

JUNG and TAROT

An Archetypal Journey



Sallie Nichols
with an introduction by Laurens van der Post

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Introduction

One of the main sources of misunderstanding of the nature and magnitude of Jung's contribution to the life of our time, is due to the assumption as common, alas, among his followers as among others, that his overriding interest was in what he came to call "the collective unconscious" in man. It is true he was the first to discover and explore the collective unconscious and to give it a truly contemporary relevance and meaning. But, ultimately it was not the mystery of this universal unknown in the mind of man but a far greater mystery that obsessed his spirit and compelled all his seeking, and that was the mystery of consciousness, and its relationship with the great unconscious.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he was the first to establish the existence of the greatest and most meaningful of all paradoxes: the unconscious and the conscious exist in a profound state of interdependence of each other and the well-being of one is impossible without the well-being of the other. If ever the connection between these two great states of being is diminished or impaired, man becomes sick and deprived of meaning; if the flow between one and the other is interrupted for long, the human spirit and life on earth are re-plunged in chaos and old night. Consciousness for him is therefore not, as it is for instance for the logical positivists of our day, merely an intellectual and rational state of mind and spirit. It is not something which depends solely on man's capacity for articulation, as some schools of modern philosophy maintain to the point of claiming that that which cannot be articulated verbally and rationally is meaningless and not worthy of expression. On the contrary, he proved empirically that consciousness is not just a rational process and that modern man precisely is sick and deprived of meaning because, for centuries now since the Renaissance, he has increasingly pursued a slanted development on the assumption that consciousness and the powers of reason are one and the same thing. And let anyone who thinks this is an

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exaggeration just consider Descartes' "I think, therefore, I am!" and he ought immediately to identify the European hubris which brought about the French Revolution, fathered a monstrous off-spring in Soviet Russia and is spawning subversion of the creative spirit of man in what were once citadels of living meaning like churches, temples, universities and schools all over the world.

Jung produced evidence from his work among the so-called "insane" and the hundreds of "neurotic" people who came to him for an answer to their problems, that most forms of insanity and mental disorientation were caused by a narrowing of consciousness and that the narrower and more rationally focussed the consciousness of man, the greater the danger of antagonizing the universal forces of the collective unconscious to such a point that they would rise up, as it were, in rebellion and overwhelm the last vestiges of a painfully acquired consciousness in man. No, the answer for him was clear: that it was only by continually working at an increase of consciousness that man found his greatest meaning and realization of his highest values. He established, to put it back into its native paradox, that consciousness is the abiding and deepest dream of the unconscious and that as far back as one could trace the history of the spirit of man to where it vanishes over the last horizon of myth and legend, it has incessantly strived to achieve ever greater and greater consciousness; a consciousness which Jung preferred to call "awareness." This "awareness," for him and for me, included all sorts of non-rational forms of perception and knowing, all the more precious because they are the bridges between the inexhaustible wealth of, as yet, unrealized meaning in the collective unconscious, always ready to carry reinforcements for expanding and strengthening the consciousness of man engaged in an unending campaign against the exactions of life in the here and now.

This, perhaps, is one of his most important contributions to a new and more significant understanding of the nature of consciousness: it could only be renewed and enlarged as life demanded it to be renewed and enlarged, by maintaining its non-rational lines of communication with the collective unconscious. For this reason he rated very highly all non-rational ways along which man in the past has tried to explore the mystery of life and stimulate man's conscious knowledge of the expanding universe around him into new areas of being and knowing. This is the explanation of his interest, for instance, in astrology and this, too, is the explanation of the significance of Tarot.

He recognized at once, as he did in so many other games and primordial attempts at divination of the unseen and the future, that Tarot had its origin and anticipation in profound patterns of the collective unconscious with access to potentials of increased awareness uniquely at the disposal of these patterns. It was another of those non-rational bridges

across the apparent divide between unconscious and consciousness to carry night and day what should be the growing stream of traffic between darkness and light.

Sallie Nichols, in her profound investigation of Tarot, and her illuminated exegesis of its pattern as an authentic attempt at enlargement of the possibilities of human perceptions has in some such form as I have of necessity described in so over-simplified a fashion, performed an immense service for analytical psychology. Her book enriches and helps us to understand the awesome responsibilities laid upon us by consciousness. Moreover she has done something in her book which people who profess to recognize the great work done by Jung, so often fail to do. Jung, as a profoundly intuitive person, was compelled by his demonic vision, not to stay long with any particular aspect of his vision. It needed all that he had of reason and the method of the devout scientist that he was, to give him the will to stay long enough with a particular stage of his work to establish its validity empirically. But once that was done he had, as it were, to strike his intellectual tent and send the caravan of his mind on its way to the next stage of his unending journey. His spirit, inevitably in an age so imperilled as ours (an intuitive soul exhorted him), was a spirit desperately in a hurry. As a result almost everything he accomplished needs enlargement. And Sallie Nichols, in this book, has done Jungian psychology and all those who try to serve it, an immense service by the way in which she has enlarged the story and our understanding of the role of an important non-rational source of consciousness. On top of it all, she has done so not in an arid academic fashion, but as an act of knowing derived from her own experience of Tarot and its strangely translucent lights. As a result her book not only lives but quickens life in whomever it touches.

Laurens van der Post

1. Introduction to the Tarot

The Tarot is a mysterious deck of cards of unknown origin. At least six centuries old, this deck is the direct ancestor of our modern playing cards. Down through the generations, the figures depicted on these cards have enjoyed many incarnations. It is a testimony to the vitality and wisdom of the ancient Tarot that, although it had spawned such an active child as the playing cards we use today, the parent deck itself did not retire. In Central Europe, these quaint Tarot cards have remained in constant use for gambling and fortunetelling. Now, in America, the Tarot has suddenly surfaced into public consciousness. Like the puzzling figures which pop up unexpectedly in our dreams, these Tarot characters seem to cry out for our attention.

Dramatic eruptions of this kind usually mean that neglected aspects of ourselves seek recognition. No doubt, like our dream figures, the Tarot personalities have intruded themselves into our complacency in order to bring us messages of great import; but modern man, steeped as he is in a verbal culture, finds the nonverbal picture language of the Tarot difficult to decipher. In the following chapters we shall explore ways to approach these mysterious figures and catch sparks of understanding.

A journey through the Tarot cards is primarily a journey into our own depths. Whatever we encounter along the way is *au fond* an aspect of our own deepest, and highest, self. For the Tarot cards, originating as they did at a time when the mysterious and irrational had more reality than they do today, bring us an effective bridge to the ancestral wisdom of our innermost selves. And new wisdom is the great need of our time — wisdom to solve our own personal problems and wisdom to find creative answers to the universal questions which confront us all.

Like our modern cards, the Tarot deck has four suits with ten "pip" or numbered cards in each. The four Tarot suits, are called wands, cups, swords, and coins. These have evolved into our present suits of clubs,

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hearts, spades, and diamonds. In the Tarot deck, each suit has four "court" cards: King, Queen, Jack, and Knight. The latter, a dashing young cavalier mounted on a spirited horse, has mysteriously disappeared from today's playing cards. The handsome Knight pictured here (fig. 1) is taken from an Austrian transition deck – meaning a design which falls historically somewhere between the original Tarot cards and our modern deck. As we see, the vitality of this Knight was such that he persisted in the deck after his suit had already changed from coins to diamonds.



Fig. 1 Knight of Diamonds

That this symbol of single-minded purpose, courtliness, and courage should have disappeared from today's playing cards may indicate a lack of these qualities in our present-day psychology. The Knight is important because we shall need his courage and questing spirit if our journey is to be a successful one.

Equally significant, and certainly as mysterious, is the amputation from our modern deck of the Tarot Trumps, which are the cards that will be the landmarks for our journey. These Trumps – sometimes called Atouts – comprise a set of twenty-two picture cards which do not belong to any of the four suits. Each of these cards bears an intriguing name (THE MAGICIAN, THE EMPRESS, THE LOVER, JUSTICE, THE HANGED MAN, THE MOON, and so forth), and the cards are numbered. Arranged in sequence, the Trumps seem to tell a picture story. It will be the focus of this book to examine the twenty-two Trumps in sequence and to puzzle out the story they tell.

Like the alchemical *Mutus Liber* (which incidentally appeared later), the Trumps can be viewed as a silent picture text representing the typical experiences encountered along the age-old path to self-realization. How and why such subject matter found its way into the Tarot, which was and still is essentially a deck of playing cards, is a mystery that has puzzled generations of scholars. Only one vestige of the Trumps remains in our modern playing cards: the Joker. This odd fellow who leads such an elusive life in every pack of cards is a direct descendant of a Tarot Trump called THE FOOL, with whom we shall soon become acquainted.

Theories about the origin of this Fool and his twenty-one companion Trumps are various and fanciful. Some imagine that these cards represent the secret stages of initiation in an esoteric Egyptian cult; others maintain, and this with more historical probability, that the Trumps are of Western European origin. Several reputable scholars, among whom A. E. Waite and Heinrich Zimmer, suggest that the Trumps were concocted by the Albigenses, a gnostic sect which flourished in Provence in the twelfth century. It is felt that they were probably smuggled into the Tarot as a veiled communication of ideas at variance with the established Church. One contemporary writer, Paul Huson, views the Tarot's origin as a mnemonic device used chiefly in necromancy and witchcraft. Another contemporary writer, Gertrude Moakley, pioneered the ingenious theory that the Trumps are of exoteric origin, being simply adaptations of illustrations from a book of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura. This book was called *I Trionfi*, a title which translates both as "The Triumphs" and "The Trumps."

In Petrarch's sonnets a series of allegorical characters each fought and triumphed over the preceding one. This theme, a popular one in Renaissance Italy, was the subject of many paintings of the period. It was also dramatized in pageants in which these allegorical figures, elaborately costumed, paraded around the castle courtyards in decorative chariots accompanied by knights on horseback in full regalia. Such parades, called carousels, are the origin of our modern merry-go-round. On today's carousels, while children play at being brave knights riding handsome steeds, their grandparents can enjoy a more sedate ride in a golden chariot.

