

The Esoteric Tarot Scene at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Introduction

In the period 2002 to 2008 I wrote a regular column for TPC with tarot and cartomancy deck-reviews. During these six years it came to a total of 70-80 reviews. Already when I started collecting tarot- and cartomantic decks and -literature back in the 1970's, I decided that it was my aim to document what happened in this area during the 20th century. We are now in the 21st century and also in a new Millennium and I could stop collecting everything tarot. In many ways I was relieved, tarot had, incredibly, reached a level where it was no longer possible to document it in the degree of completeness I wanted; the large tarot factories spit one deck out after another in a steady stream, and at the same time private publishing had become easier than ever. Every tarotist with even the slightest artistic abilities wanted to publish her own tarot deck and many actually did. Who, in 1970, would have believed that it could come to that? When Decker and Dummett wrote their excellent work, '*A History of the Occult Tarot*', back in 2002, their history ended in 1970 and they acknowledged, that after that year they already could no longer keep track of the flood of tarot events, authors, decks, concepts, ideas, freaks, readers... To find the items was no longer the challenge, that it had been; easy admission to on-line connections, auctions, sellers and other collectors substituted the old fashioned way up to the 1990's, where a collector had to build up a network of like-minded, sending by post lousy b&w photocopies, as copies were then, offering exchanges for this and that pack. Once having found a source for an unusual deck, 5-6 packs were bought to build up a reasonable selection of exchange material, like playing card collectors had done it for years.

Commercialism crept in. Stanley Gibbons in London bought up collections of playing cards, which also included tarot- and cartomancy packs, and put a price on them. The German collectors, who turned up at my door from time to time, would no longer accept the former deck-for-deck exchanges. The decks should be given a defined value, so they could be sure that they were not cheated. The esoteric tarot, initiated by the French magicians in the 18th century and followed up by British esoteric orders like '*The Golden Dawn*', had lived a peaceful and limited life in dedicated groups up to the 1970's, when tarot suddenly became mainstream. During the 1960's and 70's, the flower-power- and hippie generation discovered tarot as a tool, they could use in several ways: to communicate, to natter around in so-called 'card readings' which became a popular enterprise. Entrepreneur people saw the light: this was an area, which eventually could be capitalized on. Stuart R. Kaplan of USGames Inc. was the first to see it and his success caused others to follow with more or less luck. I was in the midst of this, when I started collecting, and at this time my first book on tarot was published in 1975.

With the emergence of the Internet it became possible for former small tarot groups to be organized and to grow. It became easier to communicate for their mem; bulletin boards and discussion groups were formed and followed by blogs. At the end of the 20th century there were two large tarot factories on the scene, and an endless number of publishers, who had included tarot books and -cards in their publication programmes. And then there was a large undergrowth of people, who aimed at self-publishing their works. Tarot was no longer reserved locally for French, British and American tarotists. National tarot groups like *T.A.B.I* (Tarot Association of the British Isles) and *American Tarot Society* (ATS) were followed by International Groups. *The International Tarot Society* (ITS), was founded and presided in 1996 by Janet Berres (USA) and run three successful International attended congresses, until it had to close down in 2003, due to economical problems in the wake of the 9.11 attack, which caused the 2001 congress to be postponed until 2002. In 2002, the Australian 'Association of Tarot Studies' (ATS) was initiated by Jean-Michel David, who published a monthly newsletter, arranged several local and International congresses, followed up on the 'lifetime award' initiated and formerly given tree times by ITS, published a couple of books, including my own '*The Story of the Waite-Smith Tarot*' until he in 2013 decided to withdraw from these activities.

