

# THE TRIAD – J G BENNETT

## CHAPTER II. THE LAW OF THREE

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### I THE TRIAD AS ABSTRACT IDEA

The use we have made of the six modes of becoming in our survey of human activity has shown us that not all that happens does so in the same way, but it has not shown us the mechanism of the different kinds of happening which are possible, nor has it shown us whether there is any hope that they can be controlled. We have seen that events happen in different ways, but we have not seen why this is so, nor how yet there is no question which can be more important. All men's problems are bound up with the *why* and *how* of events. This is equally true whether they are philosophers or theologians, scientists or engineers, historians or statesmen or common men and women about their daily lives. That the question is one and the same on all scales and in every -context is seldom recognised and never sufficiently understood, with the result that philosophers and theologians seek one kind of answer and scientists another kind. Historians and jurists approach it with quite different pre-conceptions from any of the first three; while in our daily lives, where the answer matters most of all, we usually ignore it entirely. If we once realise that the question of the why and how of events is the same wherever it occurs and that; moreover, it always has the same answer, we shall have laid the foundation for an objective understanding of the world as it really is. We shall also have taken the first step on the path which can ultimately lead from our present state of mechanicalness and helplessness to the power to control ourselves and to regulate the course of external events.

The answer to the question why and how events occur is given by the law of Three. We may start with a brief statement of the law. Every event, of whatever nature and whatsoever scale, is composed of three elements and can be seen as the interaction of three forces corresponding to these elements. The coming together of these three components constitutes the event. It is also the cause of the event and the manner in which it happens. Each of the three components has a definite character which is always: the same, and, for this reason they are sometimes called three forces or three qualities. Every event from the creation of the world down to the smallest and most insignificant happenings, from purely mental processes to purely physical ones, from events which have duration in time to these which can be conceived outside of space and time, all, without exception, can be seen as the combination of the same three components. This law is by no means a new discovery. It has been formulated, misunderstood, lost, re-discovered, misunderstood again in innumerable forms throughout the history of human thought. The Triad is the very centre and root of more than one philosophical system. It is clearly implied in many of the most important generalisations of natural science. The deep rooted and universal importance which, among all the races of the world, is attached to the number three is evidence of its antiquity. The Triad has entered into the profoundest dogmas of religion. It has perhaps never been so much disregarded and misunderstood as it is at the present day, so that the re-formulation and fresh development of the Law of Three are a necessary preliminary to any attempt at understanding man and the universe.

Before we address ourselves to the task of establishing the universal significance of the Law of Three, it will be useful to cast a glance over the part it has played in philosophical speculation and abstract thought in general. In the first place, it can readily be shown that the conception of the triad provides a solution, indeed the only possible solution, for many of the most obstinate problems of philosophy. It shows, for example, how to deal with causality, continuity and other age old enigmas of metaphysics.

The riddle of causality was not explicitly formulated by the Greek philosophers, but it was at the root of many of their difficulties. Parmenides the Eleatic taught that reality was one and unchanging, and that the apparent flux perceived by the senses was mere illusion, Zeno, his disciple, attempting to defend this position, sought to show that in all change and in every causal sequence there is a contradiction. In opposition to the Eleatics, Heraclitus evolved his theory of becoming, and compared the universe to an eternally burning fire. Neither the Eleatics, who assumed that Being was the only reality, nor the Sceptics, who affirmed non-being, nor Heraclitus, who asserted the reality of becoming, could give any explanation of the relation of these three Categories. It is probable that Pythagoras taught the law of three, but neither his followers nor other schools of Greek philosophy could see that it provided the solution of their problems. Plato, in the *Timaeus* - a professedly Pythagorean treatise - introduced the Law of Three in his doctrine of creation. He said that cause and effect of necessity implied a third element, which itself is neither the cause nor effect, to act as a link between them. From this, he goes on to show that the creation of the universe must be conceived as the interaction of consciousness with matter, the former active and the latter passive, the interaction taking place through a third element which harmonises and unites the two.

Though these ideas are no more than a fragmentary representation of the Law of Three, they suffice for a preliminary statement of the three components of every event. We can say that every event takes place through the union of three forces, one of which is active, the second passive, while the third combines or completes them. When events are seen in this light, the riddle of causality disappears. The effect is neither in the cause nor separate from it. The cause is one element, the effect a second element, and they are connected by a third element which is neither the one nor the other. In this way, both the independence of the cause and the novelty of the effect are preserved in a way which would be impossible for a merely dualistic doctrine of causality. It is vital for the right understanding of the law to grasp that it implies three independent, autonomous forces differing in character and origin. This is quite different from the idea of the two forces linked together by something which belongs to both.

An illustration will clarify this application of the Law of Three. Let us suppose that a man is displeased with himself and wishes to change. This desire and the efforts he makes in consequence of it are the first - the active - element in the triad. Against it are set his weaknesses and habits, or, more exactly, his lack of permanent will, his sleep and his inability to "do." The third element in the triad will be the general conditions of his life, the distracting influences of his environment, the bad example of his fellows who make no effort to change. The outcome will be a state of tension and dissatisfaction, but it will not lead to anything new, for this is the triad of ordinary life. To this triad applies the saying, "et plus ca change, et plus c'est la meme chose." Suppose now that a new factor comes into the man's life. He meets with people who can give him new knowledge and show him new methods of work - in other words, with a school. The character of the triad is now modified, the balance of the elements is profoundly altered. In place of the endless, fruitless turning about on the same spot, the man will begin to move in a definite direction,

and ultimately may attain, his goal. Here we have two triads, in both of which the active and passive forces are the same, but the neutralising element in one is quite different from the other. The relation is not one of cause and effect, but of union of three elements.

It may be objected that the forces we have named are not true cause, that there is no genuine interplay of active and passive forces, but merely the progressive development of the man's experience in which each state determined the next. The whole sequence of events would thus be ascribed to purely physical laws which control not merely the man's actions, but the 'whole state of the universe as it passes from one moment to the next. This is the Laplacian doctrine of pure necessity which does not explain causality, but tries to explain, it away. It must first be clearly recognised that this view is only tenable if it is made absolute, and admits of no exception at any stage or in any form. Absolute Determinism, which excludes all possibility of free will, is at least consistent, but it is easy to see that partial Determinism is not only full of contradictions, but fails to solve the very problem with which it sets out to deal, namely that of the connection between, past and future states of the world. Absolute Determinism means that the whole of reality must be considered as material, and moreover, equally material, so that consciousness is simply denied or regarded as an epiphenomenon, that is, a pure illusion having no connection whatever with reality. Any other view must lead to partial or modified Determinism. Ignoring, then, for the moment the existence of consciousness, the Determinist claims that the whole state of the world at a given moment can be expressed by a set of mathematical relations, more precisely by a set of differential equations, the solution of which will make it possible to predict with absolute certainty the state of the world at any other moment.

