

World Servers' Spread -- A 3-Card Reading for the Now

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October 3, 2005

For an introduction to the [World Servers' Spread](#)

When choosing the cards for this spread I kept my mind very open. Current circumstances have me doing this reading over a week before the New Moon, so this spread is much more a prognostication than an analysis of the present moment. My question is "what do Tarot University's readers need to hear about at the time of the October New Moon?"



This month I used the [Da Vinci deck](#), a present I got for myself to celebrate the coming of fall.

The cards are beautifully rendered, including many nudes in scenes reminiscent of Leonardo's known works, printed with subdued hues of reddish-brown and green.

I'm glad to say that even though [the deck](#) is fully-illustrated, very few of the cards require mental modification on my part to make them fit in with Tarot traditions (though some seem a tad obscure

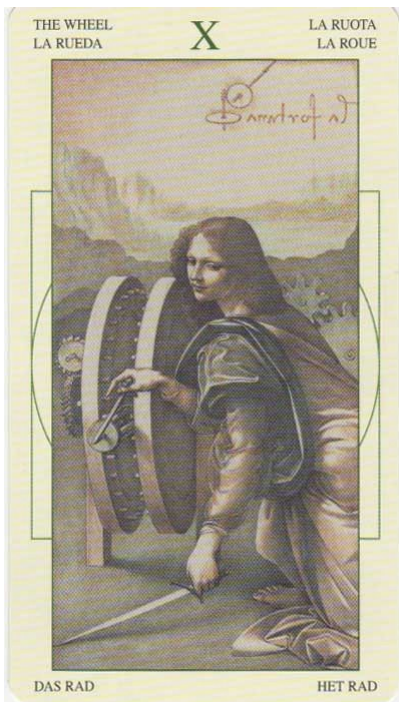
to the modern secular eye -- one has to remember that a lot of the artistic inspiration in Leonardo's times was drawn from Biblical stories).

Some of the Pip cards have his inventions worked into the action. There are wonderful little mechanical diagrams and scripts in the backgrounds of the Trumps and on the Coins, mathematical and geometric illustrations that serve as esoteric marginalia to further pique the mind. All the horses, which are

numerous, have the most marvelous personalities, and are quite contributory to the spirit of the images.

A few of the Trumps are quite innovative [*the High Priestess as Mona Lisa in a Bishop's miter; the Lovers showing both a male and female upper body embracing, but only one set of legs holding them up; the Hanged Man is actually hanged by his neck and very dead; Death sits atop a terrible war machine of Leonardo's invention*]. This deck is published by Lo Scarabeo and distributed by Llewellyn, so it shouldn't be hard to find in the States. Also see www.raretarots.com, [the Alida store](#), which carries decks from all the main Tarot publishers in Europe.

#1 - The "World" Position - The Wheel



This position represents global issues, things that affect us all together and shape the times we live in. The author of the interpretations for this deck, Rodrigo Tebani, emphasizes cyclic fluctuations, alternations and the pulse of Nature with this card. This is certainly a current reality with the [Equinox](#) having just been crossed.

Simultaneously, the reference can be to cyclical dynamics operating through culture, economics, and history. The card also points to the smaller cycles of the human psyche as each person grows and changes through time.

In every case the Wheel represents those forces that impose themselves rhythmically upon our wills and our circumstances, forcing us to acknowledge

and adapt to the greater movements that carry our little lives along. The Wheel in question could just as easily refer to the Planets circulating around the sun as the clock face that holds us in our workstations through the week. We are all embedded in Time, and we cannot either speed it up or slow it down, much as we might wish to. Do we feel like prisoners of our circumstances, or do we see circumstances as working for us?

The paradox of the Wheel is that at the rim, there is a tremendous amount of motion going on, and there's constant change as it sweeps around its circumference over and over. If one's attention is drawn to the edge of the Wheel, the potential disorientation is tremendous. It is easy to be overcome by the churning and centrifugal force that is constantly pulling on the situation. A person who has not fully thought through the consequences of identification with the ups and downs of the Wheel can get pretty beat up before they get the sense to let go and regroup on the safety of unmoving ground.

In truth, the only truly safe spot on this Wheel is at the center of the **hub**, where all the spokes come together and through which the axle passes. Once attention can arrive there, it is possible to confront the Western koan -- what is the axle of The Wheel rotating around?

The classic answer is the "Thin Spindle of Necessity", an ancient philosophical representing the single motionless point in the whole arrangement. Compare this idea to the eye of a hurricane, or the hollow center of the funnel of water running down the bathtub drain. Naming and identifying with this central principle, however you define it, puts everything back in perspective, making it crystal clear what is worthy of attention right now and what is not.

A person experiencing the Wheel card (or a globe full of struggling nations, for that matter) needs to cease reacting to all the ups and downs experienced on the surfaces of life and realize that fluctuations are natural and to be expected. The course of wisdom is to pierce below the circumstantial surfaces and identify the one Thin Spindle of Necessity that holds the Wheel in place, keeping it on the road and carrying the load. This mental discipline greatly reduces the potential for getting swept up into entirely predictable dramas, conserving energy for the journey still to be completed.

