

EXTRACT TAKEN FROM THE WORK IN PROGRESS *BOOK OF THE WORLD* 'THE HEXAD'

THE WORLD SOUL

In Chinese thought, six represents the universe in the four directions plus above and below. There are six senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing, the sixth being mind. The day and night each have six periods. In Christianity, six is the number of man because he was created on the sixth day. It is fascinating that the *biosphere* contains six (land-based) biomes or types of ecology - rainforest, tundra, taiga, desert, temperate, and grasslands.

The world soul was first proposed by Plato on analogy with the soul of a human body. It carries with connotations of harmony and wholeness and its traditional image is that of a sphere. In the *Timeaus* he writes:

Such was the whole plan of the eternal God about the god that was to be, to whom for this reason he gave a body, smooth and even, having a surface in every direction equidistant from the centre, a body entire and perfect, and formed out of perfect bodies. And in the centre he put the soul, which he diffused throughout the body, making it also to be the exterior environment of it; and he made the universe a circle moving in a circle, one and solitary, yet by reason of its excellence able to converse with itself, and needing no other friendship or acquaintance. Having these purposes in view he created the world a blessed god.

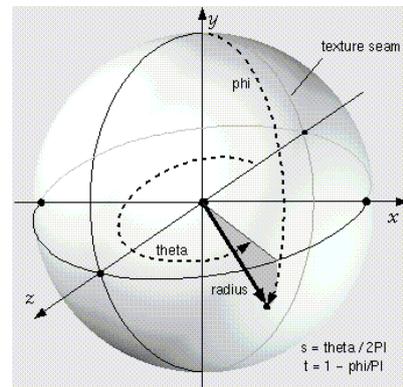


This sphere appears to us in our observation of the heavens. It is the inevitable shape of how the perfect or divine must appear to us, as depicted in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. A sphere has three axes but six points of reference. Speaking further of Plato, he describes in the *Symposium* the original human form as that of a sphere, which was then divided into two halves then having the desire to conjoin again in sexual union.

In Bennett's cosmology, the world soul translates into the Universal Individuality. It is this which cares for the harmony of the world. It is associated in his scheme with the six fundamental 'laws' that we have encountered before in the guise of forms of action. In this respect, it is co-terminus with the creation. Bennett's idea of fundamental laws in creation corresponds with that of Plotinus' *logoi spermatikoi* or seminal reasons.

The *nous* [intelligence] or second principle necessarily produces a third, the Soul of the World. This World-Soul is of a hybrid nature, on the one hand intelligent like the *nous* in which it contemplates the ideas, on the other hand tending to realize in the sensible world the image of those same eternal ideas. The plurality which it embodies is still held together, just as in the *nous*, but it is on the point of scattering itself abroad in the outer world.

The view of the world soul in Platonic terms as eternal and above is like an abstraction and is sterile. It may be more like the ultimate term of a pentad than the nature of the hexad. The alchemical-hermetic tradition went much further in opening to the role of the human soul – sometimes expressed in terms of *eros* – in uniting with the world soul – sometimes expressed in terms of *logos*. It is not without value to meditate on the union of lust and reason. This is not only a spiritual matter because much the same considerations are needed in such areas as *economic globalization*, where the selfish desires of individuals



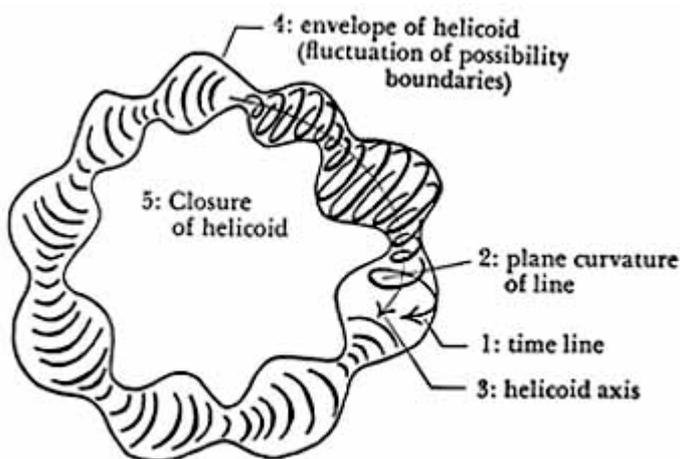
must marry with the harmony of the world market (where 'market' replaces 'soul!'). What the hexad promises is that this is not a mere matter of adjustment but of a fusion of natures to create something entirely new. In alchemy this was called the *solar child*.

