

The Application Of The Numinous Way

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Preface

The following texts explain and to a certain degree extend in a practical manner the weltanschauung known both as 'the numinous way of pathei-mathos' and as 'the philosophy of pathei-mathos'; a weltanschauung somewhat haphazardly described in the essays in the book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. [1]

The texts included here are:

1. *Summary Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*.

§ Physis And Being

§ The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis

§ Glossary Of Terms

§ Appendix: Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

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2. *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*.

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise; with the term numinous denoting "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power," with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. The wider meaning results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

3. *Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos: Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos*

It is my contention that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws.

4. *A Vexatious Question*.

In considering the 'numinous way of pathei-mathos' a somewhat vexatious question, which was briefly touched upon in a May 2025 interview, is in regard to following what one's empathy and pathei-mathos (one's conscience) suggest in relation to what some authority in a nation-State has suggested we do, or even in law has demanded we should not do, such as the edicts during a certain period of English history which forbade performance of the Catholic Mass and the

publication and distribution of items in support of Catholicism.

5. *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering.*

Since the publication of my short 2023 essay *Weltschmerz And The Conflict In Gaza*, a philosophical question I have once again considered is the nature of resistance, retaliation, and armed conflict, given the number of civilian deaths resulting from the use, by the professional military forces of one State-entity, of modern and advanced weaponry, supplied by other State-entities, against what the government of that State-entity, and their allies, have declared to be an armed terrorist group albeit one that is quite small and poorly-armed in comparison to the attacking professional military forces.

Since an analytical consideration of this question of necessity involves a lengthy often abstruse digression about aspects of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, some may regard this essay as replete with "inscrutably dense arguments" although and hopefully a few others will see such a framing as placing such a recent conflict into a necessary and wider perspective and thus far beyond politics and religiosity.

6. *Notes On War, Suffering, And Personal Judgement.*

In my 2024 essay *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering* the vexatious question of a recent, and as of the date of writing ongoing, armed conflict was considered in a philosophical context of denotata and in particular in regard to the manufactured category named 'the nation-State'.

7. *Individual Judgement, Authority, And Governance.*

Certain current (2025) events caused me, as an observer, to again consider some philosophical and ethical questions regarding governance and authority. Questions which I attempted to answer in writings such as *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, and *Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos*.

8. Appendix: One Perceivration.

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [2] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words in that *Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*.

§ Preface.

§ On Translating Ancient Greek.

§ A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos.

§ Appreciating Classical Literature.

§ An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture.

§ Concerning The Gospel Of John.

§ On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision.

§ Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum.

§ Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos.

§ Appendix I - The Concept Of Physis.

§ Appendix II - Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture.

David Myatt
October 2025

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(ii) Gratis pdf: <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-patheismathos-v7.pdf>

[2] *Corpus Hermeticum, Eight Tractates*. 2017. (i) Printed edition: ISBN 978-1976452369

(ii) Gratis pdf: included (pp.2-191) in <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/dwm-hermetica.pdf>

Summary Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

§ Physis And Being

§ The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis

§ Glossary Of Terms

§ Appendix: Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α

Physis And Being

The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos is based on four principles: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

In respect of the term numinous, it

"derives from the classical Latin numen and denotes 'a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power' with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify 'of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual.'

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into something supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi." *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022

In respect of empathy and pathei-mathos, they

"incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined

according to various masculine criteria – deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy – but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions – ancient and modern – usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and *pathei-mathos* as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and *pathei-mathos*, however, wordlessly – sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites – uncover *physis*: our *physis*, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which *physis*, howsoever presented – in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being – is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a *meson* – μέσον [9] – with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not – as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam – a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of *physis*) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion – our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings – also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of *pathei-mathos*. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing – unfolding, evolving – in a manner dependant on our *physis* and on how our *physis* is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of *physis*: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive *mesons*. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being – the cosmic order, the κόσμος – itself [12] with the balance, the *meson*, that empathy and *pathei-mathos* incline us toward living presented in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate *physis* or through *pathei-mathos* or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how such a philosophy based on empathy and *pathei-mathos* might, in one way, be presented in a practical manner in the world.

David Myatt
2019

This essay is a revised and edited version of a reply sent to an academic
who enquired about the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*

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Notes

[1] I use the term physis – φύσις – ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the ‘natural’ and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I generally use the term denotatum – from the Latin denotare – not only as meaning “to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted,” but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of pathei-mathos the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal ‘form’ of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in Kratylus 389d Plato has Socrates talk about ‘true, ideal’ naming (denotatum) – βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκείνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of “the state” because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured ‘things’, has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] ‘Reality’ in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of physis) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the physis of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the ‘essence’ of something – as for example Plato’s ἰδέα/εἶδος – but instead the physis of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἣ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of “what is real” – τῶν ὄντων – cf. the Poemandres tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use the term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean “having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence.”

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive – as a changeament – was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity – the chief of the gods – capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes

"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or

drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath – but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis

Exordium

What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious.

Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings.

Indeed, the more I reflect upon my (perhaps pretentiously entitled) 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' the more I reminded of so many things, such as (i) what I intuitively (and possibly incorrectly) understood nearly half a century ago about Taoism when I lived in the Far East and was taught that ancient philosophy by someone who was also trying to instruct me in a particular Martial Art, and (ii) what I as a Catholic monk felt "singing Gregorian chant in choir and which singing often connected me to what JS Bach so often so well expressed by his music; that is, connected me to what – in essence – Christianity (the allegory of the life and crucifixion of Christ) and especially monasticism manifested: an intimation of some-thing sacred causing us to know beyond words what 'the good' really means, and which knowing touches us if only for an instant with a very personal humility and compassion", and (iii) what I learnt from "my first few years as a Muslim, before I adhered to a harsh interpretation of Islam; a learning from being invited into the homes of Muslim families; sharing meals with them; praying with them; learning Muslim Adab; attending Namaz at my local Mosque, and feeling - understanding - what their faith meant to them and what Islam really meant, and manifested, as a practical way of living", and (iv) of what I discovered from several years, as a teenager, at first in the Far East and then in England, of practising Hatha Yoga according to the Pradipika and Patanjali, and (v) of what I intuited regarding Buddhism from over a year of zazen (some in a zendo) and from months of discussions with Dom Aelred Graham who had lived in a Zen monastery in Japan, and (vi) what I so painfully, so personally, discovered via my own pathei-mathos.

As a weltanschauung derived from a personal pathei-mathos, my 'philosophy/way of pathei-mathos' is therefore subject to revision. Thus this essay summarising my weltanschauung includes a few (2013-2014) slight revisions - mentioned, or briefly described, in some of my more recent effusions - of what was expressed in previous works of mine such as *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* [1] and *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*. [2]

[1] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[2] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

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The Way Of Pathei-Mathos

1. Ontology

The ontology is of causal and acausal being, with (i) causal being as revealed by phainómenon, by the five Aristotelian essentials and thus by science with its observations and theories and principle of 'verifiability', and (ii) acausal being as revealed by συμπάθεια - by the acausal knowing (of living beings) derived from faculty of empathy [1] - and thus of the distinction between the 'time' (the change) of living-beings and the 'time' described via the measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of 'things' [2].

2. Epistemology

a. The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

b. Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and which empathic knowing thus cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social.

c. Describing a human, and world-wide and ancestral, 'culture of pathei-mathos' [3], and which culture of pathei-mathos could form part of Studia Humanitatis and thus of that education that enables we human beings to better understand our own φύσις [4].

3. Ethics

a. Of personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [5].

b. Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it is only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos.

4. One fallible, personal, answer regarding the question of human existence.

Of understanding ourselves in that supra-personal, and cosmic, perspective that empathy, honour, and pathei-mathos - and thus an awareness of the numinous and of the acausal - incline us toward, and which understanding is: (i) of ourselves as a finite, fragile, causal, viatorial, microcosmic, affective effluvium [6] of Life (ψυχή) and thus connected to all other living beings, human, terran, and non-terran, and (ii) of there being no supra-personal goal to strive toward because all supra-personal goals are and have been just posited - assumed, abstracted - goals derived from the illusion of ipseity, and/or from some illusive abstraction, and/or from that misapprehension of our φύσις that arises from a lack of empathy, honour, and pathei-mathos.

For a living in the moment, in a balanced - an empathic, honourable - way, presences our φύσις as conscious beings capable of discovering and understanding and living in accord with our connexion to other life; which understanding inclines us to avoid the hubris that causes or contributes to the suffering of other life, with such avoidance a personal choice not because it is conceived as a path toward some posited thing or goal - such as nirvana or Jannah or Heaven or after-life - and not because we might be rewarded by God, by the gods, or by some supra-personal divinity, but rather because it manifests the reality, the truth - the meaning - of our being. The truth that (i) we are (or we are capable of being) one affective consciously-aware connexion to other life possessed of the capacity to cause suffering/harm or not to cause suffering/harm, and (ii) we as an individual are but one viator manifesting the change - the being, the φύσις - of the Cosmos/mundus toward (a) a conscious awareness (an aiding of ψυχή), or (b) stasis, or (c) as a contributor toward a decline, toward a loss of ψυχή.

Thus, there is a perceivance of our φύσις; of us as - and not separate from - the Cosmos: a knowledge of ourselves as the Cosmos presenced (embodied, incarnated) in a particular time and place and in a particular way. Of how we affect or can affect other effluvia, other living beings, in either a harmful or a non-harming manner. An apprehension,

that is, of the genesis of suffering and of how we, as human beings possessed of the faculties of reason, of honour, and of empathy, have the ability to cease to harm other living beings. Furthermore, and in respect of the genesis of suffering, this particular perceivration provides an important insight about ourselves, as conscious beings; which insight is of the division we mistakenly but understandably make, and have made, consciously or unconsciously, between our own being - our ipseity - and that of other living beings, whereas such a distinction is only an illusion - appearance, hubris, a manufactured abstraction - and the genesis of such suffering as we have inflicted for millennia, and continue to inflict, on other life, human and otherwise.

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Notes

[1] Refer to: (i) *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary* (Third Edition, 2012), and (ii) *Towards Understanding The Acausal*, 2011.

[2] Refer to *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*, 2012.

[3] The culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries.

[4] Refer to *Education and The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, 2014.

[5] By 'extreme' is meant 'to be harsh', unbalanced, intolerant, prejudiced, hubriatic.

[6] As mentioned elsewhere, I now prefer the term effluvium, in preference to emanation, in order to try and avoid any potential misunderstanding. For although I have previously used the term 'emanation' in my philosophy of pathei-mathos as a synonym of effluvium, 'emanation' is often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be God or some aspect of a divinity. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes the perceivration: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' - we mortals - and some-thing else, be this some-thing else God, a divinity, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form.

