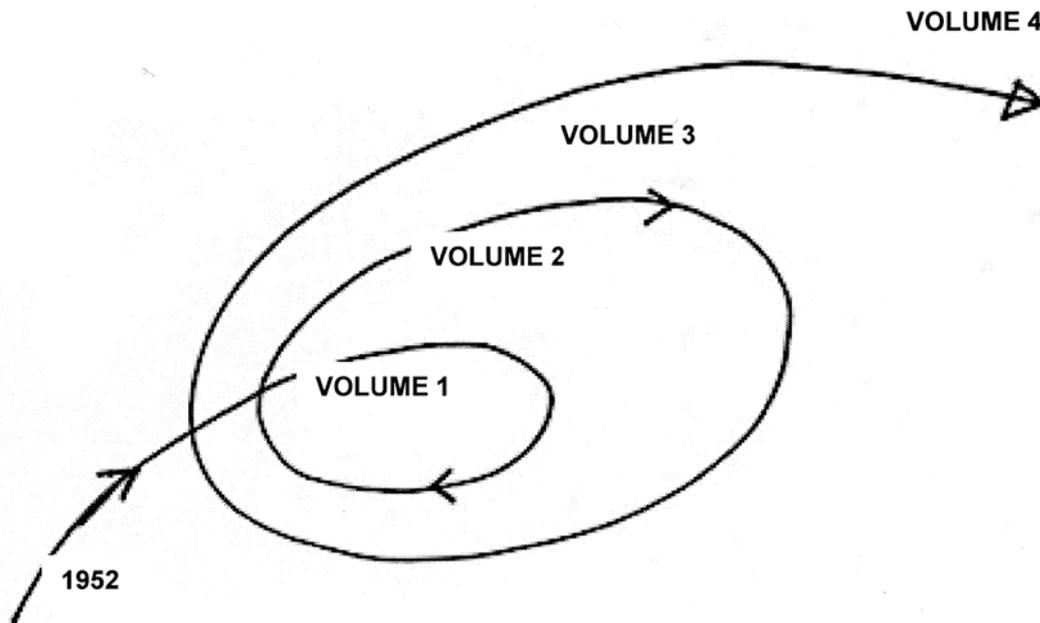


The Hyparxis of the Dramatic Universe

I can represent the progression of *The Dramatic Universe* as a kind of spiral by which I suggest that the writing *re-entered itself* at each new volume to emerge with a deeper perspective.



The conception of the *Dramatic Universe* came sometime in the 1920s, after the First World War. Bennett grew up in a period when ideas of higher dimensions were becoming popular. He was gifted mathematically - as well as in so many other ways - and wanted to develop his own theories of what lay beyond causality and time in a precise form. To further his spiritual search he first of all decided to link with the system of Anthroposophy created by Rudolf Steiner (d. 1925) but a meeting with Gurdjieff in Turkey (1920) changed his direction. What remained the same was his desire to marry science with spirituality. He wanted both and was determined to *understand* what was 'higher' rather than simply believe or resort to rhetoric.



Long before he started to publish volumes of *The Dramatic Universe* he had been writing what became parts of it, going through several versions over the years as he refined his ideas (sometimes with the collaboration of scientists such as Meredith Thring and Bruin Brown). Certain ideas or ways of framing things persisted throughout. One was his 'cosmic triad' of Function, Being and Will which I think might go back at least to the late 1930s. Another was his love of twelfold schemes, such as for: Values, Energies, Levels of Existence, the Ideal Human Society, Essence Classes, and so on.

I have spoken of ideas and also of *ways of framing* them. Bennett was keenly aware of the role played by the framework or context in which an idea is being discussed. Sadly, a lot of people talk about things as if they could be considered in isolation apart from everything else. A definition is useless in isolation because the terms used in the definition involve other things which also have to be understood. A framework holds a variety of things together and provides 'places' for them. The way we have of mapping things in terms of latitude and longitude is a framework. We can know whether one place is north or south of another, for example.

