



Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey

Sallie Nichols , Laurens van der Post (Introduction)

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Highly innovative work presenting a piercing interpretation of the tarot in terms of Jungian psychology. Through analogy with the humanities, mythology and the graphic arts, the significance of the cards is related to personal growth and individuation. The major arcana becomes a map of life, and the hero's journey becomes something that each individual can relate to the symbolism of the cards and therefore to the personal life.

Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey Details

Date : Published June 1st 1980 by Weiser Books (first published April 1st 1980)

ISBN : 9780877285151

Author : Sallie Nichols , Laurens van der Post (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 392 pages

Genre : Occult, Tarot, Psychology, Nonfiction, Spirituality

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From Reader Review Jung and Tarot: An Archetypal Journey for online ebook

Felipe Chiaramonte says

This piece should be read by everyone. Not only enthusiasts of tarot or Jung, but anyone with a will to go deep inside one's path in life.

Sallie presents an archetypal journey through the symbolic images of the Marseilles tarot deck and utilizes not only of junguian psychology, but also of art and mythology to illustrate. Her insights on the cards are great and sometimes very personal, which is also great! The good thing about her lecture is that she departs from the Marseilles cards but also roam around other types of deck, like Rider-Waite's and old-school italian decks. Also, through the book she relates a lot of the passages with junguian basic concepts like persona/shadow, animus/anima, the 4 types of personality, active imagination / sandplay etc, in an easy way to understand. It's a must read!

You won't find a complete tarot system here, tough, as there's no descriptions of the minor arcana nor the varieties of ways to read different combinations of cards nor even diverse ways of opening them.

For that reason, for a broader research on the Marseilles tarot, I would suggest "The Way of Tarot", by Alejandro Jodorowsky. There you will find a even deeper look on these cards as a whole symbolic and numeric system and also the description of diverse openings, including the "Tarot of The Hero", based on Campbell, which everyone loves. Also I would suggest to look for the "remastered" Marseilles deck that Jodorowsky produced, which is really beautiful and full of tiny symbols that were lost over the centuries of reproductions of these same cards.

Overall, Sallie's book is amazing and gives a passionate and complete view of the tarot cards, without beign hermetic and inaccessible. The association with Jung's theories is the real cream here!

Whitney Stanfield says

This is an excellent book for students of Tarot and Jung's archetypes.

Sandi says

Fascinating viewpoint on a more psychological approach to Tarot.

Laura Lee says

I refer to this book a lot. Because it has the word "tarot" in the title, it sounds like a guide to reading tarot cards, and I assume someone could use it that way. More than that, it uses the tool of the major arcana of the tarot deck to write long reflections on each of the archetypal images they represent. The entries draw on the writings of Jung, images of the archetype in art and literature. I find archetypes to be valuable concepts in writing and my copy of this book is well-used.

Marjorie Jensen says

This book had some interesting content about Jung and feminism as well as some strong connections to literature and visual art. However, Nichols (like others in the Tarot community) posits, repeatedly, that visual art is superior to books/words for inspiring creativity and imagination, and I wholly disagree with this argument. But I found her claims--as counterarguments--helpful for strengthening my own argument in favor of reading everything one can find, including the frequently maligned little white books (LWBs) that accompany Tarot decks. There is also some lazy/inaccurate writing/research at times (e.g. she claims that, unlike natural circles, squares are man-made and unnatural, and a previous library patron penciled a note about crystals in the margin next to this sentence).

Marianne says

This book is 1) extremely interesting and generated a lot of new and intriguing thoughts for me (I mean, new to me at least), 2) a product of its time (late 70s) and full of weird datedness, and factual error about science, and subtle (occasionally blatant) sexism and other unpleasant glosses on gender things (which being Jung and Tarot, gender things come up a lot). But 1) was more important than 2), by a long shot.

Alicia says

This was a good book overall but in some cases I feel like she was stretching the material to fit her thesis and not the other way around. She also does not touch on the art history behind certain images which I feel takes away from the understanding. It's very long and took me almost 3 years to get through but I would recommend this book as long as you read it with a grain of salt.

Susan says

Interesting, but only deals with the major arcana. Also, Nichols' writing is a tad repetitive. I wouldn't recommend this one as an introduction to the tarot, but it's a good supplement to any collection of books on the subject. I recommend reading Robert M. Place's wonderful book, *The Tarot: History, Symbolism, and Divination* instead.

Elaine Campbell says

There is no one definitive book about the Tarot. Throughout the centuries, each one has been written with a different slant, a particular viewpoint and even different motives. What we've got to remember is that we are approaching the Holy here. Some modern writers on the subject that are financially dependent on the sales of books tend to forget that in their haste to be "popular" with the general reading public. They're easily detected by paying visits to their websites. If the visitor sees all sorts of gewgaws and whatnots for purchase, beware. The Tarot was never meant to be a carnival attraction; nor were manufactured curio offspring (like

kewpie dolls rewarded to the winners at carnival plastic duck shooting galleries) imagined to promote a writer's career.

And that's when we turn to Sallie Nichols, for she studied at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich when Jung was still alive, and she was as devoted as possible, considering much of the origins of the Tarot are lost in historical mist, to keeping it pure and presenting it inviolate. What is the Tarot? That's easy. Ms. Nichols here quotes Jung himself on the topic: "The Tarot presents a pictorial representation of the archetypes." However, there is no evidence that Jung ever used the Tarot as a resource in analyzing his patients, as he made use of astrology for that purpose.

