

Axiomata Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos

[Introduction](#)

[Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition](#)

[A Note Concerning Aristotle, Reason, And Virtue](#)

[Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites](#)

[Reflections On Conflict And Suffering](#)

[Religion, Exegesis, And The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority](#)

[Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis](#)

[Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Impersonal Abstractions And The Modern World](#)

Introduction

A compilation of essays which in their own way express the following axiomata, and which axiomata are the basis for my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

Of how words - denotata - bring into being causal abstractions and categories used to describe the external world including living beings such as ourselves, and how such denotata inevitably bring-into-being as opposite with such opposites often assigned a value, moral and otherwise, which can vary and which has varied over causal time depending for instance on changes within a particular society or on interpretations of the various -isms and -ologies (political, social, religious. and otherwise) which inform or may guide such societies in terms of zeitgeist and otherwise.

Of how such denotata, their interpretation and their projection onto living beings, become the genesis of supra-personal judgement and a hierarchical supra-personal authority, and thus usurp personal judgment based on personal empathy and individual pathei-mathos and thus on personal experience. With such supra-personal authority often enshrined in various -isms and -ologies and thus in governments and, for example, in the supra-personal organisations which evolve to enshrine particular interpretations of a particular religion or a particular ideology or political or social point of view.

Of how modern named 'nations', and Empires in past, are or were a natural consequence of such supra-personal judgement and a hierarchical supra-personal authority and thus derive from denotata, from the interpretation of that denotata, and the projection of such denotata, such categories, onto human beings.

Of how such supra-personal enshrining is a cause of, often the main cause of, suffering for human beings as evident in war or armed conflict between declared factions - 'us' and 'them' - and as particularly evident in the conflict between one named 'nation' (or tribe) and another named 'nation' (or tribe) or between advocates of one religious or political interpretation and advocates of a different interpretation. For in such conflict one 'nation' or tribe or one interpretation is often regard as 'right' (morally or otherwise) or as 'superior' with the other regard as 'wrong' or as 'inferior'.

Of how a return to personal empathy and individual pathei-mathos as a guide to living, in place of accepting or believing in supra-personal judgement and a hierarchical supra-personal authority, is a means whereby suffering can be alleviated. Which is an acceptance that -isms and -ologies, be they political, religious, social, or otherwise, have been or are or might be a cause of suffering, and this should not be accepted or used as a means of societal change. That a moral means of such change is an individual personal one grounded in personal behaviour and personal actions, and expressed through personal example.

A classic example of the misunderstandings that denotata can bring-into-being and has brought-into-being is translation of a text in a certain language into another language, especially if the text is an ancient one and is of a philosophical or of a religions nature and it is translated into a modern language. An example illustrated in included essays such as *A Note Concerning Aristotle, Reason, And Virtue*, and *Religion, Exegesis, And The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority*.

David Myatt
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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]

78

12. HERAKLEITOS

80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον 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 presented in perceivization, with perceivization presented 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 perceivization 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, presented, 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 geniture 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 perceivization; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivization; 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 artissements, 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 geniture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geniture 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.

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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, 3396

[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 Note Concerning Aristotle, Reason, And Virtue

It was after recently reading a passage from *Sententia libri Ethicorum* by Thomas Aquinas ¹ that I returned to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and found the appropriate section:

εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου, τὸ δ' αὐτό φαμεν ἔργον εἶναι τῷ γένει τοῦδε καὶ τοῦδε σπουδαίου, ὥσπερ κιθαριστοῦ καὶ σπουδαίου κιθαριστοῦ, καὶ ἀπλῶς δὴ τοῦτ' ἐπὶ πάντων, προστιθεμένης τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑπεροχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἔργον· κιθαριστοῦ μὲν γὰρ κιθαρίζειν, σπουδαίου δὲ τὸ εὖ· εἰ δ' οὕτως, ἀνθρώπου δὲ τίθεμεν ἔργον ζωὴν τινα, ταύτην δὲ ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαν καὶ πράξεις μετὰ λόγου, σπουδαίου δ' ἀνδρὸς εὖ ταῦτα καὶ καλῶς, ἕκαστον δ' εὖ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρετὴν ἀποτελεῖται· εἰ δ' οὕτω, τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ' ἀρετὴν, εἰ δὲ πλείους αἱ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην καὶ τελειοτάτην. 1.7 1098a7-18 ²