As Bennett went on writing and rewriting his magnum opus there was an interplay between the things he wanted to talk about and *how* he wanted to talk about them or frame them. He well realised that a framework should not impose itself but serve the purpose of showing how different things relate to each other. His framework evolved into what he eventually called *systematics*. On the way he also developed a six-dimensional geometry.

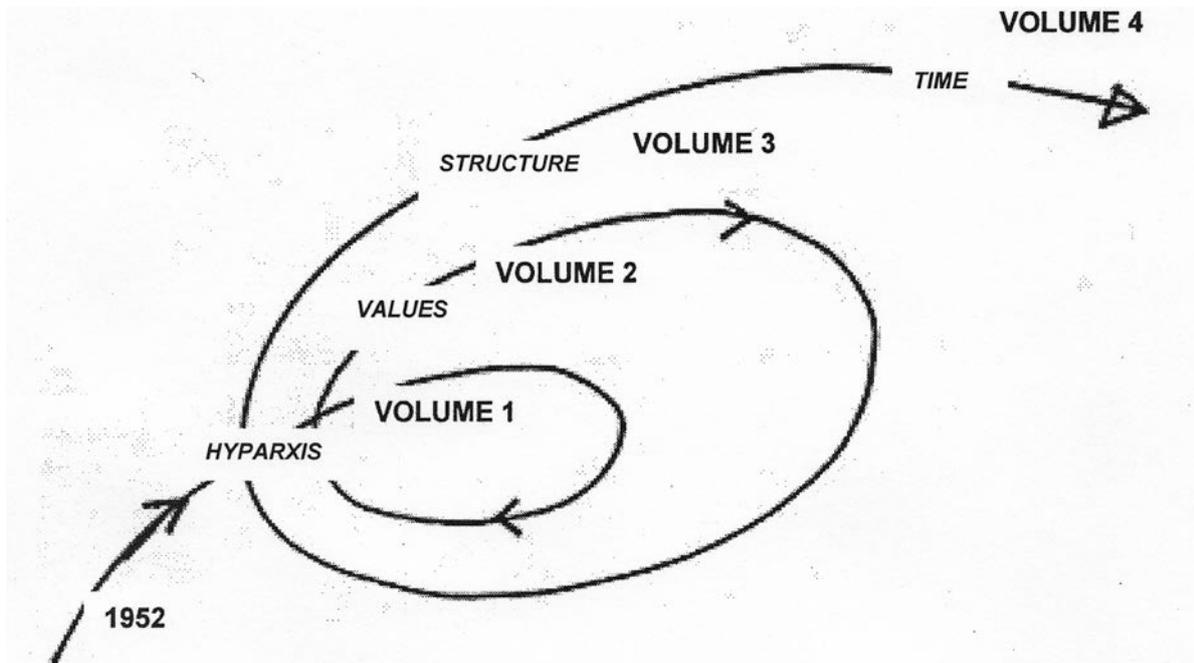
In the version (unpublished) he made in 1952 Bennett wove his many strands into a kind of rationalised 'All and Everything'. By then he had studied Gurdjieff's book of that name for some time and regarded his own project as merely 'a set of footnotes' to it. This may be why he confined himself within the restrictions of the Gurdjieff cosmology based on 'laws' of three and seven almost exclusively. In fact he speaks of three special numbers: 1, 3 and 7. 1 is the number of Being, 3 of Will and 7 of Function. He even went so far as to say that there was no sense in any idea of fourfoldness, fivefoldness, etc.

By the time the first volume of *The Dramatic Universe* was published (1956) just a few years later, many things had changed. Twelfefoldness dominated and Volume 1, devoted to Natural Philosophy, was largely based on a hierarchy of twelve levels of existence or degrees of potency, each level representing a 'category of thinking' and constituting what he called *systematics*. Many other new things came into the picture, most importantly the word *hyparxis* for the third temporal dimension he considered co-equal with time and eternity. Bennett claimed he took the word from Aristotle but his citation is suspect and it probably came from Neo-Platonism.