Glossary

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify /distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value /identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization – a concept – deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin benignitatem, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from com, meaning together-with, combined with pati, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin passiō. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are compassivity and benignity.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Denotatum

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowning/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκα - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκα from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκα thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπάθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an

appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἦ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour... [My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth

As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation

and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is

doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

[1] Refer to the Appendix: Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

[2] πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a)

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἁρμονία, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

σωφρονεῖν

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὑβρις

ὑβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement – σωφρονεῖν – and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance – is contrary to ἁρμονίη [harmony] – and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὑβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαίμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαίμόνων.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὑβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἁρμονίη.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

Appendix

Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

Text

ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Translation

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changelements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changelement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

Commentary And Notes

physis. φύσις. A transliteration, since (i) this is a fundamental philosophical principle/term that requires contextual interpretation, and (ii) the English words 'nature' and Nature not only do not adequately describe this principle but also lead to and have led to certain misunderstandings of Aristotle in particular and of classical Greek culture in general.

quidditas. οὐσία. Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word 'quiddity' - is more appropriate here than 'essence', given the metaphysical (ontological) context and given that 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical connotations. An interesting alternative would be the scholastic term haecceity. As with physis, quidditas is a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation.

changelement inherent. The expression ἀρχὴν κινήσεως is crucial to understanding what Aristotle means in respect of physis. In regard to κίνησις, since Aristotle here does not mean 'motion' or 'movement' in the sense of Newtonian physics (with its causal concepts of force, mass, velocity, kinetic energy), and since such physical movement is what the English words 'motion' and 'movement' now most usually denote, then alternatives must be found. Hence the translation 'changelement'.

For what Aristotle is describing here is 'change', as for example in the natural development, the unfolding, the growth, of some-thing living that occurs because it is living; because it is possessed of Life and which Life is the ἀρχή of the changelement, the 'original being' (the φύσις) from whence being-becomes to be often perceived and classified by us in orderly ways.

What is described is an a-causal change, of being-becoming - of being unfolding - and thus fulfilling the potentiality of being within it. Hence why here Aristotle writes ἀρχὴν κινήσεως, which describes the potential changelement inherent in certain beings. ¹ That is, the a-causal origin of beings-becoming, or having become, and which beings (having changed, developed, unfolded) we then perceive and classify in orderly ways ², such as by shape or usefulness to us, or by a notion such as causality: in terms of physical- 'movement'. Which is why, in Aristotle, there is a relation between φύσις, μορφή, and εἶδος - εἶδος in the sense of 'perceiveration' and not, as in Plato, denoting an abstract 'form' or an 'ideal' - διὸ καὶ ὅσα φύσει ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται, ἤδη ὑπάρχοντος ἐξ οὗ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι ἢ εἶναι, οὕτω φαμέν τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν ἔαν μὴ ἔχη τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν μορφήν.

Thus φύσις is what is a-causal in beings and which acausality is the origin of the 'natural' order that unfolds because of the potentiality of being to become, to presence in the causal, whence to be perceived by us in various orderly arrangements and/or arranged in terms of usefulness, and which arrangements/usefulness include τὸ καλόν - and thus schemata, τάξις ³ - and ἀρετή.

substantia. ὕλη. I have chosen to use the etymon of the English word 'substance' - qv. substantia in Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* - to again (i) emphasize the need for contextual interpretation in respect of a specific philosophical term, and (ii) to avoid whatever misunderstandings may arise from the modern (non-ontological) connotations of words such as 'matter' and 'substance'.

as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. The sense of γένεσις here implies a 'coming-into-being' rather than just 'generation', just as φύω implies a being 'burgeoning' - unfolding, revealing itself (its physis) - rather than just 'growing'.

the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is. The Greek word ἐντελεχεία is compounded from ἐν ελεῖ ἔχει and the sense here - in relation to ἐνυπάρχουσα - seems to be twofold: of a being as an unchanged being, and of what a being has become (or is becoming) as a result of a change, for both types of being actually exist, are real. One exists as a being as it is and has remained, and one exists as the being it has become (or is in the process of becoming) through the potential for change inherent within it. Thus, for Aristotle, physis denotes the being of both types of being.

ooo

[1] In respect of ἀρχὴ as implying what is primarily inherent, qv. 1012b-1013a.

[2] As Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Sciendum est autem, quod principium et causa licet sint idem subiecto, differunt tamen ratione. Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati." *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, liber 5, lectio 1, n 3.

[3] Regarding 1078a, τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον (the most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy), my view - given the context - is that τάξις here is best translated as "schemata", rather than "order" or "arrangement" both of which are vague, open to mis-interpretation, and unrelated to the context, which context is mathematical beauty. Similarly, ὀρίζω (to me) suggests consonancy, echoing as that (now somewhat obscure) English word does both by its use by, among others, Shakespeare (Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2, 286) and also by its relation to the almost 'mathematical beauty' of some music (as evident for example in the counterpoint of JS Bach).

Furthermore, just because the Greek has συμμετρία it does not necessarily follow that the English word 'symmetry' is an appropriate translation, considering how the word symmetry is now used and has been used, in the West for many centuries, and especially in relation to art (in terms, for example, of objects and the human body).

Given that Aristotle in 1078a is referring to geometry in particular and mathematics in general, then an appropriate translation is 'harmony' - as in "a collation of representative signs or marks, so arranged that they exhibit their agreement and account for their discrepancies or errors." A harmony, in other words, that is most evident (as I mentioned in my essay) in Euclid's Elements, as schemata and consonancy are therein evident, most of the contents (theorems) of which book - deriving from people such as Pythagoras - were known to Aristotle.

Thus, a translation such as "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness" can in my opinion lead to projecting onto Aristotle what he may not necessarily have meant; and projecting onto in respect of how we now, over two thousand years after Aristotle, understand and use such common English terms. Hence, also, why I sometimes use obscure English words (which may suggest a relevant meaning) or transliterations (as in physis).

David Myatt
March 2015

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The Numinous And Denotata

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise.

As I noted in my 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* [1], the term numinous derives from the classical Latin *numen* and denotes "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, [2] or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

For such extrapolation by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [3]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [5]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [6]

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12. HERAKLEITOS

80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλε-
μον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα
κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών?].

Thus δίκη is the natural balance of conflicting opposites and thus an ancestral way of reconciliation or of resolving conflict, often misunderstood as a 'unity of opposites' with a dialectic of opposites with its inherent causality thus mistakenly considered a means to understanding, development and a believed in concept of necessary change.

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood:

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [7]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [8]

Which expresses the causality inherent in the beings - existents, ἰδέα/εἶδος - that denotata brings-into-being. They are

unbalanced, and since they are causal entities will sooner or later pass away even though in their living through the thoughts and actions of mortals they usually manifest and bring-into-being discord: hence why Heraclitus wrote εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν.

This is in contrast to the individual wordless-knowing that empathy brings-into-being, and explains the fundamental flaw of Plato's ἔλεγχος which led for example to him having Protagoras saying that the poet Simonides does not speak 'correctly', οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγει [9] even though poetry could possibly be - as an intimation of the numinous - an attempt to wordfully presence what causal abstractions conceal, with the attempt by Socrates to dispute such an assertion by Protagoras seeming to fail. [10]

Which is perhaps why Aristotle (Metaphysics, 982β) quoted a saying attributed to Simonides: θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας which follows ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι,

It is hard to be a purely noble person [...] a god alone has that privilege [11]

With the context of Aristotle's quotation his statement,

ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περὶ τινὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δῆλον. Metaphysics, 982α

It is evident that sapientia is a knowing of axioms and of sources [12]

and because

ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδέχεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, οὔτε τῆς τοιαύτης ἄλλην χρὴ νομίζειν τιμιωτέραν. ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη: τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστα ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, κἂν εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Metaphysics, 983α

it is not possible for the divine to be envious; indeed, as the maxim goes: songsters make many a false claim; nor should any other [epistēmê] be considered the more honourable, for it is divine because honourable in just two ways: if epistēmê is of the divinity or of the divine. [13]

Which returns us to whether some poetry such as the lyric attributed to Simonides as preserved by Plato can, for we mortals, be an intimation of the numinous, as some music - such as the counterpoint of JS Bach - is believed by many musicians and others to be.

If we presume to substitute 'the numinous' for 'the divine' and for 'the divinity' (the theos) then an epistēmê is τίμιος - honourable, precious, worthy, prized - if it is of, if it presences, the numinous; and it is interesting to note that, well over a thousand years after Aristotle, τίμιος in the Greek Orthodox tradition implies 'holy' as in Τίμιος Σταυρός, the Holy Cross.

In addition, as Aristotle - citing an ancient maxim - writes: παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, 'songsters make many a false claim', and that because of both the nature of denotata and our physis as human beings.

Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis

The reality of empathy in relation to the numinous is two-fold - jumelle, as is our physis as human beings according to the Corpus Hermeticism - because although a means to appreciate, to discover, to feel, to know, the numinous without the need for mythoi, denotata and the associated exegesis, dialectic and discord, it is unappreciated, underdeveloped.

° Empathy is unappreciated, because of our physis: as is explained using Greek mythoi and in terms of the mystic hermetic tradition, in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

"distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one [...] This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day." [14]

This is further explained, again using Greek mythoi and in terms of the hermetic tradition, in tractate XI, which returns us to Aristotelian honour and takes us to where σοφία - qv. the quotation from Metaphysics, 982α above - is personified and explained as manifesting the noble, the beautiful, good fortune (εὐδαιμονία), arête, and Aion:

"The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on

Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine [...]

Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos." [15]

The essence of which, beyond mythoi, is (i) that our physis is both "male-and-female since of a male-and-female father" and (ii) that the numinous can be apprehended, presenced, by and through "the noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête and Aion," with Aion understood as the eikon (εἰκὼν) of the Kosmos [16] and - qv. Tractate XI, 2-4 - the cause of changement coming-into-being on Earth and thus of what is changeable and decayable and thus dies.

Which changement coming-into-being, and its change and eventual decay applies, in the perspective of Aeons - of millennia - to denotata and what existents, such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions, denotata has brought-into-being.

° Empathy is underdeveloped because it seems that for millennia we mortals - or more specifically, perhaps a majority of the males of our species - have neglected the reality of our physis being jumelle: both male-and-female, both masculous and muliebral, with such muliebral physis the geneture of empathy. [18] As described in terms of Greek mythoi and the hermetic tradition in the Pœmandres Tractate in relation to the seven spheres:

"Those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artiselements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death." [19]

The masculous is evident in patriarchy, in patriarchal religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam; in denotata, in dialectical confrontation including Plato's ἔλεγχος, as well as evident in the desire, the masculous need, for competition and for armed and personal conflict. The muliebral is evident in personal virtues such as honour, benignitas, empathy, and wordless personal methodologies such as the epistêmê that is mystical contemplation.

The neglect of empathy is understandable since the masculous - as manifest for example in patriarchy, patriarchal religions, and denotata, codified as denotata has been in the ἰδέα and ideal of Empires and nation-States - has dominated mortal life for millennia to the detriment of the muliebral.

The Uncertitude Of Knowing

Empathy, with its personal horizon, is or can be the geneture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geneture of that certitude of individual knowing that infuses codified denotata such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions.

Thus, in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words.

Thus, while some mythoi Greek or otherwise, some mystical traditions ancient or otherwise, some poetry and some metaphysical speculations Greek or otherwise, can or may provide some insights into our physis, their wordfull expression or expressions are subject or have been subjected to exegesis, just as written expressions of religious-type revelations always are; with such exegesis more often than not the geniture of a certitude or certitudes of knowing.

Which returns us to the personal wordless knowing of empathy and its discoverable embedded uncertainty of knowing, with personal virtues such as honour and benignitas one means - an ancient epistêmê - to try to live according to such a wordless knowing, with personal honour a melding, a hermetic ἐναντιοδρομία, of masculine and muliebral thus returning us to the physis that was cleaved asunder and which in others is still being cleaved asunder.

According to an ancient saying attributed to Heraclitus which may contain a fallible intimation of this and possibly was one of first written intimations of it:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by geniture is appropriately apportioned with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

David Myatt
17.iii.22
v.3

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[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy>

[2] The terms ἰδέα/εἶδος refer to Plato's postulation of what has been termed 'forms' - of a type of metaphysical existent such as an 'idea' - with ἰδέα used for both singular and plural instances, and εἶδος (singular) often used by Plato instead, as for instance at Phaedo 103ε, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον.