It is obvious that this doctrine breaks down completely if we are unable to swallow the assumption that consciousness is non-existent, an assumption which is preposterous, since the very fact that we are able to discuss these questions at all pre-supposes that we are conscious of them. However, it breaks down, on other grounds as well, for it assumes that, theoretically at least, a set of differential equations defining the state of the world can be written down. In point of fact, it is impossible to write down the differential equations which completely define the state of a simple universe consisting of a finite number of identical atoms and nothing else. As the complexity of the states increases, the complexity of the differential equations required to connect them increases at a far greater rate. From this, it follows that an infinite universe must of necessity be contingent, for its state at any given moment could not be defined, even if we were to postulate a Being of Infinite Consciousness, whose existence could hardly be allowed on the Determinist view. Even in a finite universe, the replacement of causality by a mere law of succession in time is devoid of practical meaning. For small events, for example events on our earth, taken as part of a universe of countless millions of suns, the possibility of calculation is, for all practical purposes, as remote and unreal as it would be were the universe infinite\*. On the other hand, for very large events such as the movement of the universe taken as a whole, calculation is equally impossible on account of the vast inner complexity which once again, for all practical purposes, introduces a hopeless degree of contingency and uncertainty.

All these arguments have been examined and elaborated so often that it is unnecessary for us to consider them in greater detail. Any attempt to dispense with the idea of causality altogether leads to obvious nonsense, and any attempt to explain it without recourse to the Law of Three breaks down completely.

The significance of the Law of Three is not confined to problems of causality. These are among the most artificial and the least interesting of its applications. Its

true importance lies in its power to deal with concrete problems, with facts; but before we come to facts, we must consider further the philosophical implications of the Law. Philosophy is concerned principally with one aspect of the question why and how things happen, namely why and how do we know. Western philosophy from Plato to Kant slowly came to realise that this question is much more difficult to answer than seems the case for naive, untrained thinking. The movement of thought for Aristotle was essentially analytical and consisted in finding what ideas contained, and his logic failed to show how we can ever know anything new except the data of experience coming from outside. Descartes established the autonomy of mind, but could not show how mind worked. The unsolved problem left by Descartes was attacked by Leibnitz, Berkeley, Locke and Hume, and all these philosophers could do was to establish more clearly the difficulty of explaining how we can know anything at all. A great step forward was made by Immanuel Kant, in his doctrine of the a priori synthesis which is in reality no more than the application of the Law of Three to our thinking. According to this doctrine, the contradictions which baffled Kant's predecessors are themselves the very elements by which we reach the truth. In the a priori synthesis, the conflict of "yes" and "no" is not resolved by the suppression of one or the other, but by combining them into a fuller and new truth. This triad, which in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is implicit but not formulated, becomes with Hegel the foundation of the dialectic. For Hegel, the progress of pure thought takes place solely by triads, the three elements of which he calls thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The Hegelian triad is nowhere better illustrated than in the first stage of the dialectic in his treatment of Being.

The simplest category, which must precede all others, is that of Being. We can think away everything else, but whatever we may eliminate, we are still left with the assertion that "something is." But this idea will not stand alone, for "there is" implies that "there is not." Being cannot be conceived except as the antithesis of Non-Being, and Non-Being cannot be conceived except as the antithesis of Being. Moreover, Being and Non-Being are not merely separate ideas, but actually inherent and bound up in one another. The word Being has no meaning except as that which is not Non-Being, and, conversely Non-Being has no meaning except that which is not, i.e., has no Being. Not only are our ideas of Being alone, and of Non-Being alone, incomplete and actually meaningless, but even the two taken together fail to help us. In fact, they cancel one another out and leave us with no idea at all. It is only by the synthesis of Being and Non-Being with the help of the third idea of Becoming that our thought gains meaning and concrete reality. As compared with the emptiness of the pair of ideas, Being and Non-Being, the triad Non-Being - Becoming - Being is full of rich meaning and epitomizes the whole of reality, the creation and life of the world, the nature and destiny of man.

Nothing can more overwhelmingly demonstrate the power of the Law of Three than the contemplation of this triad. From it, Hegel proceeds by what he calls the transcendental dialectic through a series of triads to build up a structure through which he claims, by a process of pure thought, to demonstrate the origin, nature and meaning of all natural, historical and spiritual events.

In the Hegelian system, there is much that is artificial and, as we shall see later, it is impossible from the Law of Three alone to demonstrate the architecture of the universe. For this, it is necessary to derive from the Law of Three the six Modes of Becoming and also show how there can be a direction of becoming. The category of direction is of fundamental importance, and we shall devote a whole chapter to its study. At this stage, it is only necessary to observe that the Hegelian system assumes direction without showing how it arises. In spite of its defects, however, the Hegelian system remains one of the greatest monuments of Western philosophy, and it derives the whole of its strength from an incomplete and only partly understood

application of the Law of Three. The sterility of attempts to abandon the Law of Three, whether in the form of the a priori synthesis or the more precise Hegelian triad in favour of a dualistic development is seen in the philosophy of Benedetto Croce. This, more than any other modern philosophical system, shows the bankruptcy of mere logical thought, because Croce takes Hegel himself as his starting point, and puts aside precisely the one feature - that of triads - which gives vitality to the Hegelian system. The same applies to the work of English followers of Hegel, who have tried to retain his transcendentalism while abandoning the triad.

Before we leave the abstract applications of the Law of Three, we should, perhaps, refer to so-called "dialectical materialism" which exhibits another form of defective thinking, in that it tries to graft the Hegelian triad on to pre-conceived notions of political economy, not realising that, as we shall see later, there is more than one kind of triad, and that the triad of the dialectic rightly exemplified in the union of Non-Being - Becoming - Being is not the kind of triad which is operative in the events of human society.

Another example of the triad in philosophy is to be found in the problem of meaning. Language is the communication of meaning between man and man, John Dewey called language "the world's supreme wonder, because it changed dumb creatures, as we significantly call them, into thinking and knowing animals and created the realm of meanings. When we try to understand how meaning arises and how it is added to mere experience on the one hand and mere activity on the other, we can see at once that no dualistic interpretation will help us.

Urban\* connects meaning with the idea of mobility of signs, of the tendency of a sign to transfer itself from one object to another. He says, "This phenomenon of transference forms the central fact of linguistic meaning, but before examining it, it is necessary to consider a characteristic of the verbal meaning situation which in a sense conditions this transference, namely the triadic character of the meaning relation." He goes on to 'show that a word only acquires meaning when it is something more than a sign connecting a particular subject with a particular object or class of objects. "We cannot think significantly in terms of a word without implying that the word is significant for others also. This becomes even clearer when we pass from words that are names for relatively simple perceptual objects to those that are names for more complex situations. Words such as love and marriage have no single, unambiguous reference. Marriage, for instance, means one thing in the mouth of an anthropologist, another in the mouth of a jurist, and still another in the mouth of a priest, It is impossible to think meaningfully of the object in terms of this word without implied reference to the universe of discourse, or the speech community .in which the word is used." The same idea is implicit in Haserot's\*\* doctrine that linguistic meaning must have three elements: subject, object and communication.

\*W. M. Urban, *Language & Reality*, London 1939, p.109.

