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Issue 230

A Directional Theory of the Enneagram

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Thomas Chou

The Enneagram explains much about behavior. But what explains the Enneagram? Why are there 9 types, and not some other number? What are the first principles that define the types? Why do the lines of integration and disintegration point the way they do? How does the Enneagram relate to basic psychological ideas, such as emotions and motivations? Currently, there is no widely accepted theory that answers these simple questions. This article proposes a two-dimensional extension of Karen Horney's triad that may shed light on some of these questions, though many questions remain. This 2-dimensional structure is surprisingly good at generating the traits of the 9 types from first principles, and can also explain most of the lines of integration. This article also highlights the connection between the Enneagram and basic

motivations, whereas most 3x3 theories do not.

In 1945, the psychoanalyst Karen Horney proposed three personality categories, which were later used to categorize the Enneagram types. Horney described aggressive, withdrawn, and compliant personality types, which move against, away from, or toward the environment. This triad may have a biological root: aggression, withdrawal, and compliance are probably related to the fight, flight, or submit behaviors observed in a wide range of animals. However, Horney's triad cannot fully describe the Enneagram. For example, types 5, 4, and 9 all withdraw, but for different underlying reasons. The 9 withdraws to avoid conflicts with others, creating an illusion of peaceful unity with others. The 4 withdraws for a different reason - to enhance their feelings of uniqueness and emotional individuality. Finally, the 5 withdraws to consolidate their sense of mental control over the world. In other words, the 9's behavior moves away from others, but the purpose of this avoidance is actually to seek uni- ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Number Symbolism in Enneagram & Tarot

This article is an excerpt, chapter 9 of my forthcoming book, and focuses on numbers in their role as universal symbols, especially the single-digit numbers 1 – 9. The idea that these numbers are inherently meaningful is the basis for idea that we can link the enneagram with the tarot based upon the numbers that they share. So before looking at how they can be linked, let's take a look at the nature of numbers and what various people have had to say about them.

Susan Rhodes

to consciousness." In other words, we did not invent numbers but, rather, *discovered* them.³

The Mystery of Numbers

Number mysticism is very old. We don't know how old, but probably older than written tablets can record. For the Pythagoreans, numbers were not a mere subject to study, but a way of life. Thus, Michael Schneider, the author of an intriguing book on sacred geometry, quotes the Pythagorean philosopher Philolaus as observing that "Truth...is inherent in the nature of number."¹ And in *Homage to Pythagoras*², Christopher Bamford notes that

the Pythagorean philosopher thus strove to align his being [and] unite his thinking...with the thinking and being sources of the Kosmos, i.e., the Gods, Numbers or Archetypes (p. 15).

The idea as Numbers, Gods, and Archetypes are equivalent (and deserving a capital "A") reflects the Pythagorean reverence for the archetype of number.

This same idea informs the thinking of modern esoteric thinkers.

- Carl Jung considered numbers to be archetypes, and as such, "pre-existent

♦ C. C. Zain, the founder of the Brotherhood of Light, tells us that "the universe spring into differentiated existence in conformity with the law of numbers."⁴

♦ Faith Javane and Dusty Bunker tell us that numerology is "the art and science of understanding the spiritual significance and orderly progression of all manifestation," going on to observe that "every word or name vibrates to a number and every number has its inner meaning. The letter and number code...brings us into a direct and close relationship with the underlying intelligence of the universe."^{5 6}

♦ Robert Lawlor says that numbers are not just abstract ideas but are intimately associated with "the laws and relationships observable in light and sound."^{7,8}

People with synesthesia—the ability to "mix the senses," such that they can, e.g., hear colors, feel sounds and taste shapes—often express a "felt" awareness of what numbers mean. In a *Scientific American* interview, number savant Daniel Tammet (who can calculate *pi* to 22,514 places) says that

I have always thought of abstract information—numbers for example—in visual, dynamic form. Numbers assume complex, multidimensional shapes in my head...They have form, color, texture, and so on. They come alive to me, which is why as a young child I thought of them as my friends."⁹

He's not alone. As much as 4% of the population ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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My apologies for the longer than usual delay with the publication. Nothing serious or nefarious, just a confluence of currents that seem to have touched the “field” or “theme.” Similar events happened a couple times before in the past 22 years when a subtle shift in the general direction of interest occurred. One such shift for example happened when a truce between competing schools quietly “evolved” in the late 90’s making it acceptable to certify and study with multiple teachers. About 10 years later the emphasis on “fixation” or negative aspects as central to type started giving way to a neutral or even positive notion that type is a natural expression of diversity of life. Now the shift appears to be tapping into broader aspects of personality and finding areas of interconnection with systems that cover other areas of life so that the true value of the enneagram can be seen as more specific and find its just place.