The latest shot on tree is '*Tarot Professionals*' founded in 2008 by British Marcus Katz and now run together with Tali Goodwin. Due to an effective, not to say aggressive promotion on all media: website, facebook, twitter.., along with being present at tarot events the world over, running a yearly '*Tarot Day*' and the so-called '*Tarot Town*' (which claims to have more than 10.000 participants!) and by offering activities themselves: workshops, congresses (interesting to note that the September 2013 CON in GB attracted only ??? out of those 10.000!), a quarterly magazine ('*Tarosophist International*' of 40-60 pages) and other publications, the commercial minded organization do their best to attract card-reading members. A recent asset is to promote the current trend of the so-called Lenormand decks, a parlour game which was popular from the late 1880's and into the early 19th century, a trend many USA-tarotists have been attracted to and is attempting to intellectualize. Maybe we have reached the limit, where there really is no more to write about tarot and other areas then have to be explored to keep the money stream going?

In December 2012, on the day the Maya's prognosticated being the 'End of the World', I signed a contract with Roskilde University Library, donating them my entire collection of tarot- and cartomancy decks and related library. Right now when I write this, the transfer of the collection has begun. Unlike other collectors, like USGames' Stuart Kaplan, who advocate a concept that collections should be split up (read 'sold') so that items can be circulated to new collectors,. I am of the opinion, that my collection's value lies in its completeness, covering the entire 20th Century, as it does.

We have not seen many mentions of esoteric tarot decks lately in TPC, and the few are mainly descriptions of mainstream products from the tarot factories. I have chosen four recent items to represent the early 21st century to the readers. None of these are mainstream products:

- a dvd presenting a New York tarotist, -tarot -reader-poet -word-linguist/-equilibrist,
- a book published by the aforementioned '*Tarot Professionals*' dealing with 'Waite's Second Tarot',
- a British art-concept, which developed into an extraordinary tarot deck,
- a self-published USA-tarot deck.

tarology - the poetics of tarot

'tarology - the poetics of tarot' is a film by Chris Deleo and Kimberlie Naughton which, in documentary form describes parts of New York as seen by a poet and through a Marseilles-tarot pattern. The poet is Enrique Enriquez, born in Caracas 1969, and now strolling through New York streets and alleys, placing a tarot card or a couple of them here and there: on fences, walls, tubes. He talks about them, describes their images, their artwork and their lines (tarot to him is the image itself, it's details, even the letters in the title, not the traditional symbology, which during the last centuries have been attached to it). He comments the cards, meets with small groups, children in parks, in cafés, in libraries and explains, discusses, points out, find similarities in streets iconography like posters, and in patterns in fences. Makes anagrams out of the titles; moves around with the letters. His tarot deck is the simple Marseille pattern, originated back in 1650. No fancy modern artistic interpretations except a short glimpse of a Waite-Smith Tarot (which in the end texts is credited to USGames, with the remark that further reproduction is forbidden!). The about 80 minutes the film takes are interspersed with short interviews with other tarotists, tarotologs, tarosophists...whatever you want to call them (maybe 'tarosophists' should be avoided, due to their trademarking?).

How can a tour-de-force like that be reviewed? You have to see the film yourself, definitely, if you at all have any interest in esoteric tarot at the beginning of the 21st century! Additionally, there are quite a number of extras on the dvd: interviews with the creme-de-la-creme of modern tarotists. The majority of those, who have been known for years, and who essentially have not much new to say, and some very sensible people, who have emerged during the last 10 years, and then, of course, some who seem to be talking nonsense to anyone, except themselves. That's the way it is, when covering a wide aspect.

If you, after having seen the film, happen to become of a fan of Enriquez' contemporary tarot concept, there is more



to find in a couple of books too, published by 'Eyecorner Press': The first book I encountered had the title: 'TAROLOGY - YL -WY EL/waI//eI/ VOYELLE'; a title illustrating Enriquez' word equilibrium. I must admit, that when first I skimmed it's 230 pages, it was sheer gibberish to me, but after

having seen the film, it makes a lot more sense. Still, it is not for mainstream tarotists, I'm afraid. The two other books are quite different; during years Enrique Enriquez interviewed quite a number of tarotists, authors, artists and others related to tarot for his website, mainly Americans and about 50 of them (some of them are the same persons, who are presented on the extra material on the DVD). It's a huge work in two volumes, totalling about 660 pages. A work of that scope can, of course, not be critically and justly reviewed. I have clearly my favourites in some interesting persons, who have something to say; there is a number of interviews, which I'll call neutral, not of much interest though. And, yes, of course, in the lower end, a lot of nonsense talk, but apparently these people have an audience out there; otherwise they would not have been included. In general, Enriquez' interviews are relevant and he ask relevant questions. Highly recommended, if you want a survey of what is going on at the tarot scene at the beginning of the 21st century.



