

The “Crosstown Traffic” Series of Tarot Card Study Maps

Recently, I found myself with a 25-card "diamond" layout on my hands and couldn't figure out what to do with it. I started tinkering by adding numbers in various patterns and finally realized that I could fit 21 of the Major Arcana and the four Aces into the model to fill all 25 positions, and then add the Fool as a kind of "free agent" in the way that Cherry Gilchrist discusses in her book, *Tarot Triumphs*. I came up with a color-coded tool for studying the Major Arcana in various groups and sets, with card colors following the Builders of the Adytum model developed by Paul Foster Case. It resembles "Broadway Boogie-Woogie," a Dutch “neoplastic” (De Stijl) painting by Piet Mondrian that I once saw in a New York City museum; it also reminds me of a Paul Klee painting or a photograph of a Chinese traffic jam, so I named it after the Jimi Hendrix song "Crosstown Traffic."

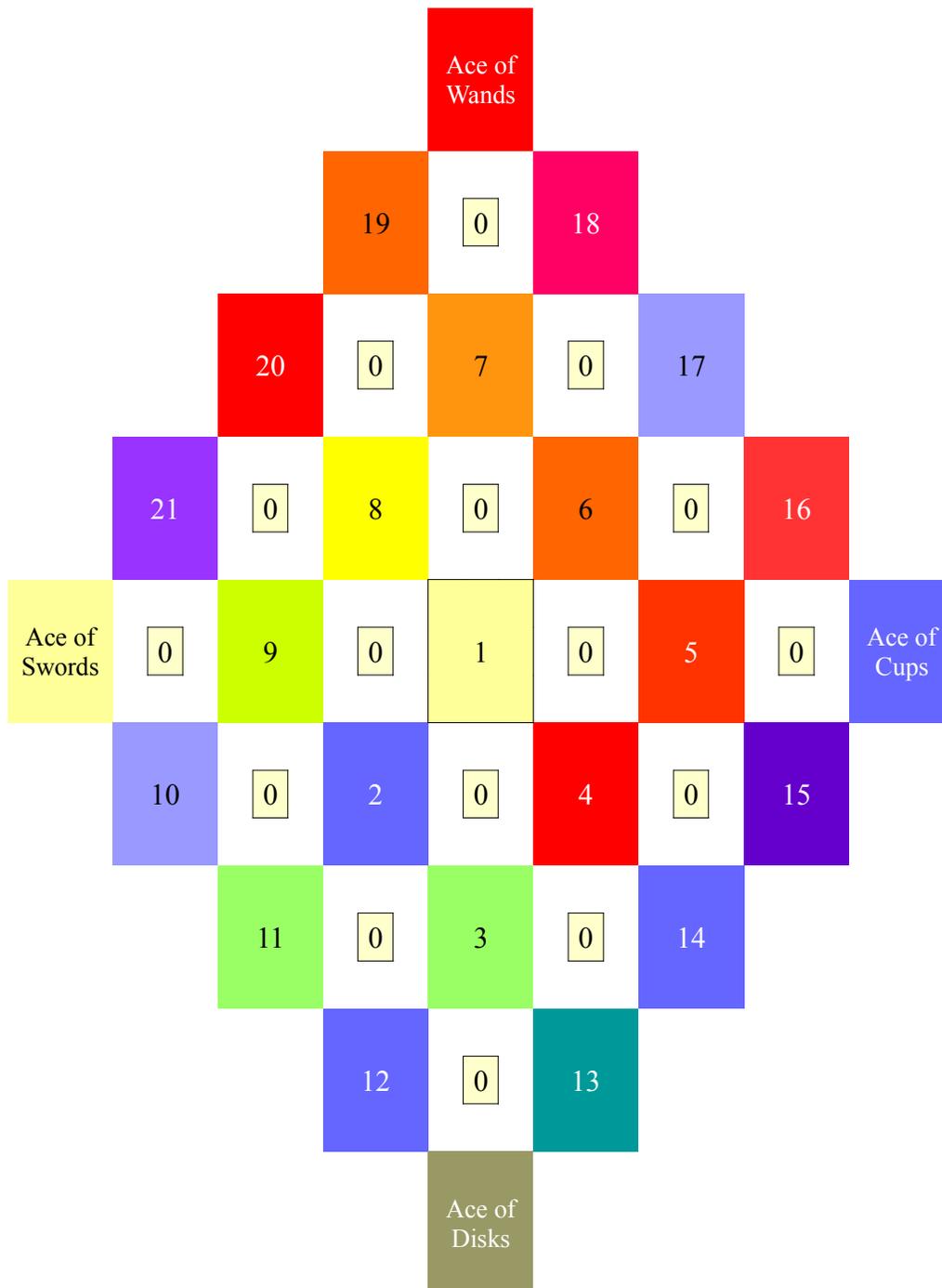
I have no idea where this might lead beyond studying the card combinations in novel ways, but I like its numerical structure. Instead of a Magic Square, it looks like a "Magic Diamond" or perhaps a "Mystic Spiral."