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Fig. 2 The Chariot (Sforza Tarot)

Figure 2 shows Tarot number seven, THE CHARIOT, as pictured in a fifteenth century commemorative deck designed and executed by the artist, Bonifacio Bembo, for the Sforza family of Milan. These elegant cards, some of which can be seen in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, are painted and illuminated in brilliant colors on a diapered background of gold over red with touches of silver. It is good to recall that such triumphal cars as the one pictured here are still an important feature of Italian festivals, and that the delightful rocking-horse spirit of its horses remains forever on parade in our modern carousels.

Actually, very little is known about the history of the Tarot cards or about the origin and evolution of the suit designations and the symbolism of the twenty-two Trumps. But the many imaginative hypotheses as to the cards' inception, and the numerous visions and revisions inspired by their pictorial symbology attest to their universal appeal and demonstrate their power to activate the human imagination. For the purposes of our study, it matters little whether the Tarot Trumps sprang from the Albigenses' love of God or Petrarch's passion for Laura. The essence of their importance for us is that a very real and transforming human emotion must have brought them to birth. It seems apparent that these old cards were conceived deep in the guts of human experience, at the most profound level of the human psyche. It is to this level in ourselves that they will speak.

Since it is the aim of this book to use the Tarot as a means of getting in touch with this level of the psyche, we have chosen as the basis for discussion the Marseilles Tarot, one of the oldest designs available today. Playing cards being perishable, the "original" Tarot no longer exists, and the few remnants of old decks still preserved in museums do not correspond exactly with any pack currently in print. Thus no present-day Tarot can be called in any sense authentic. But the Marseilles version, in general, preserves the feeling tone and style of some of the earliest designs.

There are other reasons for choosing the Marseilles deck. First, its design transcends the personal. There is no evidence, for example, that it was created by one individual as are most of our contemporary Tarot decks. And second (again unlike most contemporary Tarot packs), the Marseilles deck comes to us unaccompanied by an explanatory text. Instead it offers us simply a picture story, a song without words, which can haunt us like some old refrain, evoking buried memories.

This is not the case with contemporary Tarot decks, most of which were devised by a known individual or group, and many of which are accompanied by books in which the authors set forth in words the abstruse ideas which they have presumably presented in the picture cards. This is the case, for example, with the cards and texts created by A. E. Waite, Aleister Crowley, "Zain," and Paul Foster Case.

Although the text which accompanies the Tarot in such cases is usually introduced as an elucidation of the symbols portrayed on the cards, the net

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effect is more that of an illustrated book. In other words, it is as if the Tarot cards were devised as illustrations for certain verbal concepts rather than that the cards erupted spontaneously first and the text was inspired by them. As a result, the personalities and objects pictured in these cards seem more allegorical in character than symbolic; the pictures appear to illustrate verbalized concepts rather than suggesting feelings and insights wholly beyond the reach of words.

The difference between a Tarot deck accompanied by a text and the Marseilles deck which stands alone is a subtle one; but it is important in terms of our approach to the Tarot. To our way of thinking, it is the difference between reading an illustrated book and walking into an art gallery. Both are valuable experiences, but they are quite different in their effect. The illustrated book stimulates intellect and empathy, connecting us with the insights and feelings of others. The art gallery stimulates imagination, forcing us to dip down into our own creativity and experience for amplification and understanding.

Another difficulty with some Tarot decks is that a number of these have affixed to the Trumps extraneous symbols borrowed from other systems, implying that there is an exact correlation between the Trumps and other theological or philosophical theories. For example, in some decks each of the Trumps is marked with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet in an attempt to connect each Trump symbolically with one of the twenty-two paths of the Cabalistic Sephiroth. But there exists no uniform agreement as to which Hebrew letters belongs to which Tarot. Commentators have also affixed alchemical, astrological, Rosicrucian, and other symbols to the Tarot. Here also confusion reigns, as one can see by contrasting the ideas of Case, "Zain," Papus, and Hall in this regard.

Since all symbolic material derives from a level of human experience which is common to all mankind, it is, of course, true that valid connections can be made between some of the Tarot symbols and those of other systems. But this deep layer of the psyche, which C. G. Jung termed the unconscious, is, by definition, not conscious. Its images do not derive from our ordered intellect, but, rather, in spite of it. They do not present themselves in a logical manner.

Each philosophical system is merely an attempt on the part of the intellect to create a logical order out of the seeming chaos of imagery arising from the unconscious. Intellectual categories are a way of systematizing our experience of this nonverbal world. Each is a kind of grid system superimposed, if you like, over the raw experience of our most profound human nature. Each such system is useful, and in that sense, each one is "true" – but each is unique. Viewed one by one, these various patterns offer us convenient pigeonholes for organizing psychic experiences. But to superimpose these many grids, one atop the other, would be to distort their symmetry and destroy their usefulness.

Lest through such confusion we lose our way in the Trumps, we make no attempt in this book to correlate the Tarot symbolism with that of other disciplines. For the most part we shall confine our discussion to the Trumps as they appear in the Marseilles deck, picturing other versions of the cards only when these seem to offer insights that enrich their meaning. We shall try, as Jung did with symbolic material, to amplify by analogy, leaving the symbol's ultimate meaning, as always, free and open-ended.

In defining the scope of a symbol, Jung often stressed the difference between a symbol and a sign. A *sign*, he said, denotes a specific object or idea which can be translated into words (e.g., a striped pole means barber shop; an X means railroad crossing). A *symbol* stands for something which can be presented in no other way and whose meaning transcends all specifics and includes many seeming opposites (e.g., the Sphinx, the Cross, etc.).

The pictures on the Tarot Trumps tell a symbolic story. Like our dreams, they come to us from a level beyond the reach of consciousness and far removed from our intellectual understanding. It seems appropriate, therefore, to behave toward these Tarot characters pretty much as we would if they had appeared to us in a series of dreams picturing a distant unknown land inhabited by strange creatures. With such dreams, purely personal associations are of limited value. We can best connect with their meaning through analogy with myths, fairy tales, drama, paintings, events in history, or any other material with similar motifs which universally evoke clusters of feelings, intuitions, thoughts, or sensations.

Since the symbols pictured in the Tarot are ubiquitous and ageless, the usefulness of these amplifications will not be confined to this book. The Tarot figures, in various guises, are ever present in our lives. By night they appear in our sleep, to our mystification and wonder. By day they inspire us to creative action or play tricks with our logical plans. We hope that the material presented here will help us to connect with our dreams – not only with those which come to us at night, but with the hopes and dreams of our daylight hours as well.

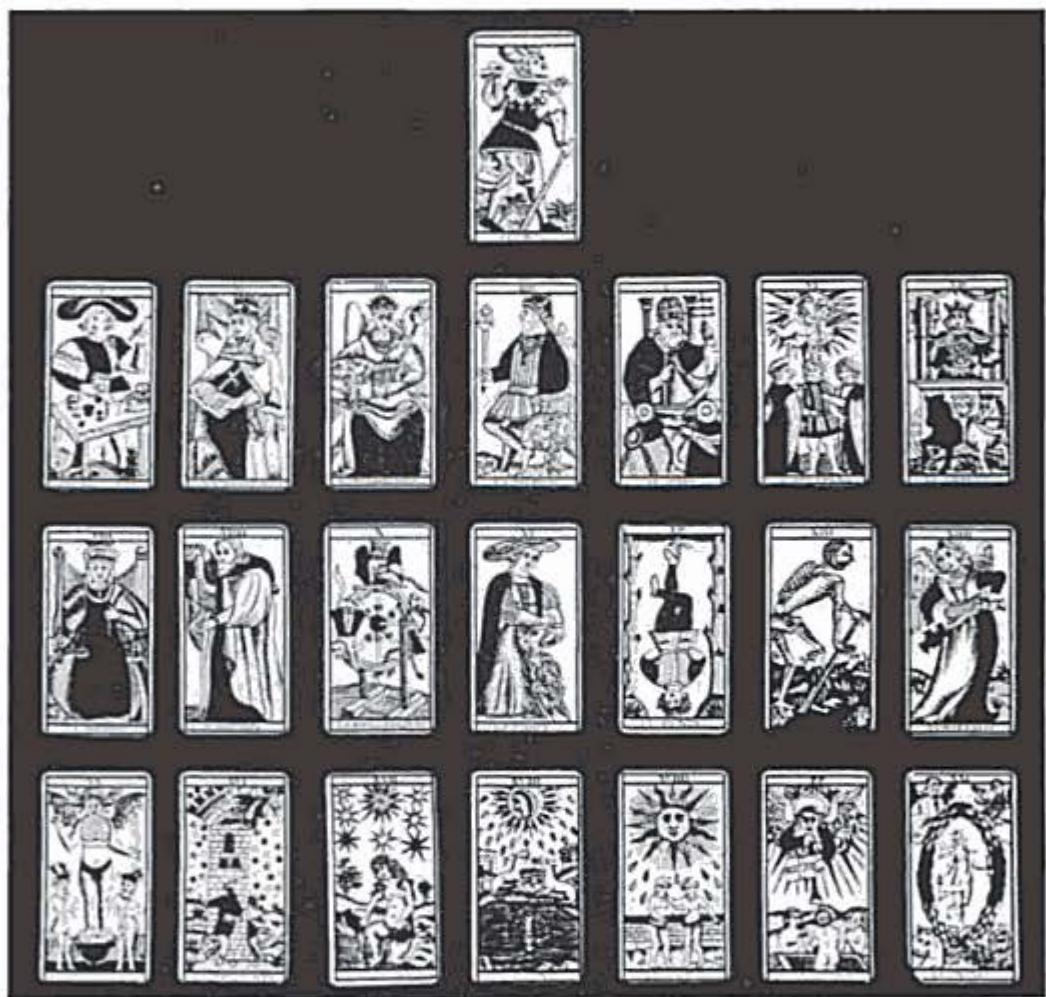


Fig. 3 Map of the Journey

Note: A full color Map of the Journey appears at the back of the book.

