ourselves to question and seek insight and understanding. If anything, what social convention has done is to assume that with tarot imagery, one *should* question and seek meaning. This was not always the case, as Dummett and others have quite clearly made known by presuming the opposite when tarot is used for gaming.

But let me also return to your actual question: do I think that the meaning of an image existed prior to the image itself?

Yes.. and no:

The selection and creation of an image – especially, but not only, in the case of tarot – already had ‘meaning’ in the sense that the image-makers sought to illustrate some individual, allegory, or capture part of a story. Once created, however, the image’s meaning becomes created anew with each viewer. In the case where the ‘source’ of the image is not known by the viewer, alternative ‘explanations’ and meanings arise, which in turn alter later depictions of both image and further understanding. A case in point here includes how the Papesse has been explained; how the World has been altered; how the Wheel of Fortune has been radically changed in many recent decks to something that is increasingly removed from Boethius’s concept of the same.

If nothing else, reading De Gebelin (or De Mellet) as an example, his ‘recognition’ that tarot depicts Ancient Egyptian concepts and Gods and Goddesses shows how ‘meaning-making’ radically alters the ‘selected meaning’ the card image-makers would have had, instructed by *their* sources.

E.E: I think you are tapping into something important there: the meaning of the tarot as an artifact could be seen as separated from the waning of the images that compose the tarot, and that meaning is consistent with its usage: both as a game, and as a divination tool, a deck of cards include the idea of chance, and therefore, the expectation on chance being somehow relevant to us.

From a neurological point of view, some authors talk about the idea of affordabilities: a thing means whatever it can afford us. A dog can afford us protection, a sense of companion, loyalty, but also a good scare or even a bite. It is easy to see why a dog means what it means to us. ‘Dog’ is a concept that includes a set of experiences, both personal and collective, we have had with dogs. I guess that setting the boundaries of our experiences about the images we see in the tarot may be more challenging. But I am asking you about all these questions for two reasons. First, while talking to a friend of mine who is an art history professor, he pointed out how most medieval images were made by draftsmen working at the service of someone else. He suggested that there must be a tarot in book, or literary, form hiding somewhere in some old library. What do you think about that? The other reason I have to ask you these things has to do with something I have been noticing in the current discourse of many contemporary artist and even poets: there is this aim, even a sense of pride, on talking about not having any representational intention in their work. I have problems with that idea. If one keeps an eye on what neuroscience is suggesting nowadays about the way we process meaning, I fail to see how there can be images without representation, either of one main idea fostered by the artist, or of the particular ideas that our subjective reading of a piece may elicit in us. What do you think about that? Do you think it is possible to make non-representational images?

JMD: There’s a lot to unravel and comment on here, Enrique!

The first point I’ll make is not directly related to tarot as such, but rather to meaning-making. Personally, I see neurological research as seeking to explain what we already observe when we carefully reflect on our own engagement in the world. So some may indeed tend to have a bit of a reductionist view of meaning as somehow being epiphenomenal on something like ‘affordability’ or suchlike. This point has similarities, in some ways, to the last in your questions about ‘non-representational images’ – to which I’ll return in a while.

Let me first briefly address your question arising from your historian friend. Could it be that tarot’s imagery, at least as it presents itself in the trumps, is somehow first illustrations to a document or a literary sequence? I think that many of us would like to find such a document, and many amongst us who

are interested in tarot's history have probably at one stage or another thought this as a strong possibility – myself included. Personally, I now doubt that this is the case. And even when an early document is found, such as with the very early Boiardo poem, it's clear that the reference is to cards and not to another work.

And so I now think it more likely that the earliest tarot-like deck, or rather, decks, arose out of a desire to have an additional and exclusive trump set to what was an already existing 'base' set of four suits (themselves being something like the Mamluk decks). This additional *trumping* suit, instead of being represented by an implement such as a baton, cup, coin or sword, was painted with imagery and developed to be what we now know as the trump sequence. Why those particular images were selected is, I suspect, in part 'accidental'. What I mean by that is that the painter was very likely constrained to a specified number of cards (whether it be 14, 16, 20 or 22 makes no difference at this stage). Given this constraint, he or she – but very likely 'he' given the times we're talking about – selected some from images of worldly positions (the early part of the sequence), some popular allegories and virtues, some celestial concepts, and some theological ones. How he made them all 'fit' was likely more fixed by trying to reflect a breadth of considerations within the limited set than trying to produce an overall sequential 'trump story'.

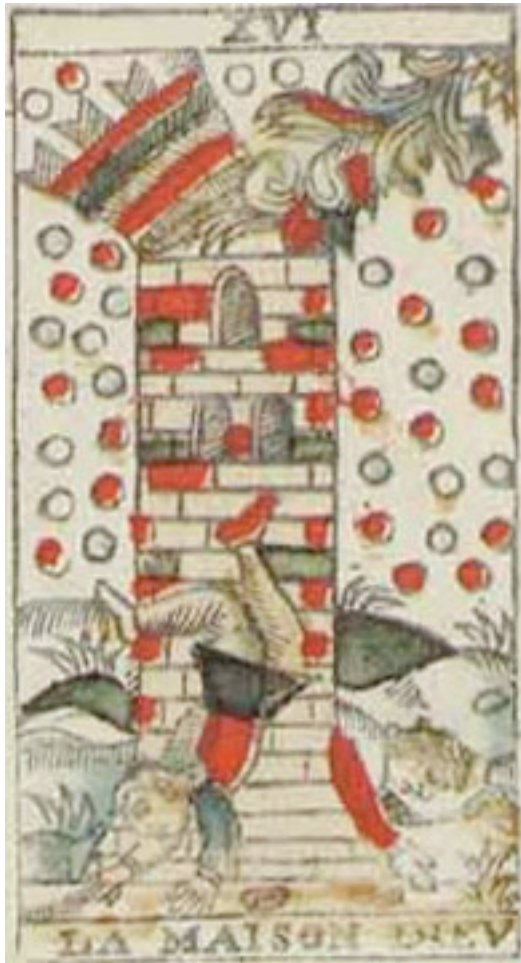
IF what I'm suggesting is correct, then I would suggest that books that mirror the trump sequence, if they exist, are likely to refer to an *existing* deck of cards rather than the deck reflecting a book. Again, a good example of this is the Boiardo poem.

In mentioning all this, I've also probably at least *partially* answered some of the other questions you raised. I'll try and add a little more here, however... you've opened such a Pandora's box!

Let me just touch on the comment that draftsmen worked at the service of others. This is of course generally correct. The problem comes, when we talk about tarot, as to what period we are discussing and what decks are at issue. In the earliest tarot-like decks to which we have evidence, they were hand-painted (I am thinking here of the Visconti-type decks). Once we get to woodblocks and what is effectively mass-manufacturing of tarot, then the craftsmen *already* had models to more or less base their own pattern upon.

