



MATRIX OF THE MIND

<i>Arcanum N°</i>	I
<i>Name</i>	Matrix of the Mind
<i>Titles</i>	The Magician The Fountainhead Will
<i>Associations</i>	The wand The phallus The shining point in the center of expectant infinity The invisible wall-pass-not Solid wind The opener who has no key The silent song of the caged bird Boldness of vision The right use of will



The mystery of the power and significance of the very first event or thing of its type goes so far back that the mists of time hadn't even begun to form yet. The magical power latent in the metaphorical firstborn is that power that is inherent in something new and never attempted before: it is the power to spawn completely new experience. It's from this that its special value to the Creator is derived.

As simple as the first Arcanum appears at first glance, it is the very first archetype of the Archetypal Mind and thus carries nuances of meaning that other archetypes do not. As the first of its kind, the Matrix of the Mind is the genesis of all that is to come; it is the living spring, the fountainhead of everything that will determine the seeker's path.

This role, of course, belongs to the conscious mind. The conscious mind is the directing agency behind an entity's life pattern. Despite all the pre-incarnative programming around which a person's life experience may be woven, that programming itself is driven by

the entity's free will based on its previous priorities, choices, and decisions, the fruits of which it reaps in the incarnation to come. And that free will, in the reality (or illusion, depending on one's point of view)¹ in which our incarnations and evolution take place, is expressed through the directing agency of the conscious mind.

The conscious mind is intelligent and logical. It is the source of creative energy, yet without access to the immense treasures of the unconscious, this creativity is barren and can produce no fruit. It is the initiating and directing agency, but it's not the magical agency. Somewhat paradoxically, by himself the Magician has no magic and his power is sterile.

The power that the Magician wields is the power of the will, and in disciplined spiritual growth, this faculty of the mind is of paramount importance. It is this principle that most eloquently expresses stirrings of the spirit within manifestation, channeling the former into the latter, directing the experience thus obtained, allowing the mind then to gather and process the harvest of that experience and to express the fruits of its new understanding. Without will, no such efficiency in the accumulation and synthesis of experience is possible, and the growth achieved would be irregular and almost accidental.

A sharp line must be drawn here between will and desire, for sometimes there is confusion between the two. Desire is usually—not always—a reaction to external stimuli that is a result of previous conditioning. Will, on the other hand, comes from within the entity and is self-impelled. If desire is reaction, will is action. A desire may, over time, meld with will if it persists after its stimulus disappears. Such are the desires of the deep and lasting kind that end up shaping a person's life. Such, for instance, is the desire for the Divine, for if it remains once the initial curiosity about the Unseen dissipates, it shall

¹ Let's just call it reality/illusion, shall we? Only that is truly real that is eternal and self-existing, and on this view, the manifested world, however convincing, is an illusion. Yet, ourselves spending a good chunk of (illusory) time within that manifestation, a grudging concession can perhaps be made that it's real enough. For now.

sooner or later fuse with the will to explore and understand and shall become stronger and stronger until nothing can stand in its way.

Thus, in magical work, both desire and will are important, given that desire here is expected to stem from one's innermost aspirations rather than momentary impulses. In this context, we can perhaps say that such purified desire is the aiming eye while will is the bow and arrow, or desire is the rudder while will is the engine, and both are necessary for magical work.

The central figure of the archetype is male, and thus it's more purely and thoroughly expressed by men. It's hardly a surprise to any student of the esoteric that men are more "in the head" than women, for the conscious mind speaks more to the male polarity. More than that, this also explains the attraction of will- and intellect-oriented paths to the Divine (in the Hindu tradition, Raja and Jnana yoga, respectively) to a man, and indeed, unlike on the path of Bhakti yoga (the yoga of love and devotion), very few women will be found on these two trails. Yet the conscious mind also carries within it the power of analysis and introspection, giving rise to being self-conscious and therefore, less conveniently, the ego. That the ego of the male *Homo terrestris* is, generally speaking, more inflated than that of the female of the species hardly needs confirmation by any special authority.

At the feet of the Magician is a box. Squares, crosses, boxes—all four-sided figures with square angles—represent the manifested reality/illusion. Locked within the box of manifestation is a bird. Birds or, more generally, wings can signify messages; however, wings also symbolize spirit, and indeed, the manifestation in which our experience moves hides and limits the spirit virtually completely. "Virtually" because, while the spirit cannot get out and show itself on its own, there is still a way to free it and let it fly. The key is, of course, free will, represented by the Magician. He is the aspect of our mind that has the power, via free will and intention, to unlock the cage of manifestation. And when it is accomplished, the majesty of spirit will make itself known via its unmistakable touch: the healing of potentially centuries-old scars, divinely inspired art and teachings, the

overwhelming peace and stillness experienced in the presence of one who touched the hem of the Divine—or some other expression of sacramental being.

Yet two things stand out about the box. First, its foundation is checkered white and black, denoting the fact that the polarity of serving others and serving the self lies at the very basis of our reality/illusion, permeating every aspect of the manifested world. Also, curiously, there is no lock on the bird's cage and its walls are thick, again alluding to the notion that it's not the Magician's direct action that will unlock it. While he is the directing agent, he is not the magical agent, and it is only via the interaction of the two facets of the mind—conscious and unconscious—across the veil that magic happens and the bird of spirit may be set free. The Magician must reach, as he does with his left hand, *to* and *through* the unconscious in order to taste of the golden bird's song. The symbolically sexual interaction of the conscious and the deep minds is strong in the archetypal imagery, and determined meditation on these concepts will greatly benefit the seeker.