Abiding in the Sanctuary

Back in about 1993 I came across a set of 23 black&white illustrations which puzzled me. Several of the images could obviously be related to a tarot major, but not them all. Beneath the images they were numbered Plate 0 followed by Plate XI through Plate XXXII. 21 of them carried the signature JBT, the last two were signed 'Wilfried Pippet'. I put them away, but when I in 1995 came across them again, I asked Professor Michael Dummett about them. He did not know them either, but identified the JBT-signature as the British artist, John B. Trinick. In 2000 he took up the correspondence again, now with the knowledge, that this set was made around 1923 for use in Waite's Rosicrucian Order. The first time any of the images in recent years appeared in print was in Decker & Dummett's *'The History of the Occult Tarot 1870-1970'* (Duckworth 2002) where twelve of them were rendered under the name of 'Waite's Second Tarot'. Later I rendered seven of them in my *'The Story of the Waite-Smith Tarot'* (2006).

In 2011 the Trinick/Pippet illustrations are again in print. This time all of them, in both black and white and colour. They appear in a book with the title *'Abiding in the Sanctuary'* and subtitled *'The Waite-Trinick Tarot - A Christian Mystical Tarot (1917-1923)'*. The authors are Tali Goodwin and Marcus Katz and there is a preface by Mary Greer. I'm sorry to say it but this book is an example of how an otherwise well intended and researched project can end up being presented as a disasterly designed book. I'm familiar with this problem myself, my own carefully designed book *'The Story of the Waite-Smith Tarot'* suffered the same destiny, when the publisher did not take the needed precautions, when sending the printfile off to the printer.

'Abiding in the Sanctuary' is a large size book with a shiny dust cover depicting the figure on plate XXII (the Empress). Already there I become suspicious of this book: a misspelling of Goodwin's name. Beneath the dust cover there is a black linen hard cover with no print at all, not even a title on the spine. On the dust cover flaps we find portraits of the two authors. Opening the book, the first we see - no, not the title page - but an eye-catching advertising list of twelve other publications the authors are involved with; four of them not yet published at that time. Then comes the title page; the misspelling of Goodwin's name continues here (these shall prove not to be the only typing/misspelling flaws throughout the entire book, as well as a number of 'orphan lines' show up). On the next page, the authors names are repeated, plus a dedication to *'Anistita, The Priestess of Argenteum Astrum'*. (here I become confused: *'The Silver Star'* being a Crowley controlled magical order. Crowley/Waite were not exactly buddies).

After a list of contents, Mary Greer's four pages preface appears and then another annoyance creeps in; the text block is too wide, the margins so narrow, that the left page throughout the entire book can only be read when pressed down. The book can simply not be opened up flat. The paper is much too heavy and so glossy,

that pencil notes can not be made. Very inconvenient, when I have to take notes on the pc: holding the book open with one hand, typing with the other. A question comes up right here: On page 10 there is a photo of a group of 16 men. Who are they? I have to go to the end of the book to find a list of illustrations. Why do the photos not have titles directly under them?

Following, Marcus Katz explains to the reader, how he via ebay found an incomplete set (20) of the b&w plates on plain paper and 16 coloured images on laminated Kodak paper, and how he '*burst in tears*' when opening the package. This was so great a sensation and such an enormous research project to manage, that it let to him having regular '*visionary experiences*' during the nights. Well... The ebay seller claimed to have bought them along with a pile of books. Not exactly a dependable provenance. Throughout the entire book the authors present the coloured images as being the original images and claim that the b&w plates were made afterwards. On page 24, Goodwin writes for example: '*They were likely designed to be hung in a temple and a set of plates were created from the images for personal study by the members of the FRC*'. This is, however, contradicted by a preceding statement re five missing coloured images '*as if the colour images were stated from the ground (when assigning them to the kabbalistic tree of life) and never finished!*' Then the question is: Which came first: the coloured banners or the detailed plates? A question not discussed in the book.

