

## **HOLISTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

*Conference Keynotes by Olivier Clouzot,  
“Enneagram of Energetic and Spirituality,” organized by the Free University of  
Samadeva, Le Hohwald, France, June 19-21, 2009*

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### **Levels of Consciousness**

In speaking of evolution it is necessary to understand from the outset that no mechanical evolution is possible. The evolution of man is the evolution of his consciousness. And consciousness cannot evolve unconsciously.

G.I. Gurdjieff (quoted by P.D. Ouspensky  
(1950), *In Search of the Miraculous*)

When [the map of levels you use] is accurate, there is no doubt where you are, and that is very beautiful to know. What is beautiful in the Arica system is that you always have that measure, you always know where you are.

Oscar Ichazo (1976). A scientific approach.  
*New Age Journal*

Originally planned as the Enneagram of the Levels of Consciousness, this article will develop the idea of levels and different designs or applications of this idea.

I recognize that I have been deeply inspired by the 35 years I spent in the Arica School, which proposed different approaches to the Levels of Consciousness. This induced me to think about the concept of levels in itself, which is a **pure mystical concept**<sup>1</sup> because it describes the way toward enlightenment and self-

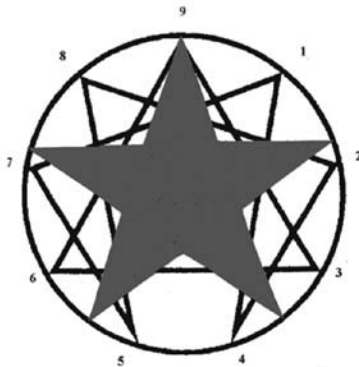
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<sup>1</sup> In a beautiful book, *The Centre of the Cyclone* by John Lilly, originally published in 1973, the author describes a dialogue between him and Oscar Ichazo, in the middle of a training that Oscar ran in the town of Arica, Chili. It is in this context that Oscar said to John: “You are going to see that your Essence is really one part of God” (Ronin Publishing, 2007, p. 189). Therefore, in that sense, the journey toward our Essence is also a journey toward God, and it is exactly what the Levels of Consciousness are about. That’s why it is not surprising that the path of evolution and transformation through the the levels can also be related to the studies realized by the Christian Mystics, like Saint John of the Cross, in their description of the journey of the soul toward the Divine.

realization. I wrote a book on this subject entitled *Awakening and Verticality: An Essay on Transcendence* and the path of transformation that leads to it. I will therefore develop a number of ideas presented in this book, I will illustrate them with my personal experience, and I will draw some conclusions about the psychological difficulty in giving up identification with the ego.

First, let me define the notion of model which is crucial, especially if one wants to talk about levels of consciousness, but it is also crucial when it comes to the Enneagram. While the Enneagram of personality types is a model of the psychological reality of human beings, i.e., an approach or an intellectual point of view about this, this is not reality itself. One knows that the map is not the land, as Korzybski said; the same is true of a model of reality - it is not and cannot be the reality itself. This is only an intellectual representation, understanding that other representations are possible. For example, the Enneagram as you know it can be represented by another model, as it is the case in Arica, where the Enneagram is the development of nine elements from another model, which is composed of five elements, the pentagram. In other words, in Arica, the Enneagram is the further development of a pentagram, a five-pointed star which is contained in the Enneagram. The upper right branch of the star concerns points 1 and 2, the lower right branch concerns points 3 and 4, the lower left one concerns points 5 and 6, the upper left one points 7 and 8, and the vertical branch corresponds to point 9.

I'm not presenting the official views of Arica; I provide only my own understanding. On the Arica website (see [www.arica.org](http://www.arica.org)), many concepts are represented by models of five elements: The Five Cavities of the Human Body associated with the Five Kingdoms of the Psyche (physical, emotional,



intellectual, sexual and spiritual), the Five Tenets of Arica, the Five Supreme Determinants of Being, etc. For example, the Five Supreme Determinants of Being reformulate the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism as follows:

1. The ego-self **determines** the experience of suffering.
2. The uncontrolled ego-self **determines** mechanical and accidental psychic processes.
3. Ego reduction **determines** the mind of emptiness.
4. The Ninefold Path **determines** the way toward self-realization.
5. The Nine Divine Gnoses **determine** theosis (supreme enlightenment).

