

## TRIADS &amp; OCTAVES II

Triads—affecting single events—are often found in the System in a sequence, in an octave of 7 linked events or transformations. An octave can be either ascending or descending (leading in music to a higher or lower pitch respectively), and the two need correspondingly different types of triad. An example of a descending octave is found in the System approach to creation, in which coarser material is created from finer material; an example of an ascending octave is what Mr Ouspensky called psycho-transformism, in which denser matter is transformed into finer matter.

We can classify triads by the force occupying the first place or by the force occupying the last place. The latter approach shows us, in terms of energy, whether the last force is 'higher' or 'lower' than the first. Triads which produce an energy lower than the starting force proceed by descending octaves and triads whose result is higher than the starting force proceed by ascending octaves.

Triads ending in active force produce something higher than their starting point and go by an ascending octave. Triads ending in passive force produce something lower than their starting point and go by a descending octave. The product of triads ending in neutralizing force may be either higher or lower than their starting point. (This last accounts for the idea that on the universal scale the six triads are shown as three ascending and three descending octaves while on the scale of mankind there are four ascending and two descending.)

A whole octave is a cycle of completion. Descending octaves complete more easily because their initial energy tends to carry the forces necessary to bridge the intervals. (It is easier to fall down stairs than to climb up.) Ascending octaves need a specific force to bridge the first interval which arises quite soon after the octave begins and unless this is provided the octave just peters out or turns into something else entirely. While ascending octaves in our psychological life are so often incomplete because we do not know how to provide the necessary energy to bridge the intervals, in the natural world the forces to produce completion are provided by nature.

In studying triads and octaves and applying labels and definitions to particular examples, it is common to lose the perception of the basic idea that these two laws are the driving force of what the System describes as a mechanical universe. It is of course a wondrous creation but, from the Absolute down, the unfolding of this infinite variety becomes more and more mechanical and each successive level contains less and less possibility of choice. Whilst the direct influence of the Absolute does exist on every level it becomes more and more difficult to winnow it out as the interaction of laws becomes increasingly complex.

We can see this mechanicalness not only in the natural world (global warming) but in our own individual make-up. The greater part of our mental activity, for instance, is the result of a triad which we have described before as elimination or destruction. Given energy (active force) arises into our perceptual apparatus (neutralizing force) and results in mostly nothing (passive force) only to be succeeded by endless repetitions of the same process. This is the same combination of forces as burning down a house where one carelessly dropped cigarette end is sufficient to produce a process which goes by itself until the available energy is exhausted and nothing remains but dust and ashes.

The attempt to refine our perception by the practice of attention, or being present, is of course an ascending octave and it is obvious where the first interval arises in this octave because we quite quickly forget what we are doing and return to mechanical mental activity. This attempt goes by the triad which can be described as refinement or discrimination. A quiet mind (passive force) receives the energy of attention (active force) and produces a heightened awareness (neutralizing force). But the active force in this triad soon runs out and if we wish our efforts to continue further we must

explore the possibility of creating more active force at this point by a different triad. We can deduce that the triad to fill this interval must itself end with active force and that its nature will be more emotional than intellectual.

Describing triads and octaves in this commonsense manner is useful to begin with but we are of course trying to grasp something which exists at a much higher level with the faculties available to us at the comparatively low level of ordinary thought. Mr Ouspensky advised that it is only with the development of Conscience, the emotional perception of individual truth, that the distinct nature of the triads becomes known as an unmistakable taste or feeling, opening a door for us to perceive the world of gigantic and inexorable cause and effect in which we unknowingly exist.

## Six Triads in a Garden

	ORDER OF ACTION		
	<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>End/Result</u>
<b>Growth</b> Preparing the ground Propagation Sowing the seeds. Planting the cuttings.	Active	Passive	Neutralizing
<b>Elimination</b> Pruning and weeding Removal of useless matter. <b>Destruction</b> The ignorant weeder Mice, rabbits insects, slugs.	Active	Neutralizing	Passive
<b>Nutrition</b> Watering, Feeding Compost making, manuring, fertilizers. Loving care.	Passive	Active	Neutralizing
<b>Healing</b> Curing and preventing disease. <b>Specialization</b> Development of one characteristic (e.g. colour or size, with loss of others such as scent.)	Passive	Neutralizing	Active
<b>Reproduction</b> Fertilization, Flowering, Fruition Hybridization Product of a new and successful variety	Neutralizing	Passive	Active
<b>Corruption</b> Pestilence and disease	Neutralizing	Active	Passive