The "Fool" position: Ten Cups reversed



This position represents transitional forces that carry collective, mass causes down into the world of individual effects.

I am quite fascinated by this card in this position, because a month ago we got this same card this very place, but upright instead of reversed. At that time we emphasized the positive potentials of the card, but a warning was also issued about the kind of undertow that can appear when this Ten is not fully appreciated, when good fortune and protection are taken for granted rather than used as an opportunity to become more self-reliant and

responsible.

At this moment in history, this card might be reversed because there's an increasing feeling that the leadership of humanity's many nations are not fully prepared to meet the needs created by the rapid pace of change mentioned above. We have seen in recent months how unpreparedness for worst-case

scenarios is threatening populations, ecosystems, and economies. What are leaders for if they lead in the direction of increasing chaos and danger? How can citizens really trust that their elected officials are keeping our well being in mind in the face of such obvious failures of planning and accountability?

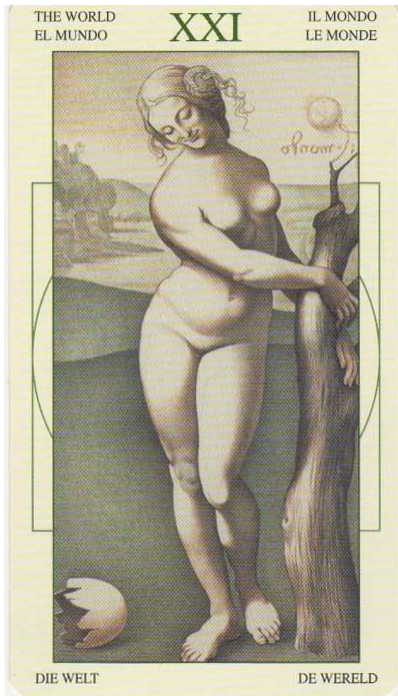
Of course, there are questions we need to be asking ourselves as well. On an individual level, persistent lapses in learning from past experience keeps the most vulnerable among us (illustrated here as a mother and child) in continuing danger while we wait for "outside forces" to provide us with solutions.

This card could be pointing to private tragedies like the petrochemicals showing up in new mothers' breast milk all over the world, or global disasters like the Gulf state fisheries being overwhelmed with nasty industrial wastes stirred up by the hurricanes and washed into our common waters. In either case, there's a feeling of helplessness expressed here, as the "sins of the Fathers" are meted out upon the children representing our collective future.

Perhaps the best way to formulate a positive message out of this card's reversal is to say: May we each become more sensitive to those less fortunate than ourselves. May we include them in our planning, and extend our safety nets to reach them, so we can shelter more of humanity and Nature from the gathering storm.

We must all get better at asking "whom can I help?" rather than "who will help me?"

The "Magus" position: World reversed



This position highlights the situation of the individual, unique in the entire world yet still tied in with the collective, a single cell having its life within the larger reality of the composite body. It has been suggested that each creature is a tiny planet, holding within our beings a link to everything in the larger Creation. If this is true, then our individual obligation right now is to become conscious of this situation, and get to work healing ourselves so the planet as a whole can come back into health and harmony as well.

This particular deck shows the lovely lady who traditionally occupies this card as a woman on the surface of the Earth, rather than as a spirit floating in a mandorla in the sky. The landscape is broad and open behind her, and half of a large broken eggshell lies at her feet. Something was recently born, released or revealed when this egg was cracked, so a sense of newness prevails. The woman looks down on the Earth affectionately while steadying herself against the trunk of a nearby tree.

Yes the card is reversed, but in the case of the World and the Sun cards, I consider that reversal is not strong enough to dim the potential of these universally benevolent forces. In the traditional symbolism of art, which Da Vinci was quite conversant with, this figure could be associated with the Virgin of the World, Sophia, the kabalistic Shekhina, Mother Church, the Holy Spirit, Great Nature, and/or the Divine Feminine. All of these associations emphasize the receptive, adaptive, infinitely powerful but quietly supportive background force that shapes and informs the "things" of this world.

In the case of the stresses we have been talking about in the previous cards, this one reminds us that within each of us resides the strength and perseverance to rally our forces and determinedly bring forth the best of ourselves to meet the need. The World card is never bad no matter where or how it falls in a spread. Just so, we must use current circumstances to demonstrate that despite the most difficult setbacks, the life force within us continues to hold us up and carry us along.

Sometimes it takes a body blow to arouse our immune systems, put us in touch with our strength and demonstrate how fast we can recover. Without being knocked off our feet from time to time, we would not know that we could survive life's surprises and eventually thrive again. Therefore I am reading this card as a provisional positive, giving each of us a pat on the back and some reassurance that "things are not quite as bad as they look right this minute". Certainly it is a refreshment to be reading the trickles of good news leaking out of the tragic stories that have played out in our Gulf States. Hopefully we can each find inspiration in the determination Nature shows, to "pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and start all over again".

World Servers' Spread, Oct 2005

For an introduction to the [World Servers' Spread](#), see Arkletter 5

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