In regard to the use of εἶδος and the postulation, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1078β, 14-15, συνέβη δ' ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν δόξα τοῖς εἰποῦσι διὰ τὸ πεισθῆναι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῖς Ἡρακλειτείοις λόγοις ὡς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰὲν ῥεόντων, ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τῶν ῥεόντων ἐπιστήμην.

[3] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[4] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[5] Fragment B80.

[6] I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

[7] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[8] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

[9] Protagoras, 339b

[10] Relevant quotations from Simonides are at 339β, 339ξ and the poem by Simonides that Plato preserved is, in the version by J. Aars, *Das Gedicht des Simonides in Platons Protagoras*, 1888,

Ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν,
χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον.
<...>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,
καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας· ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλῃ.
πράξας μὲν εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς <τις>,
καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι, τοὺς κε θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι δυνατὸν
διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄπρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·
ἐπὶ δ' ὕμιν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδῃ
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.
<...>
<οὐκ εἰμ' ἐγὼ φιλόμωμος> ἔξαρχεῖ γ' ἐμοί,
ὃς ἂν ἦ κακὸς μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰδώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγιῃς ἀνὴρ, οὐδὲ μὴ μιν ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα·
πάντα τοι καλά, τοῖσί τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται.

The more recent arrangement and reconstruction cited as PMG 242 is somewhat different:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι
χαλεπὸν χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ
τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·
<..>
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-
ρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ

ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,
ὃν ἂν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλῃ·
πράξας μὲν γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς [
[ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὲ καὶ ἄριστοί εἰσιν
[οὓς ἂν οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.]

τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι
δυνατὸν διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄ-
πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι

καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·
ἐπὶ θ' ὕμιν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδῃ
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκαι
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.
<...>
[οὐκ εἰμὶ φιλόσογος, ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγ' ἔξαρχεῖ
ὃς ἂν μὴ κακὸς ἦ] μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰ-
δώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,
ὕγιῃς ἀνὴρ· οὐ τμὴν† ἐγὼ
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων
ἀπείρων γενέθλα.
πάντα τοι καλά, τοῖσιν
τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται

DL Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Cambridge University Press, 1962

Such a reconstruction introduces the question of exegesis of not only texts but of such elements as grammar and how the personal revealing that is the wordless-knowing of empathy compares to the supra-personal wordful revealing that

can be or has been deduced from written texts, spoken words or methods such as Plato's ἔλεγχος.

[11] Socrates, in Protagoras, does not associate ἀληθής with ἀγαθός but with χαλεπός, which again introduces the question as to whether ἔλεγχος is a guide to the revealing that is ἀλήθεια and thus to understanding our φύσις as human beings.

[12] In respect of αἵτιος, here the term 'sources' is apt since 'cause' can impose a particular interpretation on the text, as in the causality of 'cause and effect'.

In respect of σοφία, the Latin sapientia is apposite, as in my translation of Tractates I and XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [*Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369] because in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in Tractates I and XIII sapientia requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation.

[13] Regarding my translation:

i) ἐπιστήμη: epistēmê - implying skill or experience, especially in a profession or type of work or in using a methodology - rather than 'science' or 'knowledge', since 'science' has too many modern connotations while 'knowledge' is somewhat vague. In respect of experience in general, qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1115: τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμῃ σύ μου προύχοις τάχ' ἄν που, "about this, your experience has the advantage over mine".

ii) αἰοιδός: songsters, not poets, qv. Hesiod, Theogony, 95 where it is associated with the Muses and Apollo:

ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος
95 ἄνδρες αἰοδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί,

iii) [epistēmê] is implied from the previous ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην.

iv) Honourable is an accepted translation of τίμιος, with the English word honour dating from around 1200 and derived from the Latin honorem (refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. An early use of the term occurs in a poem in Middle English by John Gower dating from c. 1393 which references the Greek warrior Achilles:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 (The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901, edited by G.C Macaulay)

[14] Tractate I, 15-16. From my commentary on that tractate:

jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here [...]

deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

[...]

a mysterium esoteric. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "a *mysterium*, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the *mystery* kept hidden until this very day"

[15] Tractate XI, 3-7

[16] In respect of *eikon*, as I wrote in my commentary on Tractate I (Pœmandres), 32:

The meaning and significance of [εἰκὼν] are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as *eikons*, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the *eikon* of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all *physis* - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an *eikon* of) *theos*. That is, the *physis* of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of *theos* but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize *theos*, to be in communion with *theos*, to return to *theos*, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (*anados*) through the seven spheres."

[17] The masculous and the muliebral are outlined in my 2019 essay *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/>.

[18] The unusual English word *geniture* expresses the essence of γένεσις: that which or those whom have or derive their being (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. It also avoids comparisons with the Biblical use of the English 'genesis'.

[19] Tractate I, 18-19.

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A Vexatious Question

In considering the 'numinous way of pathei-mathos' a somewhat vexatious question, which was briefly touched upon in a May 2025 interview ¹, is in regard to following what one's empathy and pathei-mathos (one's conscience) suggest in relation to what some authority in a nation-State has suggested we do, or even in law has demanded we should not do, such as the edicts during a certain period of English history which forbade performance of the Catholic Mass and the publication and distribution of items in support of Catholicism.

The vexatious question: is what our empathy and/or our pathei-mathos suggest we do always by its nature a private matter, or could it sometimes be a public matter suggestive of some kind of public statement or activity? A corollary being whether all, or only some, types of public statement or activity are political.

My own answer, derived from my pathei-mathos and my understanding of what is political ² suggests that it is a private matter, a 'letting-be' of what is presenced at a particular causal Time in the particular society in which we live because we feel or we have discovered that all such societies, as the particular governance of a particular society, will change because their very existence, their physis, is causal, as are the causal abstractions (the ideas, ideals, the -isms and the -ologies) all societies are derived from and as are the mortals who believe, or who follow, or who seek to presence such abstractions, even when before their fated dying they are changed, reformed, overthrown, by such causal mechanisms as changes in governance, civil disobedience, revolution, invasion, war and armed occupation.

My answer is only my fallible answer, and being fallible, causal, and causally presenced, possesses no authority beyond that of guiding me. It has guided me to effectively 'withdraw from society'; to not interfere in any public manner save for tellurian missives such as this in the slim hope of someone or some few, somewhere, at some causal moment, accessing them and, in the manner of an ancient hermetic ἄνοδος, ³ possibly discovering in them an intimation of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς), thus possibly leading, in a small corner of our planet, to the alleviation of some of the deaths, some of the destruction, some of the suffering, human and otherwise, that impersonal authority and ideas, ideals, -isms, -ologies, and perhaps all denotata, cause and have caused for millennia.

As noted in the Corpus Hermeticum:

σοφία νοερὰ ἐν σιγῇ καὶ ἡ σπορὰ τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἀγαθόν
noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble ⁴

David Myatt
July 2025

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1. *Dialogue With An Iconoclast*, https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/dialogue_with_an_iconoclast.pdf

I.S. Does this attitude of 'letting-be' extend to personally ignoring or going against a law or laws of some nation?

DM: An interesting question, and it can only be a matter of personal conscience as it was for those who, for example, in the First World War, opted to be 'conscientious objectors'.

2. By 'political' I mean

"both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some

ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology."

3. The term generally implies the journey, or the quest, toward wisdom with wisdom understood as a balanced, rational, personal judgement and a particular knowledge of a paganus kind concerning living beings, human nature, Nature, the Cosmic Order (κόσμος) and our connexion to such manifestations of the μυνάς, that is, our connexion to 'Being' as Being is understood in the metaphysical sense.

As described in my commentary on v.24 of Tractate I of the Corpus Hermeticum,

ἄνοδος

A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress /journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum, Eight Tractates*. Translation and Commentary.

(i) Printed version: ISBN-13 978-1976452369

(ii) Gratis pdf: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

4. v.2, Tractate XIII.

As described in my commentary on that verse:

noetic sapientia. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term noetic sapientia to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin sapientia in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes.

As in the Poemandres tractate sapientia (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant

philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceivization - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, noetic sapientia implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

Corpus Hermeticum, Eight Tractates. op.cit

Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos

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Précis

It is my contention that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', [1] or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws.

Defining Causal Abstractions

As described in the Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos, an abstraction is

"a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past." [1]

In philosophical terms, a causal abstraction is an ideation, an idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος), which is explained and/or defined by words and terms (denotata) and which invariably is used to form or describe a particular category of 'things'. [2] Thus a particular living tree is assigned to the category Oak, or a sub-category thereof, such as a Holm Oak, and which category is believed to be a means to 'know' and 'understand' that particular living being. Hence, that particular living tree is not considered to be an individual, separate, living entity with its own 'being' but is instead treated as one of a 'particular kind' and thus judged and treated according to what, at a particular time, is considered to be appropriate for the particular category it has been assigned to. This, in effect, is a stereotyping of a living, individual entity; and a stereotyping almost completely ignored in modern societies abrogating as those societies do certain ancestral, and world-wide, ancestral traditions where such a living entity was considered, even respected, as a living, individual entity; as for example in the ancient tradition in certain Britannic lands of venerating a particular Oak or a particular woodland.

In both ancient and modern times causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been and are used to categorize human beings, as for example in regard to the supra-personal abstraction, the entity, termed 'the nation-State' where individual human beings and families are considered to be, or not to be, 'citizens' of that entity and often treated accordingly, with citizens having certain privileges and freedoms often denied to non-citizens.

More recently, causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been deployed to describe individual human beings and their behaviour both personal and social. Thus, a human being categorized, and judged, by whomsoever for whatever reason, as 'depressive' is treated as the society of the time requires such a category to be treated, which is often by means of pharmaceutical medication and/or by a prescribed regime of therapy.

In another, perhaps more relevant example which I personally have some practical experience of, human beings are often categorized, and judged, by the political beliefs they publicly adhere to, or may be alleged to adhere to, at a particular time of their lives, especially if their political views do not align with, or contradict, the zeitgeist of the society of their time. Thus, in my own case, the judgement is "once a nazi always a nazi" and that such nazis should "never be forgiven" and treated according to whatever persecutorial and dehumanizing treatment the judgemental

ones deem such "nazis" deserve.

For such dehumanizing, or more precisely such hubriatic, impersonal, judgment and consequential treatment, is implicit in applying abstract, causal, abstractions to individual living beings, human and otherwise.

That this is not understood in the societies of our time, except by a few, is in my opinion somewhat indicative of how prevalent hubris still is among us.

Hence, despite our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos [3] we do not seem to have learned from what others tried to explain to us:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [4]

The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos

The axioms are:

(i) That human beings possess a still mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain wordless knowledge concerning or awareness of the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.

This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [5], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.

ii) That πάθει μάθος, a personal learning from adversity, from difficult, or harsh, or life threatening experiences, provides us or can provide us, like empathy, with a particular wordless knowledge concerning, or an awareness of, the φύσις (physis) of ourselves, of other human beings and of other living beings.

Thus, according to the numinous way of pathei-mathos it is personal empathy and pathei-mathos which enable us to circumvent causal abstractions because what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [6]

For a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos betakes us or can betake us as individuals beyond the acceptance of a supra-personal authority, and thus beyond the demand by some supra-personal authority that we individuals accept or have to accepted such a supra-personal authority, and which authority, in the Western world was described in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), as for example in his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; and with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio.