\*\* F. S. Haserot, *The Logic of Being*, p.5.

Urban says that, "Curiously enough, there are those who persist in thinking that verbal meaning is a dyadic relation. This view is, of course, inevitable on any theory that seeks to equate verbal meaning with the simple sign situation and to reduce all meaning to causal relations. It is possible to do this, however, only if we abstract language from 'speech' or discourse, and view it as a collection of entities to be related to other entities. If we do this, we are no longer dealing with linguistic meaning, but with something else - a pure abstraction."

An interesting application of triads is to be found in Von Hugel's analysis of religious experience.\* He first shows how Western Civilisation has grown up by the

interaction of three forces, Hellenism, Christianity and Science. He then divides religious experience into the sensual-ritualistic, intellectual-theological and emotional-mystical elements. All varieties of religious experience can be explained in terms of the combinations of these three. Throughout his study of mysticism, von Hugel makes effective use of a similar triadic analysis. This book is undoubtedly the most valuable enquiry into Mysticism made outside of schools.

\* F.von Hugel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 2nd.Edn,1927, Vol.1, pp. 1-82.

These various illustrations are interesting as showing how any attempt to deal with real things and not mere artificial abstractions is only possible with the help of the Law of Three. We shall see later that the problem of meaning can only be fully solved through the doctrine of cosmoses.

In this section, we have not attempted anything in the nature of an exhaustive survey of philosophical speculation in search of applications or the Law of Three, but merely to give an indication how such a survey could be approached. What we have said, however, must be sufficient to demonstrate that the Law of Three, the doctrine of the triadic nature of reality, is far more deeply rooted in western thought than might at first be supposed.

## II. THE TRIAD AS REVEALED TRUTH

The many forms which the Law of Three has taken and the extent to which, in some of these forms, it has lost contact with its original meaning, are nowhere better exemplified than in the appearances of the triad in religion. Apart from primitive Islam, with its fanatical monotheism, nearly all the religions of the world have, in one way or another, admitted the doctrine that the highest reality is triadic.

The trinities of various religions are fixed and outside the world of finite events. The triad by which, for Plato, the process of creation goes forward is also of a definite kind, dominated clearly by the active force of creation, though there is some evidence that in the Pythagorean teachings from which, on Plato's own showing, he drew his inspiration for this particular doctrine, the ubiquity of the triad seems to have been recognised. Thus, Phericydes\*, the teacher of Pythagoras, is stated by Hermas to have seen triads in everything which exists. "He maintains Zeus or Fire, Earth, and Chronos or Time as principles - Fire as active, Earth as passive and Time as that in which everything originates." , Aristotle\*\* also says, "The corporeal has no dimension outside of the Three; hence the Pythagoreans also say that the All and everything is determined through triads."

\* G. W.F.Hegel. *History of Philosophy*, vol.I. p.191. cf. also Sextus adv.Math .X 262.

\*\* Aristotle *De Caelo I*.

It is particularly remarkable that the triad should have been equally accepted in atheistic systems like Taoism and Neo-Platonism as in the theistic religions of Brahmanism and Christianity.

It is true that, in Taoism, specific references to the triad are rare. It is said, for example, in the Tao Teh King\*\*-\* that "Tao gave birth to one, two and three elements and from the triad all the ten thousand varieties of things have come forth". It is not, however, in sayings such as these that the real significance of the Law of Three in the doctrines of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu is to be found, but rather in the meaning of Tao itself. This will only be clear when we have considered more fully the varieties of triads and the nature of the third or neutralising force\*

\*\*\*The translation of this verse is very uncertain, but the above appears to agree with most versions, cf. *Tao Te Ching*, trs. Arthur Waley, Ch.XLII, p.195.

The triad has been inherent in Hindu religious doctrines from the Vedic period up to the present time. One particular division of Hindu religious philosophy, Sankhya, contains perhaps the clearest and fullest exposition of the Law of Three ever disclosed and we shall have to consider it in detail as it will serve to introduce the Law of Three as we understand it in our own system. Apart from Sankhya, which is not theistic, the idea of the triad has remained firmly established in Hindu religion, through all the changes in theological doctrine during three thousand years of evolution. The first triad in the Vedas was Surya - Agni - Varuna. In the Vedic Hymns, these are planetary or nature gods, and nothing is more striking than the contrast between the deep philosophical doctrines which half emerged, half remained lost in the Vedas, and the naive theologies and primitive rituals in which they were clothed. That, behind and before the Vedas, the Indo-European races knew the Law of Three, probably in a concrete and practical manner, is shown not only by the trinities of the Hymns, but by the very forms of language.\* The practical meaning which was lost in the Hymns was, perhaps, never recovered, but in its place there arose a philosophical understanding of the Law of Three which took two main forms. On one side was the doctrine of the three Gunas, which was developed as a practical system of self-development in Sankhya, and on the other side the more philosophical trinity, Brahma - Vishnu - Shiva, of post-Vedic Brahmanism. Brahma is the Creator; Shiva, wrongly understood as the Destroyer, but really the principle of multiplicity and variety;\*\* and Vishnu, called the Preserver, that is, the harmoniser of the unifying and diversifying tendencies of the other two aspects of the Trinity. These correspond to the three forces of the triad.

\* The original Indo-European language was essentially triadic. It recognised three numbers, three voices and three moods in the verb, three genders, and the syntax of the simple sentence was triadic in contrast with the structure of the Semitic and Turanian root languages.

\*\* cf, Shiva's title *Dhurjateh* - "matted locks", expressing the multiplicity of nature.

The triad was a central element in the religious systems of Egypt. The Gods of ancient Egypt were closely identified with theories of the origin and structure of the world. There are clear indications that in the trinity, *Tern - Ra - Nou*, the Egyptians expressed the essential character of the Law of Three as we shall see it develop in our own system. Tern was the first cause which united with Ra, the active principle, through Nou, the passive principle.\*\*\* But this combination was not regarded as static, for each of the three principles from one or another aspect might appear as the first. Thus, Nou was both the formless ground from which Tern sprang and also the passive field in which Tern-Ra was operative. The three were united in *Sa*, the seed or ovum from which all creation arose.

\*\*\* Enel, *Les Origines de la Genese*, Cairo, 1935 p. 67

The triads, Isis - Osiris - Horus, and Isis - Osiris - Seth are particularly interesting, for they illustrate the principle which is fundamental for the Law of Three, that the same elements can enter into different triads, and that the same element can fulfil one function in one triad and a different function in another triad.

It has been suggested by Fabre d'Olivet\* that the Egyptian triads are to be found in a disguised and perhaps distorted form in the Hebrew scriptures, especially in the Book of Genesis. He suggests, for example, that the triple nature of man is recognised in the three names, Adam - Seth - Enoch, given to the progenitor of the human race. There is, however, little indication that the triad entered into Hebrew theology or cosmogony until after the Christian era, when the Kabbalah constructed

the system of twelve orders of creation formed of four triads, the first of which, Kheter – Chochtnah - Binah, represented the highest levels both in man and in the universe.

