

What Is Being?

Q: I've read your book *Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* [1] but couldn't find your definition of 'Being', not even in the book's Glossary which is surprising since it's an important term in your philosophy. What's your definition?

DM: Not providing a more detailed description and the reasons behind the description in that book was an oversight, with 'Being' only briefly described in the *Introduction: Physis And Being* part of that book: 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."

For I consider Being not as a causal abstraction which requires a definition, but as what that Glossary refers to as a 'descriptor: "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)."

In addition, as noted in my 2023 essay *Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos*,

"it is denotata – 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 that denotata and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and 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 our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceivers and experiences, and therefore have what I termed a 'personal horizon' meaning that they 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.

The knowing so revealed is only and always our personal fallible answer or answers, and which knowing is invariably a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be adequately expressed by words and terms (by denotata) without in some manner distorting it because words and terms depend on exegesis, which exegesis can and often does vary from century to century."

However, in the *A Modern Paganism* sub-section of the chapter *A Modern Pagan Philosophy* of the book *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, [3] the author comprehensively, and far better than I, explained the matter, with the quotations in that sub-section taken from my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions* which essay was included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. [4] The relevant extract from the *A Modern Paganism* sub-section is:

<begin extract>

Myatt has asked

" (i) if Being – whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μοῦσας – can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.

That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' – or been created by – acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings – such as ourselves – an aspect or emanation of acausal Being? "

His answer:

"formulating such a question in such terms – causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of – is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal', and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέα) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us, both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing."

Which led Myatt to suggest that Being, and our own physis, can be discovered – known and understood – by empathy and pathei-mathos which both by-pass abstractions, denotatum, and opposites, and enable us to appreciate the numinosity of Being.

What therefore is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal?

According to Myatt

"it is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that – unlike a form or an abstraction – it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives.

That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith."

Which is a rather succinct description of the essence, the ethos, of the Western pagan and mystic traditions where each individual acquires a personal, non-dogmatic, apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal.

<end extract>

Thus, Being is a personal apprehension, discovered by means such as empathy and pathei-mathos; and is what an individual feels and wordlessly knows, comprehends, discovers, as the supra-personal 'numinous'. Or, expressed another way, how the numinous is or becomes presenced in that individual. Hence, for some individuals, it can 'be' or 'not-be' what has been denoted by denotata such as ὁ θεός, The One, The Eternal, The Divine, God; or θεοί, the gods, divinity; or θεῶν μήτηρ; et cetera. With θεῶν μήτηρ (mother of the gods), πρέσβιστος (the Elder Being), and μητέρα τῶν πάντων (the mother of all being) that which often is and has been termed Γαῖα, Gaia, and less descriptively, as Nature presenced on the planet named in one language as Earth where we were born and currently have our being.

David Myatt
2026

[1] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Seventh edition, 2022, (i) ISBN 9781484096642 (ii) Kindle edition ASIN B0DWXTNNPY (iii) Gratis pdf <https://davidmyatt.online/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[2] The essay is included, pp.24-26, in the archive of my website at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/davidmyatt-website-feb24.pdf>

[3] *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*. 2021, (i) ISBN 978-1523930135 (ii) Gratis pdf <https://davidmyatt.online/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

[4] *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015, (i) ISBN 978-1512137149 (ii) Gratis pdf <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v9b.pdf>