Polarity forms a key part of the first archetype, and the figure's stance serves to confirm and strengthen this notion. His right hand holds forth a luminescent sphere; the will of the seeker walking the right-hand path is impelled by the lofty aspiration toward Truth and Light. He holds it gingerly, implying that it's very easy to let this goal drop, and constant focus and vigilance are required to keep it in balance. Indeed, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it". One might also sense in this subtle imagery an echo of the John Berry quote, "The bird of paradise alights only upon the hand that does not grasp", although this aspect is much further down the road for the Magician.

While the right-hand—positive—seeker is driven by the pursuit of Truth and Light and his left attempts to reach and unlock the mystery of the golden bird, on the negative path the figure's pointing left hand has another connotation: it's as if it's showing spirit its "rightful" place. The pursuer of darkness, even after recognizing that the manifestation is nothing but the garment of spirit, will be in no

hurry to let that spirit fly free and show the majesty of its true colors. His power comes from control and domination, and keeping the magical bird under tight control, aiming to let it out only when it suits his purposes and keep it locked at all other times, is a major part of his path. Attempting to reach the magic of the spirit without having a spiritual goal to focus its will upon, like the right-hand seeker does, is an approach fraught with failure.

The pointing left hand has yet another connotation. The right-hand adept, once he imbued his creative manifestation with the power of the spirit, will point to the mystery concealed within his creation, yet will allow those who would partake of it the same free will in interpreting it as he himself was granted in interpreting the creation around him and in creating his own reality. True artists intuitively understand this concept and will never use plain terms to unlock the meaning that they put in their creation, instead letting the viewer reach his own conclusions, hoping that he will discern what the creator intended for him to see.

However, this realization of spirit's presence in all of manifestation is not immediate for either path: the cage is low and its contents are not visible from the vantage point of the conscious mind. It is only when the conscious mind stoops to the manifestation—gets deeper involved in it and starts an earnest and open-minded investigation of it—that the Magician begins to see the outlines of the spirit that's locked within it and to appreciate its unseen magic both in Nature and in works of man.

Yet once the true nature of manifestation is recognized, it is the Magician—the seeker's will—that wields the power to unlock the manifestation and liberate the spirit. This magical power is proportional to the strength and purity of the Magician's will to serve—whether that be the positive adept's service of the One-in-All and seeking to know this One, or the negative adept's service of his own selfish ends.

How can a seeker strengthen this all-important faculty? Will, being the ability to focus one's mental and emotional energies without the stimulus of external motivating factors, can be described as

self-impelled and immovable single-pointedness of heart and mind. It can be trained and made stronger via appropriate exercises, of which many have been described in metaphysical literature. The general progression from controlling one's actions to controlling one's speech to finally controlling one's thoughts—this last part is likely to take up the bulk of the training—appears to be a reasonable approach to training the will, especially when every failure to control the chosen behavior (either positively require it or refrain from it) is penalized². When perfectly developed will is applied to a goal, it results in a distinct feeling of being, for lack of a better term, *solid*.

Anyone who perseveres in training his willpower with any degree of seriousness shall realize sooner or later that what gives it its power is the subconscious component, or submergence of the steadiness and intensity of concentration into the deeper levels of the mind. It is only when this concentration is taken up and embraced by the emotional potency of the deep mind that it gains its true power. It is thus supremely important to develop the will in conjunction with other work upon oneself, especially balancing one's views and attitudes to bring oneself to true acceptance of all aspects of beingness. Otherwise, a strong will may act even unconsciously to the detriment of oneself and others. The unpleasant phenomenon of the so-called evil eye is a good case in point, being fairly frequently unconscious on the offender's part.

Purity of the will, which is the second aspect of refining this faculty, can be developed by contemplation and dedication of oneself more and more definitely and completely to one's chosen goal, letting all extraneous and unnecessary distractions gradually fall away.

Strengthened and purified, will can then be applied to any objective, although in the context of the discussion of the Archetypal Mind, it is, of course, more appropriately applied to spiritual goals.

² Rumor has it that, in the olden times, the self-inflicted penalty was to cut one's arm with a razor for every transgression. These days a painful pinch, although not as effective, should still provide acceptable results without damaging the "spacesuit" and leaving a permanent and publicly visible indication of how bad of a student one is.

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Taking a step back from will to consider the more encompassing sphere of the entire conscious mind that is also more broadly represented by the first Arcanum, the barrenness of the pure conscious mind on its own—the mind that has not yet reached out to the unconscious—is striking. The intellect, or the reasoning faculty, bereft of the understanding, intuition, and infinite possibilities embodied by the deep mind, can produce only misshapen chimeras. The potential of a seed that falls upon the concrete pavement of a materialistic mental metropolis, however developed and sophisticated it may appear, shall never be realized without the fallow womb of the unconscious that awaits it beyond the veil. Examples of this are many in all branches of human knowledge, although in some of them the results of their materialistic philosophies are far more egregious and actively deleterious to the dignity of human life and spirit than in others.

Lastly, while the Matrix of the Mind, unlike some other archetypes, starts out blank in every new incarnation, it has the ability to accumulate and organize the fruits of its work, turning them into the basis and reference for future direction. The conscious mind learns and accumulates the results of the Mind's experience, making the Matrix an ever-changing and growing entity, yet one that always has the capacity, by an act of conscious choice and will, to start from a clean slate.

The Magician, therefore, is that entity that stands alone in the center of a virgin Universe that is full of potential to be created and explored. His entire being vibrates with expectant curiosity—coupled with clear sight and determination to create the highest expression of his beingness.