\* Fabre d'Olivet, *La Langue Hebraique Restituee* II pp 28 – 40

The history of the triad in Christianity has been very different from that in the older religions. In the Gospels, there is no direct reference to the Law of Three and the conception of the Christian Trinity was only slowly evolved during the first four centuries of the Christian era. Whereas in the Hindu trinities, no question at any time arises as to the primacy or subordination of one or other of the three members, it was only by slow degrees that Christian theologians came finally to adopt the doctrine of a consubstantial and co-eternal Trinity. Consequently, it is not to the Christian Trinity that we must look for a clear understanding of the Law of Three, but to the treatment in the Pauline Epistles and in the writings of some of the early Fathers of such practical questions as the manner in which salvation is possible. One of the central doctrines which St. Paul preaches and which has remained like the thread of Ariadne to guide us through the maze of Scholasticism in which only too soon the simple doctrines of the early Christians were lost, is that the struggle in man between his desires and aspirations for the highest, and the weakness of his flesh and the opposition of his lower nature cannot lead to a successful outcome without Divine Grace as a third force, Neither by grace alone, nor by works alone, could man be saved, but by the interaction of the three independent forces, the striving of the spirit, the resistance of the flesh and God's mercy. In this triad, the Law of Three is truly and rightly, though not fully, understood, and wherever it has been preserved or re-affirmed, Christianity has retained its vital power, and where it has been lost to sight, religion has lapsed into empty formalism or mere human morality.

### III. THE TRIAD AS ULTIMATE REALITY

We must now return to that particular system which specifically recognised the Law of Three, and that is the Sankhya philosophy, the origin of which is attributed to Kapila, who may have been a contemporary of Pythagoras and possibly even older. The word Sankhya itself means "numerical" and it is one of the earliest systems to establish an elaborate numerology. In the Sankhya Karika, one of the earliest scriptural sources, the Law of Three is stated in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth verses as follows:

11. "The original creation and every separate event within it has three qualities. Separate events are indiscriminative, external to one another, interconnected, irrational and restless. These differentiations are absent in the One.

12. "The Gunas respectively consist in pleasure, pain and passivity and are adapted to manifestation, activity and restraint. They are co-operative, rest on one another, produce each other, consort together and are reciprocally present.

13. "Sattva is elevating and enlightening, Rajas urgent and versatile, Tamas heavy and enveloping: like a lamp, they co-operate."

The commentator explains the last illustration by saying that in a lamp, the cotton, the oil and the flame, although mutually destructive, combine to give light.

The doctrine of the three Gunas in Sankhya has baffled not only occidental scholars, but also the Hindu commentators who attempted to explain and develop the system many hundreds of years after its first appearance. The meaning of the word

Guna is itself most elusive for ordinary logical thought. In one context it appears to mean a quality, in another a form of matter, and in yet another, a force. Sometimes it refers to things and living beings, at other times to their qualities. Again, the Gunas are spoken of as never existing separately, but in all triads except the first supreme triad by which Nature, Prakriti, issues from the One, they are not present in equal proportions. Thus, one triad may be dominated by Sattva, another by Rajas and a third again by Tamas. The Sankhya writers have a tendency to call by the name Sattva a triad which is dominated by this quality, with the result that it is sometimes difficult to decide whether they are referring to the triad as a whole or to one of its three elements.

It is probable that this indeterminateness is adopted intentionally as a safeguard against too logical thinking, too abstract and artificial a way of looking at the Law of Three. If this were the purpose, it certainly failed, for the later Sankhya built up a very artificial system according to which the whole Universe was made by combining the three qualities in different proportions. This system crumbled away owing to its failure to explain adequately even the most obvious facts of nature, and the Sankhya has come to be regarded as an interesting relic of an early stage of human thought rather than a profound and penetrating system, the study of which has practical value for every age.

As compared with all other conceptions of the triad which we have considered hitherto, the doctrine of Gunas represents a most important advance by its recognition that triads can differ in quality. In the triad of the dialectic, only one process is recognised - the resolution of positive and negative by a synthesis. In religious systems, the Trinities are unique categories at the summit of creation, or even outside it. None of these ideas, however, contains more than the germ of a suggestion that different combinations of the three elements produce triads of different character corresponding to different kinds of events. The doctrine of Gunas in Sankhya recognises fully and explicitly that there can be an essential difference in triads according to which of the three Gunas has the predominating influence. We shall see later that this conception will enable us to work out the fundamental laws of all reality and to establish the principles by which effective *doing* can be possible.

#### **IV. THE LAW OF THREE**

As the archaeologist, digging in the ruins of an ancient city, reconstructs from the crumbled foundations, from a few implements and potsherds and from broken inscriptions in an unknown tongue, the lineaments of a forgotten civilisation; so may we, from scattered remains attempt to reconstitute the Law of Three as it has been taught in schools which possess practical knowledge. The fragments we have collected are no more than partial and sometimes distorted, versions of a single, universal law which answers the question why and how things happen. In stating this law, we must be careful to avoid anything in the nature of rigid definitions or precise, logical formulae. Definitions and formulae belong to the domain of logical thought and it should already be clear that the Law of Three is 'more fundamental' than logic. We have stated the law as affirming that every event on whatsoever scale can be regarded as the combination of three elements. Of the character of the three elements we can affirm that the first is active or causal, the second passive or receptive, while the third establishes continuity and harmonises or neutralises the other two. We shall call the three elements of the triad the Principles of Activity, Receptivity and Continuity. We have also seen that the nature of the event itself is determined by the manner in which the three elements come together.

According to this statement of the law, there must be different kinds of triad, according to which of the three principles exercises the preponderating influence. At

first sight, it might appear that a triad dominated by the active principle must be one characterised by progress and hence by an upward tendency, while a triad dominated by the passive principle might be expected to have a downward movement. Such a conclusion would be based on a wrong conception of the essential character of a triad. Although the three components, as they meet to constitute the event, are distinct, autonomous elements; within the event itself they are welded into one and abandon their separate identity. It is the emergence of something different, which is not merely the sum of the three components, that constitutes the new event. The active principle does not, as it were, work its way through the triad, to re-appear, attenuated and changed, perhaps but still active; but unites with the other two elements in such a way that its own identity disappears in the event. Now, if we regard activity as something measurable- and we shall see later that such a precise basis of measurement does exist-- we are forced to conclude that a triad which is dominated by the active principle will be an event in which this very activity is diminished by the conjunction of the more passive second principle. Conversely, a triad beginning with the passive principle will, taken as a whole, be less passive than its origin. A triad dominated by the principle of continuity which, by definition, is intermediate in activity between the other two, may go in either direction according to the mutual relations of the other two components.

From these considerations, we arrive at a new notion which enlarges, and at the same time makes more concrete, our understanding of the Law of Three. A triad which begins with the active principle is one which moves in the direction of less activity; a triad beginning with the receptive principle moves towards greater activity; a triad beginning with the third principle may have either possibility.