In the context of the comments by Aquinas, and later translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it was interesting how certain English words had and have been used to translate particular Greek terms and thus imbue the text with particular meanings not necessarily relevant to an understanding of Aristotle's philosophy. Such as, in the above lines, ψυχή as 'soul', ἀρετή as 'virtue', and ἔργον as 'work' or 'activity', with words such as 'soul' and 'virtue' now often associated with Christianity.

My interpretation of meaning of those lines from Aristotle is somewhat different:

Thus if the goal of humans is to actualize the Quidditas through reason or at least not disconnected from reason, and if we also say that regarding the goal of an artist and of a skilled artist of the same genre - of a Kithara player and one more skilful, and to all genres - the goal of humans with a certain type of living, of a goal to actualize the Quidditas through reason, then according to such premises it would be proper for a skilled human to act excellently in accord with reason, and if there be several such human excellences, in accord with the most meritable and accomplished of them.

Where and for example there is 'merit' in place of 'virtue' and Quidditas in place of 'soul', with Quidditas (scholastic Latin) used by Thomas Aquinas and still a somewhat neutral world which can suggest several philosophical, non-religious, meanings according to context, such as the physis - character; nature; noumenon; intangibility - of a being or existent, as in Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a:

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, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς 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 [materies, ὕλη] 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.

For me, the above example from *Nicomachean Ethics* relates to what I still find to be the vexatious issues of exegesis, of intangibility, of naming or of not naming, since what a name, a denotata, denotes, not only can and does change from century to century, from one no longer existing society to another newer one, but also has a tendency to separate and divide one being or existent from others leading to the development of categories.

According to my understanding an enigmatic quotation attributed to Anaximander expresses this:

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]

As described in my essay *Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites* ³ I interpreted this as:

< [the] source ... of beings is the un-definitive ⁴ ...>

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment ⁵ to balance, ⁶ one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. ⁷

Which understanding is that once what was or appeared to be intangible is denoted by a name it is considered to be a particular being, a 'thing', or existent, and thus becomes distinguishable from other beings, we have concealed, covered-up, its physis, and as Heraclitus described Polemos is pervasive bringing-into-being discord because the process of naming is the genesis of what is perceived to be the opposite of that now named 'thing' or existent, which as Anaximander implied it ceases, for us, to be what it was, something of an intangible mystery. ⁸

Something, perhaps, that is numinous or which presences the numinous. Hence why, in the weltanschauung of patheimathos, ⁹ the wordless human faculty of empathy is considered to be a way to know and understand the physis of

human beings sans denotata, for it is:

"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.¹⁰

But such extrapolation, by an δέα/εἶδος or by an axiom or by a or *the* source of a 'revelation', by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in ἔρις, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as a fragment attributed to Heraclitus poetically expressed.

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.¹⁰

David Myatt
March 10th, 2024

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1. Primo igitur accipit ex praemissis quod proprium opus hominis sit operatio animae, quae est secundum ipsam rationem, vel non sine ratione. Liber 1, Lectio 10.

2.

σθαι. εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον
ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου, τὸ δ' αὐτό φαμεν ἔργον εἶναι τῷ γένει
τοῦδε καὶ τοῦδε σπουδαίου, ὥσπερ κιθαριστοῦ καὶ σπουδαίου
κιθαριστοῦ, καὶ ἀπλῶς δὴ τοῦτ' ἐπὶ πάντων, προστιθεμένης ¹⁰
τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑπεροχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἔργον· κιθαριστοῦ
μὲν γὰρ κιθαρίζειν, σπουδαίου δὲ τὸ εὖ· εἰ δ' οὕτως, [ἀνθρώ-
που δὲ τίθεμεν ἔργον ζωὴν τινα, ταύτην δὲ ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαν
καὶ πράξεις μετὰ λόγου, σπουδαίου δ' ἀνδρὸς εὖ ταῦτα καὶ
καλῶς, ἕκαστον δ' εὖ κατὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀρετὴν ἀποτελεῖται· ¹⁵
εἰ δ' οὕτω,] τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται
κατ' ἀρετὴν, εἰ δὲ πλείους αἱ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην καὶ
τελειοτάτην. ἔτι δ' ἐν βίῳ τελείω. μία γὰρ χελιδὼν ἕαρ οὐ