2. Map of the Journey

Before setting out on a journey, it is a good idea to have a map. Figure 3 is such a map. It shows the territory we shall be covering in this book. Pictured here are the twenty-two Trumps as they appear in the Marseilles Tarot which, as already indicated, is based on some of the earliest surviving designs. The way the cards are arranged in this map offers us a preview of the kinds of experiences we may expect to encounter along the way.

The best way to get at the individual meaning of these cards for oneself is to approach them directly, as one would the paintings in an art gallery. Like paintings, these Trumps are so-called projection holders, meaning simply that they are hooks to catch the imagination. Speaking psychologically, *projection* is an unconscious, autonomous process whereby we first see in the persons, objects, and happenings in our environment those tendencies, characteristics, potentials, and shortcomings that really belong to us. We people the exterior world with the witches and princesses, devils and heroes of the drama buried in our own depths.

Projecting our inner world onto the outer one is not a thing we do on purpose. It is simply the way the psyche functions. In fact projection happens so continuously and so unconsciously that we are usually totally unaware it is taking place. Nevertheless these projections are useful tools toward gaining self-knowledge. By viewing the images that we cast onto outer reality as mirror reflections of inner reality, we come to know ourselves.

In our journey through the Tarot Trumps, we shall be using the cards as projection holders. The Trumps are ideal for this purpose because they represent symbolically those instinctual forces operating autonomously in the depths of the human psyche which Jung has called the *archetypes*. These archetypes function in the psyche in much the same way as the instincts function in the body. Just as a healthy newborn babe arrives with a built-in tendency to suckle or to startle at a loud noise, so his psyche also

shows certain hereditary tendencies whose effects can be similarly observed. We cannot of course see these archetypal forces, as indeed we cannot see instincts; but we experience them in our dreams, visions, and waking thoughts where they appear as images.

Although the specific form these images take may vary from culture to culture and from person to person, nevertheless their essential character is universal. People of all ages and cultures have dreamed, storied, and sung about the archetypal Mother, Father, Lover, Hero, Magician, Fool, Devil, Savior, and Old Wise Man. Since the Tarot Trumps picture all of these archetypal images, let us look briefly at some of them as they appear on our map. By doing so, we can begin to familiarize ourselves with the cards and demonstrate how powerfully these symbols act in all of us.

In our map, the Trumps from number one through number twenty-one are set out in sequence to form three horizontal rows of seven cards each. THE FOOL, whose designation is zero, has no fixed position. He strides along at the top, looking down on the other cards. Since he has no pigeonhole, The Fool is free to spy on the other characters and can also burst unexpectedly into our personal lives with the result that, despite all conscious intentions, we end up playing the fool ourselves.

This archetypal Wanderer, with his bundle and his staff, is very much in evidence in our culture today. But, being a product of our mechanized world, he prefers to ride rather than walk. We can see his present-day counterpart, with beard and bedroll, standing by the roadside, extending a hopeful smile and a thumb in our direction. And if this character represents an unconscious aspect of ourselves, we are bound to react emotionally to him in one way or another. Some may instantly feel moved to stop and give the hitchhiker a lift, recalling how they, too, in their younger days once enjoyed a period of carefree wandering before settling down into a more stable pattern of living. Others, who never played the fool in their youth, may reach out to this wanderer instinctively because he represents an unlivable aspect of themselves to which they feel unconsciously drawn.

It can happen, though, that another person might have a negative reaction to this young fellow – a reaction so instantaneous and violent that he suddenly finds himself literally trembling with rage. In this case the driver may jam his foot down on the accelerator, clench his teeth, and literally flee the sight of this innocent bystander, muttering imprecations about his "slovenly ways." He may wish he could get his hands on this "young fool," chop off his hair, give him a good bath and shave, and then set him down in a forty-hour week "where he belongs." "Such irresponsibility makes me sick," he mutters. As a matter of fact his hostility is so overpowering that he may actually begin to feel sick. When he arrives home, he may find himself drained of energy and unaccountably weary. But next day, when (and if) the obsessive chattering in his head has somewhat abated, a small space

may open up within which a question can find whispering room: "Why shouldn't this young hitchhiker wander about if he likes? What harm is he doing?" But the "harm" to the observer is already done. The mere sight of this fellow has opened up a can of worms. And these come wriggling and tumbling out as a dozen questions, each demanding an answer: What would it be like to live like that fellow – to smash one's alarm clock – to throw away one's possessions – to spend this entire spring and summer just roving under the wide blue sky – and so forth.

There being no way to stuff these worms back into the can, our driver may find himself immobilized at home trying to answer these questions and dreaming impossible dreams. Perhaps, with luck, he may find ways to make some of his dreams come true. Strange things can happen when one confronts an archetype.

Reactions to the Fool will of course be as many and varied as the personalities and life experiences of those who confront him. But the point is that being touched by an archetype will always evoke an emotional reaction of some kind. By exploring these unconscious reactions, we can uncover the archetype that is manipulating us and free ourselves, to some extent, from its compulsion. As a result, next time one meets this archetypal figure in outer reality, his response need not be so irrational and automatic as the one described above.

In the instance just cited, the emotional turmoil that seeing "the fool" touched off and the self-examination that ensued may not have eventuated in any dramatic change in the life style of the person in question. But, after seriously considering other possibilities, he may well conclude that the life of a vagabond is not for him. He may find that, all things considered, he prefers the stability and convenience of a home, and that he likes a car and other possessions enough to sweat it out at the office in order to buy them. But, through examining other possibilities, he will have come to choose his life style more consciously; and having made friends with his hidden impulse to play the fool, he may find ways to express this need within the context of his present life.

In any case, the next time he passes a happy wanderer on the road, he will feel more empathy for him. Having now chosen his own life he may be more willing to let others choose theirs. And having come to terms with the renegade in inner reality, he will no longer feel so hostile and defensive when such a figure presents itself in outer reality. But, most important of all, he will have experienced the power of an archetype. The next time he speeds along in his car he will realize that he does not sit alone in the driver's seat. He will know that mysterious forces are at work within him which can guide his destiny and absorb his energy in unforeseen ways. And he will be on the alert for these. The Fool is a compelling archetype and, as we have seen, one very much in evidence today. But all the figures

of the Tarot have their own kind of power, and being ageless, they are all still active in ourselves and our society. By way of illustration let us now look at the seven Trumps pictured in the top row of our map.

The first of these is called THE MAGICIAN. It pictures a magician about to perform some tricks. He calls them tricks, and that is exactly what they are. He is getting ready to trick us. His seeming magic will be done with mirrors, specially constructed cards, top hats with false bottoms, and sleight of hand. We know this is the case, and our intellect is a-chatter with epithets like "charlatan" and labels like "rubbish." But to our dismay we observe that the rest of our body is already moving in the direction of this magician, and our hand is now surreptitiously reaching into our pocket to extract a coin for admittance to this magic show. It is stealing our money to subject us to swindle.

And later, as we sit in the audience waiting for the show to begin, we notice that our heart is beating faster than normal and that we are holding our breath. Although our mind knows that what we shall see will at best be a demonstration of skill and manual dexterity, the rest of us behaves as if something truly miraculous were about to happen. We behave this way because, in the deepest levels of our being, we still inhabit a world of true mystery and wonder – a world that operates outside the limits of space and time and beyond the reach of logic and causality. We are attracted to this outer magician so compulsively and irrationally because within each of us there exists an archetypal Magician even more attractive and compelling than the one before us, one who stands ready to demonstrate for us the miraculous reality of our inner world whenever we feel ready to turn our attention in his direction.

No wonder our intellect skids to a stop and digs its heels in at the mere idea of magic. If our mind admits to this kind of reality, it risks losing the empire which its reason has built brick by brick throughout the centuries. And yet the compulsion of the Magician is so strong in our culture today that many bridges between his world and ours, over which reason can begin to walk with some assurance, are at last being built. Various parapsychological phenomena are being examined under scientifically controlled conditions. Transcendental Meditation is attracting thousands of followers by offering objective proof of the salutary effects of meditation on blood pressure and anxiety states. Through the use of biofeedback machines and other devices, various other forms of meditation are being explored, and convincing research is in progress on the effects of meditation on cancer. In our century, it seems, the worlds of magic and reality are becoming one. Perhaps by studying THE MAGICIAN we can bring about a new unity within ourselves.

The second card in the top row of our map is LA PAPESSE, or Lady Pope, sometimes called THE HIGH PRIESTESS. She may be seen as symbolizing the archetype of the Virgin, a familiar one in the myths and

sacred writings of many cultures. The virgin birth is a motif frequently observed in the beliefs of so many peoples, separated in both time and geography, that its origin can only be explained as an archetypal pattern inherent in the human psyche.

The Virgin archetype celebrates a humble receptivity to the Holy Spirit and a dedication to its embodiment in a new reality as the Divine Child, or Savior. In our culture, the biblical account of the Virgin Mary dramatizes this archetype. LA PAPESSE is a somewhat crude representation of the Virgin of the Annunciation as she is depicted in Catholic art. There she is often pictured seated, with the Book of the Prophets spread open before her, as in the Tarot.

The Virgin archetype has caught the imagination of artists and sculptors for centuries, and for every woman the fact of pregnancy marks her as one singled out to be the carrier of a new spirit. But today she has become active in a different way. For it is the Virgin, it seems, who has inspired what is most truly feminine and courageous in the women's liberation movement. Just as the Virgin Mary was chosen for a destiny uniquely her own for which there was "no room at the inn," so woman today is called to fulfill herself in ways to which our collective society still closes its doors. As the Virgin was forced by her vocation to forego the comfortable anonymity and security of traditional family life, carrying her burden alone, and bringing her new spirit to birth only in the most humble of circumstances, so women today, for whom the new annunciation has sounded clearly, must sacrifice their security and endure loneliness and humiliation (often in circumstances more trying than the routine of housewifery and motherhood) in order to bring into reality the new spirit that stirs within them. In this endeavor the Virgin might well be accorded a special niche for veneration, because she still shines forth today as a unique symbol of the pervasive force of the feminine principle. Although dedicated to the service of the spirit, the Virgin has never lost touch with her own femininity. It seems significant that Mary, one of the most powerful figures in our Judeo-Christian heritage, should have remained in our culture a paradigm of the utterly feminine woman.