Turning to the model of **levels of consciousness**, when I attended the 40 Days of Training in the Arica School in 1973, I learned a model of the Levels of Consciousness composed of twelve elements. The definitions of these levels were simple enough, but their labelling looked complicated because they were related to particular numbers<sup>2</sup>, first used by Gurdjieff, which could arouse questions or introduce confusion. Later, in 1998, I reduced this twelvefold scale to four elements, upon which I'll focus.

In recent years I have found that the scale of the Arica Levels of Consciousness was developed in two Enneagrams, i.e., two scales of nine levels: a scale of Subjective Levels, and a scale of Objective Levels. In fact there is a third scale, the Psychotic Levels, but that has not yet been developed in writing.

### **General Remarks About the Levels**

There are two groups of fundamentally different levels:

- the Subjective Levels, focusing on the development of the ego, the personality or the existential being;
- the Objective Levels, focusing on the development of the Essence, or the Essential Being, i.e., the principle that God is within each of us.

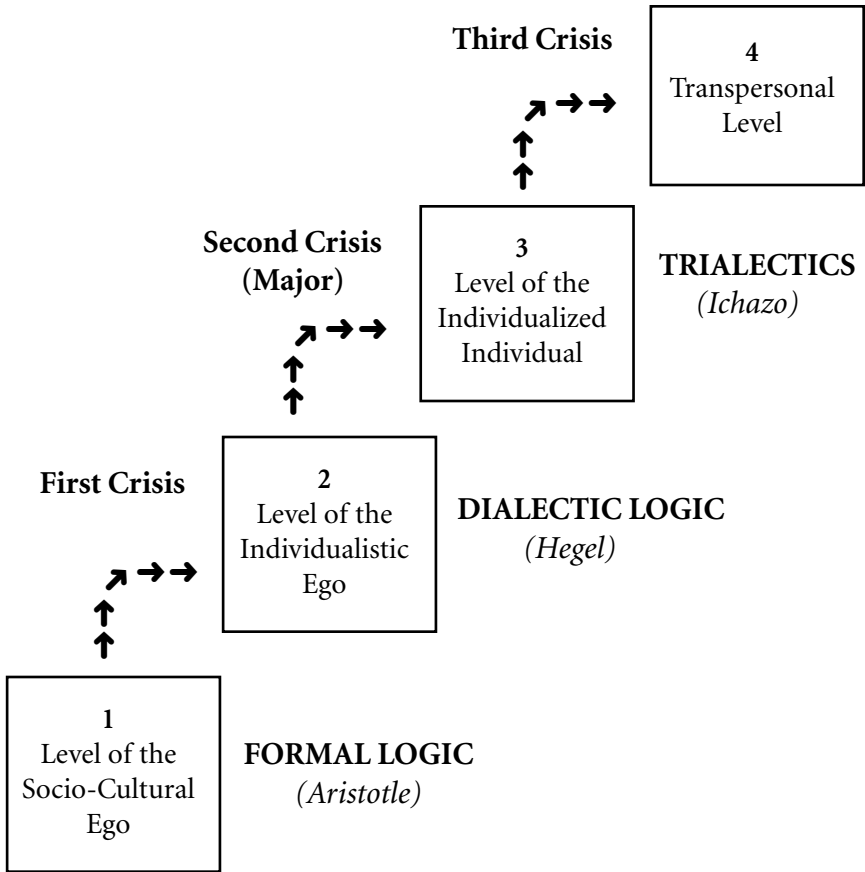
In *The I CHING or Book of Changes*, the translators postulate the existence of three levels:

- that of the "Inferior Man" (Subjective Levels)
- that of the "Great Man" (Objective Levels)
- and the middle level of the "Noble Man," who works on himself to move from the first to the third level.

I proposed a scale of four levels where the Subjective Levels are divided into levels 1 and 2, where the Objective Levels correspond to level 4, and where there is an intermediate level of "work on oneself", level 3, which is the "Noble Man."

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<sup>2</sup> These numbers are (from the top to the bottom) : 3, 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 192, 768, 1536, 3072 and 6144. Numbers 6144 to 96 correspond to subjective levels, number 48 corresponds to a level of transition, and numbers 24 to 3 denote four levels of Satori, or Illumination. John Lilly has used this scale of numbers in his book *The Centre of the Cyclone* (1973) in which he described his experience of the highest mystical levels.