What's interesting here, by the way, is that even with the various patterns that do emerge, there appears such consistency: even with, for example, card XVI in such disparate decks as the TdM-types and the Vieville, we have two different images very likely stemming from the same story. In the TdM, we have what has come to be the canonical version of the lightning-struck Maison-Dieu, whereas in the Vieville what emerges as a more northern 'pattern' with the shepherd near a tree under a 'storm'. These two images, by the way, are also carved together as illustrating part of the same infancy gospel on, again, Amiens Cathedral – in case someone else is interested, I have placed all these images on my fourhaires site.

So returning to your historian friend's suggestion that perhaps all these images are in a 'book', the closest answer in the affirmative is that indeed they are, but not in the way this would normally be understood. Rather, the images are there to be discovered as statues and as petroglyphs within and upon the largest and most well known Lumiere (or 'Gothic') Cathedrals of the 12-14th centuries. Even there, however, they are not presented as a set, but rather some are within the building as perhaps woodcarvings and effigies, others as images on the outside of the buildings. With regards to these, it's a shame that what was undoubtedly the most important of these buildings or group of buildings has long gone: the Cluny



Abbey.

Now as to the most difficult part of your question about 'representational images'. In terms of what I'll call 'classical' tarot – which include, for this part of my reply, *most* decks calling themselves 'tarot' – then the imagery used is 'representational' in all its common-sensical meaning; it 'represents' or seeks to be a *simulacrum* or *mimesis* of the allegory or office or celestial category it depicts. In some decks, which I would personally hesitate to call 'tarot' (though I'd be quite happy to call them 'inspired by tarot') what appears are not *simulacra* but rather closer to an expressionist rendering. Of course, even there I'd agree with what you seem to be implying; there is in the product a 'representation' of the feeling or emotion expressed.

If we look at meaning-making, then I would suggest that any given image, through its mere participation in thought (whether of the artist or the viewer), becomes a 'representational image'. There's an aspect of this that can be found in Peirce's rather difficult letters to Lady Victoria Welby.

...but I've probably started to veer again towards a generalised discussion, rather than tarot-focussed.

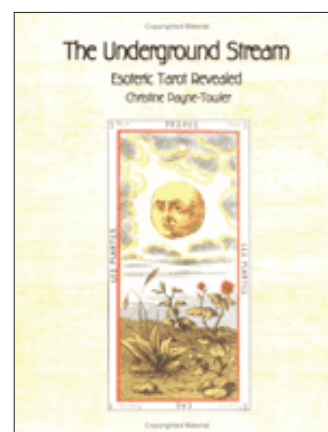
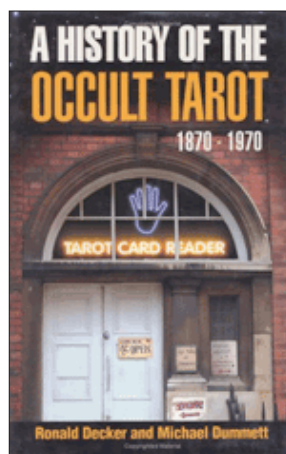
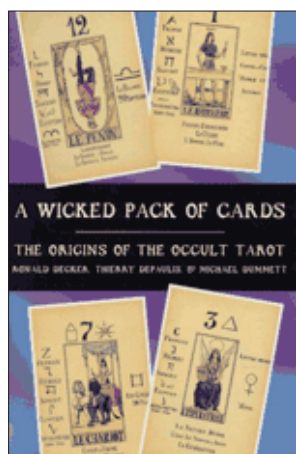
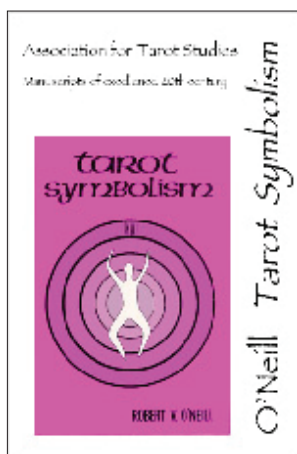
E.E: I think there is something I find important, even sobering, about neuroscience, and it is the fact that it give us tools to tackle the dynamic of perception and meaning-making. Obviously, by focusing on perception alone one may be reducing a whole range of spiritual experiences into mere chemistry, but still, I think it is important to acknowledge how is that we are all equipped to construct, or detect, meaning in the world. It is important to acknowledge how naturally predisposed we are to 'trick ourselves into meaning'. Perhaps, because underneath our poetical ability to find patterns and make sense of what we see, we find a survival mechanism that renders meaning-making way more fundamental than we usually think it is. I think I will always privilege any set of tools that will allow me to own my fictions, instead of me being owned by them, without ever losing sight of the importance of such fictions.

Within that context, I recall an interview given by poet Louise Gluck, where she was talking about a certain poem of hers. In the poem, she had mapped a metaphor from a pile of snow over a table into a ceramic bowl. In the poem, the pile of snow, resembling an upside-down bowl, had fallen on the ground, breaking into pieces. In the interview, she said that a broken bowl never ceases to be a bowl, it just transcends its original purpose. A broken object is free from its original intention and it now can become anything else. This expansive gesture lies at the basis of all our contemporary art. But by now you may be suspecting where am I going with this: in the tarot, we have this trump-taking game that evolved into a divination device, like Gluck's broken bowl, the tarot went beyond its original purpose to become something else. This is not an unlikely happenstance since, after all, both gaming and divination are ruled by chance. The suggestion implicit in a tarot reading is the same suggestion that is implicit in a card game: the cards you get define your fate. Even so, some people have problems with this. They prefer a story where the tarot's original purpose included divination. You have been in the tarot's 'scene' for quite a while. As a matter of fact you have been one of the oldest proponents of the importance of focusing on historical decks. You have told me before how you have seen changes in the way people deal with the Marseilles tarot. More people seem to be interested in those decks now than 20 years ago. The Marseilles tradition seems to be gaining terrain in the english speaking world. But what has happened to the tarot's origins? Do you perceive any evolution in the way people deals, relates, or accepts the tarot's history?

JMD: Hmmmm.... whether in the English speaking world or elsewhere, people that have had a deeper interest in tarot have generally also had an interest in its history. So for example, even if we go back 100 to 150 years, we have the likes, within the Golden Dawn, of not only Waite, but before him amongst the founders of the GD Mathers and Wescott, and after him people like Crowley, all referencing and seeking to have an appreciation for tarot's history. Where it has been a little more difficult for many people during most of the 20th century is that much of tarot's history was, until recently, mainly written in either French or German, and most early documents are in Latin, Italian, French or German – or even dialects of these! Unlike the times of Waite or Mathers, in which part and parcel of education included learning French, Latin and Greek – which meant that these people could access books in those languages – most of us living in English speaking nations during the 20th century do not tend to be bi- or tri-lingual by general education (though many are by 'choiced' education or by ancestral connections).