Modern nation-States have simply replaced God as the supreme authority with Prime Ministers, Presidents, and those who are described as elected "representatives of the people", or in case of some nation-States with some individual or individuals or some unelected representatives who or which have assumed authority by means such as a coup d'état or similar means, but all of whom expect the people they rule to obey whatever decisions or laws or diktats they make. Both types if necessary enforce their authority by means such as Courts of Law or through the use of civil or military organizations such as the Police and the armed forces, all of who or all of which accept and indeed are based upon a supra-personal chain-of-command with statutory laws made by some government (past and present) or imposed by some assumed authority regarded as necessary for what they deem to be the 'correct' functioning of society.

Furthermore, in practical terms a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos

"means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our [human] history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are 'our' enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies." [7]

Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

Since the numinous way of pathei-mathos is based on personal empathy and personal pathei-mathos which develop an appreciation of the limitation, the infortunity, of words, and of the categories derived from them, and thus engenders in an individual a knowing of the limited nature of their understanding and of their fallibility, the numinous way of pathei-mathos is apolitical since politics is derived from and dependant on words, spoken and written, and on supra-personal often ideological categories as well as on supra-personal organizations or movements with a particular agenda or particular aims.

For an appreciation of the infortunity of words is a wordless-knowing, born of empathy and pathei-mathos, of the cycle of suffering; of how we humans continue to repeat the errors of the past caused as such errors often are by some suffering-causing causal abstractions championed by some supra-personal authority such as government or some President or Prime Minister or Caesar or Emperor or King or some tyrant or some religious potentate or preacher or political demagogue or political organization, urging us as individuals to go to war or partake in some invasion or crusade or armed conflict, or some campaign, or revolution, or whatever.

Thus it seems logical to suggest that if other individuals develop their own numinous weltanschauung it would be a personal and thus non-political one and, similar to the numinous way of pathei-mathos, involve a mystical living, a life-style choice, involving the individual and/or their partner or family if they have one; where the appellation 'mystical' suggests a personal intuitive insight about and a personal awareness of the nature of Reality, with Reality wordlessly known through their empathy and pathei-mathos.

There is also in the numinous way of pathei-mathos an appreciation of the fact that the nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris (ἔρις), and thus in a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἄξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [8]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [9]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [10]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

In addition,

"the meaning of the appellations inherent in causal abstraction can and does change over periods causal time through common usage and through the changes of interpretation (exegesis) wrought through political ideology, social change, and religious dogma and reforms. The interpretation of an appellation, a denotatum, in another language can also vary or distort the original meaning, a classic example being Hellenistic Greek words, occurring the Corpus Hermeticum, such as λόγος and νοῦς conventionally interpreted as 'word' and 'intellect/mind' neither of which interpretations are satisfactory.

What is important about all this is that empathy and pathei-mathos are directly personal and wordless perceiverations and experiences and therefore are not dependant on denotata, on any ἰδέα/εἶδος, and by the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos cannot be extrapolated beyond such a personal experiencing." [11]

[1] <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

[2] Philosophically, 'a thing' is an entity which exists independently of another 'thing', and which is a particular object of human perception. It is also or can be distinguishable from the word or the idea which attempts to describe it; that is, it is the actual 'being' behind or beyond such a causal apprehension or appellation.

[3] The culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as may be (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as may have (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) may be manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms such as certain films and documentaries.

This thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath; and also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos.

[4] Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218.

Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[5] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are:

- i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first Rules of Reasoning which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and aspects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials. Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

[6] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[7] *Persecution And War*, 2018. https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution_And_War.pdf

[8] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[9] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[10] Fragment B80.

[11] *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>

Reflections On Conflict And Suffering

Preamble

Since the publication of my short 2023 essay *Weltschmerz And The Conflict In Gaza* ¹ a philosophical question I have once again considered is the nature of resistance, retaliation, and armed conflict, given the number of civilian, Palestinian, deaths, resulting from the use, by the professional military forces of one State-entity of modern and advanced weaponry, supplied by other State-entities, against what the government of that State-entity, and their allies, have declared to be an armed terrorist group albeit one that is quite small and poorly-armed in comparison to the attacking professional military forces.

Since an analytical consideration of this question of necessity involves a lengthy often abstruse digression about aspects of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, some may regard this essay as replete with "inscrutably dense arguments" although and hopefully a few others will see such a framing as placing such a recent conflict into a necessary and wider perspective and thus far beyond politics and religiosity.

David Myatt
May 30th 2024



Three Related Issues

According to my weltanschauung (or way) of pathei-mathos ² the matter resolves into three related issues: (i) the question of suffering and what empathy and our human culture of pathei-mathos ³ inform us about suffering; (ii) the temporal nature of all human manufactured abstractions; and (iii) the question of authority.

In regard to authority, individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos inlines us to consider authority as personal because they not only engender a certain humility, a knowing or awareness of our past errors and mistakes and thus of our fallibility, but also because both have a 'local horizon' so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." ⁴

"In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are 'our' enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies." ⁵

In regard to suffering, the understanding is from what is individually known or intuited to be 'good' (honourable) and what is individually known or intuited to be 'bad' (dishonourable) both of which knowing and intuition result from empathy, from a personal pathei-mathos, and/or from a study or the culture of pathei-mathos; ⁶ with this knowing and intuition extending to all biological life on our planet be such life hominid or otherwise.

"For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections, all assumed or believed categories or categorizations. For empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between them and us – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life, of ψυχή, with our individuals self understood as just one fallible, fragile, microcosmic, mortal emanation of Life, and which emanation can affect other life in a good way or a bad way. In addition, empathy and pathei-mathos, provide us with the understanding that we human beings have the ability - the character - (or can develop the ability, the character) to understand and to restrain ourselves, to decide to do what is good and not do what is wrong. This ability of reason, this choice, and this ability to develop our character, are the genesis of culture and express our natural potential as human beings.

The numinous sympathy - συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy

provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy." ⁷

In regard to the temporal nature of all human manufactured abstractions, this understanding results from both our personal pathei-mathos, and the culture of pathei-mathos, which provides us with a supra-personal, 'cosmic perspective', of for example not only nations, Empires, war, conquest, revolutions, invasions but also of every idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος) and all -isms and -ologies. For every human manufactured construct, such as a nation-State, not only has a limited life-span but is also subject to change, to revisions, to ameliorations, reformation, and re-interpretation. Thus, in the example of a nation-State, the boundaries may change though war or invasion or conquest, as the peoples within the entity change though emigration and immigration and assimilation, and as the authority or authorities governing or ruling the entity can and do change over decades and centuries sometimes through internal revolution or invasion. A pertinent example being England before and after the Roman conquest, after the arrival of the Vikings and then after the Norman conquest followed centuries later by civil war and culminating in the immigration that occurred after the Second World War and which is continuing.

In regard to every idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος) and all -isms and -ologies, their change is inherent in the reality of them being dependent on denotatum or denotata which are by their physis the genesis of an opposite and hence of the resulting dialectic, of opposition. As I mentioned in *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, ⁸

[begin quotation]

the nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris [ἔρις], a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or developes an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. ^(a)

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. ^(b)

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> ^(c)

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born bydiscord. ^(d)

Notes:

(a) Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

(b) A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

(c) Fragment B80.

(d) I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on. [

[end quotation]

Discord And Denotata

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood. As I noted in *Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites*, ⁹

[begin quotation]

ἀρχὴ <...> τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἄπειρον <...>

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [Theophrastus/Simplicius]

My interpretation of meaning:

< [the] source ... of beings is the un-definitive ^a ... >

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment ^b to balance, ^c one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. ^d

Notes:

a. Because the beginning is fragmentary it is difficult to provide a satisfactory explanation of what is meant, although many explanations have been suggested over many centuries including the speculation that 'apeiron' is the first principle, the ἀρχή, of beings, with ἄπειρον almost invariably translated by words such as the boundless, infinity, the limit-less.

However, ἄπειρον is a privation of πεῖραρ, a lack of completion; a lack of a verdict; or, often overlooked, a lack of a means, a method, an instrument, to reach a particular conclusion or of a tool do a particular task, qv. Odyssey: 3.431-435, and my translation:

ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐποίπνουν. ἦλθε μὲν ἄρ βοῦς
ἐκ πεδίου, ἦλθον δὲ θοῆς παρὰ νηὸς εἵσης
Τηλεμάχου ἔταροι μεγαλήτορος, ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς
ὄπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκήϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,
ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' ἐυποίητόν τε πυράγρην,
οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν εἰργάζετο

Such were his words, and all of his sons occupied themselves with those things
So that an ox arrived from the fields; the comrades of the vigorous Telemachus
Arrived from their well-balanced ship; the goldsmith arrived bearing in his arms
Those bronze tools with which he accomplished his art:
A hammer, anvil and well-made fire-tongs
Which he used to work gold.

Hence my suggestion here that what Anaximander might have implied is that the source of beings is 'un-definitive', incapable of resolution because we do not possess the tools, such as words, to resolve it. Which explains why he goes on to contrast δίκη with ἀδικία, which balance and unbalance I explain below.

b. Payment as in a debt owed or because of some personal need or mistake, as in our relatively recent phrase 'debt of honour'. The debt may be to a person or persons or as in ancient times to a deity either in expiation or in the hope of avoiding a misfortune wrought by some deity, for example by the "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies" of the gods, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες.

The suggestion therefore might be that the offer of payment relates to those who, despite the fact that source of beings is 'un-definitive', having tried to define it and in the process constructed a dialectic of opposites, and thus brought conflict, realize their error. As Heraclitus noted:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ
χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

c. In respect of δίκη it here simply implies balance in contrast to the unbalance, the privation of balance, that is ἀδικία. The translations 'order' or justice or 'fitting' - like 'disorder' or injustice or 'unfitting' for ἀδικία - are too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' or justice or what is considered fitting in contrast to their assumed dialectical opposites.

d. In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' (in ancient times by a sundial; in later times by a mechanical clock) but 'the passing' of living or of events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

[end quotation]

Appellation, Abstractions, And Empathy

The meaning of the appellations inherent in causal abstraction can and does change over periods causal time through common usage ¹⁰ and through the changes of interpretation (exegesis) wrought through political ideology, social

change, and religious dogma and reforms. The interpretation of an appellation, a denotatum, in another language can also vary or distort the original meaning, a classic example being Hellenistic Greek words, occurring the Corpus Hermeticum, such as λόγος and νοῦς conventionally interpreted as 'word' and 'intellect/mind' neither of which interpretations are satisfactory. ¹¹

What is important about all this is that empathy and pathei-mathos are directly personal and wordless perceiverations and experiences and therefore are not dependant on denotata, on any ἰδέα/εἶδος, and by the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos cannot be extrapolated beyond such a personal experiencing. That is, they are mystical in the sense of being contemplative in providing not only a personal apprehension of the numinous but an awareness which transcends the temporal and the denotata used and which have been used to describe Reality understood as in tractate III:1 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἁπάντων ὧν

The numen of all beings is The Theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is The Theos, who is Perceiveration and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. ¹²

In respect of which I incline toward the view that The Theos (ὁ θεός) of this and several other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is not equivalent to the God of the Christian tradition and that to render both ὁ θεός and θεός of such tractates by the term God (a patriarchal male) is a mistake, especially as verse 9 of the Poemandres tractate states 'the theos' is both male-and-female:

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὧν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεός τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὧν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινας ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται.

