

Book presentation:

Ethos - Pathos - Logos

Essays on ternary dialectics

*Gheorghe M. Ștefan**

The Western *hierarchical* approach and the Eastern *holistic* one can be integrated only with the help of a third term. It is about the *chaotic* behavior present in any recess of existence¹. We propose three modes of existence to be considered: *holistic, chaotic, hierarchical*.

Ethos - Pathos - Logos is a book about the **integrating** way which strives to harmonize our three main mental activities: *spirituality, imaginary, reason*. Our mind's behaviors relates with the three modes of existence. Thus, the 16 essays of this book are grounded on the following basic correspondences:

holistic - spiritual

chaotic - imaginative

hierarchical - rational

This collection of essays deals *unsystematically* with the multiple facets of the ubiquitous ternary dialectics. A systematic way should be inappropriate because it betrays the very essence of the triadic approach: a good balance between *evoking, suggesting, and asserting*.

Our approach considers only the *architectural interface* of each domain or object with the interval separating it from the rest. Thus, the architectural thinking becomes the main tool for our integrative approach, because it is able to manage better the unapproachable complexities targeted by the contemporary knowledge process. The Oriental holism and the Occidental structuralism meet at the level of the *architectural approach*, thus allowing the **integrative knowledge** – the only way to master the real complexity of existence.

A suggestive and simple way to present the book, already published in Romanian², is to introduce each essay by the associated motto and a short description.

*web page: <http://arh.pub.ro/gstefan/>

¹In this text *existence* stands for anything that can be said to be, either transcendently or immanently.

²Gheorghe M. Ștefan: *Ethos – Pathos – Logos. Essays on ternary dialectics*, Ed. All, 2010.

Preamble

In spite of our proud domination of nature, we are still her victims, for we have not even learned to control our own nature. . . . Man today is painfully aware of the fact that neither his great religions nor his various philosophies seems to provide him with those powerful animating ideas that would give him the security he needs in face of the present conditions of the world.

Carl G. Jung

The human being became too powerful to afford ignoring itself anymore. A lot of bad things come from the truncated image we have about our mind, awareness and consciousness.

We shaped out discourses, attitudes and actions starting from irreconcilable dualities, ignoring the integrating mediation that should be done by a third term. Between individual and community can stay communion, between mystery and clarity should be considered expressivity, revelation and explanation do not exclude imagination, phenomena and structures suppose chaos,

The consensual noetic reality is too hard imposed against the non-consensual and trans-consensual realities.

The essays of this book are supposed to support the existence's triadic unity and its wholeness.

Spirituality – Imaginary – Reason

The Buddhist cosmos consists of three realms of existence – the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm – the last being progressively subtler states of existence.

Dalai Lama

We are inquiring beings. We ask questions in the “three–dimension” space defined by:

good - evil
valuable - non-valuable
truth - false

The human being is also a playful being³. It plays its “beingness” in its *world* which it tried to differentiate from existence in the last few thousand years. At one point of our becoming we started to play more and more complex games in the three–dimension space of *good – values – truth* evolving toward a being which is, in the same time:

spiritual : discerning the good from evil related to the wholeness of existence

imaginative : by the predisposition to use its *phantasy*, *intuition*, and *intentionality* in the limits of its world and of its values

rational : by the ability to prove the truth in the simplified world of forms and structures.

³In this book *being* stands for “the living” part of the existence.

EXISTENCE'S TRIADS

Phenomenon – Chaos – Structure

There exist structures in the human brain that appear perfectly designed to capture quantum effect and amplify them via chaos, because in order to self-organize, they have adopted an iterative form at every level – chemical, intracellular, network, and even social. If so, the actions generated by the brain, and of human society as a whole, would share at least some of the absolute freedom, mysteriousness, and nonmechanicality of the quantum world. Can this claim really be right?

Jeffrey Satinover

Any existential process can be seen as a **phenomenon**, when we do not want to neglect any connections *into* the wholeness of existence, or as a **chaotic** manifestation, when the becoming *from* something else is important, or as a **structure**, when staying *in* a certain state is possible.

Into – From – In

Through “into” we pass from sense to orto-sense and reverse.

Mihai Drăgănescu

The spiritual attitude is induced by *into*. The imaginary recovers us *from* deadlocks spiritually or rationally generated. The reason is obstinated to settle all *in* forms.

The Gnostic Ouroboros (the serpent endlessly beating its tail in an unbound finiteness) is the symbol non-explicitly used, by the collective mental, to express the *into-from-in* way of existence's behavior.

Unity – Oneness – Uniformity

As student of nature we are pantheists, as poets polytheists, as moral beings monotheists.

Goethe

Confucius said to a pupil, “Do you think I have come to know many things by studying them?”

The pupil said, “Yes, isn”t so?”

Confucius said, “No. I penetrate them by their underlying unity.”

Confucius

Any phenomenon is tensed (i) by the *unity* in which it is immersed, (ii) by the *oneness* it represents, and (iii) by the *uniformity* to which it partially participates. Let us call it the *fundamental existential tension*.