The next two cards in our Tarot sequence, THE EMPRESS and THE EMPEROR, symbolize the Mother and Father archetypes on the grand scale. Little need be said here about the powers of these two figures, for we have all experienced them in relation to our personal mothers and fathers or other human beings who stood for us as their surrogates. As children we probably all saw our parents enthroned as the "good," "nourishing," "protective" mother, and the "omniscient," "courageous," "powerful" father. When, being human, they failed to enact these roles according to our script, we often then experienced mother as the archetypal Black Witch or Bad Stepmother and father as Red Devil and Cruel Tyrant. It took many years of outlandish projecting before we could finally see our parents as

human beings who, like ourselves, possessed many potentials for both weal and woe.

Even as adults, if our parents are living we may still discover some areas in which we revert to the habit patterns of youth and play "child" to their parenthood in a variety of ways. When this happens, we may feel moved to go to our parents and "have it out" with them, if possible. But from the Jungian point of view, the proposed confrontation with the parents, even if possible, is not necessarily the first step toward clarification of our problem. For here too (as in the case of the driver and the hitch-hiker) the archetypes are at work. Quite apart from the personalities and actions of our parents (however limited and unconscious these may be), we would be having similar problems with whoever stood in their shoes as long as we had not come to terms with the Mother and Father archetypes within ourselves. Chances are that both we and our parents are puppets in an archetypal drama, manipulated by giant figures operating above and behind our conscious awareness.

As long as this is the case, however much good will, determination, confession, or whatever takes place in a confrontation between the puppets themselves, the result can only be further entanglement in the strings. Obviously the first thing to do is to turn around and face the puppeteers so that we can see what they are up to and, if possible, untie or loosen some of those strings. In later chapters we shall confront the Empress and the Emperor and suggest some techniques for freeing ourselves from the hidden wiles of these master manipulators. The discovery of this archetypal layer of the unconscious and the presentation of techniques for confronting it is one of Jung's great contributions to psychology. For without the concept of the archetypes, we would forever be caught in a never ending circular dance with persons in outer reality. Without techniques for separating the personal from the impersonal, we would endlessly project on our parents, or others in our environment, archetypal behavior patterns which no human being can possibly embody.

Tarot Trump number five is THE POPE. In Church dogma the pope is God's representative on earth. As such he is infallible. He represents an archetypal authority figure whose power surpasses that of father and emperor. In Jungian terms he represents the archetypal Old Wise Man. Obviously, to project such superhuman wisdom and infallibility on any human being – even the pope himself – might be questionable.

The archetype of the Old Wise Man, dramatized in the biblical Hebrew prophets and Christian saints, is still a powerful one today. He appears in our society frequently as a be turbaned guru or an elderly bearded wanderer in white robe and sandals. Sometimes he has undergone training in some spiritual discipline, Eastern or Western, and sometimes he appears without portfolio. If we receive such a new acquaintance on sight

with overwhelming adulation or turn our backs on him in instant rejection, we can be sure that the archetype is at work. But coming to know such a person as a human being can help us to see that spiritual illumination is, after all, a personal rather than an institutional matter.

The Tarot, being itself both old and wise, has pictured the archetypal Old Wise Man in two ways. THE POPE of card five shows him in his more institutional form, and THE HERMIT of card nine pictures him as a mendicant friar. When we come to study these two cards, we shall have a chance to contact these figures as forces within ourselves. Coming to know these archetypes will help us to determine to what extent the qualities they symbolize are embodied in ourselves and in persons of our acquaintance.

The card that follows THE POPE is called THE LOVER. Here a young man stands transfixed between two women, each of whom seems to claim his attention, if not his very soul. Surely the eternal triangle is an archetypal situation vivid in our own personal experience. The plot pictured in THE LOVER needs no elaboration here for it is the basis of about ninety percent of the literature and drama extant in the world today. Anyone who wishes to refresh his memory on that score need only turn on his television more or less at random.

In the sky above and behind the Lover, a winged god with a bow and arrow is about to inflict a fatal wound that may resolve the young man's conflict. The little god, Eros, is of course an archetypal figure, and so is the young man. He personifies a youthful ego. The ego is technically defined as the center of consciousness. It is the one in us who thinks and speaks of itself as "I." In THE LOVER, this young ego, having to some extent freed himself from the compulsive influence of the parental archetypes, is now able to stand alone. But he is still not his own man, for, as we see, he remains caught between two women. He is unable to move. The principle action in this picture is taking place in the unconscious realm of the archetypes hidden from his present awareness.

Perhaps the poisoned arrow from heaven will fire him up and set him in motion. If so, we shall observe with interest what happens next because, from now on in our Tarot series, this young ego will be the chief protagonist of the Tarot drama. In this sense we shall often refer to him as the hero, for it is his journey along the path of self-realization that we shall be following.

In card seven, called THE CHARIOT, we see that the hero has found a vehicle to carry him on his journey, and it is piloted by a young king. When a young king appears on the scene in dreams and myths, he usually symbolizes the emergence of a new guiding principle. In the fourth card, THE EMPEROR appears as the authority figure. He is an older man, seated, and drawn so large that he fills the entire canvas. In THE CHARIOT the new ruler is in motion and drawn to human scale, meaning

that he is more active and approachable than an emperor; and, more important, he is not alone. He is seen to function as part of a totality with which the hero begins to feel a connection.

But the king pictured here is as young and inexperienced as the hero himself. If our protagonist has crowned his ego king and placed it in command of his destiny, his journey forward will not be smooth.

With THE CHARIOT we come to the last card in the top row of our map. This row we are calling the Realm of the Gods because it pictures many of the major characters enthroned in the heavenly constellation of archetypes. Now the hero's chariot carries him down into the second row of cards, which we will call the Realm of Earthly Reality and Ego Consciousness because here the young man sets forth to seek his fortune and establish his identity in the outer world. Freeing himself increasingly from containment within the archetypal "family" pictured in the top row, he sets out to find his vocation, establish a family of his own, and assume his place in the social order.

Having discussed "the gods" of the top row, we shall now run through the cards in the next two rows much more rapidly in order to get an overall view of the general plot that follows. The first card in the second row is JUSTICE. The hero must now evaluate moral problems for himself. He will need her help to weigh and balance difficult questions. Next comes THE HERMIT, who is carrying a lantern. If the hero no longer finds the illumination he seeks within an established religion, this friar can help him to find a more individual light.

The card following THE HERMIT is THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE, symbolizing an inexorable force in life which seems to operate beyond our control and with which we must all come to terms. The next card, called STRENGTH or FORTITUDE, pictures a lady taming a lion. She will help the hero to confront his animal nature. Perhaps his initial confrontation will not be wholly successful, for in the following card, THE HANGED MAN, we see the young man hanging upside down by one foot. He appears to be unharmed but he is, for the moment at least, completely helpless. In the next card he faces DEATH, an archetypal figure before whose scythe we all stand helpless. But in the final card of this second row, TEMPERANCE, a helpful figure appears. She is an angel, and she is engaged in pouring liquid from one vase into another. At this point the hero's energies and hopes begin to flow again and in a new direction. Heretofore he has been engaged in freeing himself from the compulsion of the archetypes as they affect him personally in the world of human beings and events, and in establishing an ego status in the outer world. Now he is ready to turn his energies more consciously toward the inner world. Whereas before he sought ego development, his attention now turns toward a wider psychic center which Jung has termed the *self*.

If we define the ego as the center of consciousness, then we might define the self as the all-encompassing center of the entire psyche, including both conscious and unconscious. This center transcends the puny "I" of ego awareness. It is not that the hero's ego will no longer exist; it is simply that he will no longer experience this ego as the central force which motivates his actions. From now on his personal ego will be increasingly dedicated to service beyond itself. He will become aware that his ego is merely a small planet revolving around a giant central sun — the self.

All along his journey the hero will have had flashes of this kind of insight; but as we follow his fortunes through the archetypes of the bottom row we shall see his awareness widen and his illumination increase. For this reason we will call the bottom row on our map the Realm of Heavenly Illumination and Self-Realization.

The first card in this bottom row is THE DEVIL. He represents Satan, that infamous fallen star. Whenever this fellow drops into our garden he brings with him, willy-nilly, a flash of light, as we shall see when we come to study him later on. The next four cards in sequence are called THE TOWER OF DESTRUCTION, THE STAR, THE MOON, THE SUN. They picture various stages of illumination in an ascending order. The card that follows these four is called JUDGEMENT. Here an angel with a trumpet bursts into the hero's awareness in a glorious blaze of light to wake the sleeping dead. On the earth below, a young man rises from the grave as two older figures stand by in attitudes of prayer and wonder at this miraculous rebirth.

With the final card of the Tarot series called THE WORLD, the self, now fully realized, is bodied forth as a graceful dancer. Here all the many opposing forces with which the hero has been struggling are united in one world. In this last Tarot figure, sense and nonsense, science and magic, father and mother, spirit and flesh, all flow together in a harmonious dance of pure being. In the four corners of this card, four symbolic figures stand witness to this ultimate miracle.

Now we have completed our quick preview of the twenty-two Trumps as set forth on our map. As we follow the hero's fortunes through these cards, we shall be observing their interconnections on the horizontal axis — how each experience encountered along the way evokes the one that follows it. When we come to study the cards in the bottom row, we shall also be making connections on the vertical axis between these Trumps and those directly above them on the map.