So far, we have spoken of principles and have compared the three principles in terms of their relative activity, without asking ourselves what we mean by either of the words "principle" or "activity". Unless we can make these conceptions more precise, we shall have difficulty in finding concrete illustrations of the law. The great difficulty of this investigation arises from the fact that we are trying to penetrate into a deeper stratum of reality than is reached by ordinary thought and by the usual forms of language. The only way to overcome this difficulty is to proceed by the method of successive approximations, that is, to use at the outset conceptions which, though incomplete; and perhaps distorted, can readily be grasped by the mind. These incomplete conceptions can then be corrected and extended as our understanding of the law is developed. With this end in view, we may supplement the idea of principles by those of force and matter. We shall not use these two terms either in a metaphysical or in a scientific sense, but in accordance with the usage of common, everyday language. By force, we shall mean something which tends to make events happen. Matter we shall take as that which has real existence. We shall regard force as acting through matter, and matter as the vehicle of different kinds of force, We shall, moreover, regard all reality as material, so that not only physical objects, perceptible to our senses, but also thoughts and emotions, being part of the real world, will be forms of matter. We shall see later that this is a necessary consequence of the doctrine that all reality consists of triads. Nevertheless, while recognising that all reality is material, we shall admit, at the same time, different orders of materiality. This means that, while everything that exists is matter, not everything has the same degree of existence. Some things are more, that is, have a higher order of existence, than others. We shall, moreover, regard matter of a higher order as more active, and matter of a lower order as more passive. It follows from this that when two matters of different order come together, one will be more active than the other and the other more passive. We shall express the same fact by saying that one of the two will transmit the active force and the other the passive force in the triad. The force corresponding to the third principle, we shall call the neutralising force. To distinguish between these three aspects, a terminology has

"been adapted from organic chemistry, and we call the matter which transmits active force "carbon" that which transmits passive force "oxygen," while "nitrogen" is the medium through which neutralising force acts. We shall then have the three-fold terminology shown in Table I.

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>
<i>Principle</i>	Activity	Receptivity	Continuity
<i>Matter</i>	Carbon (highest)	Oxygen (lowest)	Nitrogen (intermediate)
<i>Force</i>	Active	Passive	Neutralising

TABLE 1. ELEMENTS OF THE TRIAD

In accordance with this terminology, every triad can "be described in terms of the three elements, carbon, oxygen and nitrogen, and the kind of triad will depend upon which of the three elements occupies the first place. It follows from this method of describing triads, the three terms carbon, oxygen and nitrogen only have meaning in relation to a triad. No piece of matter is a carbon per se, nor is any form of matter always oxygen or always nitrogen. What is carbon in one triad may be oxygen in another and so on.

A simple illustration will show how this transition, of the same material from one to another form can take place. If I feel the room is cold and have in my mind the idea of warmth, this will make me take up a poker to stir the fire. My desire for warmth is active force, and is therefore carbon, the poker is passive and therefore oxygen, while my hand which seizes the poker to give effect to my desire transmits the neutralising force and is nitrogen. In the second event, when the fire is poked, the poker, which was passive in the first triad, now becomes active force and is therefore carbon, while the flames are passive, and the coals of the fire connect the two as neutralising force.

Since, as we have said, every event, large or small is a triad, the whole world, with all its events in time and space and outside time and space, consists of triads, interpenetrating one another, proceeding out of one another, one entering another, one containing another, and so on in every possible combination. This means that all the matter in the world enters into innumerable triads; and, in each of these triads, has a particular character of carbon, oxygen or nitrogen. It then becomes a question whether matter in itself has any meaning at all, or whether matter must be defined simply as that which transmits force in a triad. This is not the case, for in one aspect matter exists in itself, namely by the position it occupies in relation to the whole of existence. This is only an incomplete and partial aspect of matter, for it is only through triads that the fullness of concrete reality is "brought about. Nevertheless, this special aspect of matter taken in-itself, apart from triads, can be thought of separately, and for many purposes it is unnecessary to specify any particular triad or triads. When matter is taken apart from any triad, it is called Hydrogen, and it is then characterised not by the quality of activity, passivity or neutralising influence, but by its level on the scale of all existence. How this level is defined, and what it means, we shall see later. For the present it is sufficient to conceive matter under two categories. The first category of matter as Hydrogen conceives it apart from concrete events, under a universal aspect; the second category of carbon, oxygen and nitrogen takes matter in concrete, particular form, that is, as entering in a particular manner into a specified event in time and space, or in so far as there are manifestations which are not in time and space, then still as a particular and specific manifestation. Hydrogen is the term used for describing the general properties of matter; carbon, oxygen and nitrogen for indicating specific manifestations.

This terminology brings to light another form in which the Law of Three has been expressed both in Eastern and Western thought. The Quaternary of Pythagoras is an expression of the Law of Three in which the three forces are first taken separately and then united as a single manifestation. In the Hebrew symbolism of the Sefer Yetzira, the four letters composing the name of Jehovah are given the same meaning: Yod, He, Vau, represent the three forces, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, while the second He' stands for the triad taken as a whole, which in our terminology is called Hydrogen. The four alchemical elements likewise, earth, fire, air and water, are to be understood in the same way. Earth, air and fire are oxygen, nitrogen and carbon, and water as the universal element or the combination of the first three, corresponds to our Hydrogen. From this point of view, Hydrogen can be understood as the matter which characterises a triad taken as a whole. This view is, in fact, identical with that which takes Hydrogen as determining the level of any piece of matter in the universe as a whole, for every triad occupies a definite place in the universe. It is also legitimate to take Hydrogen as representing the outcome or result of the triad, that which taken as a whole it transmits to other triads.

The character of the triad is determined by the combination of the three elements, carbon, oxygen and nitrogen. At a later stage, we shall see how these combinations lead to the six modes of becoming discussed in the previous chapter, and how, in turn, these six modes of becoming are partial aspects of more general laws which determine the structure of our universe. It will, however, be useful at this stage to note the manner in which the Sankhya philosophy makes use of the inter-relation of the three components. The doctrine that different combinations of the three forces produce triads of essentially different character is specifically stated in the Sankhya teaching. Behaviour is said to be sattvic, rajasic or tamasic according to the predominance of one or the other guna. The principle is also taken as explaining the varieties of natural phenomena as well as of psychic qualities. Thus, the six primary colours are said to be formed as follows:- Where sattva predominates, rajas is second, and tamas in the third place, the colour is pure white. Where sattva is first, tamas second, and raj is last, the colour is golden. Rajas predominant followed by sattva, gives blue. Rajas with tamas second and sattva last is green. Tamas first, sattva second, is red. Finally the combination with tamas predominant, rajas in the second place and sattva last, gives black. In a similar way, six varieties of temperament in men are defined by the combination of gunas. These six combinations are increased to seven by the state of unity of Prakriti or primordial nature, in which the three gunas are so balanced that there is neither predominance nor defect of any.