Chapter two is called '*The Labourers in the Wineryard*' being short biographies of the characters, who are part of the story: Arthur E. Waite, John Brahm's Trinick, Wilfried Francis Pippet, Harold Malcom Duncan and Charles Williams. It's useful to get a bit information about these people; apart from Waite and Williams, they are relatively unknown in the mainstream tarot literature. Unfortunately, also this chapter suffers from a bad page design and can not be read as an integrated text. The text is essentially quotes from other sources, with no attempt to turn them into a readable story and it is often unclear, whether a sentence or short section is a quote or actually the author's words. Quotes are not marked as such with quote marks, a different typescript or in other ways. The entire chapter is split up in very short sections, rarely more than 5-6 lines with a double line shift between. A reference to the source for a given quote is written in the same type size, as the quote itself. Sometimes it is added after the last word in the quote, at other times it is on a line by itself, and in some cases this line even is centred below the quote as a separate line, which just as well can be read as a headline to the next section. This is simply too disturbing and draw the readers attention away from and prevent the reader to concentrate on what this book is really meant to be about. The text also is interspersed with assumptions: 'It is possible..., it is likely... On page 41 we find, for example, this assumption dealing with Trinick's experience during WW1: '*There is no exact record .. but it is possible that if Trinick were stationed in France, he could have been laying cables, using Helio-graphs, or even flags in the frontline. He could well have experienced the mud of Flanders, the Somme or been involved at Fromelles, Pozieres, Messines, Bullecourt,*

Polygon Wood or Passchendaele. Well, he could easily have been a quite different place and have been doing quite other things, couldn't he?

Chapter four, *'The Dance of the Images'* begins with the visual assignment of the thirty-three images to the cabbalistic 'Tree of Life' in that new order, which I believe is an important part of the book. The same illustration is rendered twice: first on page 77 and then over two pages in the next spread (pg. 78-79). Again a design flaw, since the book still can not be opened flat and what is in the middle can not be seen (a loose sheet would have been preferable). Anyway, by placing the images on the paths on the *'Tree of Life'* in accordance with the Hebrew letters and assigning the mystical card numbered '0' to that strange sphere on the tree, named *'Da'ath'*, we get an assignment that in most cases deviates from the standard Golden Dawn assignment. Both references are valid, as the author also states; it is depending on your approach to tarot. There are other assignments in work as well, like the sequence of the Marseille-type patterns. Waite's approach being as an Christian/Mystic: the Trinick images were created to fulfil his urge towards a mystical experience.

On page 88 we finally come to the images themselves, which the entire book is dealing with. The 23 b&w plates are rendered in the order of plate number, all signed by Trinick or Pippit (two of them only) and all are credited as belonging to the *'Trustees of the British Museum'* (BM). Behind each numbered plate comes the respective colour images stored in BM (two of these are missing, XII + XVI), most of these have

From b&w to colour or is it the other way round?



wholly or partly sharp line art contours, only a few are similar to the ebay photos' rather wishy-washy images. After twelve of the numbered plates follow also a b&w line art draft, likewise signed. And finally, for 16 of the plates (XII and XVIII to XXXII), follow the colour images, the 16 images in the '*laminated Kodac*'-format from ebay, which admittedly are based upon the Trinick images and even, if not clearly visible, in most cases carry his signature. The detailed linework of Trinick has, however, entirely disappeared. Trinick was a glass windowpane artist, where sharp outlines are a necessity. He made excellent line art drawings. Did Trinick really, after having painted the banners in a technique, that appears like water colours on wet paper or unprepared linen, afterwards make a full set of very detailed line art illustrations of the same images? Are there other examples of art made by Trinick in this watery style or other paintings for that matter? The authors just take for given without any discussion, that the banners come first. There is no mention of size and material of the British Museum items. What sort of paper was used? Which of the BM-images are printed, which are hand drawn? What is a banner? Most *Golden Dawn Temple*-banners have a width of 20-30 inches (40-50 centimetre). Is that what we have to look for now?