However, following Aristotle, he made his next volume to be on *metaphysics* - which just means the subject after the study of nature or *physis* - calling it 'Moral Philosophy' perhaps also in reference to Kant. The categories of thought in Volume 1 were used to apply only to fact or existence. In Volume 2 they were writ large. Twoness introduced the complementarity of Fact and Value, threeness the structure of Will, fourness dealt with Being and fiveness with the transflux of Essence and Existence. Volume 2 on 'Moral Philosophy' introduces Value, excluded in Volume 1, and Essence as the unconditioned complement of Existence.

One would expect after such a tour de force that the next volume would continue on this high-powered metaphysical journey and deal with sixness and beyond. Instead,

Bennett pauses and tries to set out his framework of systematics in its broadest sense as applying to any content of experience. The new ingredient can be called 'structure'. I was one of a group of young men around him at that time who often met to discuss the formulation of the number-term systems, as well as take part in a series of weekend seminars on all kinds of topics - such as music, cooking and marriage! - to try out the approach. It is significant that that the systematics in such events rarely went beyond the pentad or the fifth stage.

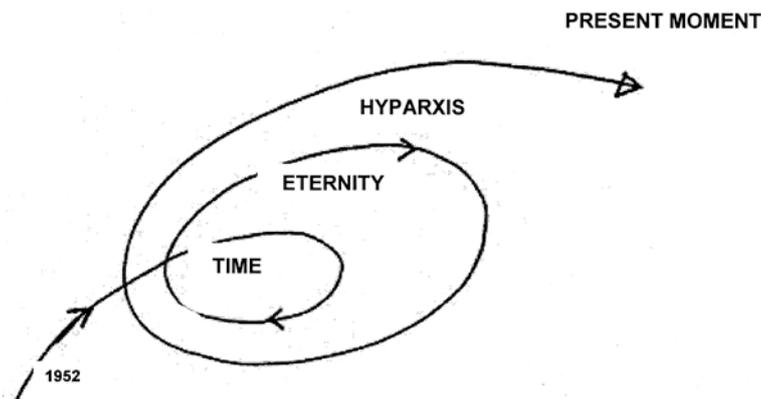


Though Volume 3 is titled 'Man and His Nature' it begins with a discussion of 'organised complexity' and goes on to lay out the characteristics of all the systems from monad (1) to duodecad (12). He had very little to say about the ten and eleven term systems because he never developed any use for them. From then on he ventured into the study of man, looking at anthropology, the human life-cycle and the ideal human society. After the book came out he confided in me that he considered the chapter on Man the worst in the whole work. In this chapter he attempted an orderly application of the systems but the result was stilted and artificial.

In laying out his principles of systematics, he had proposed a linear progression - in what he called 'concreteness' - through the series of systems. But he did not articulate *how* there was a movement or transformation from one into the next. As a result, the systems appear somewhat suspended apart from each other. Not only that, he was searching for deeper principles that he speculated might have to do with societies and history.

In Volume 4 he came to History and the 'war with time'. The hexad appears in the supremely important guise of the *present moment*. The scheme of three dimensions

of time which figured so strongly in Volume returns but, in effect, the dimensions are transformed because he is concerned with the domain of harmony where fact and value meet. Hexads were also *events* and events get structured into history by heptads. He invents new concepts such as the *hyparchic future*. After surveying the *whole* of terrestrial history he ends in making prophecies. For me, the most interesting piece of writing is in the Preface (which of course was written last) where he seems to abandon the notion of any generalised systematics and gives the present moment ultimate status.



The spiral picture of the four volumes can be adapted to show an interpretation of them corresponding with the dimensions of time. There is a progression from one volume to the next. The systematics serves this progression but does not determine it. As a reminder of the form and sequence of *The Dramatic Universe*, there follows a summary of its contents.