With the help of these further ideas, we can now attempt a general statement of the Law of Three. THE WHOLE OF REALITY, AND EVERY ASSIGNABLE PART OF IT, LARGE OR SMALL AND IRRESPECTIVE OF ITS EXTENSION IN SPACE OR DURATION IN TIME, IS DETERMINEDLY A DEFINITE AND UNIQUE TRIAD. THIS TRIAD, TAKEN AS A WHOLE, IS A HYDROGEN, THAT IS, A DETERMINATE QUANTITY OF MATERIAL OF A DETERMINATE ORDER OR LEVEL. EVERY TRIAD IS COMPOSED OF THREE ELEMENTS CORRESPONDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVITY, RECEPTIVITY AND CONTINUITY, AND ITS CHARACTER DEPENDS UPON THE RELATIVE DOMINANCE OF THE THREE ELEMENTS AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ARE COMBINED.

## **V THE WORLD AS TRIADIC**

If the Law of Three really governs every event and has the universal character which we have ascribed to it, how are we to explain its failure to command general acceptance? Unlike the laws of natural science, which have required patient

investigation and the gradual preparation of human understanding for their discovery, the Law of Three, as we have seen, has always been before men's minds, and so far from having received universal recognition, all attempts to establish it as a fundamental law of reality have broken down. The use of triads in the Hegelian dialectic has been abandoned by many of Hegel's most faithful disciples. The endeavours of the later Sankhya philosophers to explain natural phenomena in terms of the three Gunas led to absurd artificiality and empty formalism. We do not discover the Law of Three, at any rate as a universal principle, in the natural sciences. It is not necessary to go so far, for if it is completely universal and omnipresent, we should expect to encounter it in spite of ourselves in our own daily lives. Yet even when we have tried to illustrate what is meant by the Law of Three by the two stages of poking a fire, there was in each case an element of artificiality about the third force, and the illustrations have not been wholly convincing.

The reason for all this is very simple and consists in one fundamental fact of human nature. We are third force blind. Our perceptions, our thoughts, our feelings are all essentially dualistic. Our mental processes are almost entirely based on affirmation and negation, comparison of like with like, of like with unlike. Our feelings are dominated by the pleasure-pain principle. Attraction and aversion rule our affective lives. This does not mean that reality is itself dualistic, but that our limited perceptions, feelings and intellectual processes, dualistic in themselves, graft a false dualism upon the world. To take the example of Hegel's first triad, our minds in the ordinary way would be led to compare Being with Non-Being, Non-Being with Being, and to see these two as concepts which between them include all possibilities. We should say that everything that our minds can think of either is or is not. Real things, such as my cat Bimbo curled up on the hearthrug, are. Imaginary things, such as a purple dragon, spitting fire in that doorway, are not. Everything that we can think of belongs to one of the two categories, real or unreal, existent or non-existent. For ordinary logic, there is no connecting link between the two categories. This is the real meaning of the law of the excluded middle. The genius of Hegel, with a flash of insight which gave fresh life to the Heraclitan flux, enabled him to see that becoming is a third category, independent of both Being and Non-Being, but necessary to both. If Hegel's followers have abandoned the Dialectic Triad, it is because, working with ordinary minds and dualistic mental processes, they failed to catch the essence of Hegel's meaning, and could not see that when he spoke of the triads of the Dialectic as being concrete reality, he meant literally what he said. It is not merely the world of our ordinary thought which is abstract and artificial, but even our immediate perceptions and most intimate feelings, permeated as all these are by a weak dualism. We do not see how and why things happen, because we do not see third force, and this is just as much the case in the small events of our daily lives as in our understanding of history, in our formulation of scientific theories and in our attempts at metaphysics. Now and again there arises a school of teaching which understands the reality of the triad, but, no school has ever yet succeeded in transmitting this understanding to mankind at large.

Nevertheless, history abounds in events the meaning of which eludes all explanation in the absence of understanding third force. Many historical processes are seen as the conflict of two opposing tendencies, although the outcome corresponds to neither, nor even to a compromise between them. In such cases, it is always possible to find a third independent tendency which neutralises the effects of the first two.

As an example, we may consider the history of Europe in the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries. In all the countries of Europe, power was in the hands of a small aristocracy, seeking to maintain conditions of life which were incompatible with the conditions of Europe after the Thirty Years War. As against this force, there was a

rising demand for more equitable treatment of the common people, a demand which grew out of the Reformation and was carried on by the humanitarians of the XVIIIth Century. This struggle might have been expected to lead to a general social conflict throughout Europe, which would either have re-established the aristocracy or have led to the transfer of power to the masses. It is true that in France the power of the aristocracy was destroyed by the French Revolution, but the outcome was an autocracy which in turn collapsed, and looking back, as we can now, over the past two centuries, it is easy to see that it was neither the death struggles of feudal aristocracy nor the rising tide of revolution and reform by themselves which decided the subsequent history of Europe, but the economic expansion brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the opening of world trade. This was an influence independent of the other two forces, which had precisely the effect of neutralising both. In countries which escaped the Revolution, the power of the aristocracy was neutralised by the rising power of industrial wealth. The masses, scarcely liberated from serfdom, were almost immediately engulfed in the slavery of industrialism. In the outcome, Europe passed from the control of a feudal aristocracy into the domination of an industrial and financial oligarchy, leaving the condition of the masses very little changed. Effective social reform did not begin until the middle of the XIXth Century, and then by a different triad, which brought results utterly unforeseen by its authors in the form of a general collapse in the political structure of Europe.

Again, taking the political rather than the social history of Europe, the doctrine of the balance of power, which was the real stabilising influence which maintained the general state of Europe for several centuries, is but an inadequate attempt to apply the Law of Three without understanding the nature of triads. There has been for hundreds of years in Europe a general division between the races temporarily dominant and those temporarily subordinate. Had no other forces been at work, temporary domination must have passed into permanent domination and the unification of Europe under a sovereign race. There have, however, always been neutral powers, often England and sometimes Russia, which have held the balance between the generally conflicting Teutonic and Latin races. The neutralising force thus exercised as an autonomous influence has, united with the active and passive forces of each period, effectively determined the course of history. Predictions based on a study of the active and passive forces only would, in every instance, have been falsified.

If we turn from history to seek examples of the triad in natural science, we find that many of the most valuable hypotheses can be most simply expressed in terms of the Law of Three, and that much of the apparent complexity of physical, chemical, biological and psychological theory is due to thinking in dualistic terms when the reality is triadic. A profoundly interesting example is the ultimate constitution of matter. Until recently, explanations of this were sought in positive and negative electricity. The atom was thought to be composed of two kinds of constituents - electrons carrying a negative electric charge and protons and other atomic nuclei with a positive charge. The structure of matter was thus conceived as frankly dualistic. In recent years, however, it has become clear that a third form of matter exists which has neither a positive nor a negative charge. It is true that the neutron is at present thought of as a particle in which positive and negative charges are balanced, but this is merely a conception imposed by the dualism of our thought and in no wise justified by observation or experimental data. On the contrary, there is much reason to suppose that an autonomous third force which is neither positive nor negative electricity is present in the ultimate structure of matter, and that the three kinds of ultimate particle must necessarily be present in every atom and every stable configuration.

