

## STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

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The hyparchic future appears to be a strange notion wholly alien to our experience – which is always in the restricted present moment. The same is true of the hyparchic past. Are we then to conclude that hyparxis is a mysterious concept that belongs only to mystical experience in the rare cases of direct knowledge of past and future events? By no means. We should have no experience at all unless there were an hyparchic component within every present moment. It is this that enables us to live and move 'within the present' by enabling a more or less extensive region of space, time and eternity to be integrated as 'here and now'. The eternal element in the present moment is experienced in the separation of the mind from its objects; and, to an enhanced degree, when consciousness and sensitivity are separated in the mind. But this separation would only produce a state of subjective trance (samadhi) if there were no hyparchic component to hold the elements together.

We can, therefore, say that the 'present moment' is also the **hyparchic present**. If it were only a temporal present it would be a vanishing instant of time without duration. If it were a spatial present only, it would have no motion. If it were only an eternal present, it would be trance. The present moment within which it is possible *to act*, must have an hyparchic component. When this is very strong we can pass beyond the simple 'yes' and 'no' of the illustration given above, and act according to our destiny.

The fully developed man who has attained Individuality has, like everyone else, his own present moment, but he can also enter into other present moments and act within them. This means according to the views developed in this chapter that when the Present Moment opens in the direction of hyparxis, it also gains in duration, extent and in the perception of eternal forms and values.

Even for ordinary selves, hyparxis is a necessary condition of experience. Nor is it totally imperceptible. We do not observe it directly; but we have an intuition of 'presence' in those whose hyparchic nature is strong. This means that they do effectively *live in* the space that contains and surrounds their physical body. Though the notion of hyparxis as a determining-condition like space and time is unfamiliar, the manifestations connected with it are there for us to experience, when we know how and where to look for them.

### Sixfold Model

To produce a model of the present moment, Bennett relied on his scheme of the three-dimensionality of time. As a matter of principle, he looked for a sixfold model (see 25. The Perfect Six), twice his number of temporal dimensions, so he had to divide each dimension into two aspects. These were: *closed* associated with the sense of 'past' and *open* with the sense of 'future'. Ordinary time is already recognised as past and future where the past is seen as closed and done for and the future as open and not decided. For the axis of eternity he proposed we distinguish between *forms* and *values* as the closed and open poles. He gave little explanation but we might consider the contrast between 'morality' (form) and 'conscience' (values) as an example.

But an implication of his treatment of the dimensions is that the closed, 'negative' or passive aspects of the three dimensions could be closely related to *space*. Past time then becomes 'traces' of the past – as memories or objects and 'passive eternity' as the forms of our environment. Gurdjieff spoke of 'mentation by form' in such terms, for example as the influence of the landscape within which we lead our formative years.

If we regard the present moment in terms of six directions, then we have: left and right (typically, to the left is the past and to the right is the future); above and below

(as in the universal sense of heaven and earth), and behind and in front (with various associations such as unconscious and conscious).

For the third dimension of hyparxis, Bennett distinguished the closed side as 'commitment' and the open as 'decision', terms that do not easily lend themselves to making a sharp distinction. He clearly thought that commitment entailed our being carried along certain tracks because of acts made in the past. But it might be better to speak of closed hyparxis simply as *repetition*, the enacting of the same thing over and over again. This is after all the essence of the *seasons* by which our lives are governed. The other open end of hyparxis evokes a number of words starting with re- such as renewal and revolution and even including redemption. In its purest form it is *freedom*.

We can see phenomena of repetition in the lives of succeeding generations, particularly when a trauma is repeated in them. This has been studied by psychotherapists such as Anne Schutzenberger who has found evidence for repetitions going back seven generations (as spoken of in the Bible). In what she calls 'the ancestor syndrome' a traumatic experience is repeated *at the same time* (that is, for example, on the same date) by a descendent, and even over more than one generation. Typically, the family culture inhibits speaking of such events, which supports their persistence. It is not until the 'hidden event' is brought into the light that it can be resolved. Repetition is not only a matter of trauma but includes any kind of recurrent action by which we as individuals, families or even nations are defined. Since we used the word 'defined' we can add that the *meaning of a word* spans its definition (closed) and its creative freedom (open).

