

# 3: Shub-Niggurath; the Empress.



Whilst Shub-Niggurath is, in our interpretation, the Goddess of Fertility, She is known in Mythos literature as “the Blind Idiot God; the God with a Thousand Dark Young”. This Card is therefore defined as enigmatic, symbolic of mysteries and questions unanswered. In the study of the Mythos Gods, the definition of Shub-Niggurath is vague. Her actual definition as to reason is unknown. Shub-Niggurath is – therefore – symbolic of the things we feel we should know about, but don’t. She represents unanswered questions, and the things which seem obvious but are not. Whilst the Thousand Dark Young could represent a thousand things which we know, we do not – and cannot – know any of them. They represent a

thousand things which are mystery, and a thousand questions unanswered.

As we progress through this Tarot, we begin to see how the Mythos describes the nucleus and centre of the Cosmos, through creation, to ultimately conclude when it ends with describing the highest virtue of humanity as the act of Worship. “As Yog-Sothoth is the transcendence and defiance of Form”, states the Lovecraft Tarot, “so Shub Niggurath is the motion towards Form and materialization.”

Shub Niggurath is the fertility deity in the religious system we are here describing, and the definition here defines a concept that whilst all matter is stable due to Yog-Sothoth, all matter still has to be conceived

with a concept of the ‘birth’. In the religious ideology defined here we can further define this as meaning that everything that exists throughout the Cosmos, must begin by being ‘born’; and not just the living species that populate our Planet and the other places throughout space. This concept is defined very clearly by the Lovecraft Tarot when it states that, “Shub Niggurath is thus... worshiped by many names as the Dark Mother who bestows life and takes it away...”

“As Goddess of both Womb and Tomb, Shub Niggurath is the dark mystery of Unknown Nature”. The Lovecraft Deck is quite direct in this statement, but – despite this statement being quite obvious – it is also unique. What it is saying here is that

whilst everything must initially be conceived with some sort of birth, the opposite is – as always – true; and this is that everything also ends with death. The Death Card is, of course, much more direct with its definition of this, but the Tarot is here correct in context, in saying that everything that has a beginning also has an end. The only exception to this would be Space itself, as the Cosmos can be defined as the only reality which is, in fact, nothing.

In continuing to define Shub Niggurath, the next statement is important and applies to every other aspect of the Mythos of The Necronomicon. “She [Shub Niggurath] is that aspect of existence which is eternally beyond human perception”. Whilst the Lovecraft Deck is

defining one aspect of this Card as having this specific meaning (as representing concepts of the Cosmos that cannot be understood), the Necronomicon Mythos of Gods are all represented in terms of insanity understood by the comprehension of mankind. Therefore, if this Deck is to be taken in this context, then maybe Shub Niggurath could be a statement from the Tarot to represent this concept of the Gods, as the Card of the Lovers represents relationships (as an example) and love?

So if Shub Niggurath would be a Goddess of fertility, then this would be represented with a statement that is taken from supernatural horror and used in the Lovecraft Tarot; “Ia! Shub

Niggurath! The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young!”

It is the statement that Shub Niggurath has such blasphemous Young that corresponds to Her as the Goddess of birth and, in that, the creation of all that has been born.

The last statement in the Introductory Book to this Deck is an appropriate one with which to end this description of The Empress as she is interpreted by our religious view, as it says “Shub Niggurath is the Unity of the Source of all Forms (whereas Nyarlathotep is the Unity of all Substance; hence one is the Mother of a Thousand Young, while the other is one being with a thousand forms).” Reincarnation is thus defined as the transition through the Major

## Arcana.

**POSITIVE READING:** Whilst it is probably characteristic of the Lovecraft Deck of the Tarot that the Fourth Card is that of fertility, the Positive Reading in this respect is probably more characteristic in this sense than some of the other Cards of this Tarot. “Productivity [and] fertility” are both forecast, and this is quite straightforward in what it says.

But this idea is developed when the Tarot defines “fertile ground for spiritual, mental, or physical seed to be planted and nurtured.” Here the idea of the Fertility Goddess is taken further, and this in a Reading is obvious as it defines a time when new projects should be started, and



projects that have already been begun will be successful.

“Pregnancy, reproduction; multiplication [and] propagation” are defined, and this is the same as that which is defined by every other Fertility Mythos. But aside from the idea here, that childbirth may be indicated, this relates (in the further sense of the above) to the idea of personal projects that have been undertaken propagating and becoming successful. So “Profit, fruits [and] harvest” are here defined, and the Tarot states that projects which have been undertaken in the past (possibly relating to the previous Cards?) will now culminate and that they will be successful.

The last statement in this definition diverts from this as

similar to the classical reference to a Fertility Mythos, but is still very defined as the Card of Shub Niggurath. “Land, earth; ‘home & hearth’” is defined. What this means, exactly, is not immediately clear, but this Card, in the context here stated, may represent that this might be a good time to ‘earth’. In terms of the practical occult, Shub Niggurath may be saying that perhaps we should earth. This could in this sense relate to the practical use of the Necronomicon Mythos as a practical system of the occult, and in doing so this relates to our Worship as The Necronomicon is one specific use of Black Magick.

**NEGATIVE READING:** As the above follows the actual idea of a

Fertility Goddess quite clearly, Shub Niggurath in a Negative Reading follows the idea of the Lovecraftian, and can in this sense be quite destructive. As would follow the idea of this being the opposite of what is defined above, the Tarot defines “Infertility; unproductive efforts, waste of ‘seed’ due to sterility of the agent and / or object of action”. This has to be read in context as the opposite of fertility, as, if it did represent birth, it can now be argued that here it represents death.

And directly in following this definition, this is reinforced in the statement that “Abortion, miscarriage; interruption of, or intervention in, endeavours” is defined. And as with all of the descriptions of meaning with this

Deck, this should be read as relating directly to our personal lives (or to the life of the person for who the Reading is for), as all of these Readings will always be very personal to our personal situation. So when the Tarot defines “Loss, barrenness [and] decrease”, this accords to us in a personal sense, and such a Reading will usually only make sense to ourselves, or the subject of the Reading, accordingly.

The final statement with this Card according to the Lovecraft Tarot, warns of “Exile, dispossession; nomadic life”. Whilst it does have to be said that this will rarely actually mean that we will end up homeless, personal projects and our personal situation in life may start to drift and move away from

the intended direction. Shub Niggurath is said to have a Thousand Young, and in terms of personal ambition there may be a thousand directions of which we can be distracted towards or be sidetracked away from.

\* This quotation is taken directly from the horror fiction inspired by Lovecraft, as this book is written to describe. It is used by the HP Lovecraft Tarot, and this is from where we take the statement. However, as used by the this Tarot, it is not referenced. Therefore this quotation has to be used with the reference not credited, although I suspect that it is actually from Lovecraft.