3 <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/dwmyatt-anaxmander.pdf>

4. 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 εἰσης
Τηλεμάχου ἔταροι μεγάλητορος, ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς
ὄπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκὴν, πείρατα τέχνης,
ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' εὐποίητόν τε πυράγρην,
οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν εἰργάξετο

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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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?

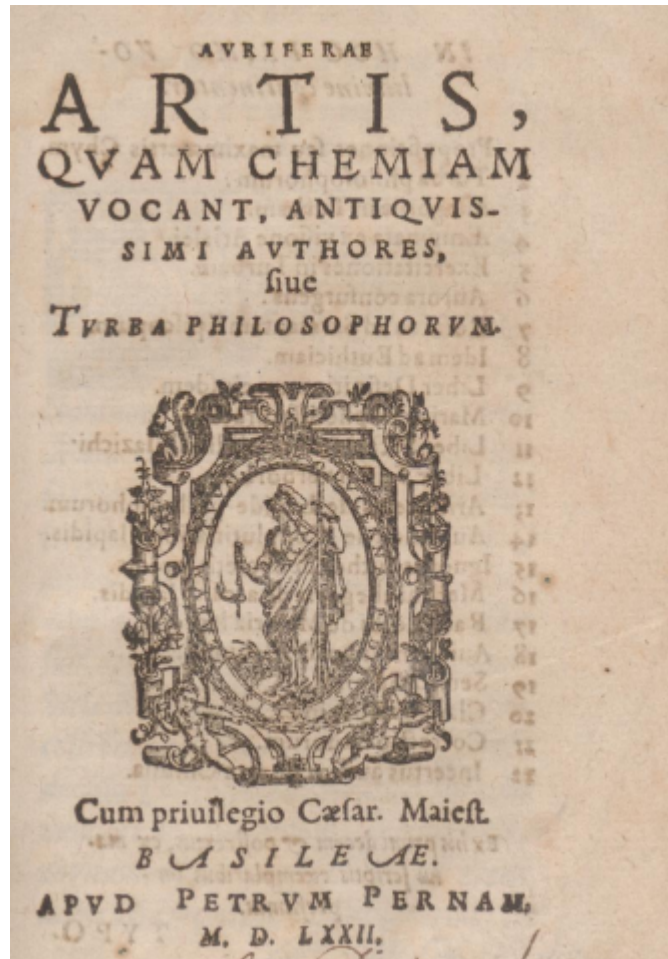
8. Compare the expression κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον from tractate One, v.16 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ from Heraclitus fragment 123. The former suggesting "a mysterium esoteric" even to this day - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf> - and the latter suggesting that the natural companion of Physis is concealment, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/heraclitus-fragment-123.pdf>

9. qv. *Introduction: Physis And Being in The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

10. *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites

Three quotations attributed to the Greek philosopher Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 BCE) one quotation in Greek and two in Latin, have been much debated over the centuries with all three suggesting an ancient *weltanschauung* which resonated with later *weltanschauungen* such as hermeticism and alchemy, which is possibly why the two Latin quotations were included in a 1572 CE compendium on alchemy in the section titled *Turba Philosophorum* itself a Latin translation of an earlier Arabic text by Muḥammad ibn Umayl al-Tamimi (c.900–960 CE).



