



Deal with it

How Modern Practitioners Are Changing Tarot

Yes, I am aware that the title was an unforgivably bad pun. Won't happen again. Probably.

Who the Hell is this guy?

ONLINE

I'm Davezilla.

I've been online a while
Sued for my blog
In Wired magazine (2X)
Wikipedia page
Urban Dictionary

CAREER

Tropical fish dealer
Notary for a cemetery
Web developer
Brand strategist
Illustrator
Author
Tarot designer

CREDS

Eclectic Wicca
American Tradcraft
Discordianism
Chaos Magick
Palo Mayombe
Lukumí



Why am I qualified to talk about this?

Tarot of the Unexplained

- Cryptids
- Ghosts
- Fortean phenomena
- Portals
- Paranormal events
- Lots of High Weirdness



Deal with

ing Tarot

Current Project: **Feral Path Tarot**

- ▶ **Mat Auryn**
- ▶ **Davezilla**
- ▶ **Ivo Dominguez Jr.**
- ▶ **Storm Faerywolf**
- ▶ **Thumper Forge**
- ▶ **Mambo Fredericka**
- ▶ **Jesse Hathaway-Diaz**
- ▶ **Devin Hunter**
- ▶ **Calypso Inaru**
- ▶ **Jason Mankey**
- ▶ **Lisa Morris**
- ▶ **Nathan King**
- ▶ **Blake Malliway**
- ▶ **Ọmọlótìwà**
- ▶ **seaN**
- ▶ **Mhara Starling**
- ▶ **Benjamin Stimpson**
- ▶ **Katy Swallow**
- ▶ **John E.L. Tenney**
- ▶ **Rachel True**
- ▶ **Matthew Venus**
- ▶ **Aidan Wachter**
- ▶ **Laura Tempest-Zakroff**
- ▶ **And so many more!**



Agenda

1. Some quick tarot research from Pew
2. Is astrology to blame?
3. Celebrity and media influence
4. Rise of the Tarot Collector
5. Changing Archetypes
6. Inclusion and Diversity
7. Rejecting Traditions
8. Jungian influence
9. Discussion

According to the latest Pew Research...

30%

of Americans consult tarot, astrology, or fortune tellers at least once per year.

SOURCE: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/05/21/3-in-10-americans-consult-astrology-tarot-cards-or-fortune-tellers/>

Tarot got big in the 21st Century

\$1.2B

Tarot is now a \$1.7 billion dollar industry. And growing.

SOURCE: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/05/21/3-in-10-americans-consult-astrology-tarot-cards-or-fortune-tellers/>

The tea is...

43%

2SLGBTQIA individuals are most likely to consult or use tarot or astrology (43%) with queer women being most likely to consult (63%) compared to queer men (40%)

SOURCE: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/05/21/3-in-10-americans-consult-astrology-tarot-cards-or-fortune-tellers/>

What now?

+10%

Atheists showed the greatest increase in belief astrology or tarot (from 3% in December 2017 to 13% in October 2024)

SOURCE: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/05/21/3-in-10-americans-consult-astrology-tarot-cards-or-fortune-tellers/>

If LGBT, Hispanic, and Black Christians are the most likely to consult tarot, why have they been among the least represented groups in tarot?

Is Astrology to Blame?

Over 90 dates for the Age of Aquarius have been given

- IAU says 2600 CE
- The '60s counterculture movement says the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions in 2020, or between 2011–2012
- Old systems are being uprooted, and that includes tarot

Is Astrology to Blame?

Carl Jung viewed the Age of Aquarius as **“a turbulent transition from the Christian Age of Pisces.”** He warned it would be a psychologically demanding period that forces humanity to confront its shadow (evil and suppressed desires) rather than projecting it outward.

Movies that rely on tarot / imagery in the plot

Touch of Evil (1958)

Cléo from 5 to 7 (1962)

Cover Up (1972)

Live and Let Die (1973)

The Exorcist III (1990)

Dead Alive (1992)

The Craft (1996)

The Red Violin (1998)

The Ninth Gate (1999)