Let us illustrate what we mean. As the cards are arranged in our map, they can be seen not only as three horizontal rows of seven cards each but also as seven vertical rows of three cards each. As we shall discover, the three cards in each vertical row are connected with one another in a significant way. For example: the first vertical row presents THE MAGICIAN at

the top, THE DEVIL at the bottom, and JUSTICE sitting as mediator between the two. Many connections can be made between these three cards, but one of the more obvious might be that the seemingly benign MAGICIAN of card one and the magical DEVIL of card fifteen must both be taken into consideration in our lives. For if we don't "give the devil his due" he'll take it anyway; if we ignore him, he will operate from behind in a destructive way. So the cards of this first vertical row may be saying that as long as we use both pans of JUSTICE's scales, there will be less chance of either magician playing tricks behind our backs.

As we shall see later on, the cards in the second horizontal row, the Realm of Earthly Reality and Ego Consciousness, often act as mediators between the Realm of the Gods above and the Realm of Illumination and Self-Realization below. In fact, all the Trumps in the second row, like its first card JUSTICE, are specifically concerned with equilibrium. For example: STRENGTH is engaged in establishing an equilibrium between herself and a lion, and TEMPERANCE is absorbed in creating a balanced interaction between the two urns that she holds. In more subtle ways, all the other cards in this row can be seen to symbolize some kind of harmonious balance between opposing forces. For this reason it might be useful to subtitle the second horizontal row the Realm of Equilibrium.

From what has already been said, it is easy to understand why Jung chose to call this kind of self-realization *individuation*. By confronting the archetypes and freeing oneself somewhat from their compulsion, one becomes increasingly able to respond to life in an individual way. As we have seen, the behavior of those with little awareness of the archetypes is predetermined by unseen forces. It is almost as rigidly programmed as the instinctual behavior of the birds and bees who always react to certain stimuli in a preordained way, so that mating, nest building, migration, and so forth, are carried on in identical patterns throughout the generations. But when a human being has achieved some degree of self-awareness, he is able to make choices that are different from those of the flock and to express himself in ways that are uniquely his own. Having contact with his own true self he will no longer be prey to the chatter of other selves, inner and outer. What "they" are doing and saying will have less influence upon his life. He will be able to examine current social customs and ideas and adopt them or not as he chooses. He will be free to act in ways that fulfill his deepest needs and express his truest self.

It is important to note here that as a person gains the independence to be a nonconformist, he also gains the self-assurance to be a conformist. As Jung has often stressed, an *individuated* person is not the same as someone who is *individualistic*. He is not driven to conform to custom, but he is equally not driven to defy it. He does not try to set himself apart from his peers by affecting peculiar dress or by exhibiting outlandish behavior. On

the contrary, because he so truly experiences himself as a unique expression of the godhead, he is under no compulsion to prove it.

Whenever we meet such a person, he is usually indistinguishable at first glance from others in the group. His overt behavior and dress may be in no way remarkable. He may be actively engaged in conversation, or he may be relatively quiet; but almost instantly some indefinable quality in his way of being may attract us to him. It is as if everything about him—his clothes, his gestures, his way of sitting or standing—belongs to him. Nothing about him is superimposed. Everything he says or does appears to arise from his deepest center, so that even his most ordinary remark shines forth with new meaning. If he is silent, his silence, too, seems to belong. It is a comfortable silence both for him and for us. Often such a person in silence will seem more present and active than those who are participating in more overt ways. Because he is in contact with his deepest self, our deep self responds, so that sitting in silence with this kind of human being can open up new vistas of awareness. Being at home with himself, he is instantly at home with us—and we with him. We feel as if we have known him forever. The communication between us is so open and easy that we understand him; and yet, he puzzles us. On the one hand, he is the most unusual person we have ever met, and on the other, he is just like us. He is a paradox.

The self is indeed the most paradoxical and elusive of all the forces operating in the deep unconscious. It is the self which will propel the hero forward from the parental womb to seek his destiny in the outer world; and it is the self which will bring him home at last to the realization of his own uniqueness. As we follow the hero along his journey, we will share vicariously in his experiences as they are pictured in the Trumps.

There are many techniques for putting ourselves in touch with the cards. Each person will find his own way into the pictures, but we offer here a few suggestions that others have found useful. For example; some like to keep a Tarot scrapbook. They find that the Trumps jump to life when relevant material is collected about them. Once attention is paid to them, the Tarot characters have a way of popping up in unexpected ways. It often happens, for instance, that related news items, photographs, prints, and references to the Tarot begin to appear quite magically and with amazing frequency.

Also, studying a specific card seems to unlock hidden stores of creative imagination so that sudden insights and ideas can burst forth into consciousness—seemingly from nowhere. These wispy creatures of the imagination are as ephemeral as butterflies. If we don't catch them instantly, they may disappear forever. But when such bursts of creativity occur, often we don't have time to sit down and give them our full attention. It is helpful to have some fixed place ready to capture and hold them

safe for future reference: a place where we can jot down the bare plot of a story, draw a quick sketch for a future painting, or set down the opening lines of what may become a poem. If we have some aptitude in the arts, we may want to develop these ideas later. If not, we may wish to refer to them again in connection with our personal Tarot trip. In either case, a scrapbook or loose-leaf notebook with several pages devoted to each Trump offers convenient storage for this material and a ready-made filing system for easy access.

All of us react differently to different cards. Some cards attract us; some repel us. Some cards remind us of people we know or have known in the past. Some are like figures in dreams or in fantasies. Others bring us entire dramatic episodes. Perhaps the important point here is that when we really focus on a Tarot card and then follow as the card itself leads, we become open to new and exciting experiences.

The Trumps are best studied in sequence. Their numerical order creates a pattern both throughout the deck and within ourselves. And to follow that pattern, our imagination will provide the passport. There are many ways to stimulate the imagination. Included here are a few ideas that others have found useful.

Approach each card directly before reading the chapter about it. This offers you a chance to react freely and naively to whatever is pictured there. It is a good idea to study the card for a few minutes, and then jot down "off the top of your head" any reactions, ideas, memories, and associations (or even four-letter words) that come to mind. Remember, these notes are for your eyes alone, so let fly with the pen. Don't censor anything, however farfetched it seems, for it may connect you with important insights later on.

Since, as with human personalities, first impressions are often more significant than they appear at the time, jot down *everything* verbatim. Please don't attempt to analyze, evaluate, or label whatever you have written. Just file it away for future consideration. Later, when you have come to know this Tarot Trump, it will be interesting to compare your first impressions of it with your later reactions. Whatever turns up, just muse on it as you go about your daily affairs. Hold these happenings in your heart as you might do with a poem—but keep your reason at arm's length. The Tarot people are creatures of the imagination. The spotlight of intellect will send them scurrying underground.

Since the Tarot characters cannot tell us verbally about themselves, we must use every sensory means to feel into their essence. One surprisingly effective way to do this is to color the cards. The Marseilles deck is not available in an uncolored version, but one can easily create an uncolored set of Trumps by making Xerox reproductions of those in the regular deck. Invariably, students who have made and colored their own cards in this way find that doing so adds a new dimension to their understanding.

Whatever you do (or don't) in relation to the cards, remember that all suggestions presented here are offered simply *pour le sport*. They are chiefly useful as devices to warm up our imagination and lure the Tarot characters out into our world where we can get a better look at them.

It is axiomatic that symbols and the feelings or intuitions that they inspire do not come labeled "right" or "wrong." As will be repeatedly demonstrated in this study, it is characteristic of symbolic material to embrace many opposites and to include seeming paradoxes. Living as we do most of the time in an Either/Or world of fixed opposites, it may be some comfort to know that in the world of feelings, intuitions, sensations, and spontaneous ideas that we are about to enter, we can pretty much discard the Either/Or yardstick we generally use to make practical choices in everyday life. We are about to step into the land of imagination, that magic world whose key words are Both/And. In reacting to a given Tarot Trump, we can't be "right" if we try — and by same token we can't be "wrong." So let us react to the Tarot in any way we like with a light heart and a free hand. Allow room for everything; expect nothing. Let your imagination play. Enjoy — enjoy.

These, then, are some of the ways to explore the meaning of the cards. From time to time we shall add other do-it-yourself suggestions for any who are interested. In the following chapters we shall amplify the meaning of each Trump by presenting themes from myth, literature, drama, and the pictorial arts which seem to enrich its message. These are not offered as conclusions but rather as springboards for the imagination. The final dimension of this study, the dimension of depth, is one which only the reader himself can fully explore; only he can relate these findings to his individual life.

Each must discover his own way into the nonverbal world of the Tarot. Although we shall follow certain signposts along the way, the cards themselves, as we have seen, are not signs; they are symbols. No precise definitions can be given to them. They are pictorial expressions which point beyond themselves to forces no human being ever completely understands. Today, man is at least beginning to realize that the more he remains unconscious of archetypal forces, the more power they have to rule his life.

So let us contemplate the symbols. Let us watch them move, connecting us with the deepest roots of our history and with the seeds of our undiscovered selves.



Fig. 4 Le Mat (Marseilles Deck)

3. The Fool in Tarot and in Us

If a man would persist in his folly, he would become wise.

— WILLIAM BLAKE

THE FOOL is a wanderer, energetic, ubiquitous, and immortal. He is the most powerful of all the Tarot Trumps. Since he has no fixed number he is free to travel at will, often upsetting the established order with his pranks. As we have seen, his vigor has propelled him across the centuries where he survives in our modern playing cards as the Joker. Here he still enjoys confounding the Establishment. In poker he goes wild, capturing the king and all his court. In other card games he pops up unexpectedly, deliberately creating what we choose to call a misdeal.

Sometimes when we have lost a card we ask the Joker to pinch-hit, a function that well suits his motley hue and love of mimicry. But most of the time he serves no overt purpose. Perhaps we keep him in the deck as a sort of mascot in much the same way that the court maintained its jester. In Greece it was believed that keeping a fool about the premises warded off the evil eye. Retaining the Joker in our deck may serve a similar function, since playing cards are reportedly "the devil's pictures."