Existence's beingness involves the tensed equilibrium in unbounded limits.

Non-locality – Uncertainty – Complementarity

Verse 5: *The subtle virtue of the universe is wholeness. ...*

Verse 6: *The subtle essence of the universe is active. ...*

Verse 4: *The subtle Way of the universe appears to lack strength, yet its power is inexhaustible.*

...

It has no form, yet it unites all tangles

...

It seems to be so obscure, yet it is the Ultimate Clarity. ...

Lao Tzu

Quantum non-locality tells us something about the wholeness of existence, suggesting a justification for the phenomenon of spiritual perception. The *uncertainty principle* tells us about the active spontaneity of the deep existence as background for the games of imaginary. The *quantum complementarity* tells us something about the power of forms and structures to offer a consensual image, as wave or as particle, about existence.

Information – Time – Form

And incorporating of time in the conceptual set-up of physics occurs only as a final act of a progressive reinsert of history in nature and human studies.

Ilya Prigogine

Information evokes about the phenomenal, the becoming *into*, unity, and non-locality of existence. *Time* suggests by turn, chaotic behavior, evolution *from*, oneness, and uncertainty of existence. *Form* is about structure, stone-stillness *in*, uniformity, or complementarity. All the three are *open concepts*, fortunately un-catched in formal, rigorous definitions. This openness tells us something about our creative inability to stone the deep meanings about existence into rigid, dead concepts.

MEN'S TRIADS

Homo Sapiens – Homo Ludens – Homo Faber

We call ourselves by many names: Homo sapiens, man the wise; Homo habilis, man the able, the toolmaker; Homo ludens, man the playful. Each aspect makes its contribution to science.

Stuart Kauffman

He [Segiu Celibidache] was for me one of the greatest musician of the century. He was part scientist, part gipsy, and part philosopher. And he had the qualities and the faults of all of those.

Daniel Barenboim

The millennium that just started will be not one of *spirituality*, will be not subjected to the unbridled *imaginary*, will be not one of *rationality*. We expect that the third millennium will make sense of a global development under the sign of *geo-modernity* (a term coined by Mircea Malița to designate the global modernity). But, the only chance of geo-modernity rests in the equilibrium of the ways the human being relates itself, by turn, to the *wholeness* of existence (as homo-sapiens), to its *spontaneous* behavior (as homo-ludens), and to its structural *order* (as homo-faber).

Ethos – Pathos – Logos

Normally, the mental health of mankind belongs to trance, to the ability to be involved in seduction and mirage.

Gabriel Liiceanu

A distinguished American professor in an academic textbook wrote the following:

Our confidence in the adding algorithm can be analyzed using the rhetorical techniques established thousand of years ago in ancient Greece. The ancient Greek philosophers classified formal argument into three distinct classes:

- **Ethos:** *Proof by authority. (“I am the teacher, and I say that it works.”)*
- **Pathos:** *Proof by emotion. (“It would make me happy if you believe that it works.”)*
- **Logos:** *Proof by logic. (“Here’s how it works”)*

Our initial confidence in the addition algorithm comes from the ethos or pathos of our teacher (preferably the former, but lamentably often the later), and increases as experience verifies that it is indeed correct. Logos often comes much later, if at all⁴.

The absolute “style” of ethos and the abstract “code” of logos are more and more challenged by the disclosures and the proposals made by the architecture’s pathos. But, it is an integrative challenge, because always the architectures have had both, “style” and “code” in the same time.

⁴[Parberry ’94] pag. 22.

Revelation – Suggestion – Explanation

Primitive man was much more governed by his instincts than are his “rational” modern descendants, who have learned to “control” themselves.

C. G. Jung

The spiritual-sensorial-mental experience, where revelation, suggestion and explanation are well weighted by an appropriate learning process, has the chance to regenerate a lost unity. The spiritual revelation, the imaginative suggestion and the rational explanation can build together the total experience of the human being *into-from-in* existence.

Contemplating – Interpreting – Understanding

You become what do you take in the sight of your thought.

Andrei Pleșu

Human knowledge is the irrepressible striving of our mind to *present* itself to existence, and in the same time to *re-present* the existence. This urge will be accomplished only by a subtle weighted mixture of *contemplating, interpreting, understanding*.

Bach – Mozart – Händel

This music [Well Tempered Clavichord] does not need my assistance.

Keith Jarrett

It seems, then, that a score of a Mozart symphony represents a projection of an experience from the level of unobjectivized unity onto the level of the ordinary, space-and-time-bound experience – experience in the subject/object mode.

Shimon Malin

Bach’s music is a continuous spiral *ascension* attracting us toward the deepness we are accustomed to perceive spiritually.

Mozart *wanders* equal with himself, covering with unpredictable trajectories heights which he discloses us in a playful game.

Händel offers us the robust comfort of a *terrestrial*, master on its surrounding extents by the virtue of well established rules.

WORLD'S TRIADS

Education – Training – Instructing

Study without thinking, and you are blind; think without studying, and you are in danger.