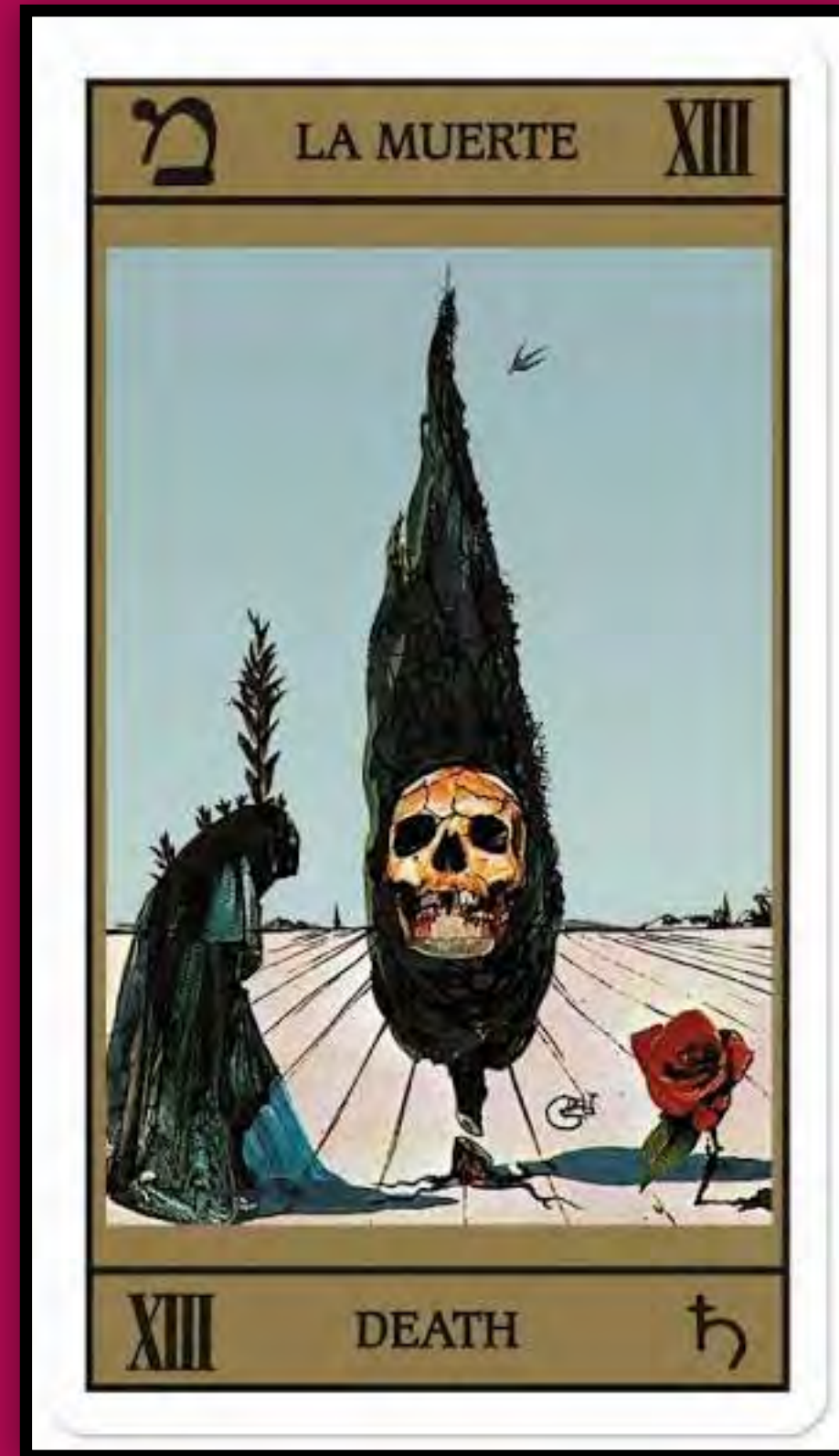
Tamara (2005)

The Mortal Instruments: City of
Bones (2013)