The Theos, the perceiveration, male-and-female [ἀρρενόθηλυσ] being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiveration, an artisan, who - the theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

Which recalls the dispute voiced by the Alexandrian Christian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) regarding the theological difference, for instance in the Gospel of John, between ὁ θεός and θεός with the disputants who said there was a difference being denounced as heretics by the Church authorities of the time.

In The Real World

The societies of today are dependant on causal abstractions just as many ancient societies were, with abstractions used to classify individuals and judge individuals. Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by perhaps a majority in a community, as well as considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings were assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery gradually came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various criteria mostly deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

We have continued to manufacture causal abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, as in the abstraction denoted by the term nation-State and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, its perceived or declared enemies often in the form of another nation-State, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

In the real world, abstractions conceal our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and pathei-mathos as a guide to Reality and to living we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions, all of which are defined and/or explained by denotata and thus open to interpretation, involve a dialectic of opposites and all of which lead to or will lead to over durations of causal time to ἔρις, to discord. According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos following Hubris around rather than vice versa, with Eris thus considered the child of Polemos and Hubris. ¹³

In the matter of the abstraction that is the nation-State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the nation-State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have accepted the social norms of the society or societies that the State governs. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a

particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

A Philosophical Question Answered

The denotatum nation-State and the denotata of its - or of our - perceived or declared enemies often in the form of another nation-State but sometimes and latterly in the form of some organized group, is an example of ἔρις already existing or waiting to be presenced or agitated for often by propaganda.

Which is and was the case with the current conflict in Gaza. There is, as our human culture of pathei-mathos reveals, an 'us' and a 'them'; we, the vengeful or we the righteous representing what is 'good', and there are 'the others' who have wronged or harmed us or transgressed against us usually in some heinous way and who we often regard as 'evil'. There is or there will be killing, destruction, civilian casualties, suffering, and often an invasion, until the enemy has been declared defeated or has been subjugated.

In regard to armed resistance to an occupying power the same criteria apply for it is empathy and a personal pathei-mathos or a learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos that betake us as individuals away from this recurrent suffering-causing dialectic -which in our modern times is often manifest in political and ideological dogma or as in the conflict in Gaza underlying and seemingly opposed religious views - toward compassion, wu-wei, ¹⁴, and thus to what was described in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum as the renunciations involved in an ἄνοδος, the journey toward personal wisdom:

καὶ οὕτως ὁρμαῖ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρῃ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ πλούτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. ¹⁵

As described in tractate XIII,

ἔτοιμος ἐγενόμην καὶ ἀπηλλοτριώσα τὸ ἐν ἐμοὶ φρόνημα ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀπάτης

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world ¹⁶

This is indeed mystical in the sense of being contemplative and perhaps in withdrawing internally or externally from society, alone, with a partner, or with one's family. It is possibly, at the very least, a modern manifestation of The Beatitudes ¹⁷ and to personally act and to live with an awareness and appreciation of the numinous and thus with self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty and avoidance of hubris.

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Notes

1. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/dwm-gaza.pdf>

2. *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022. <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

The axioms of the Way are given in Appendix One.

3. The human culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by certain newer art-forms including certain films and documentaries. This culture recounts the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia.

4. *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

5. *Persecution And War*, 2018. https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution_And_War.pdf

6. In regard to 'good' and 'bad' as honour and dishonour, qv. *Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos in Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

7. *Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life in The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

8. *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

9. Included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

10. An obvious modern example is the English word 'gay' which originally, of persons, meant "disposed to joy and mirth; merry", or as in the Provençal phrase "gai saber" which referred to the art of poetry and was assimilated into English as "the gay science".

11. In regard to νοῦς as 'mind',

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Pœmandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [vide Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Pœmandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind? I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν
εἶναι τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

vv. 549-550

Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivance thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivance of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivance." [The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία]

Source:

Commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

12.

(i) Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious; cf. Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοντων ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence my interpretation as 'numen', instead of the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, given their modern connotations and common usage, express the original sense of the Greek.

(ii) By numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (and male) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

13. A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places. Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's folk and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect with the alternative being to transliterate it.

14. Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in the way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

15. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

16. From my commentary on that tractate:

separated from the world. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριόω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

distancing my ethos. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

treachery. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates, included in
Hermetica And Alchemy, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

17. The Greek text, and my translation, are included in Appendix Three.

Appendix One

Axioms Of The Way Of Pathei-Mathos

i) That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.

ii) This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [1], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.

iii) That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος [2] and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [3] and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.

iv) This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of enantiodromia [4] and reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή [5] to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [6] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονίη [7], manifest as ἁρμονίη (harmony) is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei [8] and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement) [9].

v) The development and use of empathy, the cultivation of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν, are thus a means, a way, whereby individuals can cease to cause suffering or cease to contribute to, or cease to aid, suffering.

vi) The reason as to why an individual might so seek to avoid causing suffering is the reason, the knowledge - the appreciation of the numinous - that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide.

vii) This appreciation of the numinous inclines or can incline an individual to living in a certain way and which way of life naturally inclines the individual toward developing, in a natural way - sans any methodology, praxis, theory, dogma, or faith - certain attributes of character, and which attributes of character include compassion, self-restraint, fairness, and a reasoned, a personal, judgement.

Footnotes

[1] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, expressed by Isaac Newton in his Principia, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance..... for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

[2] The sense of τύραννος is not exactly what our fairly modern term tyrant is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or some aim or a lust for power that they go far beyond the due, the accepted, bounds of behaviour and thus exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with. Thus do they, by their excess, by their disrespect for the customs of their ancestors, by their lack of reasoned, well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] offend the gods, and thus, to restore the balance, do the Ἐρινύες take revenge. For it is in the nature of the τύραννος that they forget, or they scorn, the truth, the ancient wisdom, that their lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες -

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6

[3] Heraclitus, fragment 80:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. <https://perceiverations.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/dwm-heraclitus-translations-notes.pdf>

In respect of the modern error of ὕβρις that is extremism, an error manifest in extremists, my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious.

[4] See *The Change of Enantiodromia*, which is included here as Appendix Two.

[5] The meaning here of ψυχή is derived from the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, etcetera, and implies Life qua being. Or, expressed another way, living beings are emanations of, and thus manifest, ψυχή. This sense of ψυχή is beautifully expressed in a, in my view, rather mis-understood fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ψυχῇσι θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. Fragment 36

Where the water begins our living ends and where earth begins water ends, and yet earth nurtures water and from that water, Life.

[6] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to *The Principle of Δίκη*.

[7] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[8] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling,

a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[9] Heraclitus, fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

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Source:

<https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

Appendix Two

The Change of Enantiodromia

The Meaning of Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

This unusual word is usually translated as something like 'conflict of opposites' or 'opposing forces' which I consider are incorrect for several reasons.

Firstly, in my view, a transliteration should be used instead of some translation, for the Greek expression suggests something unique, something which exists in its own right as a principle or 'thing' and which uniqueness of meaning has a context, with both context and uniqueness lost if a bland translation is attempted. Lost, as the uniqueness, and context, of for example, δαιμόνων becomes lost if simply translated as 'spirits' (or worse, as 'gods'), or as the meaning of κακός in Hellenic culture is lost if mistranslated as 'evil'.

Second, the context seems to me to hint at something far more important than 'conflict of opposites', the context being the interesting description of the philosophy of Heraclitus before and after the word occurs, as given by Diogenes Laërtius:

1) ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι

2) εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι

3) πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

4) καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

The foundation/base/essence of all beings ['things'] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons.

This raises several interesting questions, not least concerning ψυχή and δαιμόνων, but also regarding the sense of πυρὸς. Is pyros here a philosophical principle - such as ψυχή - or used as in fragment 43, the source of which is also Diogenes Laërtius:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊὴν (ix 2)

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

Personally, I incline toward the former, of some principle being meant, given the context, and the generalization - ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα. In respect of ψυχῶν καὶ δαιμόνων I would suggest that what is implied is the numinous, our

apprehension of The Numen, and which numen is the source of ψυχή and the origin of Dæmons. For a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but another type of divinity (that is, another emanation of the numen; another manifestation of the numinous) who might be assigned by those numinous gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or who watch over certain human beings and especially over particular numinous (sacred) places.

Thus the above summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus might be paraphrased as:

The foundation of all beings is Pyros to which they return, with all by genesis appropriately apportioned to be bound together again by enantiodromia, with all beings suffused with [are emanations of] the numen.

Furthermore, hubris disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of the numen, our appreciation of ψυχή and of Dæmons: of what is numinous and what/whom we should respect. A disruption that makes us unbalanced, makes us disrespect the numinous and that of the numinous (such as δαίμωνων and θεοί and sacred places), and which unbalance enantiodromia can correct, with enantiodromia suggesting a confrontation - that expected dealing with our hubris necessary in order to return to Pyros, the source of beings. Here, Pyros is understood not as we understand 'fire' - and not even as some sort of basic physical element among other elements such as water - but rather as akin to both the constant 'warmth and the light of the Sun' (that brings life) and the sudden lightning that, as from Zeus, can serve as warning (omen) and retribution, and which can destroy and be a cause of devastating fire and thus also of the regeneration/rebuilding that often follows from such fires and from the learning, the respect, that arises from appreciating warnings (omens) from the gods. All of which perhaps explains fragment 64:

τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός

All beings are guided by Lightning

Enantiodromia in the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, enantiodromia is understood as the process - the natural change - that occurs or which can occur in a human being because of or following πάθει μάθος. For part of πάθει μάθος is a 'confrontational contest' - an interior battle - and an acceptance of the need to take part in this battle and 'face the consequences', one of which is learning the (often uncomfortable) truth about one's own unbalanced, strife-causing, nature.

If successful in this confrontation, there is or there can be a positive, moral, development of the nature, the character - the φύσις (physis) - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this pathei-mathos, and which appreciation includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect, of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις is the genesis of the τύραννος and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [28].

Thus enantiodromia reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [29] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονία [30], manifest as ἁρμονία is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Footnotes

[1] Heraclitus, fragment 80:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[2] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to Appendix I of <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[3] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

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Source:

<https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

Appendix Three

The Beatitudes

The Learning On The Hillside

Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

The Gospel According To Matthew

5:1-10

Text

- 1 Ἴδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·
- 2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·
- 3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Translation

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.
- 2.

ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

those there. Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

- 3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not

express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32, [1] from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί

[...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

5. πραῖος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word merciful - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρά ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [2] where as in Luke 11.41 - qv. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceiviation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer refined here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεός. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεός.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἐνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt
30.iii.18

Notes

[1] My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] D. Myatt. Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*,
<https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>



Greek Bible text from:
Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, 2012, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.



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Notes On War, Suffering, And Personal Judgement

Since around 2011 one recurrent theme of my writings has been the question of war and suffering, with the early writings, such as *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way* ¹ and *A Slowful Learning, Perhaps* ² concentrating on my 'numinous way' of pathei-mathos, ³ and later ones, such as *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* ⁴ and the 2018 *Persecution And War*, ⁵ in addition considering a particular Christian view expressed in 1682 by William Penn in *Some Fruits of Solitude*: "Let us then try what love can do." ⁶

Texts which were helpful regarding this question of war and suffering included the 1759 essay *Thoughts on the Nature of War, And Its Repugnancy To The Christian Life* by Anthony Benezet, ⁷ William Penn's *Essay Towards The Present And Future Peace of Europe* 1693, ⁸ *Discourses on War* by William Ellery Channing, ⁹ and various reports by the American Congressional Research Service (CRS) such as their 2007 *Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications*, the 2007 *Private Security Contractors in Iraq: Background, Legal Status, and Other Issues*, and the 2006 *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*.