Again, physicists have been led during the present century to recognise that there is a definite limit to the predictability of physical events. The Uncertainty Principle of Heisenberg and Born asserts that nothing can be known with an accuracy exceeding a certain definite limit. For example, we cannot know exactly both the time and the place at which an electron is present. Closely allied to the conception of Uncertainty is the principle of Relativity. All these various physical laws, which at present involve a complex and rather bewildering structure, can in reality be simplified into the simple statement that nature is non-dualistic. Because of this, there is no absolute velocity; because of this, action is atomic; because of this, we are always left with an unabsorbed residuum when we attempt to reduce physical reality to terms of energy and mass, of radiation and matter, of discrete and continuous solutions of differential equations or any of the other dualistic conceptions which mathematicians and physicists have tried to establish.

For reasons which will only become clear when we study the doctrine of cosmoeses, we are brought in the world of physical phenomena into contact with third force, while remaining blind to it on the scale of our own lives.

In chemistry, the Law of Three is already recognised and used, though under different names. The phenomena of catalysis, whereby two reactants are found to depend upon a third which remains independent of both before they can combine or react, not only exemplifies the Law of Three, but actually does so in a very - significant form, for catalytic processes include triads in which the forces act in different ways. In some cases, for example, the combination of hydrogen and oxygen to form water, the third force takes the form of water, i.e., the very product of the reaction. In others, the third force is apparently extraneous to the reaction altogether, as when platinum black promotes the same oxidation process. Again, the presence of active radicals, ionised hydroxyl or atomic hydrogen, promotes the reaction through chains in which the radicals occupy an intermediate position. Each combination is a triad, but the position of the forces is different.

In Biochemistry, triads abound. The secretions of organs like the liver and pancreas, as well as the more recently discovered hormones, vitamins, enzymes and viruses, all act in different ways as third force in triads formed together with two other reactants in the living organism. It is fair to say that with the help of triads, all physiology makes sense, and without triads, few processes can receive a satisfactory explanation.

It is in psychology, and more particularly the psychology of self-study and self-development, that we can find the working of the Law of Three and find it moreover for the first time as a fact of our immediate experience. For it is precisely in self-development that we begin to cure our third force blindness. We have already taken the work of self-change as an example of the triad. We may develop and extend this idea with the help of the fuller conception of the Law of Three which we have now reached. Sleeping man lives in a dualistic state. He is eternally the battlefield of two opposing forces, the desire for something better and the inertia which keeps him where he is. At the best, the desire to improve may be strong and may lead to a determined struggle to overcome this or that defect or weakness, to attain this or that aim which he sets before him. So long as he depends on his own unaided efforts, these two tendencies will be neutralised by the conditions of his external life and it will only be by an unusual chance that he can attain to anything concrete or permanent. He may, indeed, remedy one defect or attain to one new power, but he will always do so at the expense of an equivalent sacrifice. A good habit will be acquired, but together with it a bad habit. A lazy man, by desire for excellence, may overcome his laziness, but in doing so he may lose a natural modesty and pay for his acquired energy by hardness, arrogance or conceit. More frequently nothing will

happen at all and the two forces, desire for change and inertia, will revolve about one another, leaving the vicious circle of desire and irresolution unbroken.

This is the state of man into whose inner life no third force has entered, but let such a man, with his aspirations intact, meet with school teaching, let new knowledge and guidance come to the support of his desire for something higher than his present state, and a new triad will be formed. Dissatisfaction with his present state and desire for something better, when reinforced by knowledge and the conditions of school work, will enable him to overcome inertia and make real progress. Then once this change has been experienced, it is unmistakable. The limitations of dualistic thinking are then clearly perceived, for it is seen that the possibility of change could not have come either from a strengthening of desire or from weakening of inertia, but only from a third direction unconnected with either.

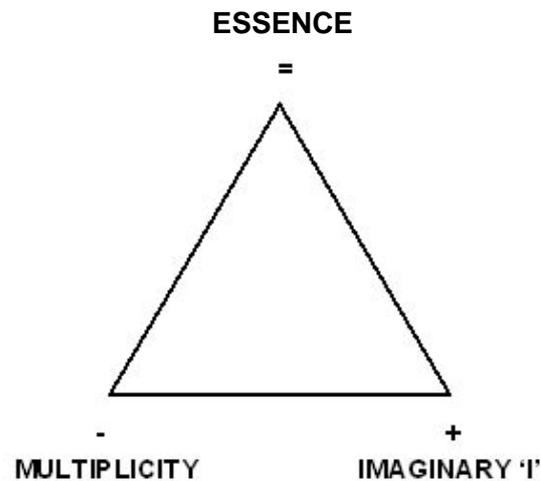
## **VI THE STATIC TRIAD IN MAN.**

Before we attempt in the next chapter to apply the Law of Three to the task of establishing the nature of the real world, we may with great benefit develop the example just given and show how the Law of Three can lead to direct practical conclusions which concern the attainment of our own personal aims. We can consider the whole course of man's self-development from his primitive, dualistic state, through successive victories over imagination, sleep, multiplicity and mechanicalness, to the permanent attainment of a higher level of being. This process is based upon a triad which, unlike those of our ordinary activities, is always present and remains stationary except that as consciousness develops, the three forces change in character. On account of this persistence, it is called the Static Triad.

The Static Triad belongs to the psychological work of self-development and self-creation, but it will help us at the present stage to see how the Law of Three can be applied in practice. We shall need for this purpose to use some of the psychological conceptions which will be developed fully only later when we shall be called upon to make a detailed study of Human Nature. We saw in the previous chapter that we have many illusions about ourselves and that we ascribe to ourselves attributes and powers that we do not yet possess. We must therefore distinguish between those attributes which characterise man in his state of sleep and mechanicalness and those which can be acquired as a result of work. In the first place we saw that our view of ourselves, of what we are, is largely based on imagination and self-deception. We regard ourselves as having a self or ego. We refer to ourselves as "I", with the implication that we are always the same person. This fictitious person, or false self, we refer to as "Imaginary I". Although unreal, this imaginary "I" is the main source of our motives and actions other than those which come from simple physical impulses. We shall see later how this assertion can be verified by observation and experiment.

A second characteristic of man is to be not one but a multiplicity of thoughts, feelings, impressions, sensations, likes, dislikes, and so on, succeeding one another like patterns in a kaleidoscope with little or no connecting thread. It is this multiplicity in man which translates into action the response, due to the influence of imaginary "I", to the impressions which reach us from the external world.