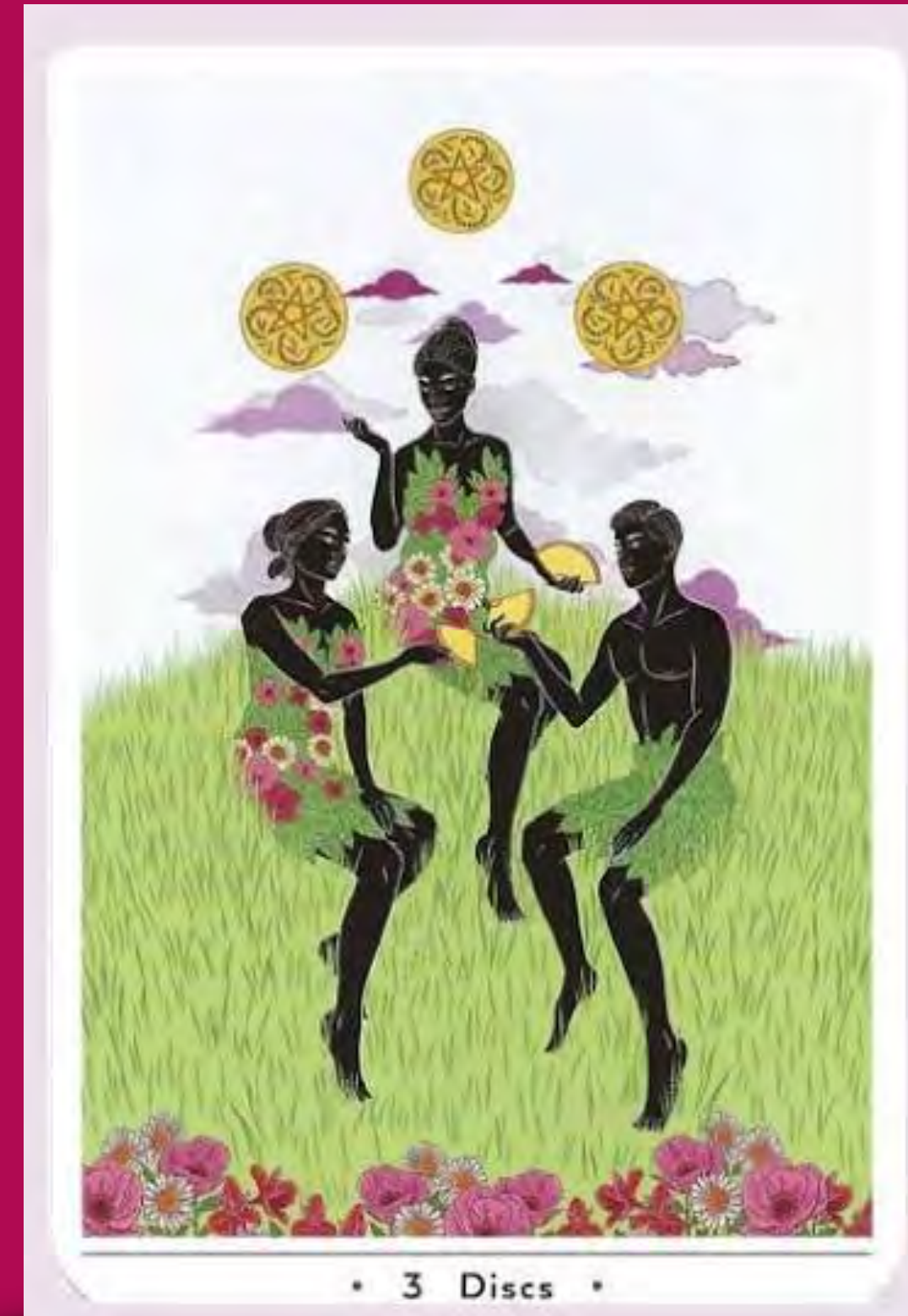
Tarot (2024)



Celebrity Tarot Decks



Dali. Tarot
Salvador Dali



True Heart Intuitive Tarot
Rachel True



Tarot del Toro
Guillermo del Toro



Cat full of Spiders
Christina Ricci

And then there's this one...



Britney Spears Oracle

Britney Spears



Rise of the Tarot Collectors

- Most of the \$1.2B market is driven by aesthetics
- R/Tarot agrees that many readers collect to see different interpretations of a card or spread
- Two major categories of collectors:
 - **Collectors:** (own 10–30 decks), but 1–5 working decks
 - **Inspiration Seekers:** buy decks for journaling, creative writing prompts, and studying symbolism