*Illustration excerpt from ÉVEIL ET VERTICALITÉ (Le Souffle d'Or, 2000)*

But later (in 2002), I developed this scale in 42 elements, articulating my four elements model with the Tarot of Arthur Edward Waite: The minor arcans arranged from Ace to 10 represent the first level, the minor arcans from 10 to Ace represent the second level, the major arcans of the Magician to the Moon represent the third level, and the Sun, the Judgement and the World represent the fourth. This model has been developed in two books which were published by Editions Holistiques (which I created):

- *Les 78 lames du Tarot, clés de conscience et de libération*, 2002
- *Le Tarot, l'Ennéagramme et l'Illumination*, 2004.

Theoretically, one can also consider a scale of five levels:

- a) a first level in which beliefs acquired through education are dominant,
- b) a second level in which the personality asserting itself is dominant,
- c) a third level in which the personality starts to crack,
- d) a fourth level in which we stop identifying with the personality,
- e) and a fifth level, a level of enlightenment, in which one enters the service of the Essential or Divine Being which is within us.

### **Model of the Four Levels**

#### **Transpersonal Level (Level Four)**

This is the goal to be reached, the purpose of human evolution, a level of freedom, creativity, love and joy. The mind that judges, analyzes, and criticizes is silent. This mental silence gives birth to consciousness and to the witness of “the present,” and it allows moments of great inspiration. The work of meditation or prayer is natural and easy at this level; at more advanced stages, it is not even necessary to meditate or pray. Thus, this is a level of successive illuminations of the intellectual plane, the emotional plane, the physical plane, the spiritual plane—the experiences I describe here concern mainly the intellectual and emotional planes.

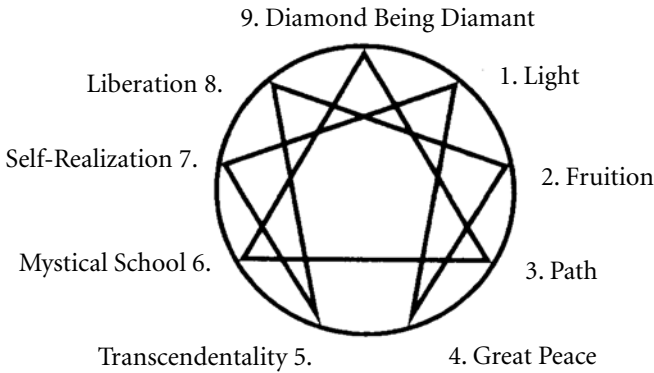
This is illustrated with accounts by spiritual masters sharing their mystical experiences and the work which inspired them (in *Éveil et Verticalité*, I refer to the experiences of Mathieu Ricard, Jean-Yves Leloup, Karlfried Graf Dürckheim, Arnaud Desjardins, Oscar Ichazo, Swami Muktananda, Gopi Krishna, Ramesh Balsekar, and Carl Gustav Jung).

In “Le Hara, centre vital de l’homme”, Graf Dürckheim writes: “It is not us who are seeking God, it is God who is seeking us.” Therefore, this level occurs on its own when we are ready; in practice it is another matter, because the ego always puts a wrench in our wheel. Dürckheim also said, “As for the experience itself, it seems it may more or less be the same for the Christian and the Buddhist. This experience is available to man not because he is a Christian or a Buddhist, but because he is a Man.” Hence the importance of the concept of Humanity—One (We are One).

The transpersonal level is described in Almaas’s *Facets of Unity: The Enneagram of Holy Ideas*, but we also find it in the Enneagram of Divine Gnosés of Arica, referred to in the Five Supreme Determinants of Being:

1. **Divine Gnosis of Light.** The experience of radiance or an increased perceptivity of light.
2. **Divine Gnosis of Fruition.** The state of fruition and gratitude, happy in itself.

3. **Divine Gnosis of the Path.** The clear experience of the third eye vision and the metaphor of the cavern.
4. **Divine Gnosis of the Great Peace.** The actual realization that death is not final, but a step in the process of eternal consciousness, producing an unimaginable peace and relief.
5. **Divine Gnosis of Transcendentality.** The experience that we are one with the Divine Metatelos (the archetype of Enlightenment), provoking unquestionable security.
6. **Divine Gnosis of the Mystical School.** The experience of transcendental love towards humanity.
7. **Divine Gnosis of Self-Realization.**
8. **Divine Gnosis of Liberation.**
9. **Divine Gnosis of the Diamond Being<sup>3</sup>.**



### The Holy Ideas

This Enneagram was created by Ichazo and developed by Hameed Ali Almaas in his book, *Facets of Unity: Holy Perfection, Holy Will, Holy Harmony, Holy Origin, Holy Omniscience (or Holy Transparency), Holy Strength, Holy Wisdom, Holy Truth, Holy Love.*

Here are some characteristic definitions:

**Holy Perfection for Point 1.** The awareness that reality moves with direction and purpose. Within this movement, each moment is connected by the process with the one goal, and thus is perfect

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<sup>3</sup> Oscar Ichazo, "The results of the Telegnostic Meditations – internal instructions," *The Arican*, Autumn 1992.