VOLUME ONE The Foundations of Natural Philosophy

FIRST BOOK: THE FOUNDATIONS

PART ONE : METAPHYSICS

Chapter 1. Points of Departure

Chapter 2. The Progression of the Categories

Chapter 3. The Elements of Experience

PART TWO: EPISTEMOLOGY

Chapter 4. Language

Chapter 5. Knowledge

PART THREE: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 6. The Methods of Natural Philosophy

Chapter 7. Possibility and Impossibility

Chapter 8. The Laws of Framework

PART FOUR: SYSTEMATICS

- Chapter 9. Existential Hypotheses
- Chapter 10. The Classification of the Sciences
A. Subanimate Existence – Hyponomic Entities
- Chapter 11. The Classification of the Sciences
B. Animate Existence – Autonomic Entities
- Chapter 12. The Classification of the Sciences
C. Supra-animate Existence – Hypernomic Entities

SECOND BOOK: THE NATURAL SCIENCES

PART FIVE: THE DYNAMICAL WORLD

- Chapter 13. The Representation of the Natural Order
- Chapter 14. Motion

PART SIX: THE WORLD OF ENERGY

- Chapter 15. The Universal Geometry
- Chapter 16. Simple Occasions

PART SEVEN: THE WORLD OF THINGS

- Chapter 17. Corpuscles and Particles
- Chapter 18. Composite Wholeness

PART EIGHT: LIFE

- Chapter 19. The Bases of Life
- Chapter 20. Living Beings
- Chapter 21. The Unity of Life

PART NINE: THE COSMIC ORDER

- Chapter 22. Existence Beyond Life
- Chapter 23. The Solar System
- Chapter 24. The Cosmic Order

VOLUME TWO Foundations of Moral Philosophy

THIRD BOOK: THE ELEMENTS OF VALUE

PART TEN: THE DYAD – FACT AND VALUE

- Chapter 25. THE TWO DOMAINS
- Chapter 26. SYNCHRONICITY

PART ELEVEN : THE TRIAD – WILL

- Chapter 27. WILL AND THE TRIADS
- Chapter 28. THE SIX FUNDAMENTAL LAWS
- Chapter 29. INDIVIDUALITY
- Chapter 30. WILL AND THE SELF-HOOD
- Chapter 31. THE CONDITIONED WILL

PART TWELVE: THE TETRAD – BEING

Chapter 32. ENERGIES

Chapter 33. MATERIALITY, VITALITY AND DEITY

Chapter 34. CREATION

PART THIRTEEN: THE PENTAD – ESSENCE

Chapter 35. THE SPIRITUALIZATION OF EXISTENCE

Chapter 36. GOD AND THE COSMIC DRAMA

VOLUME THREE Man and His Nature

FOURTH BOOK: SYSTEMATICS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

PART FOURTEEN: SYSTEMS

Chapter 37. THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD

Chapter 38. VALUES

PART FIFTEEN: SYSTEMATICS AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Chapter 39. ANTHROPOLOGY

Chapter 40. THE HUMAN LIFE CYCLE

Chapter 41. HUMAN SOCIETIES

VOLUME FOUR History

FIFTH BOOK: TIME AND MIND

PART SIXTEEN: PROLEGOMENON TO HISTORY

Chapter 42. THE WAR WITH TIME

Chapter 43. THE STRUCTURE OF HISTORY

PART SEVENTEEN: HISTORY AS REALIZATION

Chapter 44. THE HISTORY OF LIFE ON THE EARTH

Chapter 45. THE ADVENT OF MIND

Chapter 46. THE AWAKENING OF MIND

Chapter 47. THE CREATIVE MIND

Chapter 48. MIND AND LOVE

Chapter 49. MIND AND SOUL

Chapter 50. THE NEXT AGE OF MIND