The other aspect is that tarot, despite its late 19th century inclusion by the GD, was really something 'new' to the English speaking world from roughly the 1960s. Even then, it was nearly impossible to obtain a deck. And here is where some credit is due to Stuart Kaplan: if it wasn't for his business activities, tarot may not have gained the prominence it has. Of course the deck also had to be supplemented by interpretation aides. First there was Eden Gray's book that influenced the 'hippy' generation. But it wasn't really until the 1980s, with the neo-pagan revival – which can itself be viewed as a metamorphosis of the hippy movement – that tarot became rather popular. Of course by then, the deck that gained dominance was the one for which a handbook was easily available: and this was the Waite-Smith deck.

At the very same time, or just before, in 1978, the first volume of Kaplan's *Encyclopedia* came out. So here was an opportunity for an appreciation of both the variety of decks and a little of its history. Even if Dummett's *Game of Tarot* did not become popular, here was another really important work that came out at around the same time. And not long after that, in the mid 80s, was O'Neill's *Tarot Symbolism*. So already, contemporaneously with tarot's increased popularity were a number of admittedly difficult to find but important books. Then with the advent of the internet and at first bulletin boards (especially TarotL) and forums (especially Aeclectic), it became far easier for the content of those books, especially the more historically oriented ones, to be disseminated and the all too numerous faulty stories floating around to be seriously exposed or at least questioned. Again, it's not so much that many had access to the original material, but rather that these books, and those that later followed, especially by again Dummett and Co's with their two historical books (*Wicked Pack* and *History of Occult Tarot*) as well as, for example, Christine Payne-Towler's *Underground Stream*, that most tarot enthusiasts were inevitably exposed to their research and ideas.



That I may have had a part in this dissemination is more a reflection of my interest in pursuing an understanding of tarot's imagery *grounded* on what is actually presented.

In terms of tarot history, fortunes have now rather changed from generations past: most of the important historical works are now in English... and I have already mentioned them. This inevitably makes the English-speaking world more open to tarot's historical dimension. What emerges from this is that even if an author appears to be more interested in tarot as psychological tool, as I sense, for example, in Mary Greer's works, she still grounds it in historical research and, in her case with regards the Waite-Smith court cards or the founding women in the GD, furthers original research.

But let me get back, then, to this concept of 'grounding' with regards to tarot's imagery, and from this also address two important points you make with the example of Louise Gluck's poetry and tarot history's central importance.

This goes back also to some things I've said and written about before. It's not just a matter of looking at the image as given to us, but also seeking to understand the cultural context in which it emerged. Let me give you a brief example coming from both Kabbalistic tradition and Mediæval Biblical exegesis: a fourfold reading of the text. In this, the first is the literal text and this, from my perspective, cannot but include its historical context and setting; the second level is still grounded in the first, or takes it as a given *from* which to emerge, is its allegorical or typological level, in other words, what specifically marks this text or, in our case, image, and how does it meaningfully relate to other texts or parts of the text or image. In many ways, this is often the level at which readers wish to remain, but without grounding it by prior study on its more literal foundation. The third level is its tropological-moral dimension, basically seeking to ascertain how the current narrative assists one in meeting and engaging with the world as it meets us; Whilst the fourth level seeks to ascertain its anagogical or 'secret' level – how does the reader transcend or ascend to its mystical intent, or how is he or she liberated by the insights brought to bear on the situation at hand.

So like Louise Gluck's snow pile that resembles a bowl that fragments and is thus liberated from its original form, there is first a need to understand what this original form is and its historical or socio-cultural context. After all, even calling it a 'bowl', rather than, for example, a spittoon or potty, says something of the 'intent' that *grounds* the poem. Similarly in tarot: it's the grounding of the image within its historical setting that provides a depth going far beyond even the artist's knowledge or intent.

E.E: now, I would like to ask you an unfair question. Why do you think the tarot is so attractive to people?
Where does its appeal resides?

JMD: I don't think we can go past how popularity breeds popularity as one of the ingredients. However, to remain in a long-term popular category, the item in question must have very special qualities of complexity, economy of design, intrigue, and relative ease of use. Not many things fit this criteria: chess and books fit, but not much else. Of books, its content will be of primary importance, and similarly with cards. Most decks do not have the inner tension that manifests with tarot's trumps, for example.

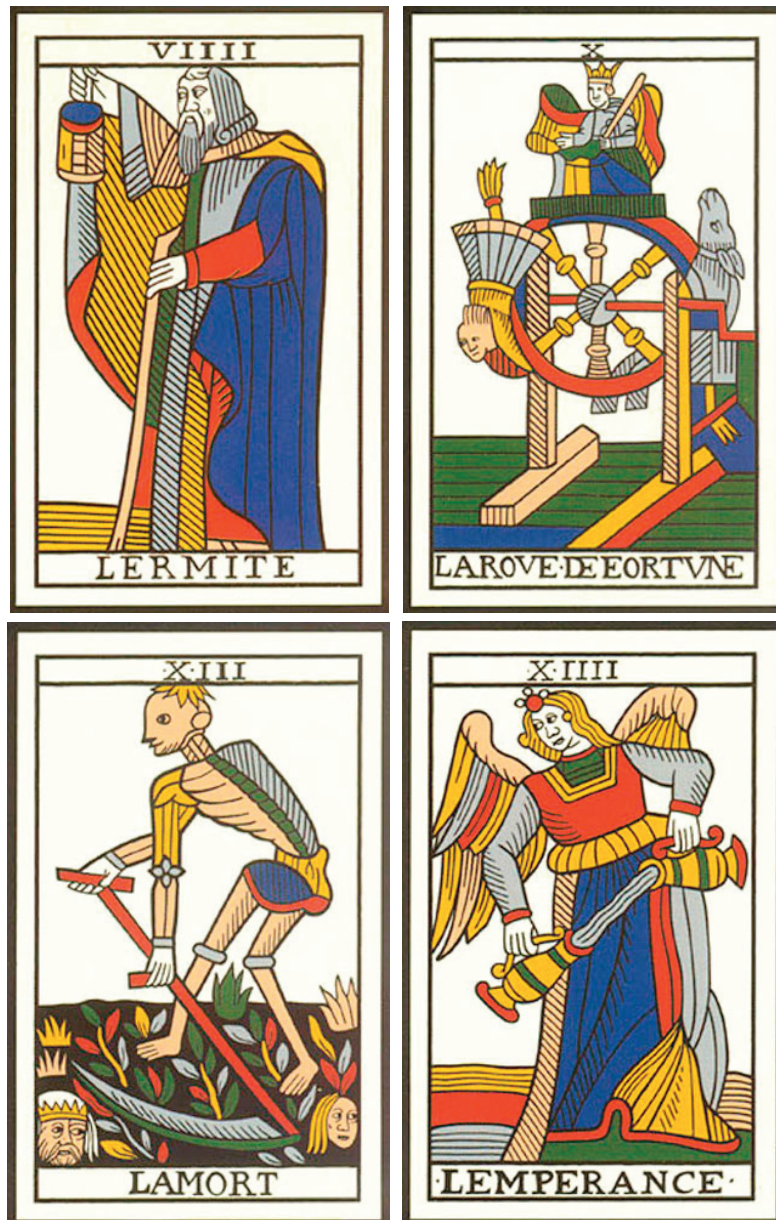
Unlike chess, however, tarot has something that is quite profound, and this is where its appeal, I would suggest, in part resides: its imagery encapsulates thousands of years of western philosophical striving expressed in archetypal western imagery. Even if this is not consciously held by the viewer, it reflects what permeates western culture.