In this Issue:

Thomas Chou has revised “A Directional Theory of the Enneagram” originally published in the *EM* 17 years ago when it may have been ahead of the times. Now that the enneagram community has digested and advanced a lot of information, we have a better basis for understanding questions such as: “why are there 9 types, and not some other number; what are the first principles that define the types; and why do the lines of integration and disintegration point the way they do?” Thomas wants to fill this gap and help relate the enneagram better to basic psychological ideas about emotions and motivations. He proposes a two-dimensional extension of Karen Horney’s triad, a structure that is good at generating the traits of types and can explain most of the lines of integration. This article also highlights the connection between the Enneagram and basic motivations, where most other 3x3 theories do not.

Most readers are familiar with Karen Horney’s personality categories describing Enneagram types as aggressive, withdrawn, or compliant, or as moving against, away from, or toward. This triad is related to the fight, flight, or submit behaviors. Thomas makes a very good case for revising types 5, 4, and 9 reasons for withdrawing. The 9 *withdraws* from conflict to create an illusion of peace in order find belonging that takes them *toward* others. The 4 *withdraws* so as to enhance their feelings of uniqueness ultimately moving *away* from the environment. The 5 *withdraws* to consolidate mental control over the world by moving *against* the environment.

This well crafted and thought through explanation adds a dimension of clarity to the fundamentals of the enneagram theory. Bravo.

Susan Rhodes has been working on her newest book, excerpted here is chapter 9 “Number Symbolism in the Enneagram and Tarot.” We decided to leave in references to other parts of the book. Numbers and their meaning have always fascinated me and the fact that so little connection to the enneagram has been made seemed rather astonishing. If there ever was a system with clear linkage to the enneagram it would be numerology. I believe St.

From the Editor

Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430) said it best: “Numbers are the Universal language offered by the deity to humans as confirmation of the truth.” Similar to Pythagoras, he too believed that everything had numerical relationships as did the Vedic sages. One reason a link with the enneagram was not immediately obvious may have been because there are several lineages of working with numbers. For example the Hebrew Kabbalistic numerals assigning mystical meaning to words based on their numerical values, and on connections between words of equal value, known as gematria. Then we have the Abjad numerals in Arabic, the Armenian, the Greek and the Hindu (Tamil Nadu) numerals... Finally we also have the purely mathematical/geometric depictions of how intelligent life evolves. Here Susan focuses on how seemingly random patterns relate to two Laws—the Law of Three and the Law of Seven—where The Law of Seven depicts the dynamic motion of life processes and the Law of Three depicts the stabilizing force of intelligent will that acts upon these processes. The enneagram circle represents the cosmos in which these two laws interact; thus representing unity in diversity. Susan thinks that the lack of interest in numerology among enneagrammers stems from the fact that the nine types have been historically depicted as fixation types or neurosis types whose attributes are of interest only as an aid to minimizing their negative effects. However, as the field moves away from this negative paradigm, numbers will likely be of greater interest and the tarot literature can also serve as a rich source of information on number symbolism.

Jennifer Schneider M.D. and **Ron Corn, M.S.W.** take the “Achiever – Detective the Three–Six Couple” to task. As a pairing they may not be the easiest one, but offer good opportunities to work as a team as they sort out some important differences in the relationship. Detectives criticize Achievers mainly because they see the deceit that their sensitive radar picks up.

Achievers believe that they have a lot to hide, that only winners are worthy of love and that they must deceive in order to achieve their ambitions. Being with a detective makes that task pretty hard. But they share a connecting line that, at least allows them to understand and validate each other. The result can be more humility and loyalty for the Achiever and more confidence in risk taking for the Detective.

Healthy relationships find a balance between letting the small stuff go (Six), and being less conflict avoidant (Three) which includes taking time off from pursuits to relax and connect.

Jack Labanauskas continues with “Space and Time: Enneagram & Astrology (Part 4) for a better Picture of a Controversial Individual.” Let’s assume that as students of human nature we aim to be accurate, but each of us is at a different level of insight

into personality in general, and how our own mind works. Michael Damian says it beautifully:

“Depending on how we use it, the mind can obscure or reveal truth and thereby create hell or heaven for us. In that sense, where we really live is in the quality of our state of mind. The factor that determines its quality is insight.

Insight comes from attention. Insight clarifies and uplifts. Insight also changes us at the deepest level of identity, because to see things as they are creates a shift in who we think we are.

In other words, by seeking the truth, we awaken in truth. We cannot say, “I want to know the truth about existence, but leave me out of it.” It does not work that way. To ask about the truth of existence throws our own identity into question. It works this way because truth, being total, cannot be found as an object, image or opinion outside of you. It is known through direct identity or not at all.” [https://www.michaeldamian.org/book]

Things we feel very passionate about or see as controversial provide a fertile ground for distorted assumptions. Consciously or not, we see the world from the perspective of our type — enriched by our life experience, education, plus whatever bias we picked up.