Thirdly, we have the background of concrete fact, what man really is; his physical body, the structure of his mind and other psychic functions, his innate disposition and powers. All this we shall designate by the term essence, to show that it is man's own, what he is born with, what he really is, and not the adventitious and impermanent acquisitions derived from his mechanical contacts with the outside world. We thus have three elements in human nature: Imaginary "I", the Multiplicity and Essence. The mutual relations of these three are shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig.1.** FIRST STATE OF THE STATIC TRIAD

Symbols + stands for the active principle  
 - stands for the receptive principle  
 = stands for the principle of continuity

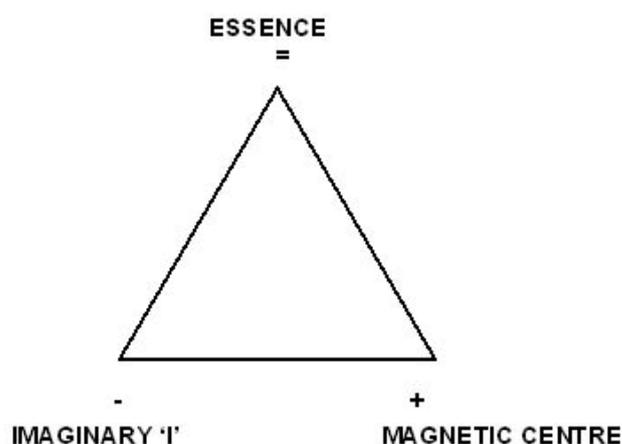
The meaning of this triad is that the activity of sleeping man has its mainspring in imagination. He is not merely self-centred, but centred in an imaginary self, in his picture of what he imagines himself to be, or wishes other people to think him. His motives derive almost entirely from the desire to preserve this imaginary picture; to justify the false value he places upon himself; to persuade other people to accept that valuation; to hide from himself what he really is, a machine controlled by external influences. These and a thousand other motives arising from his Imaginary "I" start in him all kinds of thoughts; they determine nearly all his emotions, colour his sensations, and sustain his activity. This first stage of the Static Triad is the most mechanical which can exist, for in this state imagination is the very source of activity, and there is no trace of real freedom or inner strength.

If we now suppose that in the sleeping man there arises discrimination between influences connected with ordinary life and those coming from conscious man, he then can respond to the idea that the real meaning of life is to be found on a higher level than that of his present existence. He begins to understand the necessity for change in himself. New thoughts and desires are aroused, not connected with imagination, but with the search for reality. These new thoughts and desires build in him a new set of values; they begin to attract him in a definite direction. As a steel needle which is indifferent to direction sets itself when magnetised in a definite relation to the earth's magnetic field, so does the man in whom the new understanding has arisen acquire a new attitude towards the external world and towards himself. The acquisition of this new attitude we shall call "the formation of Magnetic Centre." The full significance of this process in a man's life will become clear when we come to a deeper study of schools and their organisation.

The formation of Magnetic Centre does not mean that the old motives arising from Imaginary "I" disappear or cease to be operative. On the contrary, it is only at rare moments that the Magnetic Centre becomes a dominating factor. At such moments the Static Triad assumes the form represented by Fig.2. The Imaginary "I" has been thrust aside from the active force, and forced into the passive position by

emotions and thoughts arising from the desire for knowledge differing from ordinary knowledge and from dislike of his present state.

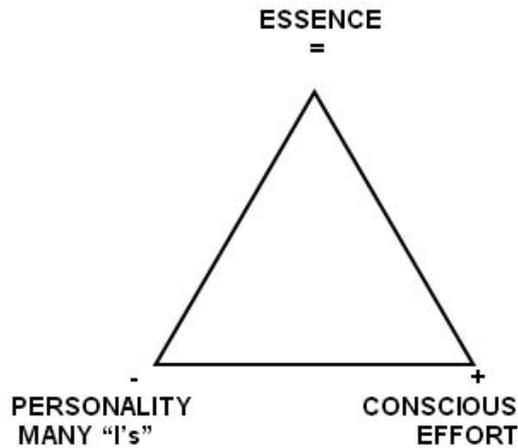
If he makes progress, the Static Triad more and more frequently takes the form represented by Fig. 2; the Magnetic Centre is strengthened and deepened; it brings the man into contact with school work and it gives place to valuation of the teaching which he receives and to the desire to apply it. Out of this in turn grows a new personality whose central interest and motive is the work of self-creation.



**Fig. 2** SECOND STATE OF THE STATIC TRIAD

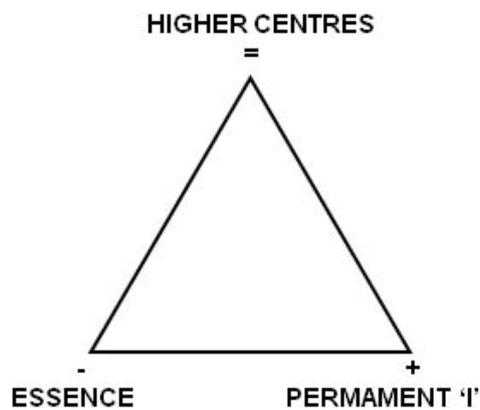
During this second stage, the Imaginary "I" is deprived by slow degrees of its dominating position. The first state of the Triad ceases to determine quite so much of the man's response to his environment. The new interests grouped about the Magnetic Centre occupy an even greater place in his thoughts and his actions. From aimless drifting or unavailing endeavours to find and keep a direction, his life begins to take the form of a struggle between reality and illusion, between the new personality and the Imaginary "I." Essence remains unchanged as the conditioning background, of the struggle. It must be appreciated that, although all this implies a profound change, the second stage is, nevertheless, mechanical and not conscious. The man is not directly aware of the nature of the transformation which is taking place. The triad works, not by his own will and conscious purpose, but by the energy which comes from desire for something better and higher, regulated and organised by the new knowledge he has acquired.

It is only when the second stage has been well established that the first fleeting glimpses of the third stage can be discerned. This stage is illustrated in Fig.3. The many "I's," instead of dancing like helpless puppets to the tune of the Imaginary "I", are now summoned to activity with understanding and purpose. There is a guardian at the door of the mind, judging each thought as it arises, whether it shall be allowed to develop or not; a watchman at the threshold of the senses, to ward off the ever present danger of being absorbed and lost in the external world and, above all, an emotional consciousness of purpose able to guide emotional energy into fruitful channels and destroy false and wrong emotions. During this third stage, a deep transformation begins which establishes new and reliable associations able to ensure prudent actions, even without the immediate guidance of self-consciousness. Essence is still the neutralising force through and by which the struggle takes concrete shape. The third stage is conscious, that is, it only persists so long as the man remains awake and knows what he is doing and why.



**Fig. 3** THIRD STATE OF THE STATIC TRIAD

In the meantime, the second stage may have been completed or brought to such a point that the Imaginary "I" ceases to be a danger to man's work. Then and only then can the fourth stage begin, which is shown in Fig.4. Here for the first time essence ceases to be the unchanging background of activity and itself becomes passive in relation to consciousness. Then begins a permanent change in man, going beyond the limitations of space and time and perhaps surviving death. The Static Triad is still present, but it is completely transformed as compared with the first stage. Imaginary "I" as active force has been replaced by self-consciousness and dawning will. At this Stage, man begins to enter a new level of being laying up for himself treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and thieves do not break through and steal.



**Fig. 4** FOURTH STATE OF THE STATIC TRIAD