Or at least, there's my brief answer to your errrr..... unfair question...

E.E: "Inner tension". I like that notion. How would you define the tarot's inner tension?

JMD: There are a number of ways in which I see this manifest in tarot. Given that I've mentioned a fourfold exegesis, let me also take the opportunity to try and answer this question in that manner.

On a literal level, the sequence of images does not appear to give us a nice and easy continuous, coherent and complete narrative. For example, even if the fourth cardinal virtue of Wisdom is 'assigned' to one or another card, it is, from a literal perspective, missing. Also, in terms of looking for sets that are self explanatory, and again considering the cardinal virtues, they are scattered through the sequence rather than held in a nice and easy sub-group. There appears no rhyme or reason why, for example, the Wheel of Fortune follows the Hermit, or why Death precedes Temperance. These are some of the difficulties that especially face the person first coming to tarot, and reflects the deck's apparent incompleteness.



At the allegorical level, the deck as a whole presents itself as a movement within a symphony, each card like a bar with its own internal chords, keys and overtones, which somehow works by drawing from the great traditions. It's as if, to use the metaphor of a symphony again, someone wrote a movement in which each bar calls to mind – at least to the musically saavy – existing important musical works, some from Schubert, some from Mozart, some from Albinoni, etc.. And yet managed to somehow make the whole not sound cacophonous or discordant. In this case, to appreciate the musical piece, one could of course simply sit back and enjoy the experience. To allow its meaning to be enriched with a depth of understanding, however, not only would an appreciation of the source of each bar need to be studied, but also the context and full musical piece each part but echoes. The inner tension here is that the parts and the whole need to be reconciled and enriched beyond the limited presentation taken out of any context.

At the moral level or tropological level, one can begin to reflect on how each part gives us insights into not only human nature and the world around us, but appropriate and inappropriate reactions and engagements with it. How is *this* (whatever it is) situation presenting itself in this specific context instructed by, for example, reflecting on this particular card. The 'inner tension' here allows not only the 'meaning-making faculties' to be at play, but also applied with a sense of inner freedom and valuing of the human engagement or activity for its own sake – something that, in my view, reflects genuine ethics. Incidentally, an aspect of what I'm trying to present here is what Steiner calls *ethical individualism* in his *Philosophy of Freedom* - with the 'individualism' referring to an appreciation of the specifics of the individual situation at hand. In order to sense into the situation-at-hand, there is inevitably inner tension as insights begin to slowly emerge.

At the anagogical level, tarot's inner tension manifest from two orientations: the horizontal and the vertical. On the *horizontal* axis, there is what I'll closely paraphrase from Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* – though there he speaks not of imagery, but of poetry: 'the image is not an echo of the past; on the contrary, through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away; because of its novelty and its action, the image has an entity and a dynamism of its own'. Here we see also the importance of seeking to appreciate tarot's history as well as each image's pre-history as, in part, a need to understand what the 'echoes' are. On the *vertical* axis, not only each image, but also the whole, can be seen as an archetypal pattern that takes form anew in each instantiation of a genuine tarot deck. This is a little like Goethe's description of the archetypal plant that manifests or unfurls out of a constant impulse – this sense of 'archetype' is somewhat different from the way in which it has come to be used in modern Jungian-type psychology, but rather harkens back to Plato's concept of eternal forms. At this level, the artist does not seek to understand how or why an image is placed therein, but rather leaves himself or herself open to the work manifesting through them. It is in part out of consideration of this aspect that I do not think that it is necessary for very early tarot to 'need' to have been 'understood' or be viewed as 'coherent' by their artists.

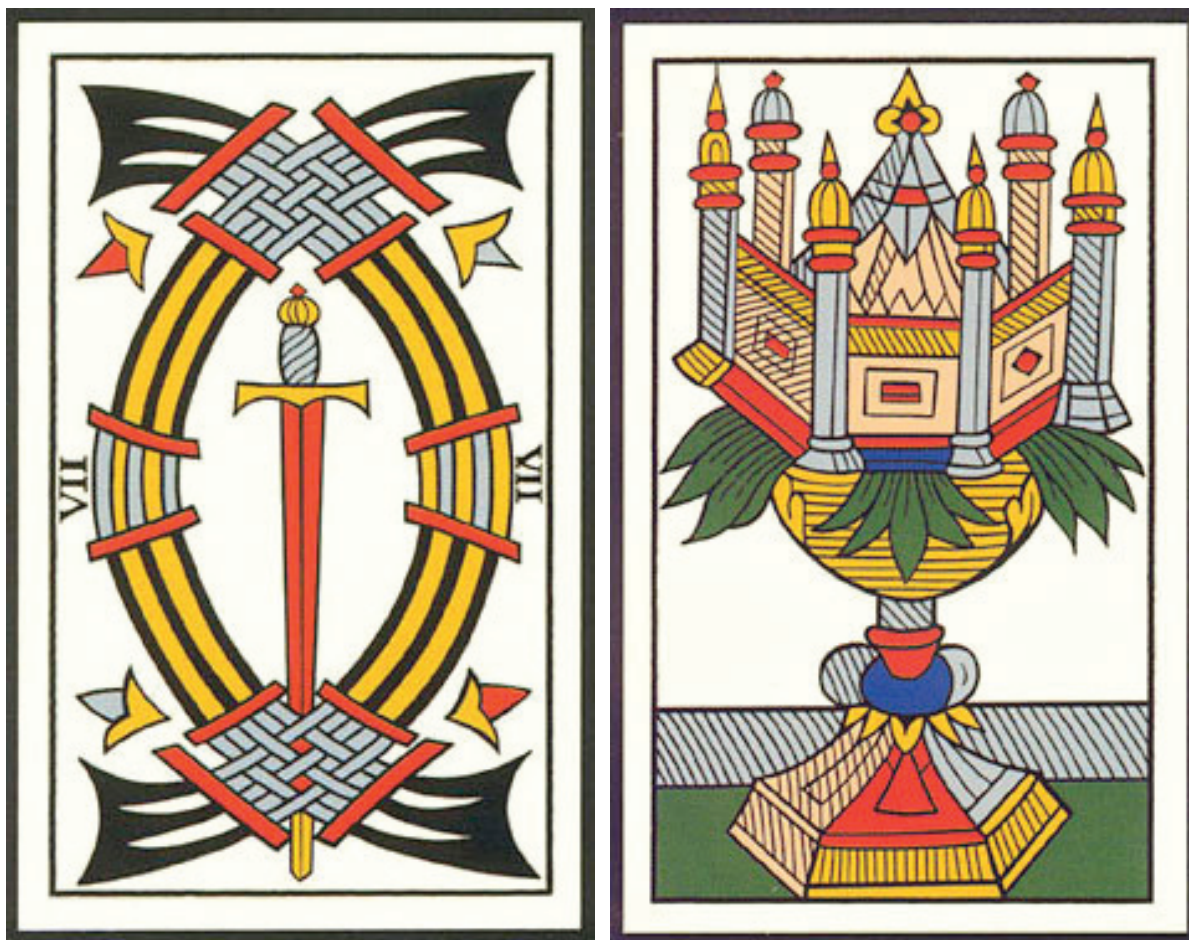
E.E: I tend to find that fourfold exegesis very useful when it comes to tackle the tarot images, but somehow I feel that your answer was addressing the trumps alone. Am I right? In other words, I would like to know what role you assign to the pips. This is a tricky topic, I think, since it may seem that, when it comes to earlier decks, it is the graphic simplicity of the pips what turns most people off. I have seen the importance of the pips addressed by people like Paul Marteau, or in current times, by Alejandro Jodorowsky; but when it practice, those authors tend to disregard the pips. Other authors, like Jean-Claude Flornoy, would openly dismiss the pips. Obviously I am only talking of authors within the Marseilles tradition, but I would love to know your thoughts on the pips.