The Joker connects two worlds — the everyday, contemporary world where most of us live most of the time and the nonverbal land of imagination inhabited by Tarot characters, which we visit occasionally. Like Puck, King Oberon's jester, our Joker moves freely between these worlds; and like Puck, he sometimes mixes them up a bit. Despite his tricky ways, it seems important to keep the Joker in our modern deck so that he can connect the modern "games people play" with the archetypal world of the ancestors. No doubt he observes and reports on our doings to Someone Up There.

To act as the king's spy was, in fact, an important function of the court jester. Being a privileged character, the fool could easily mingle with any group nosing out gossip and assessing the political temper. There is an old

Italian saying, still current, "To be like the Fool in Tarocchi," (Tarot) which means to be welcome everywhere.

The Shakespearean fool could act as the king's alter ego in other important ways too, notably in *King Lear* where he seems to symbolize a kingly wisdom not attained by Lear himself until the end of the play. According to James Kirsch,¹ Lear's fool personifies the central core of the psyche, the guiding force which Jung has called the self. In the Tarot series, as we shall see, the Fool sometimes play a similar role. And like his Shakespearean counterpart, this Jester is restless – all over the stage – popping up now here now there and then disappearing before we can catch him. He likes to be where the action is, and if there isn't any, he creates some.

Portraits of court jesters frequently picture them with dogs. Like the king's dog, the fool was thought of as belonging to the king, and both accompanied their master everywhere. One can imagine that the relationship between these two court "animals" must have been an intimate one, more so even than that of master and beast, for they were, in a sense, siblings.

In many Tarot decks, the Fool is shown with a small dog which is nipping at him as if to communicate something. In the Marseilles Tarot (Fig. 4) we are left to imagine the nature of the dog's message. In the Waite version of the Tarot (Fig. 6) the animal appears to be warning his companion of impending danger. In any case, the Fool is in such close contact with his instinctual side that he does not need to look where he is going in the literal sense; his animal nature guides his steps. In some Tarot cards the Fool is pictured as blindfolded, further emphasizing his ability to act by insight rather than eyesight, using intuitive wisdom instead of conventional logic.

Like the foolhardy third brother in fairy tales who rushes in where angels fear to tread, and by doing so wins the hand of the princess and her kingdom, the Fool's spontaneous approach to life combines wisdom, madness, and folly. When he mixes these ingredients in the right proportions the results are miraculous, but when the mixture curdles, everything can end up in a sticky mess. At these times the Fool can look pretty foolish which (being a fool) he has the good sense not to mind. He is often pictured like Bottom, wearing asses' ears because he knows that to admit ignorance is the highest knowledge – the necessary condition of all learning.

Our inner Fool urges us on to life, where the thinking mind might be overcautious. What seems like a precipice from afar may prove to be only a small gulley when approached with the Fool's gusto. His energy sweeps everything before him, carrying others along like leaves in a fresh wind.* Without the Fool's energy all of us would be mere pasteboard.

*The energizing aspect of The Fool is nicely depicted in Manley Hall's *An Encyclopedia Outline of Masonic, Qabalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolic Philosophy*, The Philosophical Research Society, 1968, Plate CXXIX. There The Fool, "life-sized," strides across the page bearing affixed to his costume the rest of the Tarot Trumps, shown as small cards.

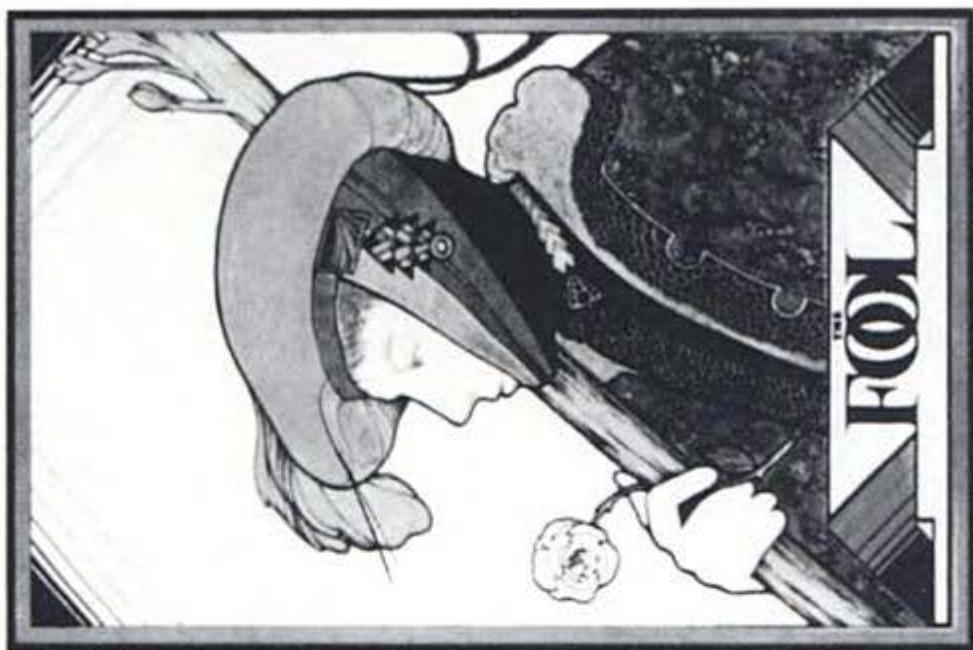


Fig. 7 Aquarian Deck

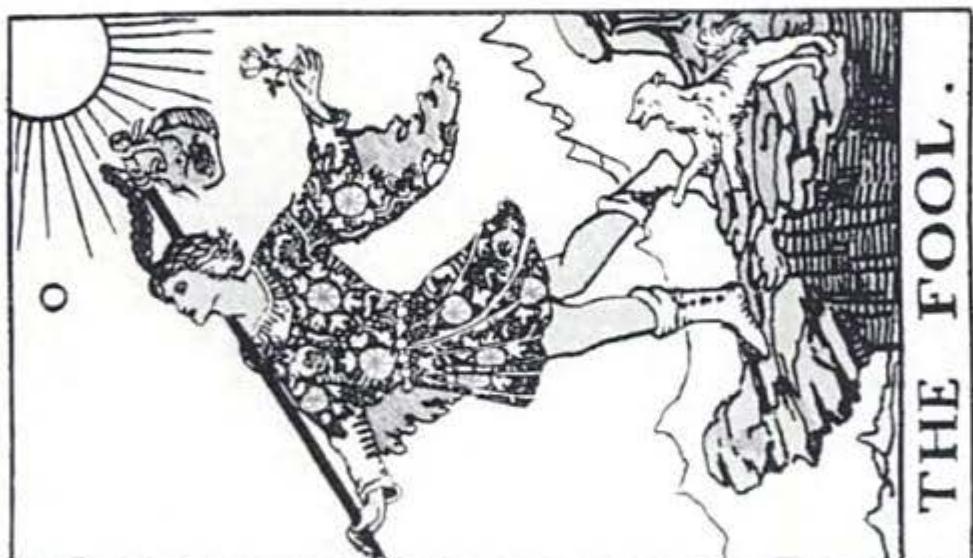


Fig. 6 Waite Deck

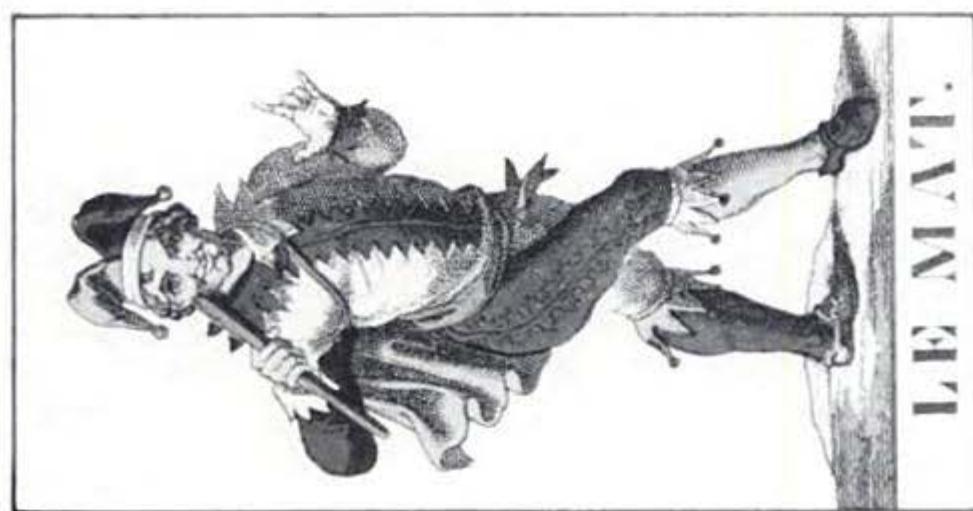


Fig. 5 Swiss Deck

In his book *The Greater Trumps*,² Charles Williams explores a similar idea. Here the Fool is the central character of the Tarot Trumps. To see him dance is to plumb the mystery of all creation, for his essence is all-inclusive and his paradoxes many. He strides forward yet he looks backward, thus connecting the wisdom of the future with the innocence of childhood. His energy is unconscious and undirected, yet it seems to have a purpose of its own. He moves outside space and time. The winds of prophecy and poesy inhabit his spirit. Although he wanders with no fixed abode, he endures intact throughout the ages. His multicolored costume spins a rainbow wheel offering us glimpses of eternity. As patterns in a kaleidoscope appear and disappear, so the Fool pops in and out of our world, erupting into the Tarot Trumps from time to time as we shall see.

His many-sided nature is expressed by his bauble, a replica of his own head in cap and bells, with which he is often pictured in earnest conversation. This idea is embellished in many subtle ways. In some decks, a serious Fool holds up a mirror whose image grins or sticks out its tongue. In one fifteenth century Austrian deck, a female joker holds a mirror up to – us! The mirror image here, a glum-looking masculine figure, is inscribed “Female joker looking at her grinning idiot’s face in the mirror.”³

Many of the ambiguities of the archetypal Fool are illustrated in a French deck of unknown origin which was given to me about thirty years ago, and which I have seen pictured nowhere else (Fig. 8). In this card the Fool is depicted as an old beggar man, white bearded, and blindfolded. In his right hand he holds a bauble (his alter ego) in such a way that it precedes and guides his faltering steps. Perhaps it shakes its bells to warn the Fool of the crocodile lying in wait below. The little dog barking at his master’s heels also sounds an alert of impending danger. As further indication that this old mendicant is in tune with his instinctual side, he carries a violin under his left arm. Its music will accompany him when he sings for his supper at the next village and will help to keep his soul in harmony and peace along the lonely road.