Supra-Personal Authority

In my 2024 essay *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering* ¹⁰ the vexatious question of a recent, and as of the date of writing ongoing, armed conflict was considered in a philosophical context of denotata and in particular in regard to the manufactured category named 'the nation-State' ¹¹ which by its nature involves:

"principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman Leges Regiae – qv. the Jus Papirianum attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, *Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio.*" ⁵

Most modern Western nation-States, which nation-States now dominate our lives, have simply replaced kings, emperors, potentates and oligarchs, with Prime Ministers, Presidents, and by what are described as "representatives of the people", and in regard to the violence and the threat of punishment, domestic and foreign, former brute honesty has been replaced by rhetoric and propaganda, political and social, about 'law and order', about 'national defence and security' and 'in the national/public interest'. But the demand, often unstated, that individuals should or must accept some supra-personal authority remains as does the threat or the use of violence or punishment, against dissenting individuals, by officials appointed and approved by such supra-personal authorities. That is, that individuals must or are expected to forsake their own judgement, their conscience, and rely instead on the judgement of Prime Ministers/Presidents, 'representatives of the people', government ministers and officials, with – as it was for the Roman kings and Caesars – the individual required to obey the laws and decrees they manufacture and which laws and decrees such modern types regard, or claim to regard, as necessary, 'just', and moral with declared enemies, domestic and foreign, often said to be 'evil' or a threat to 'our' way of life, our nation, or our society. As often in former times there thus is a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' a modern government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents.

In practice, therefore, the personal suffering, domestic and foreign, that modern nation-States cause or have caused not only continues the periodical pain, trauma, injury, grief, and death inflicted on individuals over the past four thousand years or more, but increased the multitudes affected as evident for instance in the West (i) by the First and Second World wars with their millions upon millions upon millions of casualties and dead and the associated destruction inflicted nationally and supra-nationally, and (ii) by the poverty, despair, homelessness, robbery, theft, murder, and violent offences against the person, which still exist in so many Western societies.

Even religions such as Christianity, with its millions of adherents past and present which has been claimed by many of its adherents to be the way of peace and equality, ¹² have not prevented such wide-spread and continuing suffering. Primarily, according to my understanding, ¹³ because such religions derive from and depend upon a written text or texts which invite indeed depend upon exegesis and thence on the interpretation or exposition of one particular individual or on a collective, often hierarchical, exposition codified in a particular doctrine.

Examples being (i) a vernacular interpretation of meaning of the Christian Gospels and/or of the Christian Bible and (ii) a particular doctrine derived from a particular interpretation of some or parts of those texts, either in the vernacular or in their original language, by a particular individual or by a group, both of which can result and has resulted in schisms, such as the Nestorians, the Lollards, and the Protestant reformation, and thence to accusations of heresy and even of blasphemy by a particular and established religious hierarchy or by some authority who or which claim to rule 'in the name of or by the grace of God'.

Empathy And Pathei-Mathos As A Guide

It is my contention that the wordless knowing which personal empathy provides or can provide together with the wordless knowing arising from a personal pathei-mathos is a moral alternative to the abrogation of personal judgement and of personal conscience required by a nation-State and by established religions in the particular matters of war and the violence involved in supra-personal conflicts where there is an assumed 'us' and a 'them'.

A moral alternative because there is a personal, individual, horizon to both empathy and pathei-mathos so that what is beyond this horizon is something we rationally, we humbly, we morally, accept we do not yet know and have not personally experienced and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy and pathei-mathos live within us manifesting the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding. That it is a failure to appreciate and understand this which continues the periodical pain, trauma, injury, grief, and death inflicted on individuals.

Basically, this is

"an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others.

The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment. There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility." ¹⁴

As it says in Matthew 5 v.7:

μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται

"Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion." ¹⁵

As it says in the Rule of Saint Benedict:

"The peak of our endeavour is to achieve profound humility..." Chapter 7, The Value of Humility

As it says in the Quran:

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahman [Allah] are those who walk on earth in humility." 25:63

As it says in the Dhammapada:

Yo bâlo maññati bâlyae paúóitovâpi tena so bâlo ca paúóitamânî sa ve bâloti vuccati.

"Accepting of themselves, the simple person in their simplicity is wise, [although] if they pride themselves they are wise, they are simply full of pride."

Which interpretations of mine, in English, of the original texts return us to the question of exegesis, and to empathy and pathei-mathos and why I personally find in them a more reliable, because wordless, guide to wisdom understood as an appreciation of, and of our relation to, the other mortal beings, Hominid and otherwise, with which we share this planet, and of our relation to Being itself: that is, to The Numinous, The Acausal, The One-The-Only (τὸ ἓν), the Monas (μονάς) and The-Unity.

The numinous is θεϊότης, divinity-presenced, as in tractate XI v. 11 of the Corpus Hermeticum, θεϊότητα μίαν, and as in Plutarch, De Pythiae Oraculis, 407a, 398a-f. The numinous is essentially what is, or what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) that which is felt, experienced, or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, divine, awe-inspiring, beautiful, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control or meaningfully express through the medium of words. For Christians, it is considered to be God; for Muslims, Allah; for the Romans, divinitas; for others ancient and modern, it was and is considered to be expressible, or intimated, by mythoi and presenced in ὁ θεός, the deity, and/or by θεοί, the gods.

1. Included in *War, Persecution, and Violence*, <https://archive.org/download/war-violence-davidmyatt/war-violence-dwmyatt.pdf>
2. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/dwm-slowful-learning.pdf>
3. qv. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>
4. Included in *Selected Essays And Effusions*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/essays-and-effusions.pdf>
5. Included in *War, Persecution, and Violence*, <https://archive.org/download/war-violence-davidmyatt/war-violence-dwmyatt.pdf>
6. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t5r78692x&seq=9>
7. http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/benezet_thanksgiving.pdf
8. <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/penn.pdf>
9. <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/channing.pdf>
10. *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>
11. By the term the State/nation-State is here meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority /representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.
12. "If the Christian, however, recollects himself, he will find war to be a sad consequence of the apostasy and fall of man; when he was abandoned to the fury of his own lusts and passions, as the natural and penal effect of breaking loose from the Divine Government, the fundamental law of which is Love: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy Fellow-Creature, as thyself." *Thoughts on the Nature of War, And Its Repugnancy To The Christian Life*, Anthony Benezet, 1759, http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/benezet_thanksgiving.pdf
13. qv. (i) *Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf> (ii) *Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/questions-hermeneutics.pdf> (iii) *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics*, included in *Selected Essays And Effusions*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/essays-and-effusions.pdf> (iv) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God in Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf> (v) *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>
14. *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

In regard to some terms and expressions used in that quotation:

innocence. Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

wu-wei. The cultivation of an inner balance arising from an appreciation of the natural change (the flux) of living beings and how it is unbalanced, and harsh, of us to interfere in ways which conflict with the natural character of such beings and with that natural change. Part of this appreciation is of the numinous; another is of our own limits and limitations because we ourselves are only a small part of such natural change, an aspect of which is Nature; and which appreciation of the numinous and of our limits incline us toward a certain humility. Regarding 'the numinous', qv. the end of the *Empathy And Pathei-Mathos As A Guide* section:

The numinous is θεϊότης, divinity-presenced, as in tractate XI v. 11 of the Corpus Hermeticum, θεϊότητα μίαν, and as in Plutarch, *De Pythiae Oraculis*, 407a, 398a-f. The numinous is essentially what is, or what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) that which is felt, experienced, or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, divine, awe-inspiring, beautiful, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control or meaningfully express through the medium of words. For Christians, it is considered to be God; for

Muslims, Allah; for the Romans, divinitas; for others ancient and modern, it was and is considered to be expressible, or intimated, by mythoi and presenced in ὁ θεός, the deity, and/or by θεοί, the gods.

a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention. That is, an honourable self-defence. For it is, in my experience, part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone or others close-by who are unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, force sufficient to cause injury or injuries to the attacker or attackers.

15. *The Beatitudes*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

Individual Judgement, Authority, And Governance

Certain current events caused me, as an observer, to again consider some philosophical and ethical questions regarding governance and authority. Questions which I attempted to answer in writings such as *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, and *Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos*. ¹.

The Events

The deployment of the US National Guard, and of Marines, during recent disturbances in Los Angeles, ² the handcuffing and forcible removed of US Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) for asking a question at a news conference held by a government representative, and the video of female Australian journalist Lauren Tomasi being hit by a rubber bullet during civil unrest in Los Angeles, are possibly recent and American examples of how a modern Western government/administration, and its leader or leaders can and will employ their obedient forces of 'law and order' to deal with civil unrest and to enforce their will, their diktats. Obedient forces because their members are duty-bound to obey a hierarchical traditional chain-of-command at the top of which is someone such as a President, a Prime Minister, or someone appointed by such a leader or such a commander-in-chief.

In Britain, this use of government-sanctioned and violent force during civil unrest was evident during the Miners' strike in the 1980s and in the more recent forcible arrests of people during pro-Palestinian protests in London.

Which use or force against civilians by established authorities is invariably defended as 'necessary' by representatives of the government-of-the-day and, again invariably, defended by some or by many pro-government sections of the Mass Media and by pro-government 'independent' journalists. In addition, governments-of-the-day seem to have a propensity, sometimes during but often after such civil disturbances, to introduce new laws, new legislation, giving their civil and armed forces more powers, more authority, to deal with such disturbances.

Thus, as decades pass, there are more and more, and often uncommented on, restrictions on what a citizen can and cannot do in public, for all 'public spaces' are deemed to be the purview of, under the control of, the government who can and who will using whatever force is necessary enforce their will on those using such spaces.

For me, this raises certain philosophical and ethical questions relating to governance and authority.

The Questions

The basic questions concern individual judgement, the acceptance by an individual of a supra-personal authority, whether this acceptance is necessary for a society to function, ³ and whether it is morally right to use force and violence against dissenters and if so what are the limits.

Related questions are the nature of personal judgement and the nature of modern governance. Which lead to what, morally, dissenters can do and thus to the limits of dissent.

In attempting to answer such questions my guide, or as some might suggest my bias, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos and the axioms of that weltanschauung ⁴ derived as the axioms were from forty and more years of (mostly practical political and religious) experience 'in the world', and years of reflexion on, and studies regarding, that experience. The answers are thus personal, fallible, and possess no authority whatsoever.

§ Individual Judgement And Supra-Personal Authority

According to my understanding, the basis for individual judgement is the wordless knowing provided by the faculty of empathy combined with accumulated learning from pathei-mathos: from personal, practical, often difficult, harsh, adverse, or life threatening, experiences.

Thus, the judgement is the result of thoughtful personal reasoning and implies fairness, a balanced view; a personal view and understanding well-described by Heraclitus in fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας
Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Hence why, in describing the weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, I used the term σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) as a synonym for such thoughtful personal reasoning, explaining that σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) as used in that fragment is usually translated as something akin to "soundness of mind, moderation" which, invoking relatively modern concepts such as "mind" and "soundness", distorts the meaning, with σωφρονεῖν in the weltanschauung of pathei-mathos thus a metaphysical Anglicized Greek term requiring no inflective forms.

