

The Octave of Energy

by Robert Anton Wilson

The Law of Octaves was first suggested by Pythagoras in ancient Greece. Having observed that the eight notes of the conventional Occidental musical scale were governed by definite mathematical relationships, Pythagoras proceeded to create a whole cosmology based on 8s. In this octagonal model Pythagoras made numerous mistakes, because he was generalizing from insufficient data. However, his work was the first attempt in history to unify science, mathematics, art and mysticism into one comprehensible system and as such is still influential. Leary, Crowley and Buckminster Fuller have all described themselves as modern Pythagoreans.

In China, roughly contemporary with Pythagoras, the Taoists built up a cosmology based on the interplay of yang (positive) and yin (negative), which produced the eight trigrams of the I Ching, out of which are generated the 64 hexagrams.

In India, Buddha announced, after his illumination under the Bodhi tree, the Noble Eightfold Path. Patanjali subsequently reduced the science of yoga to eight "limbs" or, as we might say, eight "steps."

The game of chess appeared, somewhere in the East, with a grid based on 8x8 (64) squares.

Hepler discovered the laws of planetary motion serendipitously, while trying to make the planets fit into the Pythagorean octave.

In the 1860s, English chemist John Newland showed that all the chemical elements fall into eight families. Since Pythagorean mysticism was unfashionable at that time, Newland was literally laughed at and rejected by the Royal Chemical Society. In the 1870s, with much more detail than Newland, the Russian chemist Mendeleev proved once and for all that the elements do, indeed, fall into eight families. His Periodic Table of the Elements, an octave of hauntingly Pythagorean harmony, hangs in every high-school chemistry class today. (The Royal Society later apologized to Newland and gave him a Gold Medal.)

Nikolai Tesla invented the alternating current generator which unleashed the modern technological revolution after a series of visions in which, among other things, Tesla "saw" that everything in the universe obeys a law of Octaves.

Modern geneticists have found that the DNA-RNA "dialogue" -- the molecular information system governing life and evolution - is transmitted by 64 (8x8) codons.

[R. Buckminster Fuller](#), in his Synergetic-Energetic Geometry, which he claims is the "co-ordinate system of the Universe," reduces all phenomena to geometric-energetic constructs based on the tetrahedron (4-sided), the octet truss (8-sided) and the coupler (8-faceted with 24 phases). Fuller argues specifically that the 8-face, 24-phase coupler underlies the 8-fold division of the

chemical elements on the Mendeleev Periodic Table.

In 1973, unaware of Fuller's coupler - which I called to his attention later - Dr. Leary began to divide his 8 circuits into a 24-stage Periodic Table of Evolution (see diagram). Leary also began attempting to correlate this with the Periodic Table of Elements in chemistry.

The eight families of elements are:

1. Alkalis
2. Alkalines
3. Borons
4. Carbons
5. Nitrogens
6. Oxygens
7. Halogens
8. Noble Gases

The first four families, Leary argues, are terrestrial; that is, they are heavy and tend to fall to Earth. The second four families are extraterrestrial; that is, they tend to float off into space. Similarly, he says, the first four circuits of the nervous system are terrestrial; their function is to control survival and reproduction at the bottom of the 4,000-mile gravity well in which we presently live. The second four circuits, then, are extraterrestrial; they will come into full play only when we live normally in zero-gravity - in free space.

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF EVOLUTION

CIRCUIT	DENDRITIC FUNCTION (Input)	CELL BODY FUNCTION (Integrative)	AXONIC FUNCTION (Output)
Neuroatomic	Cosmic Consciousness	Cosmic Engineering	Cosmic Fusion
Neurogenetic	DNA Awareness	DNA	DNA Fusion

		Engineering	
Neuroelectric	ESP Precognition	The Neurologician (the Shaman)	"The Conscious Circle of Humanity
Neurosomatic	Hedonic Passivity	Hedonic Engineering (Yoga)	Hedonic Synergy (Tantra)
Domestic (SocioSexual)	The Adolescent (Barbarian Bands)	The Parent (Patriarchal Civilization)	Centralized Socialism (Hive-Unity)
Laryngeal- Manual (Symbolic)	The Learning Child (Paleolithic)	The Skillful Child (Neolithic)	The Creative Child (Bronze Age)
Emotional- Territorial	The Toddler (trickster mammal)	The Fighting Child (predator mammal)	The Political Child (pack-bonding)
Bio-Survival	The Newborn (unicellular consciousness)	The Demanding Infant (marine consciousness)	Mother-Child bonding (amphibian consciousness)