JMD: I personally don't dismiss the pips, and I consider that a fourfold exegesis can actually deepen an understanding of these as well – and not just for the pips, but the court cards as well. Yet I also acknowl-

edge that the pip and court cards have both a different 'quality' as well as a different history to them. But see, even here I'm beginning with that first of the fourfold division: I talk, right from the word go, of a different, and in many ways far simpler, *history!*

There's two aspects to this different history: in the first place, it's clear that the four suits – sometimes referred to as 'colours' – arise either directly or with only minor indirectness from the Mamluk decks of centuries earlier. Therein we have batons (or perhaps what some have considered to be polo sticks), cups, coins, and scimitars. In the second, we need to consider the implements depicted themselves. After all, the scimitar or sword isn't a two centimetre obsidian scalpel.

Looking at the four implements used in the suits, we can again begin to appreciate what they first 'literally' represent by first investigating and reflecting the purpose to which these were put or used, and *who* or what class of people had access or control of the same. For example, unlike Roman times, by late mediæval European times, swords were solely the province of the nobility. As another example, cups, as depicted, are not those used for everyday drinking, but rather Church chalices – and the Ace of the series certainly accentuates this even more. So again here we begin to gain a deeper *grounding* in the implement's 'literal' meaning grounded in its historical context. A related aspect that is often overlooked is whether cards depicting a single straight sword amidst curved ones – and I am here of course talking of those decks that are similar to the TdMs – are to be considered upright when the sword's point is downwards or upwards: on this, being no longer in a society in which swords are common nor commonly depicted, a diminished sense of convention has set in... along with the implied meaning.



Another *historical* consideration that can illuminate the pips is whether or not a greater number is superior or inferior to a lesser number. For example, there are early rule books of card games that clearly show that some suits increase in power with number, others diminish their power with number – does a card with two cups win or lose against one with three? what of two and three batons? This very step in understanding also brings to reflection considerations that have to do with number.

So here we can now begin to take the next interpretative step, the allegorical-typological level, grounded within an augmented literal-historical understanding: each of the suits relates to classes of people – these classes, by the way, goes at least as far back as Zoroastrianism as they are mentioned in the *Pahlavi Dinkard* – ‘priesthood, warriorship, husbandry, and artisanship’. It becomes quite clear, in this context, that swords marks what may be considered the political-judicial sphere; cups marks not only religion but also education and much of the arts; batons marks farming and husbandry; and coins marks not only artisanship, but its modern various manufacturing equivalents.

When considering the number of implements depicted, considerations as to whether or not an increase of visual implements shows a dissipation of focussed ‘energy’, an increase in strength, or something else entirely, also becomes possible. For example, in considering eight rather than three cups, something of the notion of the tinctures of homeopathy may provide a sense as to alternatives to what is all too often considered as ‘more’.

I’ll leave the other two levels of interpretation for now, but I think we can begin to see how the topological-moral will instruct the specific context, itself arising out of the previous level of understanding and, similarly, the analogical level will allow for a transcendence given the context and depth previously achieved.

What this shows, it seems to me, is that seeking to understand the suits by reading them solely as though they were four elements, with these further viewed as thinking or intellect, emotion and feelings, sexual urges or will, and states or factual situations, tends to place eye-wear on the viewer that partially blinds one to looking at what’s actually depicted.

So allow me to briefly put all this against Marteau, Flornoy and Jodorowsky – acknowledging that I shall be doing justice to none given the brevity in which I’ll caricature their respective views: Marteau wants to give too much credence to colour, despite the fact that this is amongst the most variant detail across decks; Flornoy, as you mentioned, tends to not place much importance on the pips, probably in part due to his focus on word-play – an important consideration, but perhaps diminishing the centrality of the implement as implement; and Jodorowsky tends to want to reduce the pips to somehow reflect what the trumps are saying by trump-numbering–to–number-of-implements type correlation. Of course, each of these authors say many other things, and do not want in any way to diminish their respective important contributions and insights!

E.E: I see you and I have both a similar take on the pips. I also start at the literal level, by acknowledging the way in which these objects are commonly used: two objects function as extensions of the arm, keeping others at a distance. These are of course Swords and Wands. The others two objects are held inside the hand, suggesting the need for closeness. Those are Coins and Cups. In others words, each object can be placed within a certain kind of relationship, and the presence of these cards place the characters we see in the trumps within a certain kind of relationship as well. Any object crafted by

men is metonymy of a person's presence. Any one of those elements in the cards will therefore stand for a person. From there, we can map analogies between groups of objects and groups of people, and have each card showing a scene, or telling a story. This way, you can look at the Three of Cups and see a couple being interrupted by the arrival of a third party, or you can look at the Ten of Swords and see a battle winding down, perhaps by the exhaustion of the armies. I find pips very useful to anchor the trumps, almost like consonants that, by opposing some resistance to the more primary, vowel-like, sound of the trumps, can help us 'pronounce' them. The literal level, in my view, is consistent with the level of our experience: how do we experience these objects in the world. We also have an experiential understanding of numbers that starts with us using out ten fingers to count, and manifest in both a comprehension of time and space: things move forward, things go backwards, things move slowly or suddenly. The only thing I would add to your approach is the increase, or decrease of numbers can be interpreted as positive or negative depending on the context in which we are looking these images. That third cup could be the unwanted presence of a secret lover, or a welcomed guest. The reason why we look at the cards, this is, the questions we are asking ourselves, redefines the meaning of what we are seeing.