After completing the Major Arcana, I expanded this idea into the Minor Arcana, using a different color scheme and sequencing; it is both more direct in structure and more convoluted in concept. The 40 “pip” cards spread over 25 positions necessitate some overlap at the corners of each “wedge” of suit cards, providing an incentive to study the paired cards in combination. The number Five, as the “Number of Man,” holds a special place in this layout after the four Aces at the cardinal points. The metaphysical significance of J.E. Cirlot's geometrical “graphics” (see his *A Dictionary of Symbols*) was also brought to bear on the structure as a way to once again factor in the Fool as an overarching presence.

Finally, I turned my attention to the sixteen Court Cards, combining the B.O.T.A. color scheme with Major and Minor Arcana correspondences from my table “Court and Minor Cards as Allies to the Major Arcana” (attached). Study should encompass the relationship between each Court Card and the associated Major Arcanum. The four Aces as the “root” of the elemental power for each suit were added for completeness.

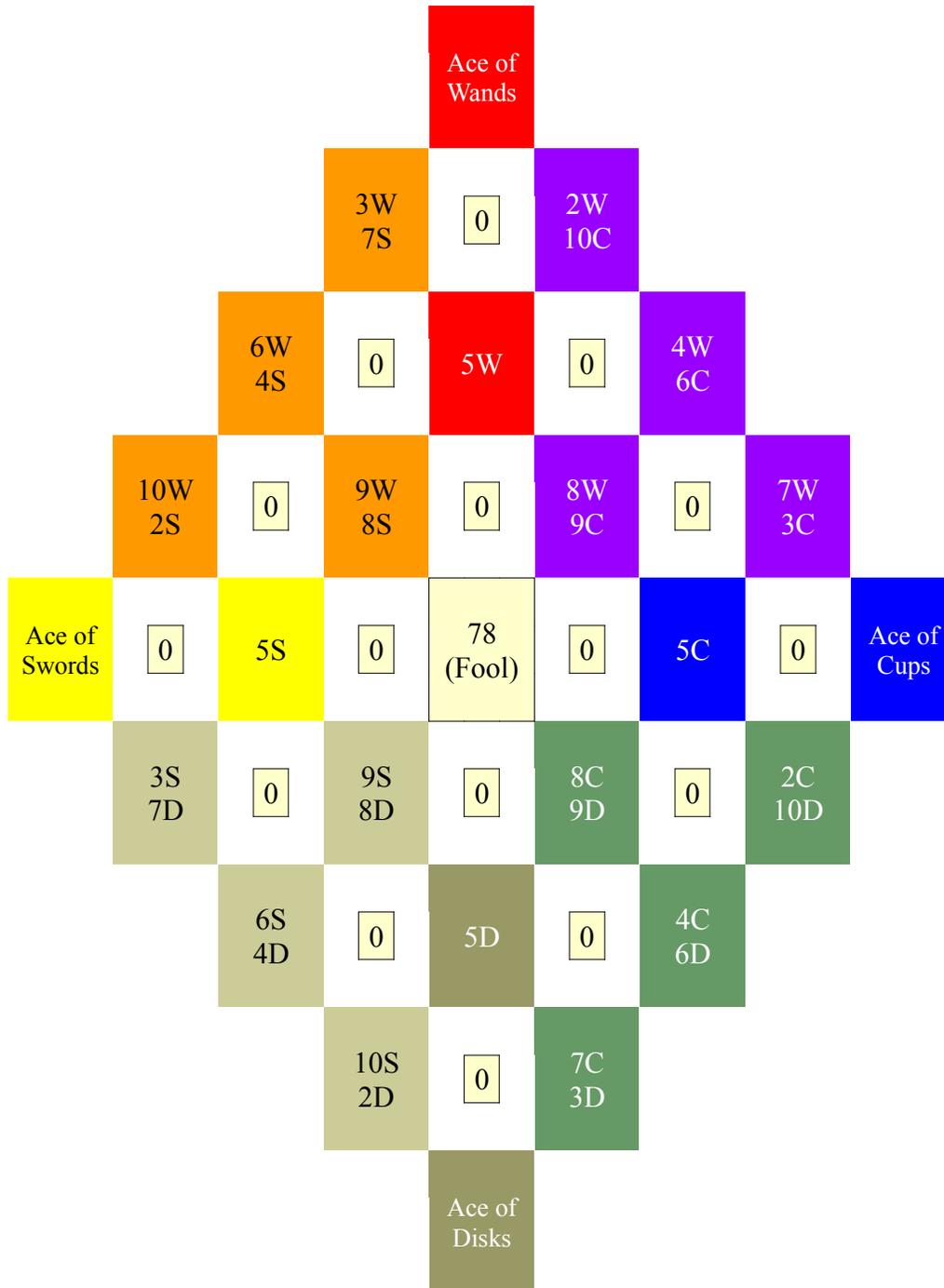
The goal of all three "maps" is to offer an innovative approach to combining card meanings for the purpose of study. Call this my "post-Korzybski manifesto;" the map IS the territory, or at least has a lot to say about its dimensions.