**Holy Will for Point 2.** The awareness that reality, moving with direction and according to fixed natural laws, flows with a certain force. The easiest way to deal with this force is to move with it.

**Holy Strength for Point 6.** The awareness that the cosmos is a self-regulating mechanism, existing in a state of balance; as long as the objective laws which govern this balance are respected, an individual can exist in a state of harmony with reality, moving toward his own personal fulfilment.

**Holy Wisdom for Point 7.** The awareness that reality exists as a succession of movements, each experienced as “the Present,” and that it is only by existing in the present that the constant unfolding of the cosmos can be experienced. Only by working in the present can real work be done and real results achieved.

**Holy Love for Point 9.** The awareness that the laws which govern reality are objective. These cosmic laws inevitably lead to the creation of organic life. Life itself, like all natural phenomena, fulfills a cosmic purpose. As soon as the mind’s words mechanism is destroyed, love—the natural condition of the mind—appears (Ichazo, 1972).

All the Holy Ideas derive from Holy Perfection. The objective towards which reality is moving, whether we like it or not, is the enlightenment of human beings; if we recognize that this is a natural flow, rather than fighting against it, all moments within the process, whether they are judged good or bad, are perfect.

At this level, the three logics (formal logic, dialectics and trialectics) are functioning in unity, according to what the practical situation requires; this is possible because the general trialectical point of view allows cooperative interactions between complementary poles.

## **The Level of the Socio-Cultural Ego**

This level can be developed into two clearly differentiated sub-levels:

**Conditionings and beliefs imposed by the family and the socio-cultural environment in which we are educated, and in which we had to develop a “Horizontal Apprenticeship” necessary to function in society.**

Children form their characters and personalities very early, but they still have no independence and depend on the people within their environments for survival.

**Dogmatic identification with certain socio-cultural and religious beliefs.**

Young adults take on certain beliefs enhanced by education, but they identify with peer groups that protect and structure those beliefs (social classes, professional organizations, political parties, spiritual/religious groups, sporting team fans, movie stars, etc.).

This is a level ruled by standards of conduct or “norms” imposed by the environment (dress codes, unwritten rules of relationship/friendship, linguistic and moral codes, etc.).

The logic at this level is the Formal Logic codified by Aristotle with his three laws: *Identity*, *Contradiction*, and *Excluded Middle*. It is the logic of duality, exclusion, good and evil, right or wrong.

### **Level of the Individualistic Ego**

We can also subdivide this level into two sub-levels:

**Affirmation of the personality.** The ego must jostle and (more or less violently) oppose other egos and personalities to get its “15 minutes of fame,” its place in society. This is a level of conquest of personal freedom.

**Justification and rationalization of one’s personality.** “I’m like that!” Here we are describing dogmatic ego; the personality is not only asserted, it’s also explained and claimed, thanks to ideas and theories which are projected onto all areas of life: intellectual, emotional, sexual, political/ideological choices, philosophical and spiritual values.

As an example from my personal experience, I spent part of my adult life adopting values of anarchy and sexual liberty. Then, I discovered personal and spiritual development, and I began to defend those new values with the rationalization of the previous ones—the same thing, of course, when I became acquainted with Arica, whose ideas on evolution greatly influenced me, after I translated the first books that Ichazo wrote.

This sub-level prepared me for the following level by blending closely with it. There was no major crisis for me when passing from level 2 to level 3; but for many people, this transition is very difficult. It often produces a major re-evaluation of the main elements of their lives (emotional, professional, or even physical responses to a serious accident or illness).

The logic that prevails at this level is that of Hegel’s Dialectics (plus certain adjustments and clarifications by Engels) with the law of *quantity becoming quality*, the law of *opposites*, and the law of *negation of the negation*. It is the logic of competition and conflict of opposites which is supposed to sustain and support the economical, social and intellectual progresses.