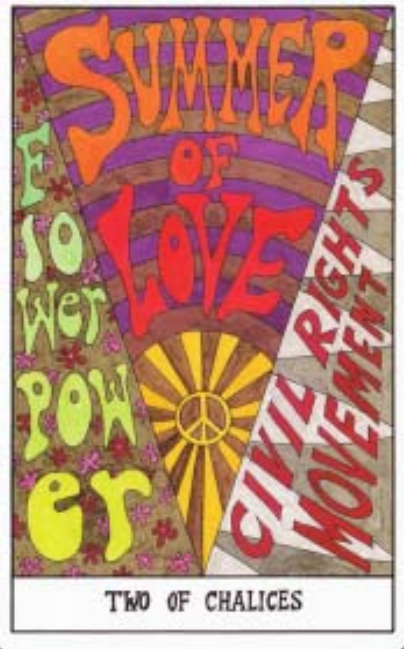
It cost the authors US\$ 20.000 to produce the initial 250 copies of this book. US\$4.500 of these came from an online fund-raising. The rest was paid by the authors. My copy costs me about US\$165.- including postage and the exorbitant high Danish import sales tax, which the distribution company, Blurp, added even though it was sent from inside EU, where only the local sales tax should have been added. I can't recall, that I have paid that much for any other book for a very long time: Not even relatively rare antiquarian tarot-related books. Was it worth that? No, it was not. Additionally, this was an example of selfpublishing, when it is worst. Take this as a warning on entering into such printing enterprises, without any whatsoever fundamental knowledge of graphic book design, about paperweight and- qualities, type font sizes etc. ... In my opinion, a much better, well designed book could have been made for half the cost and even for a larger printrun. It would also have saved me from all these of negative comments,so I instead could have concentrated on what should have been the book's message.

HEXEN2.0

Suzanne Treister (b. 1958) is a contemporary British multi-media artist who, after art school studies in London, began her artistic career in the 1980's with what she calls 'historical paintings'. With the introduction of computers and the availability of digital media in the early 1990's, introduction of 'artificial worlds' and like phenomena, she became a pioneer working in that field. Her works are often a conglomerate of drawings, watercolours, film, photography and installations build up over years around a connecting and meticulous researched theme. Over the years she has gained international interest and her conceptual works have been shown in several galleries and art museums all over the world. In her works her aim is to point out the hidden structures, which have been build up, consciously or unconsciously, in the society and it's military, scientific and economic organizations and to reveal how these structures enable corporate and government control.

She also uses unusual tools, as when she for 'Hexen2039', a research project preceding 'Hexen2.0', investigated the links between the military and the occult. One detail in that project being, that she made a series of remote drawings, using a scrying stone. The first drawing was a floor plan of Aleister Crowley's house in Scotland, which had an unusual structure, a drawing, whose similarity with the actual house plan was later verified. Treister's use of the scrying stone was triggered by the 'US Remote Viewing Program' initiated by CIA. 'Hexen2039' was Treister artistic study in military power and war, and for that purpose she 'invented' an identity as her alter ego, Rosalind Brodsky, a time traveller who, in a not too far future world worked in a military institute, assigned to the task of making investigations on occultism and witchcraft, with the purpose of developing new forms of military-occult technologies for psychological warfare (!). She also worked with alchemical drawings, by transcribing front pages of international daily newspapers over them, thus rendering our daily world as being taken over by strange forces and belief systems. It was in that phase she saw that the tarot medium was another step to take. She chose the title HEXEN for those projects, the Greek word 'hexis' means coherence or cohesion, which presence Treister attempts to document.