Read from the bottom up. Every infant begins at "The Newborn"; every adult arrives at least at "Centralized Socialism" (although the Control Center or major input may be back at "The Toddler" or "The Fighting Child" or in any slot). So-called geniuses, mystics or weird people with wild (psionic) talents are post-larval and may reach any slot from "Centralized Socialism" to "Cosmic Fusion."

If the higher circuits have been appearing (partially and in rare mutants) for a few thousand years this is because the DNA blueprint is gradually modifying us for future evolution. If higher circuit functions are increasing at an accelerating rate, as many parapsychologists think, it is because we are now mutating rapidly

toward extraterrestrial migration.

Mathematically, the first four circuits are Euclidean-Newtonian, orienting us to the 3-dimensional space and 1-dimensional time of planetary life. The second four circuits are Fullerian-Einsteinian, orienting us to interstellar zero-gravity.

It is possible to see the development of an individual (if s/he evolves all the way to the 8th circuit) and the development of life itself as the working out of this Octave of Evolution. Thus:

	Individual	Life
Circuit I	infant bio-survival passivity	uni-cellular life
Circuit II	"toddler" emotional politics (ego)	vertebrate life, territoriality, hierarchy
Circuit III	student Mind	hominid languages and tool-making
Circuit IV	post-pubescent domesticity	urbanized civilization
Circuit V	neurosomatic rapture	free-fall (extraterrestrial migration)
Circuit VI	neuroelectric metaprogramming	Intelligence squared
Circuit VII	neurogenetic consciousness	immortality
Circuit VIII	satori	Cosmic Union

But this is strikingly similar to the teachings of Gurdjieff (which may be,

according to many, the secret inner teachings of Sufism). The Gurdjieff vibration numbers and the levels of consciousness, as named by Gurdjieff, fit the table as follows:

384	Movement center	Circuit I	Invertebrate reality
192	False emotional center	Circuit II	Mammalian reality
96	False intellectual center	Circuit III	Paleolithic reality
48	False personality	Circuit IV	Civilized reality
24	Magnetic Center	Circuit V	Hedonic reality
12	True Emotional center	Circuit VI	Psionic reality
6	True Intellectual center	Circuit VII	Immortal reality
3	The Essence	Circuit VIII	Cosmic reality

Leary began to divide the 8 circuits into 24 phases when he became convinced each circuit has an input phase, a decision-making phase, and an output phase. (On the synaptic level, this appears as dendrites, receiving signals; cell-bodies, making decisions; and axions, transmitting signals.) This 24-stage chart can be correlated with the hebrew alphabet, thereby casting new light on the Cabala; with the Tarot cards (a Sufi invention, it is claimed); and with the Zodiac (if we allow 12 extraterrestrial types to complete the 12 terrestrial types of traditional astrology). These correlations are not indicated on the diagram; a full explanation will be found in two later books.

Working independently of Leary and myself, Prof. Peter Flessel of the University of San Francisco has begun developing correlations between the 8x8 codons of the genetic code and the 8x8 hexagrams of the [I Ching](#), which he will be publishing soon. It is to be hoped that in further work on the Leary Periodic Table, Flessel's correlations and Fuller's 24-phase geometric coupler, science will eventually find a "Rosetta Stone" by which the traditional symbols of occultism can be decoded in modern, operational, scientific categories.

It will be seen by the thoughtful reader that this emerging synthesis evades entirely the usual dichotomy of "spiritual" versus "material," being purely geometric-energetic. It is thus in the same philosophical category as the unitary systems of the East (Zen, Taoism, Vedanta, etc.) and outside the dualisms of Greek logic and Christian theology. Any attempt to describe this octave as "mystical" or as "materialistic" misses the real point of Leary's work.

By [Robert Anton Wilson](#)

[The Eightfold Model of Human Consciousness](#)