In marked contrast to Waite’s young Fool, whom we saw about to set forth on his adventures, this old wanderer is approaching the end of his long journey home. He is not blind, but he wears a blindfold, indicating a voluntary willingness to forego the stimuli of outer scenes and events so that he can contemplate life with the inward eye. He has also outgrown the need for human companionship. He now devotes himself to dialogue with his intuitive self, as personified by his bauble, and to the wordless companionship of his little dog. The age-old tradition of the archetypal sad, wise Fool, kept alive in drama and art through the centuries; is dramatized today in the Chaplinesque clown and the sad jesters whose world gaze meets ours from the canvasses of Picasso, Rouault, and Buffet. The sad Fool is close kin to the archetypal Old Wise Man, a character whom we shall see personified as the Hermit of Tarot number nine.



Fig. 8 The Fool (Old French Tarot)

The Jester's place in the Trump sequence is appropriately quixotic. In some decks, as number zero he leads the pack. In others he is assigned the number twenty-two and as such brings up the rear of the Trump parade. In our view, the question of whether the Fool is first or last is irrelevant; he is neither, and both. For, being a creature of perpetual motion, he dances through the cards each day, connecting the end with the beginning—endlessly.

As might be expected, the details of the Fool's costumes combine many pairs of opposites within their design. His cap, although originally conceived as a satire on the monk's cowl, nevertheless betrays a serious connection with the spirit. Its bell, echoing the most solemn moment in the mass, calls man back to the childlike faith of fools, ringing out St. Paul's exhortation: "Let us be fools for Christ's sake."

The Jester's talisman, a coxcomb with bells, similarly combines a serious truth with lighthearted trappings. The cock foretells the dawn of a new awareness, a reawakening to ancient truths. This miracle, it appears, will be enacted not in the starry heavens above, but once again in the filth and hubbub of the barnyard. In place of iridescent doves and angels with golden trumpets, the Fool offers us the crowing of a cock, that bright and fertile bird with connections in Gethsemane. In the light of these comments, it seems doubly appropriate that the Albigenses, the probable originators of the Trumps, should have chosen to disguise themselves as fools. Feeling betrayed by the corruption of the Church, they too proclaimed a new spirit; and they must have enjoyed fooling the authorities by smuggling their revolutionary ideas into a deck of playing cards.

Symbol par excellence for the union of many kinds of opposites is, of course, the Fool's motley. Its variegated colors and haphazard design might seem to bespeak a discordant spirit; yet within this apparent chaos, a pattern is discernible. Thus the Fool presents himself as one bridge between the chaotic world of the unconscious and the ordered world of consciousness. In this way he is related to the Trickster archetype, as will be discussed later.

The word "fool" is derived from the Latin *follis*, meaning, "a pair of bellows, a windbag." One Austrian Tarot shows the Fool in monk's cowl and bells, playing on a bagpipe.⁴ Today, circus clowns sometimes carry a set of bellows or beat one another over the head with empty bladders, thus maintaining a connection with the windy folly of their origins. Bellows furnish the oxygen needed for combustion in much the same way as the Fool furnishes the spirit, or impetus for action. He "fires us up." The Tarot Fool occasionally wears a feather in his cap, further emphasizing his connection with the heavenly spirit. But the Jester can also be a windbag, full of hot air, as the name "buffoon" (from the Latin *bufo*, meaning "toad" and the Italian *buffare*, "to puff") suggests.

Always within the Fool *les extrêmes se touchent*. William Willeford calls our attention to the fact that the jester has traditionally been connected with the phallus, both in the sense of lewdness and of fertility.⁵ The phallus was worn by the Fool's Greek and Roman counterparts and by the Renaissance *Arlecchino*. A more contemporary example of this theme is illustrated by Punch – the title figure of the British humor magazine – who has a colossal phallus. The European court jester often carried a bladder shaped like a phallus. His bauble with its two pendant bells is obviously a fertility symbol, his "tool." At the same time this toy is also the Fool's sceptre, connecting him directly with the king as an alter ego.

Sometimes the Fool, depicted more outspokenly as the king's counterpart, is shown wearing a crown. A crown is symbolically a golden halo, open at the top to receive illumination from above. Thus, both king and fool are seen to be divinely inspired. As the king ruled by divine right, so

his counterpart had a right equally divine to criticize him and to offer challenging suggestions.

Pictured here (fig. 9) is a modern king and his jester. Shockingly similar in physiognomy, these two personages wear identical crowns of a most peculiar kind. These head coverings are square and black and solid at the top so that they have the effect of miniature roofs, protecting the wearers both from the illumination of heaven and from its tears. Many find such crowns worthless today, and those who wear them have been called "squares." Such head coverings seem to make their wearers all look and behave alike. As this illustration shows, it is sometimes hard to tell which is the king and which the fool. It was the function of the king's jester to re-

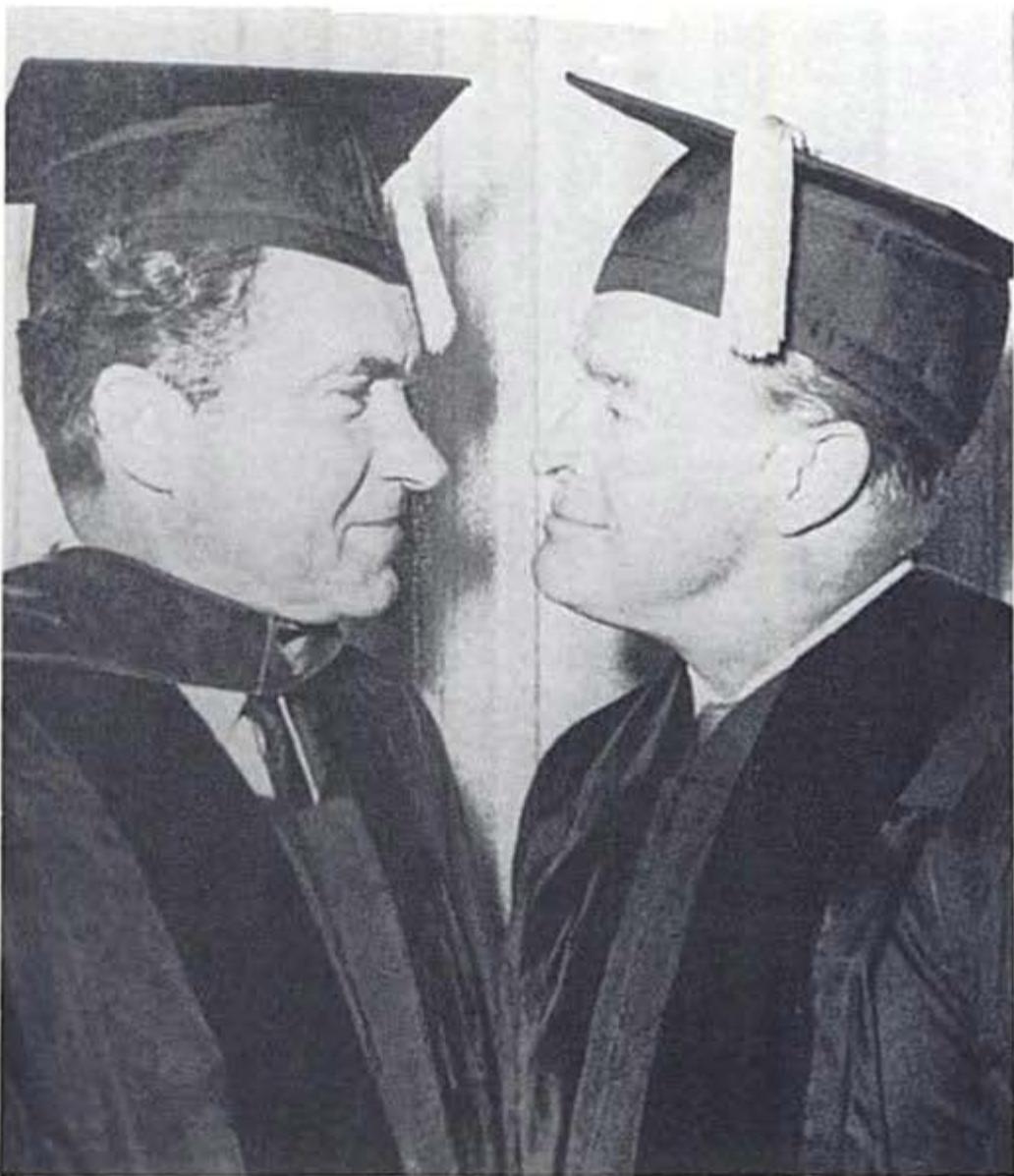


Fig. 9 King and Jester

mind him of his follies, of the mortality of all men, and to help him to guard against the sin of hubris or overweening pride. A jester who is almost identical with the king cannot properly serve these functions; nor can he ward off the "evil eye." And, as the "Watergate tragedy" of the early 1970s demonstrated, a court composed entirely of yes-men is doomed.

Because the Fool encompasses the opposite poles of energy, it is impossible to pin him down. The minute we think we have caught his essence, he slyly turns into his opposite and crows derisively from behind our backs. Yet it is his very ambivalence and ambiguity that makes him so creative. Speaking of this aspect of the Fool, Charles Williams has said: "(It) is called the Fool, because mankind finds it folly till it is known. It is sovereign or it is nothing, and if it is nothing then man was born dead."⁶ The Fool encompasses all possibilities.

