

On Arguing the Merits of Local vs. Remote Reading (A Rant)

I think I've discovered the crux of my problem here, and it's a philosophical rather than a spiritual or scientific one. The selection of each card in a tarot spread is a product of that particular instant in time and the person making the request, in which the operating principle is some form of non-rational induction (in my own humanistic view, it's subconscious, but it could just as easily be the Divine out slumming). I suggest that this is why electronic apps produce legitimate results. In crude conceptual terms, the electrons that interact with the program's RNG code to render a particular card on the screen and no other are responding to the intent of the person pushing the button. It collapses the duration of the selection process into a micro-second, but the relationship is still a causal one linked to that instant. The on-line role playing geeks looking for rewards call it "praying to RNGeezus."

This is a different matter from you sitting (or sleeping, or out having a beer) half-way around the world and me picking the cards for your reading. The Universe at that particular instant in time is responding to my intent, not yours, and the causal relationship is between me and it. In that scenario, you're basically irrelevant. I may be your "agent" and we may even have a "contract," but the underlying principle and the agency for its execution are more accidental than causal from your perspective. My burden is then to translate the Universe's response to my intervention into something even remotely related to your personal reality. This is probably why many legal jurisdictions force tarot and other divinational arts into the shadows of "For Entertainment Only." It's not that they don't know what's going on; if they smell money changing hands, they make it their business to know. It's that they don't trust the validity of the "contract" and are suspicious of the pedigree of the "deliverable."

I won't say categorically that remote reading doesn't work (it seems to work well enough to support an entire industry, if that's any kind of meaningful yardstick in this world of "P.T. Barnum" cynicism), but we seem to agree that the agency for its working exists in a different dimension from that of the human activities it is being enjoined to explain. This is neither good nor bad, but it does make all of our arguments and defensive stances a bit moot since they are based almost entirely on anecdotal evidence. Suffice it to say it's not one that I can get behind because I find it too tenuous and marginally reliable when I can have the active engagement of the querent in a number of creative ways. It's similar to the fact that many of you believe in an anthropomorphic "loving God," while I've always thought it was absolute rubbish, a figment of the human imagination rooted in gullibility. Yet I can accept the pantheistic idea of a sentient Universe that interacts with human consciousness in the same way it interacts with every other element of the fabric of reality, from the grossest to the most subtle. The measure of its scrutability to human thought and its active interest in our petty affairs is anyone's guess, even though we may flatter ourselves with our intuitive presumptions.