In contrast, the basis of supra-personal authority, as expressed in a chain-of-command, military, political, governmental, or otherwise, is the acceptance by individuals of the judgement of a 'higher', a supra-personal, authority. That the judgement of some other person or persons is better than, superior to, ours and thus the 'correct' one.

§ The Nature Of Personal Judgement

The nature - the physis ⁵ - of personal judgement is personal character which is revealed through personal example and thus by deeds. It cannot be contained, presented, expressed through a word or words (denotata) or by an 'idea' or 'ideal', or by anything supra-personal such as an -ism or an -ology be they political, religious, ideological, or social, just as the knowing of empathy cannot be so contained, restrained, expressed, or so revealed.

§ The Nature Of Governance

According to my admittedly fallible understanding, governance is based on two principles:

- (i) That some minority - a government (elected or unelected), or some military authority, or some oligarchy, or some already existing or new ruling elite, or some tyrannos, ⁶ or some leader - has or has assumed a mandate, or has the means, to exercise authority (and thus power and influence) over others, with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory.
- (ii) That the majority of citizens or subjects will be acquiescent regarding or obey the laws, proclamations, or diktats of that authority with public refusal to so obey deemed by that authority to be disruptive, or misguided, or 'wrong', or 'illegal' and if considered appropriate by the ruling authority or its functionaries render those so publicly refusing to acquiesce or obey liable to arrest by forcible or other means and again if considered appropriate by the ruling authority or its functionaries to be charged with some offence(s) and subsequently fairly tried in a government Court of Law and if found guilty liable to penalties including imprisonment. In the case of a non-elected authority such as a military one, the arrested or detained person is sometimes imprisoned without a fair trial or summarily executed.

§ The Vexatious Question Of Dissent

Whether it is morally wrong to use force and violence against peaceful public dissenters is a vexatious question because the answer seems to me to depend on whether an organized society requires some acquiescence regarding or some acceptance of such supra-personal authority as is or may be necessary for the orderly function of such a society, and because of who decides, with what existing or manufactured 'authority', what in terms of society is necessary, what is or is not 'acceptable' force or violence, and what criteria are employed in the making of such decisions.

My answer is that In respect of governance, acquiescence regarding or refusal in some way to obey 'a higher supra-personal authority' is or should be a personal choice. In respect of society it is also or should be a personal choice, with the consequence that those who consider society does require some acquiescence regarding or some acceptance of a supra-personal authority should withdraw internally or externally from society, be it alone, with a partner, or with one's family.

Internally in the sense of living in society but with no public or even private dissent of any kind; accepting of what-is with an understanding of how over periods of causal time all supra-personal authority - and the societies which require them or which some authority attempt to 'reform' or change or manufacture according to whatever criteria - will change and be replaced. ⁷

Externally in the modern sense of going 'off-grid' or in the older sense of contemplative or spiritual isolation either reclusively or as part of a community.

Conclusion: A Moral Alternative

The axioms of empathy and pathei mathos are a moral alternative because they have their unique being, their unique presencing, their life, in an individual. Which presencing enables or should enable the individual to choose how they deal with vexatious questions regarding suffering, society, supra-personal authority, and events involving the use by governments and others of force, violence, and of war as an instrument of change as required by some -ism or some -ology or by some supra-personal authority for some political reason or because of resources or because of a quest for power and/or for domination.

My own answers are in my extensive writings about my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos. In *Persecution And War* I wrote that, In the weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, authority is personal and that In practical terms:

"this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero - self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty - and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority - whether political, religious, or otherwise - and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are 'our' enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies." ⁸

1. (i) <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf> (ii) <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/impersonal-abstractions.pdf>
2. Some members of the deployed forces have apparently questioned their deployment.
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/12/los-angeles-national-guard-troops-marines-morale>
3. By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.
- I generally use the term to refer to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).
4. The basic axioms are described in Appendix One. For further details refer to *Axiomata Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/dwm-axiomata.pdf>
5. In regard to physis, qv. Appendix IV, *The Concept Of Physis*, in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>
6. The sense of τύραννος is not exactly what our fairly modern term tyrant is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or with some aim or some -ism or -ology or lust for power that they go far beyond balanced behaviour, of being fair and balanced in physis, and as a consequence exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with or have acquired.
7. As noted in *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*,

"In regard to the temporal nature of all human manufactured abstractions, this understanding results from both our personal pathei-mathos, and the culture of pathei-mathos, which provides us with a supra-personal, 'cosmic perspective', of for example not only nations, Empires, war, conquest, revolutions, invasions but also of every idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος) and all -isms and -ologies. For every human manufactured construct, such as a nation-State, not only has a limited life-span but is also subject to change, to revisions, to ameliorations, reformation, and re-interpretation.

Thus, in the example of a nation-State, the boundaries may change though war or invasion or conquest, as the peoples within the entity change though emigration and immigration and assimilation, and as the authority or authorities governing or ruling the entity can and do change over decades and centuries sometimes through internal revolution or invasion. A pertinent example being England before and after the Roman conquest, after the arrival of the Vikings and then after the Norman conquest followed centuries later by civil war and culminating in the immigration that occurred after the Second World War and which is continuing.

In regard to every idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος) and all -isms and -ologies, their change is inherent in the reality of them being dependent on denotatum or denotata which are by their physis the genesis of an opposite and hence of the resulting dialectic, of opposition." <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>

8. https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/persecution_and_war.pdf

Appendix One

Axioms Of The Way Of Pathei-Mathos

- i) That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.
- ii) This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [1], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.
- iii) That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος [2] and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [3] and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.

iv) This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of enantiodromia [4] and reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή [5] to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [6] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονία [7], manifest as ἁρμονία (harmony) is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei [8] and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement) [9].

v) The development and use of empathy, the cultivation of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν, are thus a means, a way, whereby individuals can cease to cause suffering or cease to contribute to, or cease to aid, suffering.

vi) The reason as to why an individual might so seek to avoid causing suffering is the reason, the knowledge - the appreciation of the numinous - that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide.

vii) This appreciation of the numinous inclines or can incline an individual to living in a certain way and which way of life naturally inclines the individual toward developing, in a natural way - sans any methodology, praxis, theory, dogma, or faith - certain attributes of character, and which attributes of character include compassion, self-restraint, fairness, and a reasoned, a personal, judgement.

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Footnotes

[1] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, expressed by Isaac Newton in his Principia, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance..... for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

[2] The sense of τύραννος is not exactly what our fairly modern term tyrant is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or some aim or a lust for power that they go far beyond the due, the accepted, bounds of behaviour and thus exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with. Thus do they, by their excess, by their disrespect for the customs of their ancestors, by their lack of reasoned, well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] offend the gods, and thus, to restore the balance, do the Ἐρινύες take revenge. For it is in the nature of the τύραννος that they forget, or they scorn, the truth, the ancient wisdom, that their lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες -

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6

[3] Heraclitus, fragment 80:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. <https://perceiverations.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/dwm-heraclitus-translations-notes.pdf>

In respect of the modern error of ὕβρις that is extremism, an error manifest in extremists, my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious.

[4] See *The Change of Enantiodromia*, which is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[5] The meaning here of ψυχή is derived from the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, etcetera, and implies Life qua being. Or, expressed another way, living beings are emanations of, and thus manifest, ψυχή. This sense of ψυχή is beautifully expressed in a, in my view, rather mis-understood fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ψυχῆισιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. Fragment 36

Where the water begins our living ends and where earth begins water ends, and yet earth nurtures water and from that water, Life.

[6] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to *The Principle of Δίκη*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[7] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[8] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[9] Heraclitus, fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

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Source:

<https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>
Appendix Two

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One Perceivration

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Preface

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and

what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceivance - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata - and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κάγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character.

But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Pœmandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the *Introduction* to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt
2020
Second Edition

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/>

[5] In respect of physis, refer to Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. ISBN 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

On Translating Ancient Greek

Given that I have numerous times over the past ten or so years been asked by various individuals (including Greek scholars) about my Greek translations, and given that it seems some of my translations (such as parts of the Corpus Hermeticum) are regarded as "iconoclastic and controversial", it seems

fitting to provide a rather more detailed explanation of my methodology over and above my few, short, previous remarks.

When studying New Testament Greek while a monk in a Christian monastery in the 1970s - and being already familiar (from schooldays and later studies including at that monastery) with Homer's Greek and the way that Aeschylus often omitted 'the article' and invented new words to express his meaning - I began to wonder, in respect of translations, about what I have since termed 'retrospective re-interpretation'. As I mentioned in my essay *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, included as an Appendix to my Poemandres translation and commentary:

"I incline toward the view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning, or an interpretation, somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed.

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial or iconoclastic they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

For example, one of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous and the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided."

I then proceeded to give various quotations and argued that the original sense of the English word 'sin' was "the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word *syn* implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*." Hence why in translating John 8.7 I eschewed the much overused and now often pejorative word sin:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητός] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

While such a translation may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which to me seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Pen many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. This seeking after meaning beyond what a particular English word now often denoted - in common usage or otherwise - I applied to my translations of some fragments of Heraclitus, to my translations of three tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and am applying to my on-going (as of 2016) translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John. I also used this principle, albeit then in a mostly intuitive way, when undertaking my translations, decades before, of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Thus I sought to try and understand - to apprehend, both intuitively and by scholarly means - what the author was expressing or sought to express all those centuries ago; which necessitated understanding the milieu, the ethos, the culture, of the time and the place where the author lived. My approach was therefore more than strictly grammatical; more than lexicographical. Why is why, in the Hermetic tractates the translation of such words as ἀγαθός and εὐσεβέω and θεός were considered in the necessary context. [1]

What, for example, did θεός mean and imply in the Hellenic times that the texts were written? My view is that to translate as 'god' is to miss the variety of possible meanings, since 'god' to so many people in the West imparts the sense of, if not the God of Christianity, then of 'the one deity' of neo-pythagoreanism and gnosticism. This then leads and has led to speculation as whether God and 'the one deity' are the same and whether the texts are neo-pythagorean and/or gnostic and/or possibly influenced by early Christianity. The texts under consideration, however, are unclear as to exactly what and who θεός is, especially given (i) that in the Poemandres tractate θεός is described as being both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλος) and (ii) that 'archetypes'/deities from classical Greek culture are mentioned, from Psyche to Hermes, and (iii) that Poemandres is described as 'changing their form/appearance' (shapeshifting) in the manner of Greek divinities such as Athena in The Odyssey and Demeter in mythological poems and legends, and (iv) the mention of 'daimons'. This θεός might thus refer to a deity in a classical sense, with the texts describing a mysticism that is essentially a development of existing and past Greek ideas.

To translate θεός as god is therefore, in my view, not helpful given that 'god' is not, in our milieu, a neutral word and therefore tends to impose a certain meaning on the text. In contrast, the transliteration 'theos' is neutral and also aids the curiosity of the reader who might well then ask: what and who, here, is theos?

In regard to εὐσεβέω, is what is meant what we understand by terms such as reverent and pious? Again, given the influence of Christianity over the past two millennia, what such terms now so often denote is redolent of that religion so that such words are not neutral in respect of understanding the spirituality of such ancient Greek texts. Hence why my choice was for an expression: 'awareness of the numinous', which expression encompasses - or seems to me to encompass - an essential aspect of all spirituality, from ancient Greece to Greco-Roman times to Christianity and beyond. There is therefore, yet again, no retrospective re-interpretation of the text resulting from a poor choice of English words.