The author points out that the Tarot cards were never meant to be interpreted "upside-down," and many Tarot consultants do not practice this method. Besides the Major Arcana and the Suit Cards, not much was to be concluded from the rest of the deck's numbered pip cards, as the early Tarot decks did not fancily illustrate them (that came later when esoteric sects sought to use the Tarot cards to express their tenets). And, above all, there was no text. No cast in concrete definitions were attached to them, no cardinal rules set down. The Tarot cards cry out and yet they are silent. The only message they clearly offer is, each in its own way, "Take me in!" And they do not mean that in an academic, pedantic way. Leave your rational handbag at the doorstep when you approach these cards, lest they fly away, or get purposely lost in a dark corner of a faraway cupboard.

Another problem with books on Tarot is they are not very interesting. Sallie Nichols, for instance, whose book is more readable than any other I've studied, admits that writing does not come naturally or easily for her. She is an extrovert most at home in giving lectures and teaching, which is exactly what she did. Some of the most prestigious Jungian analysts in the world, and particularly those based in Southern California where Ms. Nichols resided, attended her lectures and learned of the Tarot directly from her. Some, such as James Kirsch, author of Shakespeare's Royal Self, and an extremely knowledgeable woman, Lore Zeller (wife of famed Jungian analyst Max Zeller, and head librarian of the C.G. Jung Bookstore at the Los Angeles Jung Institute until her death) are even acknowledged as having acted on an advisory level. These cards were a passion to the author which she accidentally encountered during a "dry" period in her life. She would converse with them (using the Jungian technique of creative imagination), listen to their silent attentiveness and turn to them for guidance during stressful times in her life for an understanding of them, and of herself.

The author examines and reviews the 21 cards of the Major Arcana in depth, beginning with the card that is unnumbered, therefore assigned a zero to it, that of "The Fool." And which of us escapes starting off as "The Fool" in life? The final card depicts the illumination possible at the end of the journey of individuation, a state of being and awareness very few succeed in achieving. And then we once again confront The Fool, who is saying to us all: "Well, now that we have reached enlightenment, let's start all over again." The planet keeps on revolving around itself and the sun. And so do we.

If the reader is not familiar with the works of C.G. Jung, not to worry. Ms. Nichols does an exemplary job of explaining Jungian analytical psychology to the layman. She also explains spiritual numerology (numbers one through nine) that I found particularly informative. And then there are the archetypal images themselves. What a parade! From the beginning Fool with his knapsack and dog, through the various phenomenon we encounter and become in life: the Magician, the Hermit, the Heavenly Alchemist, even the Devil...they're all here. And each and every one of us is somewhere and everywhere in those cards.

As for the origin of the Tarot, there are many theories. But the only valid, provable one is that they owe their origin to the Albigenses, a Gnostic sect which flourished in Provence in the 12th century. As Ms. Nichols states, in my opinion with just conviction, "It is felt they were probably smuggled into the Tarot as a veiled communications of ideas at variance with the established Church." Remember, the Albigenses Cathars were horribly persecuted and ultimately exterminated. "Catharism disappeared from the northern Italian cities after the 1260s, under pressure from the Inquisition." (Wikipedia)

The second possible theory is that the Major Arcana cards are adaptations of illustrations from Petrarch's Sonnets to Laura (this is the theory of writer Paul Huson).

I first read this edition shortly after it was published in 1980. I was living in Pasadena, California at the time and knew that Sallie Nichols resided in Santa Monica, not far away. I also learned that she was available to give private readings; however, when I telephoned her home to make an appointment, the phone was answered by a man I judged to be in his mid-'20s to late '30s. I told him I wished to speak to Ms. Nichols and why. He told me that she had recently died. Of course, I was very flustered that through my unawareness of her death, I had added salt to the wound of grieving. I apologized for my call, and the man concluded by comforting me more than I him, assuring me that my telephone call was "all right." Yes, he did make me feel better. But I was very sad that we had lost such a sincere and knowledgeable Tarot pioneer.

Oliver Ho says

Re-read: Got more out of the book the second time around. I'll definitely read it again.

Another interesting tarot book--I particularly liked how this one shied away from being new age-y and focused instead on the psychological interpretations of the major arcana, which were similar to Rachael Pollock's "78 Degrees of Wisdom" in many ways (in particular how both books described the major arcana as representing a psychological process of growth and development). The style is associative and digressive, bringing in various subjects from art and mythology around the world, but I liked that sort of rambling discussion.

Michael Neal says

Solid Jungian material on the symbolism of the Tarot of Marseilles.

Chaeya says

If you read tarot or work with tarot cards, this is an interesting book to give you some deeper insight into the cards, especially if you enjoy archetypes as much as I do. You'll find that as you go through life, there are recurring themes which are prevalent, and in using the Jung and Tarot, if you find yourself attracted to certain cards of the Major Arcana, it will give you some deeper insight into your self.

Note: This is not a book to buy and leaf through for an explanation on the cards while you're doing a reading. It isn't that kind of book, nor do I think one should give it poor review simply because they failed to understand or investigate the nature of this book. Later on, you can refer to some of the things in regards to a reading.

Teleri says

One of my absolute favorite Tarot books. I wish I hadn't lost my copy & intend to replace it. I wish it would come out on Kindle...I first read a friend's borrowed copy when it came out in the 80's. I finally snagged my own copy in the 90's...and lost it with all my stuff in 2004 when I became homeless. It's on my "to replace soon" list!

Kelly says

This book was incredible! The concepts expressed in this book are applicable to anyone on any kind of spiritual path. It has also deepened my respect and understanding for the figures of the Major Arcana. Highly recommended!

Lara Thompson says

Very rich exploration of the major arcana, full of symbolism, mythology, art, told in a friendly voice. The author presents many ideas of Jung as they appear naturally in the cards. Not every card has a clear connection and none is forced; other cards do or have several and these are offered alongside other possible interpretations. Never is only one option given, fantastic for inner exploration via the cards with this book as guide. Shame only that she neglects the minor arcana.