We have adduced the example of the world soul and the sphere because of their inherent correspondence with our intuitions of wholeness and the present moment. We can be reminded of Bennett's linking the hexad with *recurrence* which is evidently represented in our ideas of cycles and orbits. The idea of eternal recurrence was re-introduced by Nietzsche and later taken up by Ouspensky, a pupil of Gurdjieff. Nietzsche wrote:

If the world may be thought of as a certain definite quantity of force and as a certain definite number of centers of force--and every other representation remains indefinite and therefore useless--it follows that, in the great dice game of existence, it must pass through a calculable number of combinations. In infinite time, every possible combination would at some time or another be realized; more: it would be realized an infinite number of times. And since between every combination and its next recurrence all other possible combinations would have to take place, and each of these combinations conditions the entire sequence of combinations in the same series, a circular movement of absolutely identical series is thus demonstrated: the world as a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely often and plays its game in infinitum.

But far is involved than repetition of the same cycle of events. When Bennett proposed a dimension of *hyparxis* he took the ancient Greek meaning of 'ableness-to-be' is a serious way to allow for certain events *becoming more real* along this sixth dimension. If we have a heaven above and earth below, they remain separate and infertile. In the modern context of thinking the feeling of a progression towards reality has been projected simplistically into progress in linear time. Yet we know that things get worse as much as they get better. Gurdjieff remarked that 'there is no progress whatsoever'.

A useful image here is to consider simple trial and error. We try to do something and it does not work. So we then try another way, and so on until some fulfilment is achieved. The picture relates to ordinary time because our different attempts are made one after the other. Bennett's remarkable idea was to propose that such a *series* of attempts can take place *simultaneously*. This is like having the 'eternal time' of the world soul fusing with the 'desire time' of the individual soul. A typical attempt to model a more complex view of time is shown here as a 'closed time structure' and it seems as if we have to think in terms of time-loops in



A—Closed Time Structure (potential aspect) with its dimensions

order to approach the concept of a deeper kind of time.

In what we take as ordinary and obvious linear time, moments are separated. In this manner we understand Locke's concept of time as a 'perpetual perishing'. Time takes us from ourselves. Our joys are fleeting and our remembrance faulty. Every moment of our existence can be seen as an attempt to be ourselves. A pulse arises that then fades and dies until it is renewed in another moment. This is the lesser form of *hyparxis* as repetition and it implies on a deeply emotional

level that we are condemned to fail at being who we are. If this is the picture in terms of *hyparxis* (ableness-to-be) projected into linear time, then what is *hyparxis* in its own terms? However, first we contemplate *hyparxis* projected into eternity, the realm of pattern. This is

the renewal of potential, and can be called creative. The purely hyparchic dimension is then that of the *soul*. The 'repetitions' are no longer string out in time but stand together. In this view, the Gurdjieffian concept that we have to *make a soul* appears in a new light. It does not build in time but in hyparxis. The postulate of a third kind of time entails that a human life is indeed undertaken in the 'vale of soul making' as Keats said and has results that coalesce in hyparxis.

The projection of hyparxis into space is seen as *rotation* and Bennett went so far as to depict the ascension of Christ as such a rotation and not as a mere translation. The concept of 'turning into oneself' was embodied in the turning of the Mevlevi Dervishes, which is an act of remembrance in the sense of Gurdjieff's *self-remembering*. What is hinted at is an attempt to connect from the world of space and motion to the world of inner recurrence. The image of the gyroscope and of the turning Dervish fuse into a symbol of extraordinary resonance; yet the idea is rarely entertained. A particularly interesting attempt is that of William Pensinger, because of his proposition that *time operates on space to produce consciousness*. If time is threefold and space also three-fold then we have the union of the hexad.