Tarot Deck Collection

View All By Condition By Publisher By Author By Illustrator

DECK TITLE	PUBLISHER	CONDITION	AUTHOR	ILLUSTRATOR	BOOK	TYPE	
777 Cabalistic Correspondence Cards	SELF-PUBLISHED	VERY WORN	Lance Reynard	Lance Reynard	NONE	ORACLE	
Aleister Crowley Thoth Tarot Deck	US GAMES SYSTEMS	WORN	Aleister Crowley	Lady Freida Harris	BOOKLET	TAROT	
AOS Tarot	STRANGE ATTRACTOR	SLIGHTLY WORN	Austin Osman Spare	Austin Osman Spare	BOOKLET	TAROT	
Aquarian Tarot	US GAMES SYSTEMS	WORN	David Palladini	David Palladini	BOOKLET	TAROT	
Archeo, The: Personal Archetype Cards	LLEWELYN	NEW	Nick Bantock	Nick Bantock	MINI BOOK	ORACLE	
Black Tarot, The	DA BRIGH	NEW	Victoria Ivanova	Victoria Ivanova	MINI BOOK	TAROT	
Chinese Five Elements Oracle, The	HAY HOUSE	NEW	Vicki Iskandar	Candice Soon	MINI BOOK	ORACLE	
Christina Ricci's Cat Full of Spiders	INSIGHT EDITIONS	SLIGHTLY WORN	Christina Ricci + Felipe Flores	Felipe Flores	MINI BOOK	TAROT	
Conjure Cards	WEISER	NEW	Jake Richards	Jake Richards	BOOKLET	OTHER	
Daemon Tarot, The	STERLING ETHOS	NEW	Arianna Osbourne	Louis Breton	FULL BOOK	ORACLE	
Deviant Moon Tarot	US GAMES SYSTEMS	SLIGHTLY WORN	Patrick Valenza	Patrick Valenza	BOOKLET	TAROT	
Egyptian Art Nouveau Tarot	LO SCARABEO	SLIGHTLY WORN	Jaymi Elford	Giulia F. Massaglia	MINI BOOK	TAROT	
Faeries Oracle, The	FIRESIDE	SLIGHTLY WORN	Brian Froud, Jessica MacBeth	Brian Froud	FULL BOOK	TAROT	
Hedgewitch Tarot, The	LLEWELYN	SLIGHTLY WORN	Tudorbeth	Angela Rizza	FULL BOOK	TAROT	
Hermes Playing Card Oracle	HERMES PUBLICATIONS	NEW	Robert M. Place	Robert M. Place	BOOKLET	ORACLE	
Hexen 2.0	COSMOGENESIS	NEW	Suzanne Treister	Suzanne Treister	PAMPHLET	TAROT	
John Bauer Tarot	LO SCARABEO	NEW	Unknown	John Bauer	BOOKLET	TAROT	
Le Tarot Astrologique	VIEUXMONDEEXPRESS	NEW	Georges Muchery	Henri Armengol	BOOKLET	ORACLE	

Changing Archetypes?

- Is RWS the end-all be-all? No. It is by far the most popular. 100 million copies in 20 countries.
- **The archetypes are correct**, but some of the **details may not be relevant** to all of us and in some cases are offensive to some.

Overt Christian Imagery in the RWS



SOURCE: <https://medium.com/@scalia.june/your-tarot-decks-more-christian-than-you-thought-representations-of-the-four-evangelists-in-the-a77e38d39da6>

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Overt Christian Imagery in the RWS



Christ in Majesty, Bruchsal Codex, 1220.



Ezekiel's vision. Artist unknown, 17th century.



The World Card,
Pamela Colman-Smith, 1909

SOURCE: <https://medium.com/@scalia.june/your-tarot-decks-more-christian-than-you-thought-representations-of-the-four-evangelists-in-the-a77e38d39da6>

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The CIS male/female imagery



Pixie's artwork was beautiful, however...