It seems significant that today the young in heart of all ages often wear a medley of colors and affect rags and patches, baubles and bells. Many also become wanderers, traveling about with their worldly goods slung carelessly over their shoulders. Alan McGlashan,⁷ in his book *The Savage and Beautiful Country*, sees these phenomena as unconscious attempts to reach back into the creative soil of Eden to reactivate the boundless power of the first creation. Many contemporary young people drop out of recognized institutions of higher learning to search for wisdom more profoundly rooted in the soil of their essential being. Perhaps the psychedelic colors of the 60's and 70's presaged the dawn of new consciousness for all mankind.

The Fool's French name, Le Fou, cognate with the word "fire," echoes his connection with light and energy. As the Jester himself might put it, "I am light and I travel light." (They do love to pun.) A symbol of Promethean fire, the archetypal Fool personifies the transforming power which created civilization – and which can also destroy it. His potential for creation and destruction, for order and anarchy, is reflected in the way he is presented in the old Marseilles Tarot. He is pictured walking his own way, free of all encumbrances of society, without even a path to guide him; yet he wears the conventional dress of the court jester, indicating that he holds an accepted place within the ruling order. At court he plays a unique role as the king's companion, confidant, and privileged critic. Like the Navajo trickster Coyote, the fool is accorded a special role in the social order. His presence serves the ruling powers as a constant reminder that the urge to anarchy exists in human nature and that it must be taken into account.

The maintenance of jesters at court and in the households of titled families began in ancient times and continued until the seventeenth century. This practice dramatizes the idea that we must make room for the renegade factor in ourselves and admit him to our inner court, which means psychologically we must *admit to him*. It is usually a good idea to

place our Fool out front where we can keep an eye on him. Excluded from consciousness he can play jokes on us which, although "practical," are difficult to appreciate. Accepted in our inner council, the Fool can offer us fresh ideas and new energy. If we are to have the benefit of his creative vitality, we must put up with his unconventional behavior. Without the Fool's blunt observations and wise epigrams, our inner landscape might become a sterile wasteland. Thus the belief that "to keep a fool at court wards off the evil eye" is no antiquated superstition; it represents a psychological truth of enduring value.

Another technique used in earlier times to insure society against unexpected uprisings of latent destructive urges was to set aside certain periods of universal permissiveness, such as the celebrated Feast of Fools, when all conventions were temporarily suspended. On these occasions the natural order of things was turned upside down. The most sacred rituals were parodied in obscene fashion; dignitaries of Church and State were ridiculed, and all underdogs were allowed to give vent to year-long representations of hostility, lust, and rebellion.

Today the spirit of such saturnalia survives in a watered-down form in carnivals such as Mardi Gras and Fastnacht, and to a lesser extent in Hallowe'en, New Year's Eve, April Fool's Day, circuses, parades, rodeos, rock festivals, and other events where a holiday spirit prevails. The recent eruption in our culture of black magic and increased interest in the activities of witches and warlocks indicates that we need to include the irrational in more acceptable ways.

There are many less dramatic possibilities for admitting the Fool into our lives. One of these is to admit freely to our own foolishness. Whenever we are able to do this in a conflict situation, the results are disarming. Meeting with no resistance, antagonism falls on its face, and one's adversary is left making a fist at thin air. More significant, the energy we ourselves formerly spent defending our own stupidity is now freed for more creative use. Whenever one protagonist can open his heart to admit the Fool, it usually happens that hostility is dissipated in laughter, and all parties to the conflict end up shaking their heads with Puck over the foolishness of mortal man. All in all, the Fool is a good character to consult whenever we find that our best-laid plans have gone askew, leaving us hopelessly adrift. At these times, if we listen we can hear him say with a shrug, "He who has no fixed goal can never lose his way."

As mentioned earlier, there are many versions of the Tarot. Several examples of the Tarot Fool are presented here because each of these dramatizes an important side of his complex personality. The first of these, an old Swiss card (Fig. 5) shows him as *puer aeternus*, a youth of immortal vigor — several centuries old. His wand suggests Papageno's magic flute, which could set his enemies dancing, thus dispelling their wrath. Surely a fine way to avoid disharmony and war if we can but catch the tune.

The flute also suggests that infamous trickster, the Pied Piper. (There is in fact a German deck that pictures the joker specifically as the Pied Piper followed by a pack of enchanted rats.) In a similar way, the enchanting Swiss Piper can lure us away from conventional ways of thinking and back to the children's land of fantasy and imagination. But we must beware of his magic; if we should forget to pay the piper, this Tarot Trickster could hold us prisoners in the instinctual world, dancing like rats to his tune, helpless until we have paid him his due. It behooves us to keep a good relationship with our Fool. Then, like him, we can journey freely back and forth between the worlds of airy fantasy and earthly reality.

A good example of such a working arrangement between the adult world and that of the eternal child is symbolized in the story of Peter Pan. This famous boy, like the Pied Piper, lured children away from the Establishment. Although he did not wear a fool's coxcomb and bells, Peter could fly and he liked to crow like a cock. Like the archetypal Fool, he embraced the opposites, for he had a dark shadow which he wisely kept sewn to him so that it could not get lost or forgotten.

When Peter Pan abducted Mrs. Darling's children to the Never-Never Land she was desolate, so Peter made a deal with the Establishment: Wendy could live at home most of the time on condition that she drop by the Never-Never Land once in a while to help with the spring house-cleaning. Perhaps if we welcome the Fool into our world, he will teach us to fly and will offer us similar safe-conduct trips to his world, provided of course that we help him tidy it up a bit. Obviously he needs our ordered intellect in his Never-Never Land as much as we need his vitality and creativity in our Ever-Ever Land.

The Fool's trickster aspect is indeed a tricky one. As Joseph Henderson observes, the Trickster is thoroughly amoral. He submits to no discipline and is guided wholly by his experimental attitude toward life; yet it is out of the Trickster figure that the Hero-Savior ultimately evolves. A necessary concomitant to this transformation is that the youthful Trickster must endure punishment for his hubris. Hence, to quote Henderson, "the Trickster impulse provides the strongest resistance to initiation and is one of the hardest problems education has to solve because it seems a kind of divinely sanctioned lawlessness that promises to become heroic."¹⁰ It is perhaps in long overdue recognition of the heroic potential of youth that society today tolerates unconventional dress, behavior, and even lawlessness in young people. That many older people, too, are adopting youthful dress and habits may indicate an unconscious attempt to contact in themselves an unfulfilled heroic potential.

Sometimes this unconscious attempt to contact the unfulfilled heroic potential within can erupt in strange and even violent ways. One notorious example in recent years is the attempt by a young woman called Squeaky Fromm to assassinate President Ford. Not content to play the Jester's

archetypal role as an impudent balance wheel for established rules and customs, Squeaky set out to eliminate the Establishment altogether. "It didn't go off," she reported. But this misguided young Fool did achieve immortality of sorts when a photograph of her appeared, complete with red fool's cap, on the cover of Newsweek magazine for September 15, 1975 (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10 Squeaky Fromme as The Fool

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In our journey toward individuation, the archetypal Fool often demonstrates both the resistance and the initiative inherent in his nature by influencing our lives in less drastic and more creative ways. His impulsive curiosity urges us on to impossible dreams while at the same time his playful nature tries to lure us back to the laissez-faire childhood days. Without him we would never undertake the task of self-knowledge; but with him we are always tempted to dawdle by the wayside. Since he is part of ourselves cut off from ego-consciousness, he can play tricks on our thinking mind; embarrassing slips of the tongue and convenient lapses of memory are the least of these. Sometimes his jokes, even more practical, lure us into situations where the ego would never dare.*

It seems evident that the Fool, as Trickster-Hero, can play good or bad tricks depending on one's point of view. To quote Marie Louise von Franz, such a figure "half a devil and half a saviour . . . is either destroyed, reformed, or transformed at the end of the story."⁹ In the following chapters we shall attend the Tarot Fool and/or hero throughout the twenty-one stages along the way of his transformation. Surely many miracles must take place before the mad conglomeration of energies symbolized by the prancing Jester of card zero can emerge in card twenty-one as The World, a serene dancer moving to the harmonies of the spheres.

In the Swiss deck, The Fool is called *Le Mat*, meaning literally "the dull one." Oftentimes, court fools were actually mentally retarded. Although dull in matters of intellect, they were felt to have a special relationship to the spirit. Calling such a fool "an archetypal religious figure," von Franz connects him with the *inferior function*, Jung's term for an undeveloped aspect of the psyche. In her *Lectures on Jung's Typology*, she equates the Fool with "a part of the personality, or even of humanity which remained behind and therefore still has the original wholeness of nature."¹⁰

Affectionately referred to as God's folk, or *les amis de Dieu*, such fools were cared for and cherished by society. This custom survives in a vestigial form today among country people whose "village idiot" is supported and protected by the whole town. But in more so-called civilized communities, these aberrations from the norm are no longer tolerated so that such people are shut away in institutions.

If The Fool went by his Italian name, *Il Matto* (The Mad One), he would surely be put away by our society, for insanity is a condition of the human spirit much feared today. Here too the conventional Establishment has become increasingly intolerant of behavior that deviates from whatever it has chosen to call normal. No doubt the alarming increase in the use of drugs is attributable in part to the increased rigidity of the previous genera-

*For example, my inner Fool led me into Jungian analysis one day over twenty years ago "just for one hour – to see what it was like!" I am still there, in a sense, for the journey never ends.

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About the author: Sallie Nichols taught *Symbolism of the Tarot* for trainees at the C.G. Jung Institute, Los Angeles, and lectured frequently on this subject under Jungian auspices in San Francisco, San Diego, Orange and Los Angeles. In a series of seminars entitled *A Tarot Trip into Jung's Psychology* presented at the Theosophical Center in Hollywood and elsewhere, she successfully introduced both the Tarot and Jung's concept of the archetypes to audiences relatively unfamiliar with either subject. A longtime student of Jung's psychology, Sallie Nichols had the good fortune to study at the C.G. Jung Institute, Zurich, while Jung was still alive and active.

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