But I have to admit that I don't always use the pips. There is a point when, if I haven't seen them for a while, using them again feels great. But the same thing happens with the trumps after using the pips for a while. When you take only the trumps you feel as if the tarot went on steroids. The messages are so sharp and powerful! I guess it has to do with the need we have to look at things again, the need we have to refresh our glances by encountering things anew. So, sometimes I hide the pips for a while, to really look at them when I take them out again; just as working with the full deck equals hiding the trumps, burying them in a garden of pips.

Now, you have put together what I consider the most comprehensive course on the Marseilles tarot. What was in your mind while you were designing it? What would you say is the main point you wanted to come across, or the most important thing a person wanting to learn the tarot must know?



JMD: Thanks Enrique – relooking through the course materials I can see so much more I would like to say, but at the same time adding those things would somewhat muddy the focus. I had been asked by various people for some years to write a course that could be taken online. To be quite frank, however, I'm not sure exactly what was on my mind as I was designing or writing the course: like a reading, I allowed myself to be guided by its own unfolding. The main point that emerged, however, is probably clearer than I anticipated, and it is this: *look* at the image presented; study it in all its aspects; reflect upon it; allow its own multifaceted richness to guide insight and meaning.

In many ways, you have shown an aspect of this with your example of three cups – the third can be allowed to speak in a multifaceted way: as welcome or as detrimental; as literal or as metaphorical; as meaning-enriched or as depraved. Here is also where metonymy, since you mention it, becomes also a liberating force for the imaginative faculty to allow for meaning-making. It's as if, allowing ourselves to so be, poetic creativity is permitted to instruct deeper meaning... but here I'm going far beyond the course as it stands, though elements of this are also mentioned therein.

As to the most important thing a person wanting to learn tarot must know... so many of the things we've already covered, but also a deck's structure and its canon, without which what is produced may be wonderfully pretty and useful, but *tarot* it ain't.

E.E: In your view, when does a deck stops being tarot?

I understand that nowadays 'tarot' is basically an umbrella brand for all sort of decks that may, or may not have 78 cards, may, or may not have, 22 majors and 56 minors; decks which draw their imagery and inspiration from anywhere: elves, cowboys, cats, Marilyn Monroe, Marc Chagall, vitamins or vampires. What is your opinion of all that?

JMD: I might begin, in attempting to justify my answer to that, by getting back to your example of the crown taken as metonymic, and consider – again – the Maison Dieu card, which, as I have already mentioned, historically very likely derives or depicts part of the infancy gospel story of the flight to Egypt. Atop the tower is a stylised crown which, read metonymically, can be seen as representing a whole realm: so here the 'crown', also representative of the whole people, tumbles, and the building or the state is shattered. Modern recent historical, though only partial, equivalents may include an image of Hiroshima or Nagasaki or even the signing of surrender, though these also differ in much of that which the infancy gospel speaks. Another metonymic reading of the same card image is in its kabbalistic sense, where the Crown – Keter – here is read as representative of the whole Tree, being shattered by not being able to contain the Divine Light, causing the shattered vessels to bring or to allow evil into the world.

Now, if a person was to reflect in a manner in which I just have, and then produce a deck imaging these reflections, I would personally consider the deck as not quite tarot, but nonetheless inspired by it. The deck, to my view, would *maintain its 'tarot-ness' to the extent that it can be explained against a 'rigidly designated' tarot deck* – to use Kripke's concept, which, having now used this term, I'll also have to explain a little later!

Conversely, there are decks that more or less re-present an existing image by artistic means: whether, in the extreme and obvious case, as Dali has done by collage; or, really, by any means that *begins* by seeking to somehow visually mimic an approximation of the image. Again, for myself at any rate, these are only tarot to the extent that each deck can be 'explained' by reference and comparison to a canon that has been

‘rigidly designated.’

Kripke introduced this concept of ‘rigid designation’ in the philosophical literature in, if I recall, the mid-1970s in a small book entitled *Naming and Necessity*. In a nutshell, he gives the example of two possible worlds in which everything is the same save that what is here water is there another substance (but nonetheless called by the same name in both worlds). It is only by *pointing* or *designating* what we call ‘water’ that some kind of ‘fixity of designation’ clarifies what is or is not water. So with tarot – and indeed in many other areas – there can be real value in striving to point to something that is clearly tarot and seeing how other decks fare.

I suppose that in my own early investigation into tarot, that was one thing that I strove to do. Different people were pointing to different decks and saying ‘this is tarot’. When looking at all that, one thing was clear: whether as gaming decks or more esoterically oriented ones, they all pointed to the TdM as a foundation or a core. In many instances, they pointed to a TdM type-II – well exemplified by the Marseille-based Conver of 1760. It isn’t, of course, that the TdM is the first deck – far from it. And there are the various Visconti-type decks, as well as the Minchiate, the Sola Busca, the Mantegna – to name a few quite radically different styles of very early decks. The question can be asked of each of *those* whether they are ‘tarot’.

This is where it of course gets quite interesting and also somewhat controversial. The Sola Busca, in many ways, stands a little like the gaming tarot of post-Revolutionary France: clearly connected but allowed, within simply a base structure, to differ in significant ways to tarot. The Minchiate is clearly a deck that, taking tarot as its base, seeks to augment it to ‘complete’ its trumps with images of the zodiac, of the ‘missing’ virtues, etc.. And the Mantegna seems to be related only to the extent that there are overlaps and similarities between its fifty images and the trumps.

The reason I mentioned these early decks is in large part to show that variety and various influence occurs in decks right from earliest of days.

With the Visconti decks, we are faced with another ‘problem’. They may indeed be the very first tarot-like decks. I would, however, consider those *proto*-tarot: even assuming that they consisted of four base suits and 22 trumps – the latter of which is far from clear – their image content appears too personally related to the Visconti and the Sforza families for these being considered a generic deck.

So personally, and given the apparent sourcing of tarot imagery, the TdM-type *I* (on which the type *II* is based), especially exemplified in its Noblet version, seems like a deck to which we can point and say: ‘*THIS is a tarot deck*’. And from this deck trace deviations across space and time right down to our contemporary decks seeking their rank as ‘tarot’. Could there be another more likely candidate for this central exemplar? Absolutely! I personally suspect, as of course others have too, that the deck from which the World card found in the well of a Sforza castle, possibly dating from the late 15th or early 16th century, would best deserve that nomenclature.

This of course raises problems, for if we talk of a ‘rigid designator’, then we can’t at the same time allow shifts and changes to the *designated* or ‘pointed-to’ deck. The difficulty here lies in that from a variety of decks we know what the canons more or less are, yet the clear deck of what ‘ought’ to be considered as exemplar eludes us, perhaps forever destroyed.