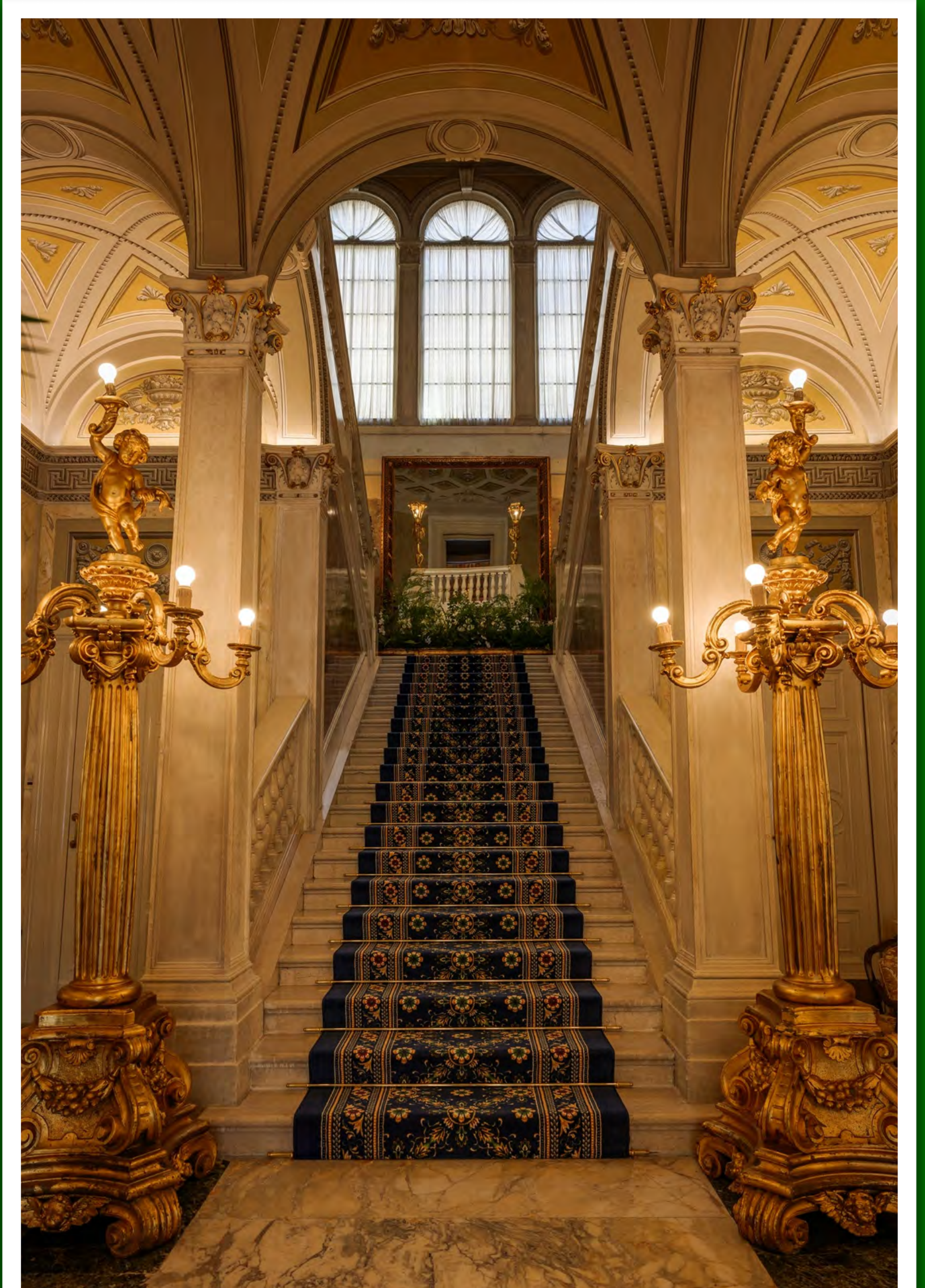


Diversity and Inclusion

Traditionally, the Court cards are very WHITE

The original courts represented ages, complexion, gender—even hair color

BECAUSE wealthy, white European families were financing the creation of the first decks



Busca-Serbelloni Family Villa

The Suits have changed

- In the older European decks, the suits represent social classes—not descriptions of the earth. More about social role and estate than “spark of creative fire.”
- **Cups** were linked to the Clergy
- **Wands** were linked to the working or peasant class
- **Coins** were linked to high finance or the bourgeoisie
- **Swords** were linked to the Military