HEXEN2.0 takes a starting point in the Macy conferences, which took place shortly after WW2 (1946-53). They were sponsored by the New York based Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, with the purpose of establishing connections between engineering, computing, biology, mathematics, psychology, psychiatry and various social sciences; the attendees being leading personalities in these and related areas. They were responsible for the development and spread of the idea of 'cybernetics', a science to understand the function of the human mind and to develop a model of how to understand and control it: "*the science of control and communication in the animal and the machine, in society and in individual human beings*", as Norbert Wiener defines cybernetics. The underlying purpose being to avoid another world war and another mass extermination. Use of the cybernetic ideas have been positive but



definitely also negative. We are right now in the midst of the outcome in a not too happy civilization with Internet, increasing national and international surveillance, left-wing anarchist groups, local wars, economic disasters, social manipulation, facebook, google, aggressive advertising and control systems of all sorts. Through her art, Treister brings attention to the underlying forces, which lay behind the current situation and now, by choosing tarot as her medium, she hopes to reach outside the established art world to reach a broader audience.

HEXEN2.0 is not just a tarot deck, as most of them are, meant to be used for readings about your daily annoyances, your private problems with partners, children, job, friends or whatever else the endless 'tarot readings' are about. It is not a tarot deck based upon fictional characters, mythological stories, former civilizations or whatever other themes have been connected with the concept of tarot during the last 40 years; it is a tarot deck about your own history and of those influences it forced upon you, your parents, your grandparents...whether you wanted it or not. You are in the middle of it. What will come out of that, how will your future develop with those influences in your luggage? Isn't that a more relevant information to obtain, than to be enlightened about how you shall react next time you meet a former friend? Is there anything you can do? Treister's HEXEN2.0 can tell you, how you ended up there. The next steps are yours. The future. Do you want to live in a completely controlled world? Do you want Google and Facebook to know everything about your doings and where you are, what books you read, what film you see, what





products you buy? Treister's works may appear like science fiction, they are not. They are based upon your own reality.

The HEXEN 2.0 tarot deck is only a part of the entire HEXEN2.0 project of exhibitions, film, large size diagrams etc. If you are interested in the deck, you should also buy the book. It starts with an introduction 'The Secret Life of Control' by Lars Bang Larsen. Five initial diagrams connect the material featured in the cards and all 78 coloured cards are rendered in large size. The book does also present the Macy Conferences attendees (even if most of the many photos are veiled, likely due to escape ridiculous copyright claims).

HEXEN2.0 Tarot: 78 large size cards (94x150 millimetres) in cardboard box. Large format book, 157 pages (can be bought separately). Suzanne Treister's former art project: 'HEXEN2039 - New Military-Occult Technologies for Psychological warfare - a Rosalind Brodsky Research Programme' is also available as a book. All published by Black Dog Publishing, London.

Dark Goddess Tarot

One night, eleven years ago, I was in a room in a hotel in Chicago with 8-10 other people, all attending the third (and last) congress under the auspices of *'The International Tarot Society'*. One of those present, a young, healthy looking blond woman, handed over a stack of tarot cards to me, asking me to select a card to take with me home to Denmark. I looked through the stack a couple of times and decided for the *'Two of Cups'*. The woman was Ellen Lorenzi-Prince and the deck was a prototype of her forthcoming *'Tarot of the Crone'*. She was one of these artists, who at that time wanted to selfpublish her own deck to make it available. Shortly after, the deck actually was for sale in a hand-crafted limited edition of 100 decks. The surface of the cards were agreeable and the images went right out to the edges, reached to the edges. The deck became much in demand and another print run came into being in 2007, with smaller cards and titles and a narrow white border added.



*'Tarot of the Crone' 2003
Two of Cups*



Right now I am in my studio in Roskilde, Denmark, with Ellen Lorenzi-Prince's latest and just published tarot deck *'Dark Goddess Tarot'* in front of me. It comes in a shining, sturdy two-part box. The all-over colour of the box is dark grey, a colour emphasising the already strong colours of tarot major XIII *'Santa Muerte'* - the Mexican Goddess of Death - printed on the lid. It is good to see that much effort has been made to create a worthy box for the many Goddesses. Even though, by and by, we have got rid of the sloppy plastic containers and horribly so-called 'presentation boxes', which so many tarot decks came in for a long time, there are still too many publishers, who do not care much for the boxes, but just go for a cheap solution.