So, to return to your question, decks that take as their base either a tarot or a tarot derivative and allow images to be slotted reflecting, for example, Marilyn Monroe’s life, are just that: allowing the artist



to wear tarot-frames with, in this example, Marilyn's-life-coloured lenses. Is it *tarot*? no, but it certainly would not be able to be accurately described without reference to tarot!

E.E: Most of what passes for tarot today seems to come from draftsmen operating under the same frame as those architects who specialize on renovating apartments: people who feel entitled to 'improve' something they couldn't actually create in the first place. In a way, that lack of consistency seems the aesthetic parallel to the conceptual blandness of the whole New Age movement. There is a lack of standard in everything that is 'New Age' that seems to come from a marketing need: if you give yourself enough wiggle room you can package and repackage any set of ideas in several different ways, to sell. A market that will sell you Mayan prophecies only after it ran out of Native American myths, or more precisely, a market that will package the same tales as Egyptian, Native American or Mayan to keep the buyers hooked, is simply eroding any chance of respectability in front of the society at large.

Here in the States there is something called 'Poet Laureate', which is basically a poet appointed by the Library of Congress as the nation's official poet. Some of these poet laureate simply assume the job as any other academic gig, but some of them have done a significant job at promoting poetry's presence in people's life. I am one of those who thinks that poetry is some sort of essential craft anybody must learn early at school, since it provides the most fundamental approach to understanding forms and metaphors as engines for thought. I guess that is why it is fascinating for me to think on the possibilities that such official position may bring, both to poetry and to the country itself. Poet Marilyn Hacker said that, often, people read poets who share their own concerns, because they want to see how these poets are able to impose some order, "at least verbal, musical order" in those preoccupations. Poet Louise Gluck, who I already mentioned before, also wrote: "the dream of art is not to assert what is already know but to illuminate what has been hidden, and the path to the hidden world is not inscribed by will". I see the tarot as a form of poetry. I see it consistent, both with Hacker's idea of being approached by those who hope to impose some order in the rhythm of their concerns, and with Gluck's hint at how Chance often feeds our hunger for meaning by uncover unexpected things. The tarot's poetry is the poetry of Chance. But it is clear that this is not the kind of discussion fostered by the tarot's market, and therefore, it is not the image the mainstream has of the tarot. If we take, for example, those books you mentioned above as fundamental for an understanding of the tarot's history, we see that they are out of print because they weren't popular. They don't tell the tale people wants to read. It is a sad fact that Dummet's research, for example, doesn't stand a chance -marketing wise- before a book proposing the trump series as an ancient system designed to measure the size of unicorn horns. I would like to end this fascinating conversation with another unfair question: What do you think needs to happen within the tarot world so one day we can have a 'Tarot Laureate' too?

JMD: Louise Gluck's description, paraphrased, as bringing to light what has been unintentionally hidden, is something that certainly is one important aspect of art. Poetry also allows an encapsulation of an insight brought, as so often happens, in non-literal ways – so figures of speech such as metonymy, or synecdoche or metaphor or even allegory are all important tools that really allow for an ease of waking to polysemic value: in other words, these things can help us to consider that with-which-we-are-faced to be seen from a variety of perspectives. I do consider that imagery – especially imagery that in the first instance seeks to depict not a local landscape, but rather an allegory or a symbolic office, has similar abilities to that of poetry to wake us to a wide range of insights.

I've got to here be also a little careful as to what I say of poetry – I share an office with a poet [Shane Kendal] whose dissertation was on Blake and who shares with me an interest in tarot. The difference between a 'Poet Laureate' (as I understand the position in the USA) and a potential 'Tarot Laureate' is

that the former is not restricted to certain forms of poetry, whether in structural form nor in content. Perhaps a 'Tarot Laureate' would be the equivalent of an 'Iliad' or an 'Odyssey Laureate': wonderful to have, but also very focussed. What perhaps would be wonderful is if an 'artist in residence' (or 'artist laureate') included the possibility of someone, such as J-C. Flornoy, whose focus happened to be tarot.

Now, with the learning of poetry at school... I agree, but we need to be careful to not kill the very artistry, for it is a *playful* yet rigorous art... and perhaps I shall leave that aspect at that before I head too far into my professional life, which is in education.

In describing the renovation of apartments, I suspect you've also well captured something of the misgiving many of us have with many decks that seem to just package the latest trend into a packet of 78 cards. The *Lord of the Rings* 'tarot' is one of the worst amongst those. Yet, I can also see the real artistry in having a true architect craftsman re-design an existing apartment: to bring it to new light in all its glory. In cases of both the tarot and a renovated apartment, what needs to occur is for the touches of the renovator to allow for the user to discover what the apartment or tarot actually offers, rather than impose his or her (ie, the renovator's) own views. It's especially obvious in a small apartment or house in which the architect has pre-determined where everything is to go, and the design forces one particular way of living. This is the analogy, from my perspective, with all too many modern decks that do something of the type – and which your example brings to light.

E.E: I feel there is something I need to add now that we are comparing tarot to poetry. I believe anybody can study poetry, read poetry, and enjoy poetry, just as anybody can look at the tarot and enjoy the tarot, but something that we see hammered once and again within the tarot world is this idea of how learning the tarot, or reading the tarot, has to be made easy. If we were to apply such idea to poetry, this is, the idea of how writing poetry should be made easy, we will see how absurd it is. No one should expect to be proficient as a poet, or respected as a poet, by using rhymezone.com. Lots of times I feel people who want to learn how to read the tarot is hoping for a formula to make that poetic leap that one has eventually to make if one wants to find living meaning in the cards. I would submit that reading the cards requires a certain talent that is no different from the talent required to write poetry, to paint, to craft stories or to design objects. I do believe the tarot has the unique quality of being visual, and therefore, able to 'speak' to anybody who uses her eyes to listen, just as a painting or drawing will speak to whomever is willing to engage with it. But not everybody can, nor should, read the tarot for others. What are your views on this? What are the attributes a person needs to become a tarot reader?

JMD: Here we come to one of those issues that can have quite unexpected ramifications if we're not careful... I'll try and explain what I mean in a short while.

Firstly, let's pursue this analogy between reading tarot and poetry for a while: even a great poet has not, I would suggest, the muse at his or her beckoning. Of course, however, the more experience the poet has, the more there is from which to draw and, if somehow called upon to provide a literary piece 'on the spot', will generally be able to access this wealth of resources should the voice of the muse remain silent.

I've always very much liked your synesthetic metaphor: the reader as keenly listening with their eyes. It also very much reminds me of the stage in *Lectio Divina* where the reader-mediator 'listens within the chambers of one's heart'. Here is where text, image, sound, and even smell not so much blend, but rather reveal that which until then was sealed and concealed. The reader has to be open to this unfolding nar-

rative, awake to dream-like realities and subtleties of the developing gifts.