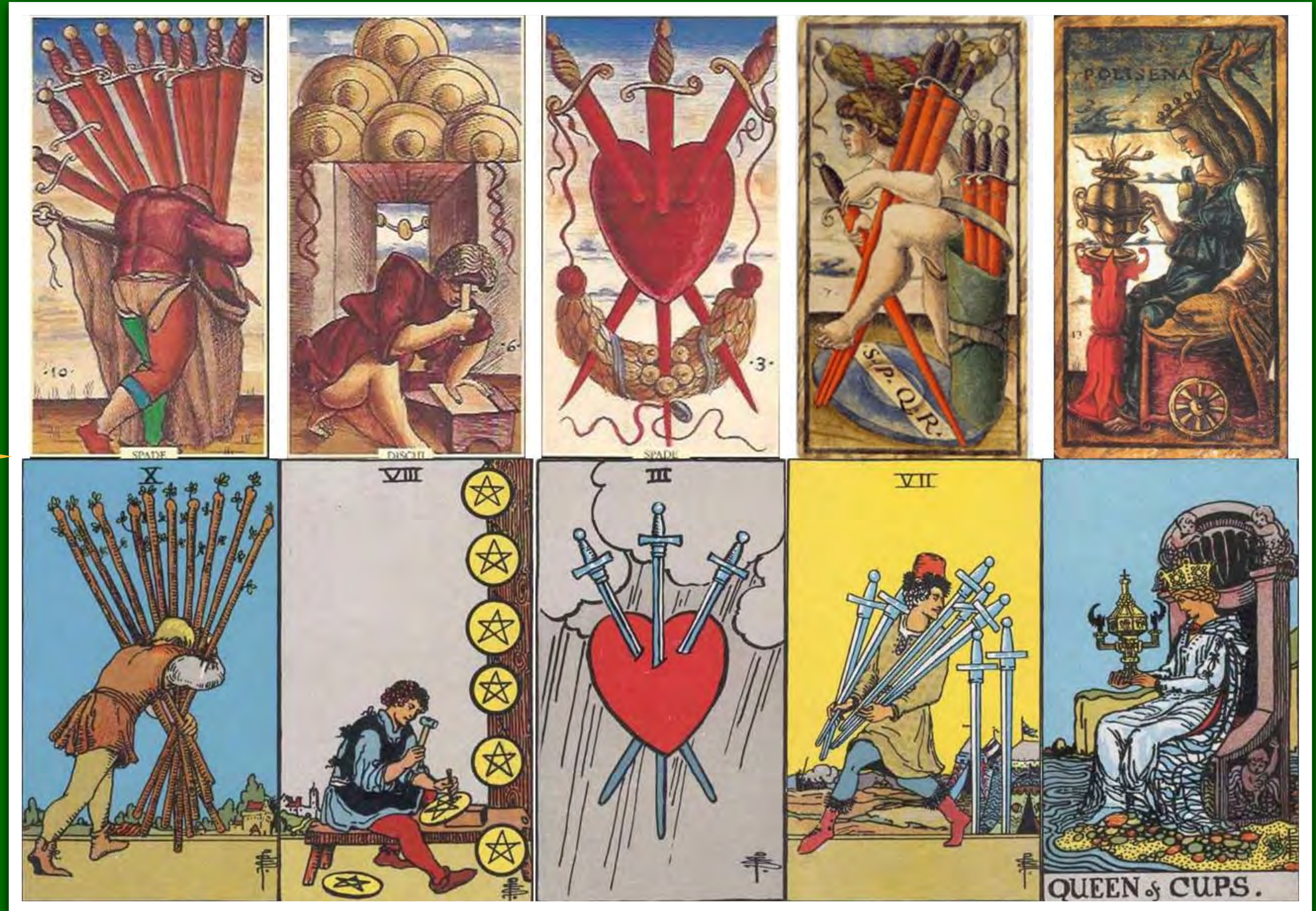
The Suits have changed

Old decks like the Sola Busca feature literal historical nobility alongside heroes of antiquity.

- The main “tarot families” of Europe
- Visconti and Sforza families
- Busca-Serbelloni families
- Tarot de Marseilles is a different story