### **Level of the Individualized Person**

This level is defined by the capacity to overcome crises and enter into a process of self-transformation, resulting in the desire to let the essential being emerge and reach full maturity.



This level manifests itself as follows:

- Interpersonal relationships are transformed.
- Action is geared towards general evolution.
- Some experiences of the transpersonal level become possible.
- One acquires the certainty that the only thing worth seeking is the deep state of Enlightenment, Realization, Satori, Union with God—what Arica calls “The State,” which is achieved through transcending.
- At the same time, we understand the necessity of exploring our inner depths, which we do when descending.

The logic here is that of Trialectics, the logic of unity explaining changes through a series of mutations, formalized by Oscar Ichazo, with its three laws of *mutation*, *circulation* (between opposing poles), and *attraction*, either ascending or descending. (See the table in the appendix, which details the three perspectives corresponding to three clearly differentiated levels of socio-cultural consciousness).

#### **Transition from Level 3 to Level 4**

The pattern of the four levels of consciousness does not adequately detail the transition from the third to the fourth level. In my opinion, in hindsight, mentioning that a crisis is necessary is not enough.

**Experiences.** In my experience, when working consciously at the third level as is done in the Arica School, for example, it is common to have short-to-medium-duration experiences of unity and serenity akin to the fourth level. For example, one night in bed, after tiring of the chattering in my mind, I found myself immersed in the Love of God for about an hour. You can find similar illuminating accounts along the same lines on the Arica website.

But what about living permanently or mostly in the fourth level? I have a friend who lived in the entourage of a well-known spiritual master. My friend told me that this man’s aura and energy as a master were present when he was in public. However, when the master was on his own, he would often find himself in the second level, when it was obvious and evident to his entourage, who would pretend not to notice. My friend was very disappointed, and he has come to distrust what is said about so-called enlightened beings.

As for myself, I’ve had the opportunity to meet people in my own entourage, several of whom I know intimately, who are often in the fourth level, and I can say that their company is very enlightening for me.

As another example from my personal experience, for two years I lived in a strong loving relationship with one of these persons. It was a shared love, but not

a couple relationship, because we were more than 600 miles apart, she with three daughters in the North [of France], and myself with a wife in the South. We met only five or six times a year. So, it was not a relationship in everyday life; she had her own life, and I had mine. For me, this relationship was a very strong fourth level experience—my heart opened as it had never done before, and we spent several hours a day on the phone, living synchronicities and sharing awareness that often seemed to be miraculous. We both acknowledged that this encounter was for each of us a gift from God. There were a number of problems due to our age difference, but these were problems that we overcame.

One of these problems, by far the most difficult, was that she was living our long-distance relationship in detachment, while I was becoming more and more attached. I finally recognized that this relationship reflected a grip of the ego. For years I have been working on my four types of fixation (7, 9, 1, and 4) but then I finally realized that the number 2, the Independent-dependent, was hard at work on the sly. When certain aspects of our material life started to change, and the relationship could not continue as it had, it created in me a craving and led me to a painful fall from the third level (and certain aspects of the fourth), to the second level. All of my ego fixations woke up and panicked; this was a chaotic time for me, and I finally understood that I hadn't really made the transition from the third level to the fourth, because I still had a number of beliefs from the first level, and illusions from the second level.

Another phenomenon accompanied my process of rehabilitation to the new situation, and still does. My emotional life has weakened. Often when I think of this woman, when I speak of her, but also when I feel around me the presence of love, tears come to my eyes, and I am completely unable to control myself. So, I must accept that I need to work on pacifying my frustrated ego, in order to progress in a process of transformation which seems inevitable to me, although I don't know where it will take me, or how long it will last. How long will I stay in this "dark night of the soul"?<sup>4</sup> I don't know.

## **Modeling**

In the model of the Levels of Consciousness that I developed with the archetypes of the Tarot of Arthur Edward Waite, the transition from the third to the fourth level is represented by the Hanged Man, Death, Temperance, the Devil, the Tower, the Star and the Moon, while the Sun represents the entry into the fourth level.

