

Thus we have two opposing figures: a solar, redemptive savior and a saturnine, plutocratic demiurge. One sun may be mistaken for the other. In tarot, we can compare the Saturn-ruled, Capricornian Devil to the demiurge: Lord of the Gates of Matter and Child of the Forces of Time, the Devil is the master of the rules and he abides in the details. Absolute power absolutely corrupts, and we can see that iconographically both in the miser's tortured crouch and the visual echo of the devil's binding chains. (Incidentally, "misery" and "miser" are cognate.)



*Who doesn't enjoy a
leontocephaline demiurge?*

The sun may represent freedom and agency, but this king cares mainly about the agency and freedom bought by wealth. Visually, he has adopted the furs of the Beast; his stone seat recalls the stony block of the Devil, which he perhaps mistakes for the sheltering stone wall of the Sun. He is imprisoned on this block, even as he claims it as a throne. Everything he touches turns to gold, and he has yet to recognize this for the curse it is.

THE MATTER-SPIRIT INVERSION

Let's talk about pentagrams, shall we? The five-point star is a familiar sacred symbol. As everybody knows—or should—there's a difference between the upright and the averse pentagrams: the upright star represents "Spirit over Matter"—1 point over 4 points. Therefore, the averse or upside-down star represents "Matter over Spirit." In the Waite-Smith deck, it is only on the Devil card that we see the averse pentagram. *Cupiditas* has overcome the Devil's chained minions; matter has triumphed over spirit.

We can see something similar going on in the 4 of Pentacles, if we examine King Midas' pentacles more closely: one by the head, one over the heart, two beneath the feet. The 4 coins are positioned like the bottom of an upside-down Tree of Life.

Malkuth (which corresponds to Earth or Saturn) normally is the lowest point on the Tree; above it in the heart is golden, solar Tiphereth, and far above that the Crown of Kether. From the king's topsy-turvy point of view, the most mundane sphere has taken the place of the most divine. The Kingdom has taken the place of the Crown; the thing ruled now governs the ruler. The radiant sun has been replaced with cold, hard, shining lucre.