**The Sola Busca
deck was highly
influential on
Arthur Waite and
Pamela Colman-
Smith**

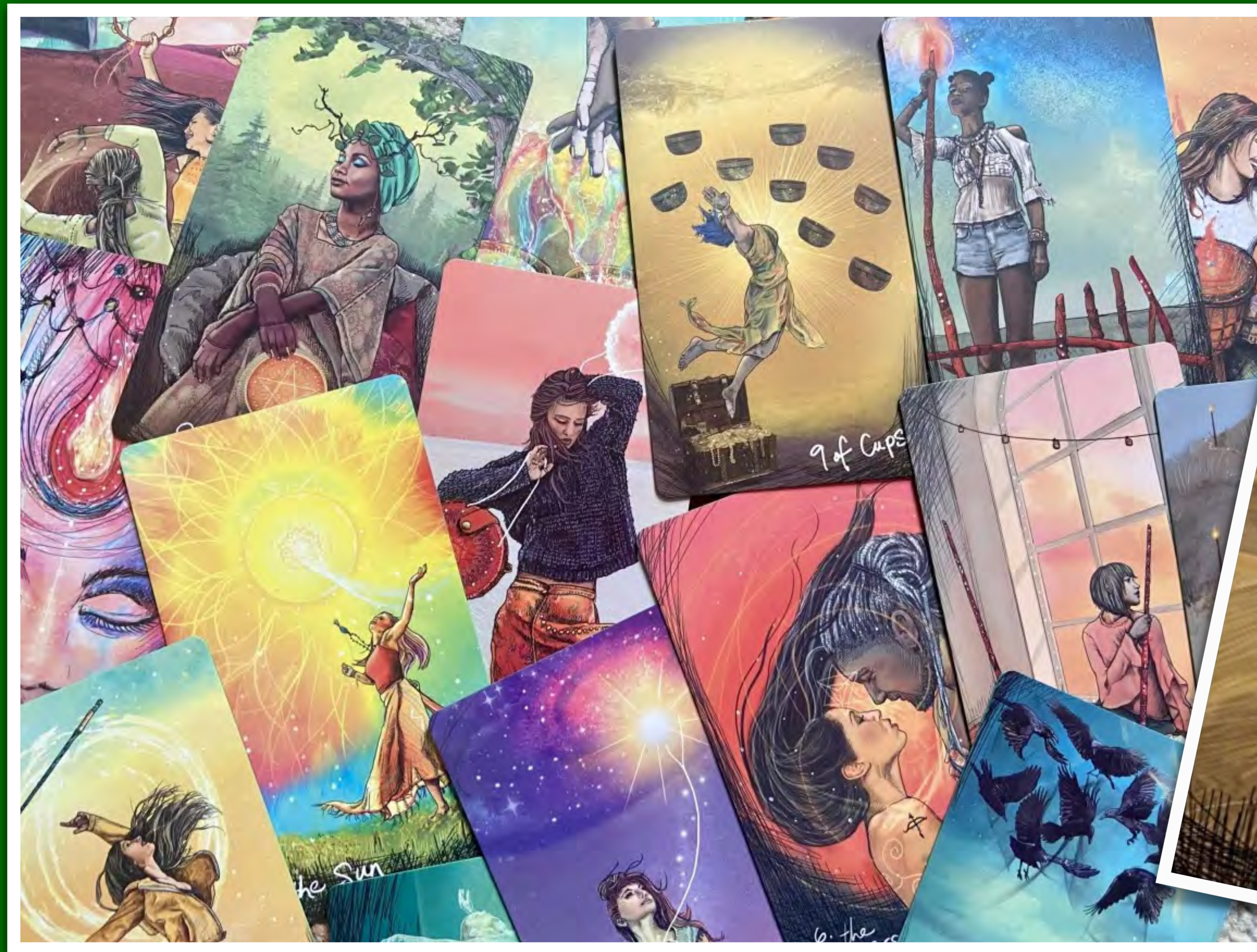


The Suits have changed

- Pages, Knights, Queens, and Kings now seen as creative shorthands for levels of skill, maturity, or modes of expression in the suits
- Queer-friendly, BIPOC, multicultural decks, and accessible decks are becoming far more common
- Let's look at some!



Tarot of the Cosmic Seed, by Lalanina Simone



Light Seers Tarot, by Chris-Anne





Accessible Tarot!