So here I am placing a very high demand on the reader – a demand that, as for the poet-in-the-act-of-poetry-making, the reader is aware of the sacred trust placed in her or him. At the same time it's often to the reader who remains open to its voice yet who inwardly lacks the *resolute* confidence that the muse *will* speak.

So I agree with your comment, Enrique, that reading the cards requires particular talent that is also developed with practice as well as careful study and reflection. We very likely would agree that we wouldn't want anybody to work on a public painting; nor would we read a very poorly written story. This, however, does not prevent the encouragement that each can be given to painting, or crafting stories. It may be that he or she develops to become both inspired by their muse as well as sufficiently developed in their skill to be able to present the insights in a most wonderful of ways.

In that sense, there is 'reading for others' and 'reading for others' – in the same way that there is painting and there is painting, and the latter arises with a development of the former. In the art of reading, speaking with the ears of the open-eyed heart – if you allow a mild expansion of your wonderful expression – is something that can only occur with situations that allow its expression.

...Now who was it, Horace, who wrote *Ut pictura poesis!*? In some ways, the reader is allowing these to be combined: to the given tarot imagery a poetry unfurls in order for the listener to enter the spoken narrative and make meaning out of its newly worded image.

Where the risk lies, in seeking to ensure or guarantee readings, is something akin to the disastrous Stalinist view of art: poetry, not less than the visual art, was bureaucratically state controlled. Those that seek for reader certification are not only basically doing the same, but also totally dismissing and not recognising the poetic in reading tarot.

Perhaps here, again, the analogy with poetry is best: not everybody should read their poetry to others, but neither should they be prevented from so doing.

So what are the attributes I personally look for in a reader? An inner trust they have in their narrative; ideally an ongoing engagement in tarot studies; a lack of rigid dogma; an appreciation for the details their eyes detect in the moment of reading; a rich inner life.

E.E: Perhaps it would be important for me to make a precision here. I agree in that everybody who wants to write, or paint, or read the tarot should pursue that urge. What I don't believe is that such a person should expect this pursuit to be easy. There are no shortcuts to any form of artistic production. Every person should be willing to put the work that learning a craft requires. Then of course, if we are talking about reading for others, I am reminded of something poet C.K. Williams said. I am paraphrasing here, but he said that the aim of the writer is to keep human values alive. I can see how one big component of what these tarot images show is that: how to live a beautiful life. But a person has to be very clear about his own motivations to become a tarot reader. Reading for others means spinning other people's tales. Tales that, for them, aren't just tales, but life itself. We may not be able -nor intend!- to change a person's life, but we can certainly affect the way a person talks, and thinks, about his or her own life. Would you mind sharing a little bit what were your personal motivations

to become a reader?

JMD: I entirely agree with what you raise here – and I don't think we can understate the impact that weaving a tale has on others: it alters, in either subtle or not so subtle manner, the way in which the person permits themselves to engage with the world, and thus the narrative can even be a seed, for good or bad, that entirely sets a person to *re-vision* their world.

Now for myself, I rarely do readings for others these days. Apart from any other consideration, between work, other courses I teach, and other engagements, I am occupied every day and all too many evenings. I still regularly demonstrate how a particular spread *may* be read – mainly in the context of a course. I also regularly use the cards in assisting my reflections on various situational issues.

There was, however, a time in which I far more regularly engaged in reading for others. Now what were my personal motivations to become a reader?

It's probably not a clearcut motive, but rather something that emerges as a response to situations – in the case of becoming professionally advertised as reader, the 'situation' includes the autobiographical element: a deepening engagement in working with tarot. Probably the single most important motive is that I strive to engage in an action for its own sake – for the love of it. In terms of reading tarot – which involves entering a particular creative state in the context of engagement with others – the value of the engagement in itself makes it worthwhile.

I'm not sure I've done full justice to your question, but here's an aspect I personally find difficult to answer to the satisfaction of others, probably in part due to various people having quite radically different motivations... so I'll leave it at this for now.

E.E: And finally, what would you like to see happening in the tarot world in the next ten years?

JMD: ...now that's a difficult question!

What I *suspect* will happen in the next ten years is a real uptake of tarot in far eastern nations such as China, with the deck's inevitable re-design as part of its appropriation. So I suspect that we can expect to see a new tarot-based deck with imagery and concepts taken from the vast literary and cultural impulse from the region. In the west and in the Americas, I suspect a greater appreciation for Marseille-styled decks, as well as also a definite push towards imposing a more formal psychological or psychotherapeutic reading of spreads. In general, there also already appears to be a move away from tarot's printed format to, in some cases, solely electronic versions. I cannot but see this trend continue – which may also be a blessing in disguise for canonical decks, which inevitably will also remain in print.

What I would *like* to see happen is a different question:

Firstly, in terms of availability of *tarot decks*, I'd like to see Flornoy work with people like Karen Mahony and Alex Ukolov (of Prague) as well as Osvaldo Menegazzi (Italy) on a new deck that captures tarot's essential characteristics – that allows the '*Ūr-tarot*' as purely as possible to be expressed. The deck

would have to take as its material basis the Noblet, Dodal, Bolognese, and that single World card from the Sforza castle well, and as its non-material basis the research and insights that have already been presented in various places, including, I would hope, my own work. And then for that deck to also be worked into an electronic format with the skills of someone like Kat Black.

This concept of 'Ür-tarot', by the way, is something I started talking about some twelve or thirteen years ago and has at times been rather mis-understood (and mis-represented): though it's from the German, it does not refer to what 'ür-' often means in popular language, but rather stems from Goethe's usage in his *Metamorphosis of Plants* - the *Ürplanz* is there more like the unmanifest spiritual archetype that provides the impetus and blueprint for manifestation and incarnation. The *Ür-tarot*, in this sense, will forever take on shades and aspects of the ground out of which it manifests, but one can see, with study, approximately how it would look with the attrition of non-essential characteristics.

Secondly, in terms of *tarot books*, I'd like to see something that extends or reconfigures my own book - basically the course to which you referred, now also in bookform - and combines the likes of Dummett and Co's research with those of Andrea Vitali and Ross Caldwell, edited with Sophie Nusslé's and Robert Mealing's touches.

Thirdly, *online*, it would be fantastic to have the resources of *Tarotpedia*, Andy's Playing Cards and of Trionfi merged (without those horrid frames the latter still currently uses!), presented in a form somewhere between wiki-based and dupral-based content management.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I'd like to continue to see the growth of opportunities for *discussion* about tarot and studies of tarot in the wider community, amongst specialists and enthusiasts, and in formal educational settings.

Can these things be achieved within the next ten years? I very much think it can, though the specific details as to the 'who' and 'how' remain to be seen!

E.E: One final question: a man is walking on the street and finds a card on the sidewalk. He stops, picks the card, turns it around... which card is it?

JMD: Wonderful to have had this opportunity to have this discussion with you, Enrique.

Now, with regards to your question... I'll finish off where I started, with another experienced event, walking, this time, in the *South* of France: the Page of