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Tarot of the Future: Raising Spiritual Consciousness. Arthur Rosengarten

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Additional Keywords

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signs in Books 19 and 20 and how they are read are non-discursive knowledge and arise without the interference of the rational mind.

This is a fascinating book and an important contribution to the history of intuition in the ancient world, since Struck takes a significantly different set of texts and assumptions than previous studies of divination/intuition. There are some sections where it seems Struck is stretching definitions to some degree; decontextualizing subsequent schools of thought such as the Stoics and Neoplatonists whose understandings of divination and its purposes differed from Plato and Aristotle also seems to me somewhat problematic, at least for the non-specialist. Nonetheless, these criticisms are rather minor in comparison to the majority of the text which does not cease to hold the interest.

—Larry Swain

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TAROT OF THE FUTURE: RAISING SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS. Arthur Rosengarten. Paragon House, 2018. 326 pp. with notes, bibliography, index, and b/w and color illus. ISBN 9781557789334 (paperback) \$24.95; Kindle version available.

Wisdom, with its sense of continuity, repetition, precedent, and prudence, is the highest form of the ordinary functioning level of society. The revolution is far in the past; it is part of tradition now, and without the fifth stage of prophecy the culture reflected in the Old Testament would have nothing unique about it. For prophecy is the individualizing of the revolutionary impulse, as wisdom is the individualizing of the law, and is geared to the future as wisdom is to the past.

—Northrop Frye, *The Great Code* 125

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

—Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (qtd. in *Tarot of the Future* 153)

It is not the Fool's Journey but the Fool's *Story* (illustrated by the infinite combination of letters to form words) that affords us a mind-boggling peek at the workings of the divine mind—a creative consciousness in which patterns and formulae play a secondary role in a cauldron churning with the potentiality of all possible possibilities. This would explain the desirability to transfer the concept of each letter to cards that can easily be shuffled and grouped in nearly infinite combinations.

—Lon Milo DuQuette, *The Tarot Of Ceremonial Magick* (qtd. in Arthur Rosengarten, *Tarot and Psychology* 161)

ARTHUR ROSENGARTEN IS THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST accredited dissertation on Tarot and of *Tarot and Psychology: Spectrums of Possibility* (2000), *The Tarot of the Nine Paths* (2009), and *Tarot of the Future: Raising Spiritual Consciousness* (2018). In *Tarot and Psychology*, he details numerous fascinating case studies of the use of Tarot in clinical therapeutic practice and provides extensive information on approaches to reading the cards. Perhaps the most interesting of these address the relevance and appearance of opposition (especially in the Tarot card twos), dimensionality (memory, fantasy, body language), and directionality (cards upright or reversed) in relation to human and card interpretations. Readers of mythopoeia are also likely to find his chapter on universality of special interest because it connects the traditional cards directly to archetypes familiar to many novels: the Hermit as the wise old man, the Chariot as the Hero, and so forth. Further to the implicit connection between Tarot and personal narrative, and thus between Tarot and mythopoeia, is the understanding of the entire set of Tarot Trumps as a linear sequence about the "Fool's journey," the Fool numbered 0 being the person/character setting out on that journey, and the cards assumed to inevitably follow in order from 1 through 21. Although conventionalized in such decks as the *Rider-Waite*, the order of the Trumps has been variable ever since their fifteenth-century invention as an add-on to the suited gaming deck, so, as Rosengarten observes, this understanding seems presumptuous. So too then is the notion offered by various authors that the Trumps can be understood hierarchically in three rows of seven, with the journeying Fool on the outside.

It is in his most recent works—*The Tarot of the Nine Paths* and *Tarot of the Future*—that Rosengarten provides a solution to the apparently artificial rigidity of the linear sequential and seven-card three-tiered arrangement of the

trumps, one that is both elegant and (perhaps unintentionally) responsive to cries for change to the dated assumptions about how our stories—personal and fictional—ought to play out. Rosengarten does not mention it, but I have always found the conclusion of the Tarot Trump sequence with the image of a nude captive woman being watched by the creature symbols of the four evangelists unsatisfactory. The image evokes the infinite number of novels that likewise conclude with a woman subservient to a marriage or some other confine and under constant surveillance, or the trope of the male author and his female muse. Developing an idea about the importance of the number nine or the “Hermit effect,” that originated for him, at least in part, in the work of Angeles Arrien (135), Rosengarten added a number of trumps, including five after the World so that it is possible to lay them out in three tiers of nine with the Fool included, rather than outside, as the last card. These new cards—Well, River, Ring, Dragon, and Web—alter the connections between the cards on each tier and in the same column. The Empress (Passion) points to the Hanged Man (Surrender) and the World (Integration); the Chariot or hero to the Tower and one of the new cards, Dragon; and, most importantly, the final sequences are Strength (Lifeforce), Star (Essence), and the Great Web (Interbeing); and Hermit (Wisdom), Moon (Imagination), and Fool (Possibility).

As he writes of the possibilities opened by Tarot, rather than the inevitable endings invoked by prophecy, Rosengarten seems inspired by the same illumination that captured Northrop Frye when he spoke of the individualizing of the revolutionary impulse, but Rosengarten’s vision is colorfully prismatic rather than categorical. He wants to get down to brass tacks, as it were, helping others find their futures; for him, the revolution Tarot individualizes is that of psychology. Tarot accomplishes its goal, as other oracles do, by converting the Fool’s question into a kind of dream language that reflects the forces—which are often unconscious—at work, and showing that in every situation there is “an inner spirit trying to communicate with us” (15). He devotes most of his book to describing Tarot use in relation to air travel, albeit travel into the future than between geographical destinations, emphasizing the terminal, particularly terminal 9, the gates, the liminal, and so forth. With Tarot as our guide, he proposes, we are free to travel anywhere in our futures. Nothing is fixed about the story each of us writes in life and nothing is fixed about the tales authors of mythopoeia may tell. The possibilities are infinite.

—Emily E. Auger

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