Lifting the lid, a little booklet of 28 pages comes up first, followed by a title card. The booklet gives a 3-4 lines short description of each Goddess and a few keywords. The first card that shows up in the 78 card series of goddesses is *'The Fool'*, here represented by *'She-la-na-gig'*. The borders around the images are the same grey colour as the box, the



card number/title is printed in negative types within the grey border on the top of the card. At the bottom edge is the name of the Goddess. The titles of some cards have been changed and the suits are called Fire, Water, Air and Earth. The court cards are Amazon, Siren, Witch and Hag. Otherwise the tarot structure is followed.

I've pondered a bit over the name of the 'Dark Goddess'. The 78 figures are not all goddesses, (what is a goddess?), but are rather mythological characters from various pantheons, from legends or from history. An example being the *She-la-na-gig*, who is modelled after the stone figures placed over the Medieval church doors in Ireland and some parts of Britain, with the purpose to scare away evil forces (some say that their purpose was to invite men into the church, but that's another story). Also, what does 'dark' actually mean in this context? It is not the skin colour; so many dark skinned goddesses will be hard to find; actually there are all possible skin colours depicted throughout the deck. Is it 'dark' in the sense of 'sinister'? Evidently, some of the goddesses are sinister, but hopefully only a minority (and, again, what does 'sinister' actually mean? Some US-reviewers even call Elisabetta Cassari's excellent tarot decks 'sinister'!). Are the Goddesses 'dark' in the sense, that they represent the dark = negative forces working in all human beings? No, there are really many goddesses included in the deck, whom it is difficult to attach anything negative to. Then, are they 'dark' in the sense that they are working in the 'hidden' = in our personal unconscious world, where they from time to time manifest in a dream, or even as archetypes in the Jungian defined 'collective unconscious', where we have to make some effort to integrate them in our personal conscious world? That could be.

What is the definition of a Goddess? In the opinion of a rabid feminist from the 1980's, Barbara Walker, who also made a tarot deck, the Universe was created by one Almighty Female God, a cosmic parent-figure ruling over everything. According to

Walker, male writers did, in their attempts to cling to their own superiority, over centuries break this almighty female god figure down into innumerable goddesses, with each their characteristics and names, depending on which culture and pantheon they appeared in. If we shall take Walker serious, we have here a compilation of aspects of the *One and Only Almighty Female God*. Is this then a feminist tarot deck? Obviously, it will appeal more to a female than to a male audience, but considering that 90% of the tarot concept during the last 30 years has been taken over by women, that makes sense and, anyway, it is not feminist in the sense of the feminist tarotist groups, who in the 1980's created one circular deck after the other. One of them even denied to sell me a deck for my collection, because they did not want to sell to men (that era and story still remains to be told..).



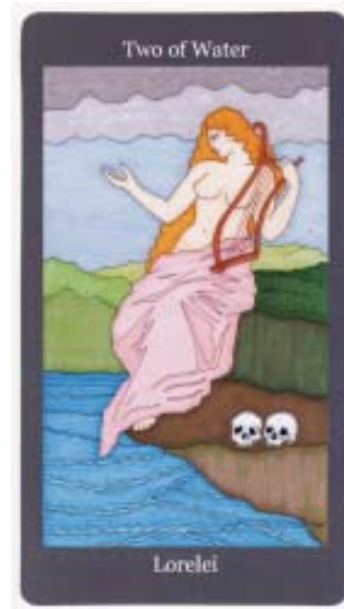
As a male, and not as a tarot reader, which I am not, I asked myself when I turned over all these colourful goddesses:

'Did I ever have any personal relation to any of these women'? as much as it is possible to have a personal relation to a Goddess, of course. Doesn't that question sound well-known? In contrast to the usual reply, the answer is 'yes'. I selected immediately eight of the Goddess cards and looked in vain for a few more.