The Tarot Garden Braille Service



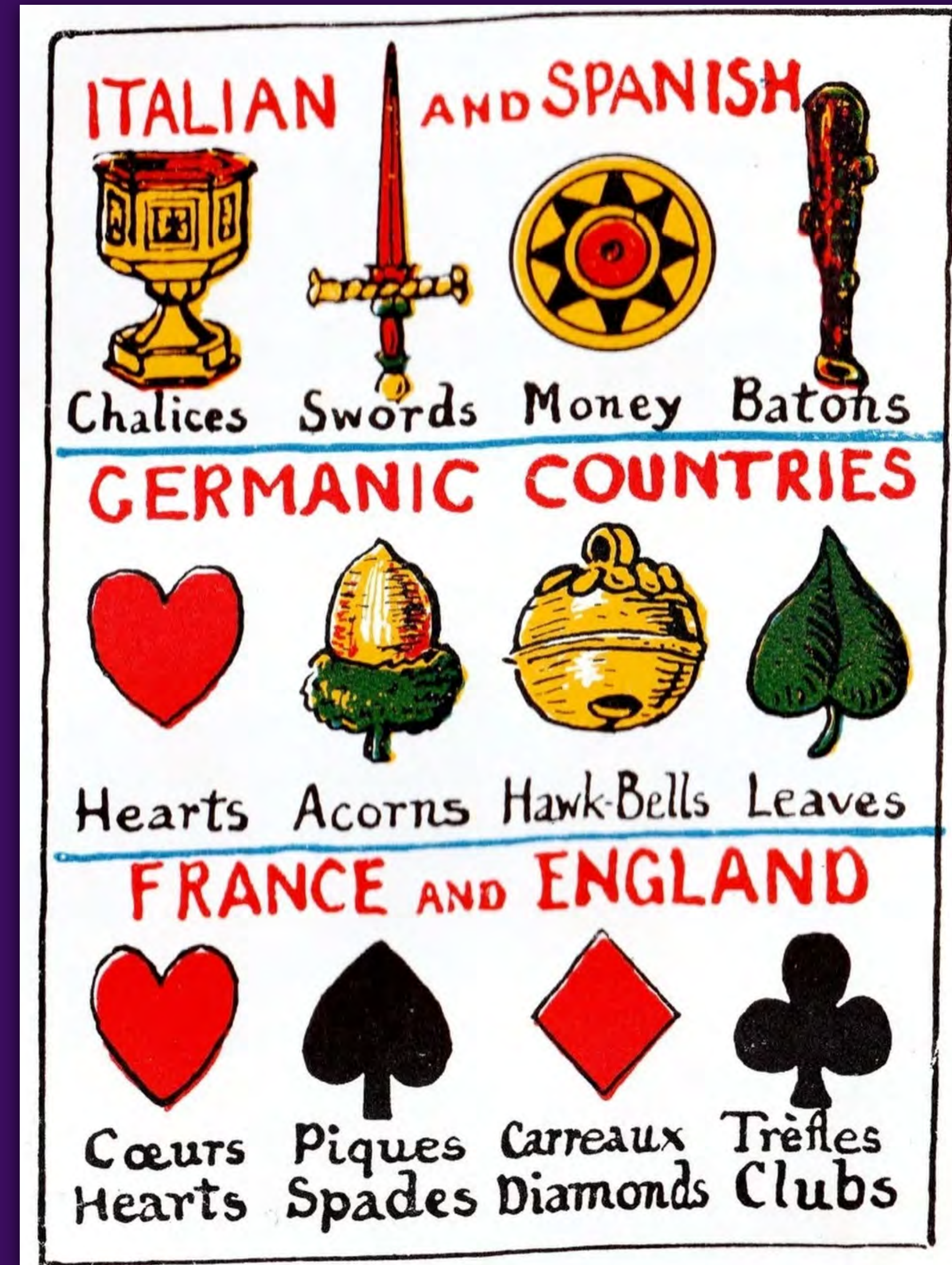
Tarotrial Tarot Training Deck, by Pamela Coe



As a result, we see decks that completely do away with 15th Century imagery.

Rejecting the courts

- Many designers are outright rejecting the court cards and even more so, the suits.
- The suits were not what we know today.



How have artists messed with the suits?

- **Numinous:** cups = vials ; swords = bells; wands = candles; pentacles = tomes
- **Blood Moon:** cups = songs; swords = dreams; wands = skins; pentacles = honey
- **Forest of Enchantment:** cups = visions; swords = challenges; wands = spells; pentacles = boons
- **Tarot Fauna:** torches = wands; shells = cups; feathers = swords; rocks = pentacles
- **The Halloween Tarot:** Ghosts = Cups; Bats = swords; Imps = wands; and Pumpkins = pentacles

The suits can be replaced with almost any series of items—as long as they match the expected elements or properties

How have artists messed with the court cards?

- **Tarot of the Unexplained:** Pages = Fans; Knights = Hunters; Queens = Advocates; Kings = Skeptics
- **Cosmic Seed Tarot:** Pages = Messengers; Knights = Action; Queens = Nurturer; Kings = Mastery
- **Numinous:** Pages = Dreamer; Knights = Explorer; Queens = Creator; Kings = Mystic
- **The Wild Unknown Tarot:** Pages = Son; Knights = Daughter; Queens = Mother; Kings = Father

+10%

**We've seen a progression from
the court cards representing**

- Atheists showed the greatest increase in belief and consultation via astrology or tarot (from 3% in December 2017 to 13% in October 2024)
- social classes to descriptions of
people, to stages of mastery or
initiation**

Jungian psychology + Joseph Campbell's work

- **Jungian psychology maps neatly to tarot.** But also to astrology, brand strategy, and Hollywood screenplays.
- **Nichols and Greer popularized the “Fool’s Journey”** as psychological development, with courts as personality types
- **And everyone is misusing Joseph Campbell’s work.** The templating of the Hero’s Journey is the opposite of what Campbell intended.

Final Thoughts

- Tarot cards are changing, but it's getting better—not worse.
- Deck creators are opting for diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility
- Deck creators are experimenting, exploring, and evolving the tradition and what tarot means
- So where is tarot headed?

The Future of Tarot

- More cultural representation
- Less universal symbolism — more personal symbolism
- Smaller publishers
- Creator-owned decks
- AI-assisted design
- Better accessibility
- More experimentation
- A possible tarot bubble where it loses broad appeal

Q&A