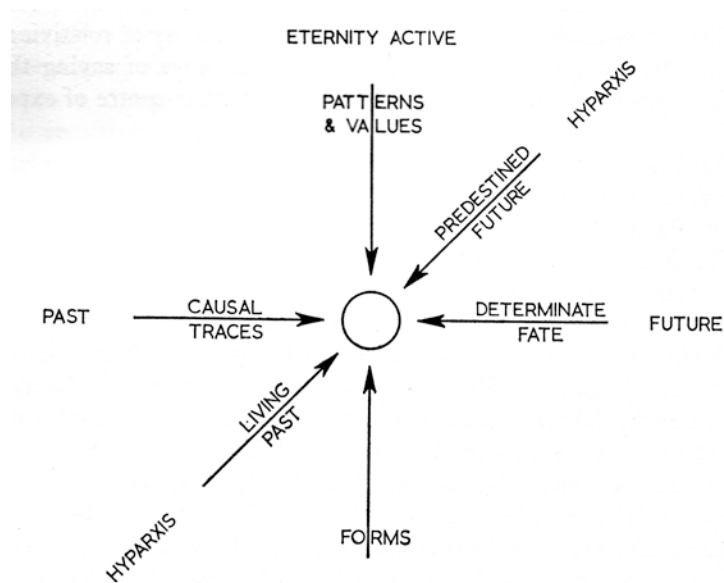
The axis of hyparxis is we think depicted in the apocryphal stories of Christ descending into Hades to redeem lost souls. Christ comes out of the hyparchic future to change the past.

The treatment of the three temporal dimensions is qualitative, so our verbal descriptions can diverge and merge in complex ways. One more description of the six aspects (in three pairs) of the present moment is given here to emphasise this point:

<b>dimension</b>	<b>closed</b>	<b>open</b>	
HYPARXIS	repetition	freedom	<i>uniqueness</i>
ETERNITY	imitation	authenticity	<i>sameness</i>
TIME	fixity	uncertainty	<i>contingency</i>

It should be noted that such explorations of terms within a structure have kinship with *poetry*. Bennett's own version of the present moment emphasises the axis of time as *causality*, the axis of eternity as *potentiality* and the axis of hyparxis as *freedom*,

these terms obviously implying some hierarchy of significance since causality and freedom are two extremes. His own model of the present moment is given here:



### Implications of the Model

We are free to make any kind of combination of the six elements we wish – and to find a meaning for them all if we can. However, we restrict ourselves to a limited set.

*Essence-Existence:* the open terms can be taken together as signifying essence and the closed ones as signifying existence

*Zones:* every mutually orthogonal pair of terms – such as past time and hyparctic freedom for example - signifies a 'zone' within the present moment. Bennett distinguished eternity-time, hyparxis-time and eternity-hyparxis again in a hierarchical way:

E-T material energies

H-T vital energies

E-H cosmic energies – zone of demiurgic intelligence – kingdom of heaven

If we took each of the six elements and looked for their 'orthogonal' relations then we would find 12 of them. These would enable us to reflect on the implications of the model in more detail. For example, we would distinguish the zone E+-T- as signifying the value of objects made in the past – antiques! Whereas E+T+ might signify the desire for things. It is likely that we could find a meaning in all twelve particular zones.

Concerning the H-T axis we should note that Bennett later takes this up in writing about the *heptad of historical operations*.

## Note on Method

Proceeding from a given set of terms to other levels containing combinations of these terms and thence to combinations of combinations and so on is called making a *combinatorial hierarchy*. Such hierarchies can differ widely in their range and extent, such differences arising from the *rules* which govern their generation. For the most part, Bennett's hierarchies of this type are very restricted. Taking the case of a six-term bottom strata or starting level - signified by the collection A, B, C, D, E, F - then we could have, not only combinations such as {A, B}, but also {A, B, C}, {A, B, C, D} etc and even combinations such as { {A} {B, C, D} { } } ( { } signifying the empty set) and so on making a very large number.

Bennett, for the most part, does not spell out his rules but simply writes about what strikes him. But it is fairly clear that having some explicit method of making combinations aids the interpretation of a model by generating a language to address its phenomenology. In a quasi-scientific sense, it might even enable *prediction* of a kind, similar to (but also very different) from Dirac 'discovering' anti-matter in his famous equation.

## A Major Implication

Pursuing the thought of zones – made from coupling of pairs of parameters of the present moment – leads us to suppose that the higher or spiritual influences are already within us here and now. In an interesting sense *we are made of them* just as *our bodies are made of star dust*.

This is perhaps Bennett's greatest gift to us. To make this appear as reasonable and inevitable so that our minds can at least accept its possibility.

In this extended symbolic sense, *the present moment is a Eucharist*. 'Now' is the altar. When God wills our freedom He is Christ and we enact the Mass.