Death, the Tower and the Moon correspond to particularly difficult trials to overcome until we let go of the ego; Temperance, the Star and the Sun represent the liberation that occurs when the mind governed by the ego abandons its grip. This analysis, which uses the Tarot, corresponds to a model that I outlined at the end of the first part of this article, in the section entitled, «General Remarks

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<sup>4</sup> The *dark night of the soul* and the *gift of tears* correspond to states of consciousness described by the Christian Mystics.

about the Levels.» In this section, I explain that after the level of assertiveness, there are very difficult stages during which the ego starts to crack. It then deconstructs itself, and we must let it go, and abandon it. This is easier said than done, and I think these steps for the transition between the third and fourth levels correspond to the biggest crisis that we must cross—much more difficult than the crisis between the second and third level which I said was a “major crisis.” In my case, I occasionally feel like I have gone through this crisis and somewhat succeeded, but at other times I feel otherwise, and that there remain major events to experience because my ego has not really let go.

### **Movements Across the Levels**

It's clear that in a scale of levels, we can equally ascend or descend. We ascend when we become aware of our egoistic functioning and defuse our tensions before they occur. We descend when we identify our shortcomings without seeing that they are only mechanical, when we think we are free but are not, or when we are carried away by feelings that take us to a lower level.

Without a doubt, the biggest problem is **Identification**. When I identify with an emotion or a negative thought, this emotion sticks to me or this thought haunts me, because I'm not able to distance myself from it. I judge myself, or I judge others as responsible for this emotion when I refuse to take responsibility. This process lasts as long as I escape the initial thought or emotion. When this process occurs frequently, it can even lead to physical disturbances.

To free ourselves from this restriction of movement, which can only take us to lower levels, we must develop our internal witness, which can observe what occurs without judgement. This can approach what Ichazo called the *Gnosis of the Path*. When we can maintain awareness of the internal witness, and obtain a true **distancing**, we can see our emotions and thoughts without getting carried away by them. We stay centered in the kath or in the heart, or both simultaneously, and nothing can shake us. In this case, not only do we not descend to lower levels, but we even ascend each time that we release old beliefs of the socio-cultural or individualistic egos.

### **Conclusion**

When the concepts of Levels of Consciousness, associated with the essential and the existential self, are integrated into our culture, working for the goal of “Humanity as One” will become natural and easy. Each level corresponds to a different vision of reality, with different content. The change is in how we think or reason. This is why we can speak of specific logics based on science but operating with different laws.

Each level involves and integrates the previous ones, but someone who identifies with a lower level is not aware of the existence of the higher levels. At the third level, the existence of the fourth level can be viewed, which one can access with trust in oneself and by persevering in the work.

It is interesting that this scale of Levels applies equally to the evolution of individuals as it does to the evolution of mankind. Our culture is currently at the second level, with the full power of dialectic logic. With the justification of economical competition, we are pursuing selfish profit to the detriment of our planet. However, a number of signs show that we are moving into the third level, like the publication of a very instructive book published in 2000, *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World*. This book, written by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, was translated into French and has had a large success in my country. Integration into the culture of Trialectics or *Integral Logic* (written by Ichazo), will have decisive results when fully formalized.

**APPENDIX: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE THREE LOGICS**

<b>Laws</b>	<b>FORMAL LOGIC</b> Aristote	<b>DIALECTICS</b> Hegel	<b>TRIALECTICS</b> Ichazo
<b>1</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Quantity becoming Quality</b>	<b>Mutation</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Contradiction</b>	<b>Opposites</b>	<b>Circulation</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Excluded Middle</b>	<b>Negation of Negation</b>	<b>Attraction</b>
	Logic of space	Logic of time	Logic of processes
	LOGIC OF CHILDHOOD	LOGIC OF ADOLESCENCE	LOGIC OF MATURITY
	Logic of agricultural societies (Middle Age)	Logic of industrial revolution	Logic of post-industrial society
	Logic of didactic language	Logic of critic and polemic	Logic of humor and paradox
	Logic of labelling and analysis	Logic of thesis/antithesis/synthesis	Logic of holistic models
	Logic of stability	Logic of conquest	Logic of unity
	Logic of duality	Logic of conflicts between opposites	Logic of complementarity
	Logic of military war	Logic of economical war (competition)	Logic of ecology
	Logic of Law and social contract	Logic of the conquest of liberties	Logic of the alliance with nature
	Logic of the group	Logic of the individual	Logic of the team
	Logic of the economical immobility	Logic of the economical competition	Logic of supportive interaction
	Logic of the body (habits)	Logic of the emotions (desires)	Logic of the unity of the body and the psyche

(Table excerpt from: *Éducation pour le 3<sup>e</sup> Millénaire*  
by Olivier Clouzot – Éditions Holistiques, 1999)

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