The “Crosstown Traffic” Major Arcana Study Map



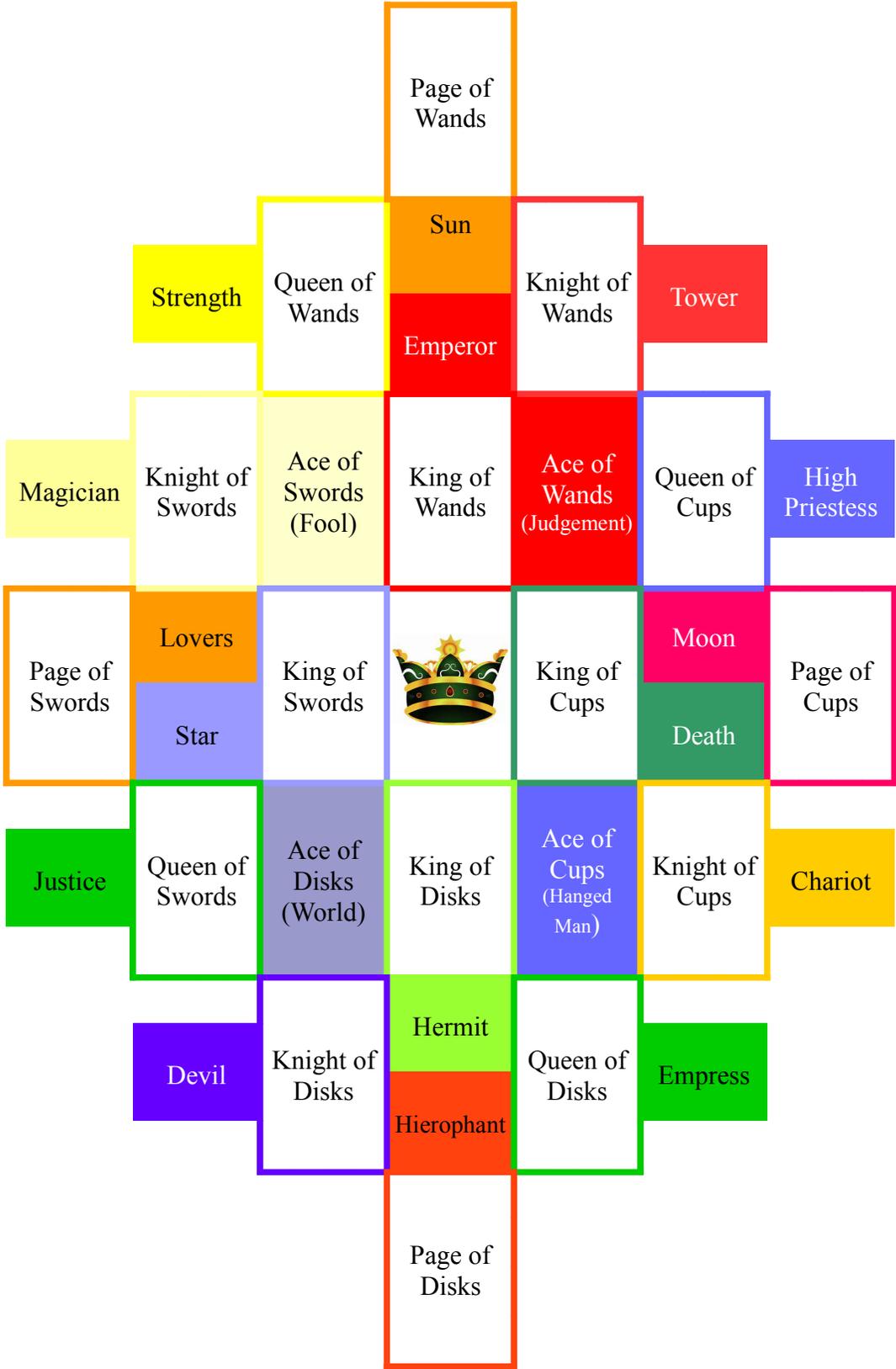
1. In keeping with the idea that the Fool can appear anywhere in the Major Arcana series at any time, the Fool's number Zero has been placed at the interstices of all 16 quaternary sets.
2. In addition to the four-card sets, each of the numbers One through Nine sits at the focal point of a nine-card diamond comprised of four separate quaternaries, offering a further opportunity to study sub-sets of cards as a group. Cards may also be studied in a variety of linear and cruciform patterns.
3. The B.O.T.A. color scale developed by Paul Foster Case was used to delineate the cards.
4. The Aces were added at the cardinal points to complete the 25-card pattern.

The “Crosstown Traffic” Minor Arcana Study Map



1. According to J.E. Cirlot, the equal-armed cross represents the “spiritual and neutral quaternary;” here its four arms add to 24. The diagonal cross portrays the “active or dynamic spiritual quaternary;” the two arms of each axis add to 54, which number added to the sum of the cross equals 78, the number of cards in a standard tarot deck, and of the Fool in extension. The Fool also sits figuratively at the interstices of the 16 four-card sets.
2. One diagonal axis joins card pairs that are elementally friendly internally (Wands and Swords, Cups and Disks) but unfriendly externally (Wands and Cups, Swords and Disks), while the other joins pairs that are unfriendly internally (Swords and Disks, Wands and Cups) but friendly externally (Wands and Swords, Cups and Disks). This arrangement “creates a harmony out of the opposition of contraries” (in this case the Fool) typified in art by the Dutch *De Stijl* movement.
3. Primary, Secondary and Tertiary color scales were used to delineate the cards. The Aces and Fives are pure expressions of their color type; all others are blended. The Fool is neutral.

The “Crosstown Traffic” Court Card Study Map



These derivations are drawn from my table “Court and Minor Cards as Allies to the Major Arcana.”