Back to the Shelanagig. In the period of 1975-80 I made a number of oil paintings. One series of maybe 15 or 16 Shelanagig-paintings, based upon a just accepted dissertation for a degree of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. The title page carried this sentence by Irish James Joyce from *Ulysses*: : *'without a stitch on her, exposing her person, open to all comers, fair field and no favour'*. Ten of these paintings hung in two rows over my bed for some years, discussed by some, neglected by a few and to indignation for others. There were other Goddesses, who manifested in my paintings at that time: a series of the huge overfed Megalitic Maltesian Goddesses with tiny hands and feet, excarvated from subterranean temples. Another series of paintings were based upon the Mesopotamian 'Eye-Goddesses' figures, flat and a few inches tall, found in hundreds during excavations. Unfortunately I looked in vain for the latter two among the Dark Goddesses, even if the Eye Goddesses most likely have some connection to Istar.

The 'Lady of the Lake' was an important issue during my researches in King Arthur country; and so was it following the Black Madonna's route through France ending up meeting her statue in the church in 'Santa Maria de la Mer' near ancient Mediterranean Templar harbour of disembarkation, Aigue de Morte. The Goddesses from the Norse mythology relate to my book on runes and Nu(i)t to the world of magicians and particular to Aleister Crowley. I have to admit it, they are all over these Goddesses; we can't escape them. I looked in vain for my alter ego and steady anima figure, Astarte, but realized that the Greeks actually call her Aphrodite. Which Goddess is it working right now, dragging and tempting me into writing all this? Loreley, the two of cups, perhaps, likely.. of course.

Could a similar deck named 'Dark Gods' be made? Probably not without including dictators, warlords, corrupt politicians, sport-heroes, economic scoundrels... so until further notice, you have to let the Goddesses kick you; they are inside you.. all the time. But beware of Kali, she is there too!



The '*Dark Goddess*' is a self published deck, made in only 1000 copies and available for a *very* reasonable price. Ellen Lorenzi-Prince's line art illustrations and clear colours fit well with the theme. I like those grey borders instead of the white one you find in most commercial tarot products and the box is gorgeous. This is an example of that not all selfpublishing enterprises need to end up as a disaster. That Ellen L-P decided to let Arnell Ando take care of practicalities around the production, couldn't have been a better choice.

The only negative remark I have is, that I could have used more text material with descriptions of the endless number of goddesses. Personally, I have a large reference library to go to. Otherwise there is the Internet, but a book at hand is a lot better than endless sites out there.

links & literature

Links:

- Enriques' *Tarology*, the dvd can be obtained from Chris Deleo:
tarologythemovie@gmail.com (about US\$ 40.-)
- Enriquez' books are published by Eyecorner Press/ Camelia Elias, Roskilde, DK and are available at Amazon.com
- The b&w Trinick plates can be seen on my web-site:
www.manteia-online.dk/waite-smith/trinick/trinickplates-b&w.pdf
- The b&w and coloured Trinick images can be accessed at
www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=725678&partId=1
- Tarot Professionals' website: www.tarotprofessionals.com
- Hexen2.0 tarot deck and books are available from : www.blackdogonline.com/all-books/
- Dark Goddesses Tarot is published by Arnell Ando is available at [Arnellart.com](http://arnellart.com)
- Arnell Ando's article on selfpublishing: <http://www.arnellart.com/makenpub.htm>
- Ellen Lorenzi-Price's website is: <http://www.darkgoddessstarot.com/>
- The entire set of my magazine 'Manteia' 1989-97 (a total of 700 pages) is available as pdf-files: http://www.manteia-online.dk/manteia_1-16pdf_index.htm.
(you need to be patient, the files are large).

Literature:

- The Megalitic Monuments of Malta. Gerald J. Formosa. 1975 Scorba, Canada
- The Eye Goddess, O.G.S. Crawford . Phoenix House London 1957
- The Witch on the Wall. - Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles.
Jørgen Andersen. Rosenkilde og Bagger, Copenhagen 1977