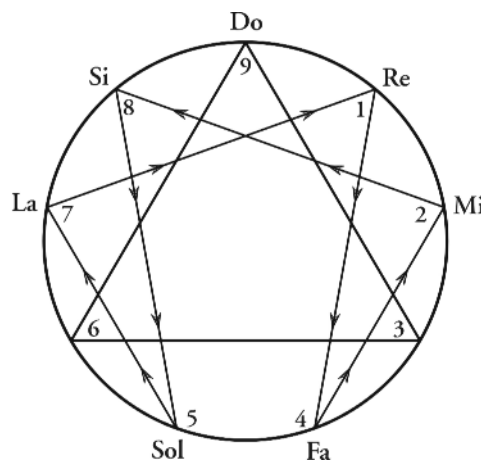


Enneagram. Law of Octaves

It is said that the interaction of the law of three and the law of seven can account for everything we know. One possible approach to this claim is to be found in the laws of music. All music is composed of triads and scales. Triads establish the nature of musical events—harmony—and scales control the progressions of these events. All possible music is formed from the interaction of these two as they combine in melody, rhythm and structure. In the world, a single event can be expressed as a triad of forces and the developments proceeding from this event progress according to the law of octaves. Within a certain process, for example growth, one step—movement from one note to the next—will take place under the influence of a particular triad. Of course it is rare at our level for things to be so simple—usually, many triads and octaves are proceeding simultaneously—but this is the basic principle.

A musical scale, and in some sense any sequence of events in time can be seen as an octave—a period over which the frequency of the original vibration doubles or halves. But the step, the change in frequency, between one note and the next is different for different pairs of neighbouring notes. This produces ‘intervals’, places at which the original direction, or key, of the octave may change unless some extra impetus is provided to maintain the original direction. To express the law of octaves in terms of the enneagram, Do, the original note of the octave is placed at point nine and the six inner notes of the octave placed around the circumference. Point three represents the ‘interval’ between Mi and Fa.



A descending octave appears as an anticlockwise motion around the circumference and an ascending octave correspondingly clockwise. Movement around the circumference often represents movement in time. As well as this simple progression the System proposes that there is another connection between the notes, unseen and existing in a different scale of time or perhaps even beyond, or outside, time, a hidden connection that provides the impetus for the simple progression. This relates to the idea that many ‘causes’ are unseen because they exist in a higher dimension.

This inner connection, the ‘inner circulation’ of the enneagram is produced in a mysterious way by dividing Unity—one—by seven, the number of steps in the octave. This produces the number 0.142857 recurring, that is, the numbers repeat indefinitely 142857142857. This was originally described as the ‘perpetual motion’ machine which powers every cosmos and it is represented in the enneagram by connecting the six inner notes according to this sequence, 1-4-2-8-

5-7. In any series of events it is said that as well as the observable progression (around the circumference) there is also this hidden progression, determining the inner nature of those events and their possible outcomes.

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How can we make this knowledge real for ourselves, make it of some practical use? Much of it we do accept instinctively or habitually. Waiting while an interminable line of traffic passes across the side road from which we wish to emerge we know an interval will inevitably occur. In the grip of a negative emotion, we know something will eventually distract us and divert our energy to some other use. We know our blood circulates through our organs in a perpetually ordered progression to sustain our lives which are lived at quite another level.

But how to apply it to some object we desire but which is seemingly unattainable? Let us say we understand that stillness, deeper penetration into the moment of now is what we want. We begin with the energy we have available, the Do of the octave. If it is sufficient it will carry us on to the next note of the octave and even, if we are determined, to the next again. Do, re, mi. Here we know there will be an interval. Unless some new force comes to help us, the mechanical activity of mind will reassert itself and we find ourselves once again swept along on the conveyor belt of energy which is our inner life. Whether or not we express it like this, that will be our experience. We do not know how to connect our will to our perception. Neither can we, apparently, choose what we perceive.

The first thing to help is the knowledge of what it is that always causes us to lose this state of attention. We each of us, individually, have one particular set of impressions which distracts us at this crucial point and we rarely allow ourselves to observe what it is, let alone learn to replace it or allow space for, the energy that will further our desire.

And yet, the certain knowledge that the Absolute, is eternally available in this moment now, is enough to free us of this limitation. If we use this initially intellectual understanding sufficiently persistently, repeatedly associating it with what we want, it can become emotional and so allow the interval, the first obstacle to our efforts, to be dissolved.

All this, the circulation, the separation from what we want, the still centre is captured in *Burn Norton* by T S Eliot:

The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars
Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,

Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.
The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,