Confucius

The knowledge which does not take you away from yourself

Is to be despised more than ignorance.

Sana'i

Instructing promotes the *rational* skills. By instruction we can get a lot of knowledge, but no one guarantees the performance and the utility in applying them.

Training develops the use of *imaginary*. Sometimes we access a solution directly, using strange shortcuts. The reason comes only after to validate or to explain the solution, but have no contribution to the inspiration behind the solution.

Education is destined to *spiritual* achievements. It is used to discern where the reason and the imaginary are not (enough) supportive.

All the three forms of learning must be practiced in order to support the integrative process of geo-modernity.

Symbol – Image – Sign

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

The spiritual values are stoned in a symbolic eternal world.

The rational truths of science have a “cyclic evolution” in the world of signs.

What can be found in the middle, between the eternal symbols and the cyclical signs? A possible answer: the ephemeral world of the (chaotic) images.

The acyclic dynamic of existence generates “a kind of order without periodicity” (Hao Bai-Lin) responsible for the expressivity of the (chaotic) images. In real life we are immersed in the world of images, dreaming watchfully about symbols and signs.

Elitism – Centralism – Democracy

A people represents not so much an aggregate of ideas and theories as of obsessions.

...

Freedom can be manifested only in the void of beliefs, in the absence of axioms, and only where the laws have no more authority than a hypothesis.

Emil Cioran

In the Occidental world, by turn *faith* (in Middle Age), *suggestion* (in Renaissance) and *explanation* (in Modernity) tried to keep the human being in the vicinity of “knowledge”, and the society in a fragile equilibrium. The result can be found in the actual diversity of the Occidental world, where coexist:

- a space of the traditional values, spiritually grounded on faith, and of communities centered on **elites** (the weak “Orthodox democracies”)
- a space of spectacle and hierarchy where man plays the cultural games stimulated by imaginary and allowed by a hierarchically structured, **centralized** community (the authoritative “Catholic democracies”)
- in the rationally established civilized space, where the man has only the **democratic** guaranteed freedom to act in a maximally efficient system, which tends to globalize (the genuine Protestant democracies).

NGO – Corporation – State

It is much harder to do good than to run an enterprise for profit.

George Soros

Three nets are used to “cover” any place of our world: the net of *states*, the net of *corporations* and the net of *non-governmental organizations* (NGOs).

The *rules* to live together are given by the state. The creative *freedom* is exercised inside the corporations. The degree of the social *integration* depends on the ways the NGOs are organized.

The integrity of the global world can be achieved only by the self-organizing process involving the three very differently structured nets: the hierarchically organized network of states, the concurrent network of corporations, and the cooperative network of NGOs. The *order*, the *competition*, and the *cooperation* are able to well-temper a world no matter how struggling it might be.

Mystery – Fascination – Secret

The more certainty we have on our lives, the more we are intrigued by mysteries.

John Lawrence Reynolds

... maybe the questions are more powerful than the answers.

Dan Brown

Obscuring is part of expressing. Hiding is not here or there only to charm the world, it makes also our world possible.

The *mystical* hiding of Lohengrin's origin makes possible his presence and his actions in our world.

The *fascinating* smile of *Gioconda* or the stupendous "femininity" of St. John in *The Last Supper* exemplify the expressive hidings used by Leonardo for attracting us in the strange vicinity of his thought.

The *secret* code of our credit card maintains our financial resources active in any place inside of the civilized world. Hiding generates ubiquitousness in the well organized banking space.

Epilog

And if ART is the great bridge between science and morals, is not world salvation in the hands of the artists?

Ken Wilber

The book ends with the following list of additional 23 triads (each introduced by a few-line presentation):

Existence – Being – World,
Synchronicity – Spontaneity – Causality,
Wholeness – Self-Organizing – Locality,
One – Soul – Intellect⁵,
Reality – Phantasm – Illusion,
Good – Beauty – Truth,
Present – Past – Future,
Sense – Signification – Syntax,
Awareness – Experience – Consciousness,
Archetypes – Values – Concepts,
Wiseness – Beliefs – Accuracy,
Spirituality – Cultures – Civilization,
Magic – Art – Technology,
Individual – Communion – Community,
Priest – Prophet – King,
Orthodoxy – Catholicism – Protestantism,
Augustine – Thomas – Descartes,
Ecstatic – Expressive – Clear,
Baroque – Classic – Romantic,
Endless Column – Gate of the Kiss – Table of Silence⁶,
Antonia – Giulietta – Olympia⁷,
Stalker – Writer – Professor⁸,
Deep Mental Reality – Non-Consensual Mental Reality – Consensual Mental Reality.

If, at the end, when the book is finished, the author believes he did what he intended to do, then the work values nothing.

J. L. Borges

⁵The Plotinian triad.

⁶The three components of the sculptural complex made at Târgu Jiu by the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși.

⁷The three feminine characters in Hoffmann's celebrated opera.

⁸The three main characters in Tarkovsky's *Stalker*.