Court and Minor Cards as Allies to the Major Arcana

<u>Trump Card</u>	<u>Principle</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Ally</u>	<u>Principle</u>	<u>Quality</u>
Fool	Initiation	Primal Air/Pluto	Ace of Swords	Root of the Power of Air	Air (Active)
Magician	Concentration/Will	Mercury/Air	Knight of Swords	Power in Action	Air of Air (Active)
High Priestess	Reflection	Moon/Water	Queen of Cups	Brooding Power	Water of Water (Passive)
Empress	Fertility	Venus/Earth	Queen of Pentacles	Brooding Power	Water of Earth (Passive)
Emperor	Authority	Aries/Fire	King of Wands	Potential Power	Fire of Fire (Active)
Hierophant	Traditional Values	Taurus/Earth	Page of Pentacles	Reception & Transmission	Earth of Earth (Passive)
Lovers	Choice	Gemini/Air	Page of Swords	Reception & Transmission	Earth of Air (Mixed)
Chariot	Material Triumph	Cancer/Water	Knight of Cups	Power in Action	Air of Water (Mixed)
Strength	Self-Mastery	Leo/Fire	Queen of Wands	Brooding Power	Water of Fire (Mixed)
Hermit	Practical Wisdom	Virgo/Earth	King of Pentacles	Potential Power	Fire of Earth (Mixed)
Wheel of Fortune	Evolution	Jupiter/Fire	6 of Wands (Victory)	Harmonizing Power	Fire (Active)
Justice	Deliberation	Libra/Air	Queen of Swords	Brooding Power	Water of Air (Mixed)
Hanged Man	Involution/Delay	Primal Water/Neptune	Ace of Cups	Root of the Power of Water	Water (Passive)
Death	Transformation	Scorpio/Water	King of Cups	Potential Power	Fire of Water (Mixed)
Temperance	Mediation of Forces	Sagittarius/Fire	9 of Wands (Strength)	Synthesizing Power	Fire (Active)
Devil	Materialism	Capricorn/Earth	Knight of Pentacles	Power in Action	Air of Earth (Mixed)
Tower	Disruption	Mars/Fire	Knight of Wands	Power in Action	Air of Fire (Active)
Star	Clarity of Vision	Aquarius/Air	King of Swords	Potential Power	Fire of Air (Active)
Moon	Illusion	Pisces/Water	Page of Cups	Reception & Transmission	Earth of Water (Passive)
Sun	Success	Sun/Fire	Page of Wands	Reception & Transmission	Earth of Fire (Mixed)
Judgment	Renewal	Primal Fire/Uranus	Ace of Wands	Root of the Power of Fire	Fire (Active)
World	Completion/Entropy	Saturn/Earth	Ace of Pentacles	Root of the Power of Earth	Earth (Passive)

NOTES:

- The Wheel of Fortune and Temperance represent evolutionary rather than revolutionary change. The Wheel of Fortune allies with the 6 of Wands, associated with the solar sephira Tiiphareth and Jupiter in Leo (Six was the "Second Perfection" of the ancient Greeks), while Temperance is attended by the 9 of Wands, associated with the lunar sephira Yesod and Moon in Sagittarius (Nine was the "Third Perfection"). Temperance occupies the 25th path, which unites these sephiroth on the Tree of Life.
- The "power" principle of each courtly ally is derived from an unofficial Golden Dawn paper, "Description of the Tarot Trumps" by G.H. Soror Q.L. The rest come from Aleister Crowley and Paul Foster Case.
- The modern planets (Uranus, Neptune and Pluto) have been assigned to the Major Arcana according to the following conceptual scheme:
 - In Greek mythology, Uranus was the father of Saturn; hence, assignment of Uranus to Trump XX as the predecessor to Trump XXI (Saturn) is logical.
 - Due to the elliptical orbit that takes it to the remote fringes of the solar system, Pluto (the outermost planet) acts as a "Cosmic Messenger" in the same way that Mercury (the innermost planet) acts as a "Solar Messenger." This corresponds well to the pronounced other-worldliness of the Fool.
 - By default, Neptune aligns with the Hanged Man, whose inward-looking focus is a good match for the clouded, cryptic nature of the planet.
- The "Active," "Passive" and "Mixed" qualities of the "ally" cards were derived from elemental correspondences.