

## THE ARCHETYPAL TRIAD

If there is one number that dominates *The Dramatic Universe* it would be three. The triad is ubiquitous, though it takes various forms. Two major ideas stand out.

First, the *triad of experience*, which is composed of Function, Being and Will. Starting from psychological and intentional experience JGB extrapolated these to encompass all possible experience and not just human. The 'stuff' of experience he called *hyle* after the Greeks, not to be understood as just 'matter' in the naive sense.

Function is correlated with actualisation, process, behaviour but also has connotations of 'use' as with a machine in a human world. Function has structure. We can *know* function.

Being is degree of inner togetherness. There is a relativity of being so that different entities can exist *more or less*. Being has levels. We can be *conscious* of being.

Will is correlated with initiative and act. It can be said to 'seek to actualise' and to 'make use of function'. We can *understand* will.

Knowledge, consciousness and understanding are the *subjective* aspects of function, being and will.

Second, *the will is triadic*. JGB equates Gurdjieff's prime cosmic substance okidanokh, which has three guises, with will. The triad is the principle of relatedness and has the attribute of dynamism.

Here is hardly the place to discourse on the *number-term systems* of which the triad is one. Suffice it to say that understanding these systems requires some kind of articulation of *instinct*. If we don't have the instinct no amount of intellectual argument will help. The instinct for the triad is the feel for relatedness. It's what emerges beyond sex. It embraces a wide range of experience including the original meaning of 'competition' which was 'to struggle together'.

Followers of Gurdjieff inherited a built in tendency to always 'look beyond dualism'. Thus, the familiar distinction and contrast of mind and matter was discounted by moving to a triadic position. Hence JGB's function, being and will. Hence also the transcendence of such dualities as: time is an illusion v. only time is real. It was inevitable that JGB would come up with *three* kinds of time. It was also inevitable that he would refer this triad of time back to the archetypal triad (we also show how it reflects back on hyle which now appears in three forms):

Will	Hyparxis	sensitive
Being Eternity	virtual	
Function	Time	actual

The main aspect of G's approach that appealed to JGB was that of such things as: doing, practice, dealing with uncertainty, decision and the like; in essence the will. He was concerned with the 'conquest' of time through hyperaxis and not 'escape' from it through eternity.

So, the triad of function, being and will is an attempt to break through the dichotomy of mind and matter (the postulate of hyle went the other way, dissolving the distinction in the *monadic* state).

Time and the Will were JGB's two main obsessions. When he got to Vol. 4 of the DU these had produced the theme of *the war with time* and also the important concept of the *present moment*.

In dealing with time there are intrinsic constraints. For example, we cannot just add on new dimensions ad hoc but must have some reason for each one. Thus, consider what are the possibilities for some other kind of time? In a quasi-mathematical-logical sense, there are only two: the *opposite* and the *inverse*. The opposite fits eternity while the inverse fits hyperaxis. Below we mention two concepts that have a bearing on this which are not explained very much.

### **A mention of the semiotic square**

Use of two kinds of contrast produces what is known as the semiotic square – a kind of *tetrad*. The square of three kinds of time plus one of space shows eternity as the inverse of space, hyperaxis as the inverse of time, space as the opposite of time and eternity the opposite of hyperaxis.

### **A mention of quaternions**

As a little mathematical aside, the form  $3 + 1$  that appears in JGB's dealings with dimensions is significant. If we take this as three dimensions of time and one of space then a convention demands we label the three dimensions of time with imaginary numbers (involving the square root of minus one) and when we calculate a total space-time interval (d say) it appears as:

$$d^2 = x^2 - t_1^2 - t_2^2 - t_3^2$$

a group of numbers with one real and three imaginary variables is coherent and consistent and is called a *quaternion*. Only groups with 1, 3 or 7 imaginary numbers are coherent.

### **From *The Dramatic Universe* 1952 edition (before he introduced hyperaxis)**

It would be too restrictive to confine the idea of Function to actualisation in Time alone. When explained by the Principle of Structure, Function includes the co-ordination of parts in Space, and the pattern of possibilities in Eternity. In the most general sense,

Function is the answer we give to the questions "What part does this whole play in the cosmic scheme?"

The second element in the universal character of every whole is its existence. To understand that existence is relative is one of the most difficult and most necessary steps towards a new conception of Reality. I shall show later how the place of every whole in the Universe is uniquely determined by the intensity of inner togetherness which is the measure of its Being.

Finally, we have in every triad an element of Will. As I shall show later, the distinction of one and many is not applicable to the Category of Will. We can therefore neither say that there is only one Will pervading all Reality nor that there is a multiplicity of wills existing independently in each separate whole. Because Will is not subject to this distinction, it can become an element in the existence of every whole and thereby confer upon the Universe the dynamic character of a genuine striving towards an undetermined goal, without collapsing into a pluralism from which there can be no redemption.

I have only indicated in general terms the character of the three components of the ultimate triad. In using these categories their meaning will gradually emerge. The special advantage of thinking in terms of these categories follows from the second principle of explanation, which asserts that in every triad the elements are significant in proportion to their independence and distinctness.

Function, Being and Will must be so sharply distinguished that each taken separately will serve to give a complete account of all that exists. As I have said before, Function, Being and Will are each co-extensive with Reality. We can therefore study our problems under each of the three categories separately, and afterwards bring together the results in terms of the triad.

Similarly, the Principle of Wholeness suggests a division of the triad into three aspects: subjective, objective and cosmic.

Finally, we shall see how the Principle of Structure enables any one whole to be explained in terms of any other, insofar as they share a similarity of recurrent structure. Thanks to this principle, we can hope to apply the discoveries of our own subjective experience to the interpretation of the Reality which is beyond. I have already referred to the unified interpretation which is the direct intuition of Reality, as what Gurdjieff calls Objective Reason. Of this he says that it is a measure of the 'totality of self-awareness of all separate large and small cosmic concentrations'. It is also that by which it's determined their, as it is called 'degree-of-justification-of-the-sense-and-aim-of-their-existence', and also the further role of each separate Individual in relation to everything existing".