In considering ἀγαθός my basic guide was ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός in ancient Greece and Greco-Roman times with the sense being not some abstract god-given 'what is good' and 'what is evil', nor of some impersonal idea of 'good' contrasted with some other impersonal idea of 'evil', but rather the difference between good (noble) and bad (rotten) individuals, and which difference (according to so many authors of those times) was revealed, became known, through the deeds done by individuals. An interesting passage illustrating ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός occurs in section eight of the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἔχόντων, ὦ Τάτ, τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τε
ὑπῆρξε καὶ ὑπάρξει· τὰ δὲ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀκολουθησάτω καὶ μὴ
ὑστερήστω· ἐπεὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἴτιοι τῶν κακῶν,
ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν

Nearly all past translations have opted to use the English words 'good' and 'evil', as did John Everard and G.R.S. Mead whose respective translations are,

These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so
plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from
us, without any scarcity or sparing. For God is innocent or guiltless,
but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.

This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be
ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press
onward and have no delay; for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the
cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

A more recent translation is that of Brian Copenhaver,

Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be
available to us. May what comes to us be suited to it and not
deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who chose
them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's.

In contrast, I interpret as,

Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
With theos blameless in this.

Which interpretation emphasises the personal origin of what is done and why what is bad, in personal terms, is - as the author of the text later writes, αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον - a privation of what is good:

This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Which contrast between personal honour (a nobility of character) and dishonour (a doing of rotten deeds) is rather different from abstract "evil things", and well expresses an important aspect of the ethos of ancient Greece and of Greco-Roman culture; an aspect well-expressed by Sophocles: πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεί battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable Philoctetes, v.437

This interpretation of ἀγαθός - in the personal terms of such an ethos, rather than as some abstract existent external to the individual as posited by Plato, ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα - is why the author of text also writes,

ὁρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον, πόσα ἡμᾶς δεῖ σώματα διεξελθεῖν, καὶ πόσους χοροὺς δαιμόνων καὶ συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων ἵνα πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον σπεύσωμεν; ἀδιάβατον γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές, αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἄναρχον, ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν. οὐκ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχὴ γίνεται ἡ γνῶσις

Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse - How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations - So that we hasten to the Monas. For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it It yields to us the origin of our knowing. [2]

For Plato's explanation requires a questioning, a philosophical search for ἀληθεία, a type of anados, resulting in a knowing of 'the good', ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, and which knowing - which knowledge - is the source, the origin, of all other knowing. Here, the opposite is clearly stated: that such knowledge of 'the good', of what is honourable, is not 'the knowledge' - the conclusion of our anados - but instead only the source of what we know about ourselves

and about others.

This understanding of 'the good', of ἀγαθός, is indeed somewhat controversial - the opposite of what Plato et al theorized and what some seem to have assumed regarding the Corpus Hermeticum - but one which presents an alternative (a somewhat paganus) understanding of such hermeticism as is described in the three tractates under consideration. And an interesting alternative that, to my knowledge, has been long neglected, given the various and the numerous assumptions made regarding the meaning of certain Greek words in texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

2016

[1] In order to elucidate my methodology I for brevity only consider here three Greek terms.

[2] As I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:

Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceivation," having won that prize gifted by theos [...]

The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of
theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of
honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἄρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδρομία/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings

thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
σημαινομένου χρῆται.

2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ἐρὸς Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed

details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated *mythoi* - can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase *καλὸς κάγαθός*. That is, in the melding of *τὸ καλόν* (the beautiful) and *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰών.

But the Sophia of the theos is what?
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, *arête*, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, *τὸ καλόν* refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὖειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ
ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni

utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἄθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἄθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,
τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεός – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεός is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture

One of my fond memories of English schooldays was as a Sixth Form boarder in the late 1960's when I had a room to myself and an allowance from my father who had returned to live and work in Africa.

As recounted elsewhere [1] the allowance allowed me to travel and buy

books, often from bookshops in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and one such purchase was of the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and almost every evening I loved

"to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility, quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata." [2]

Such schoolboy habits would prove useful when I began to develop my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* and sought to express my intuitions about Being and about our mortal being through the medium of English words.

Such an expression led me to use some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily mis-understood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is both a "transition from *mythoi* and anthropomorphic deities (*theos* and *theoi*) to an appreciation of the numinous *sans denotatum* and *sans religion*" [3] and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over *denotatum*, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin *denotatum* – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presented in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom.

I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (*sophrosyne*) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of *sophrosyne* as "soundness of mind, moderation".

I used and use Δίκη instead of δίκη when the sense implied is "what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as [a] goddess", which is the natural instinct in those of noble *physis* (φύσις) for honour, fairness, and beauty – καλὸς κάγαθός [4] – and thus the natural balance rather than

"the correct/customary/ancestral way" or an abstract, impersonal, modern-type of "justice".

In most such cases the Greek words are used, as I wrote in *A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, in an Anglicized way – as transliterated terms such as pathei-mathos and enantiodromia are – with there being no need to employ Greek inflective forms.

In the cases where the Greek words are not transliterated – σωφρονεῖν as sophronein for example – the intent was to not only provide a direct link to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture but also to signify that the word represents an important or interesting metaphysical principle in the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Hence σοφόν – sophon – is how and why empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal and can presence our physis, the nature of our being, the nature of Being itself, and reveal that Time is not only causal but acausal. It also suggests, as do Δίκα and σωφρονεῖν, the primacy and the importance of individual insight and understanding.

In a world where propaganda and disinformation still proliferate, based as they are on denotatum and often on political dogma and impersonal abstractions/ideations, and in a world where mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) and thus organized religion still seem to dominate, the philosophy of pathei-mathos provides an alternative: the individual way of pathei-mathos and of empathy, based as it is on four axioms:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotatum – and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom – which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and – as a causal human presenced effect – for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth. [5]

Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since philosophia – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, [6] and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected.

April 2019

[1] *Early Years*, in *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484110744.

[2] *The Joy Of Words*, 2013. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/the-joy-of-words/2013>.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy/2018>.

[4] I have described καλὸς κάγαθός in my two recent books *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

[5] *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2019. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/02/10/physis-and-being/>

[6] *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018. ISBN 978-1484096642.

Concerning The Gospel Of John

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὗρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινή) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [1] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of

Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and

his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

2017

[1] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision

Over forty years ago, many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library of a monastery reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [1], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

Such minutiae make the process of translation – at least for me and in respect of the Gospel of John – somewhat slow, partly because they can change the meaning; or rather, provide a possible alternative interpretation as is the case in the matter of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Why, for example, is θεὸς here not ὁ θεὸς (pedantically, the Theos/the God) as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός? Which apparently pedantic question formed part of a somewhat acrimonious theological dispute before, during, and after the time of John Chrysostom; a dispute centred around a possible distinction between (i) The God and (ii) God, father of Jesus, and thus whether Jesus was, like The God, eternally-living. Those who affirmed such a distinction, and who thus came to believe that both Jesus and the πνεῦματος ἁγίου (the Holy Spirit) were not equal to The God, were termed ‘Arians’ (after the Alexandrian priest Arius) and were repeatedly condemned as heretics.

In respect of certain words or phrases it is, as so often, a personal choice between following what has become or is regarded as the scholarly consensus or undertaking one’s own research and possibly arriving at a particular, always disputable, interpretation. Such research takes time – days, weeks, months, sometimes longer – and may lead one to revise one’s own particular interpretation, as occurred recently in respect of my interpretation of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, which initially and in respect of grammar was a minority one (qv. Jean Daillé) of *The Logos was Theos* rather than the

conventional Theos [God] was the Logos [Word].

In the matter of θεός and ὁ θεός the current consensus is that there is in the Gospel of John no distinction between them. However, the arguments used to support this – from Chrysostom on – are theological and devolve around the use of such terms by John, by other Evangelists, by early Christians such as Paul of Tarsus, and even by the authors of LXX. That is, arguments are made regarding, for example, why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it is argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, are often considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [2] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to some doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung, brought-into-being by πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I approach the text as I did the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, when I consider a phrase such as πνεῦμα ὁ θεός I wonder about the meaning of πνεῦμα, of θεός, and of ὁ θεός, not in terms of later explanations – in this instance ‘the Holy Spirit’, God, the God – and not in terms of assuming the author is learned concerning and referring to or quoting or paraphrasing texts such as LXX, but rather as terms, ideas, germane to the world, the place, in which the author lived. Understood thus, θεός is just theos; πνεῦμα is just pneuma or ‘spiritus’; with words such as those and other words such as λόγος possibly becoming explained or placed into context by the narrator as the narrative proceeds.

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John [3], revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to

travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

July 2017

[1] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[2] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Wycliffe, and the King James Bible: "The deep things of God."

[3] <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὃ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἡράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλῆς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead

as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεός as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

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Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

[2] B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/>

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/>

[4] To be pedantic, when θεός is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that

wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the

knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good

fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Denotatum

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκᾱ - spelt thus in a modern

way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπάθης - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδορμίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἢ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour... [My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
So that Achilles underfongeth
As to a yong ladi belongeth
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἀρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate,

and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schibboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits,

abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

See my *From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous* for more details.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those

individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

See Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis.

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἀρμονία, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

σωφρονεῖν

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and

large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliq/ minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ῥβρις

ῥβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement – σωφρονεῖν – and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance – is contrary to ἁρμονία [harmony] – and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ῥβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονες τ' Ἐρινύες and δαίμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαίμόνων.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀμυνή.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from

empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

Appendix I

The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ἰερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be.

Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as *arête* (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [3].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [4] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [5]

Physis is also personified in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* tractate:

"The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presenced in the divine." [6]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [7] and by abstractions [8], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [9] is a concealment of that relationship;

- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings. [10]

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

March 2015

Notes

[1] See my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[2] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλόμενον οὔτε ἀξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[3] See <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[4] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[5] Pœmandres 16-18.

[6] Ιερὸς Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερὸς Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[7] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[8] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[9] Refer, for example, to *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness* section of

in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

Appendix II

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora,
et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is

cosmically presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathē-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

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[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

Appendix III

On Ethos And Interpretation

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully renew interest in them beyond conventional current, and past interpretations, which - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - makes them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? For two reasons.

First, because the choice of English words hitherto in respect of Greek terms such as λόγος, νοῦς, θεός, ἀγαθός, φῶς, and φύσις, seems to me to be based on various assumptions such as that those and other terms express something definite and philosophical and relate to various ancient 'schools of thought'. I dissent from this view; instead, regarding such terms as descriptors used by individuals to express their own often mystical weltanschauung based on their own personal insights or, more probably, on what they had learned from others and/or from various MSS they had read. That is, many of the tractates present mythos, and/or ancient aural esoteric traditions, rather than the teachings of some established and philosophical 'school of thought'. Thus, such Greek terms require contextual interpretation and are often best transliterated or at least referred to the ethos underlying such weltanschauung and such mythos.

Second, because such texts seem to me to be, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἄρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1] .

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view - as noted in the Preface of my translation of and commentary on that tractate - is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility, τὸ ἀγαθὸν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in brave,

noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals - exemplified in legend by the likes of the hero Leonidas - which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well express and have expressed.

Thus, such an iconoclastic interpretation of such an important ancient Greek word - in terms of individuals and their physis, as opposed to in terms of some abstract, moral, impersonal schemata or dogma or as part of some conjectured philosophy - might provide a new perspective on some of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

But whether this particular insight of mine regarding ἀγαθός is valid, others will have to decide.

2017

[1] (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

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