The choice of Donald Trump as the subject to be examined is perfect given that he is at the center of controversies in the U.S. and also a topic outside our national borders. This essay aims to point out some basic considerations about the methodology we apply in search of answers. For example, the enneagram is essentially based on subjective interpretations of reported or observed behaviors. Astrology too is subjective in its interpretations of the meaning based on an objective birth time and place. We can’t begin opining about an individual in enneagrammatic terms without knowing something about the person; while astrology does opine on probabilities based on the time and place an individual entered life, even without knowing who the individual is.

In enneagram and astrology sites and literature we can see dramatic inconsistencies and displays of bias.

We do not have an enneagram test yet that is universally accepted and can break a tie when experts disagree, so we still rely our own assessment, a democratic consensus about type, or on the expert(s) we choose to trust. In that sense astrology has a leg up on the enneagram as it works off a knowable basis for speculation (time/place of birth) and has the added element of prediction plus time that allows for later verification of accuracy. The enneagram of course does not make predictions and touches on the element of time only when referring to general developmental stages.

Time is an impartial and absolute judge about the veracity of predictions, and astrologers with a good record are generally accurate also when assessing (controversial!) characters — ability to detach from personal preferences is a must for staying objective. I had some impish fun with a little test designed to measure the accuracy or objectivity of an astrologer. I found the data of a pair of well known individuals of roughly the same age who held opposing and rather

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For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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controversial views — one a notorious extreme leftist, the other an equally notorious extreme rightist. Astrologer with no interest in politics interpreted the charts in a consistent and reasonable way. But when I happened to know an astrologer's political bend, I switched the names on the birth data between those individuals. The readings were distinctly slanted to reflect the astrologer's like or dislike. Not surprisingly, the chart believed to be that of the their ideological foe was given a negative spin, and the chart of the other a more positive interpretation. Conclusion? Never underestimate personal bias. The same goes for enneagrammers of course, except I can't think of a way to switch data in order to devise a similar test.

Tom Condon has been watching and commenting on how "Learned Behavior, Mistyping, Idolatry, Ideologies and Group Egos" affect our personality style. Are we born with our personality style or is it learned in childhood? The answer is "yes." Genetic inheritance and environmental influences are collaborating. Babies are born with distinct temperaments and geneticists estimate that about fifty percent of our psychology is innate. However, we find surprisingly consistent childhood backgrounds for each Enneagram style, surely indicating that a key part of a personality style is shaped by early life.

Mistyping or failing to identify one's personality style is mostly due to not being accustomed to observing our behavior, thinking or emotions, or having no framework for self-knowledge as it hasn't been part of a necessity in life.

Idolatry is yet another way of avoiding authentic self knowledge or spirituality. If we choose not to strive for undefended openness, to pursue states that

only symbolize our spiritual potential, then we'll have a hard time warding off feeling empty by only embracing ideologies that reinforce our worldview. We see that in politics, religion or philosophy where people adopt belief systems they can easily identify with, reinforced by joining healthy or unhealthy groups that share our worldview, self-image or shadow side. This happens a lot between wartime enemies who demonize each other but behave identically. Then again, one's ideology could represent positive values or be an expression of personal neurosis maintaining personality defenses.

Carl Marsak opens the discourse on what it takes "To Function as a Soul: The Esoteric Dimension of the Enneagram". Esoteric generally means a type of knowledge reserved for the elite few. Mostly such knowledge has a self-policing nature as it requires a level of sophistication to pursue a profound subject.

In matters dealing with spiritual techniques capable of accessing unusual levels of energy and subtle powers, ancient sages observed strict rules and issued warnings to prevent abuse — akin to today's nuclear non-proliferation treaties that try to limit such powers from getting into irresponsible hands.

In the current information age such restrictions are off, but life always finds a way to establish new forms of balance. No longer are secrets protected by wise guardians, they now out in the open but protected (i.e. rendered esoteric) like a needle is concealed in a haystack of electronic and printed tsunami of information (trivia, social media, commercial advertising, ideological propaganda etc). If we don't have the fortune of guidance by enlightened teachers, we must learn to navigate through information with discern-

ment to find space and time for spiritual science.

Carl says it perfectly: "Spiritual science teaches that one of the greatest problems inherent in the human constitution is the natural gap existing between lower and higher mind. Without bridging this gap there is no perception of the Spiritual Triad, no entry of the Soul into the Upper Worlds, and no true intuition — one effectively remains stuck at the level of sense perception, emotional reactivity and lower cognition, which we know from Enneagram studies to be merely lower-order mimics or reflections of the Higher Centers of Intelligence.

It is with the greatest of sadness that we mourn the deaths of two great friends, authors, teachers and pillars of the Enneagram Community,

Elizabeth Wagele

Born: May 31, 1930 Salt Lake City UT

Died: March 27, 2017 Berkeley CA

and

Dr. David N. Daniels

Born: August 30 1934 Palo Alto CA

Died: May 26 2017