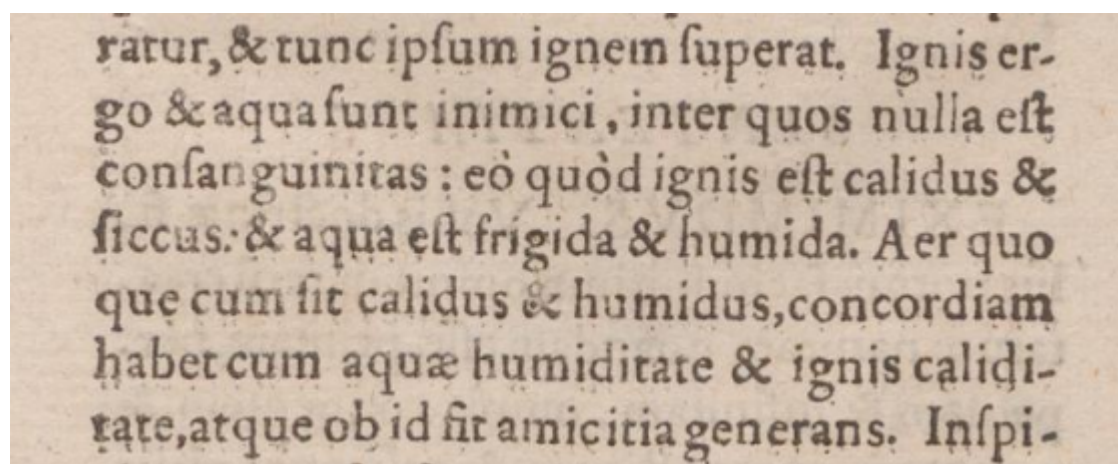
My methodology in interpreting these quotations derives from my understanding that certain Latin and Greek words as originally used by their authors represent philosophical, or hermetic or alchemical, principles or substances or what we now term 'archetypes', and that it is therefore erroneous to translate them by English words which over centuries may and often have acquired ordinary meanings, such as air', 'water', 'fire'.

The question of such principles is, as Aristotle wrote in his *Metaphysics*, (3.996a) an interesting and complex question answered by many in certain ways with others proposing as first principles Fire, Water, and Air - ἄλλος δέ τις πῦρ ὃ δὲ ὕδωρ ἢ ἄέρα - which leads him to the question of whether or not such principles are universal or individual.

The Latin Texts

The Latin of the first quotation in *Turba Philosophorum* is:

ignis ergo et aqua sunt inimici, inter quos nulla est consanguinitas, eo quod ignis est calidus et siccus, aqua vero frigida et humida



Auriferae artis, quam chemiam vocant, antiquissimi autores, sive turba philosophorum
Basileae, 1572

My interpretation of meaning:

Ignis ¹ and Acua ² are not friendly for there are no ties of kindred among them: Ignis is fiery and resolute while Acua is cool and moistening. ³

1. Retaining the Latin rather than simply translating here as 'fire' because Ignis (πυρὸς) is a philosophical, hermetic and alchemical, principle (or substance or archetype) as in the Corpus Hermeticum. For example:

σὺ εἶ ὁ θεός. ὁ σὸς ἄνθρωπος ταῦτα βοᾷ διὰ πυρός, δι' ἄερος, διὰ γῆς, διὰ ὕδατος, διὰ πνεύματος, διὰ τῶν κτισμάτων σου

You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Ignis [Fire, πυρός], through Air, through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song, Tractate XIII, 20. Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 2017. ISBN 9781976452369

Compare also a fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη [Diogenes Laertius, 11:7]

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.

2. Acua. I have opted for a somewhat obscure regional (Sardinian) variant of aqua rather than simply retaining the Latin or translating as 'water' because aqua is now a somewhat commercialized word with the Greek ὕδωρ, like Pyros, a hermetic and alchemical principle, qv. Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate IV, 1:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σῶματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ὢν, μόνωι ἑαυτῷ τοῦτο ἀναθεῖναι ἠθέλησε καὶ τὴν γῆν κοσμήσαι,

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire [pyros] or Water [ὕδωρ] or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being. (Myatt, op.cit.)

3. (i) qv. "moistness and consistency" in the second quotation, below. (ii) cf. William Caxton: "one somer is softe and moyste, and another is drye and wyndy." Myrroure of the Worlde, 1481 CE.

ooo

The Latin of the second quotation in Turba Philosophorum is:

doceo autem vos stellas esse igneas et aera ipsas continere et quod si aeris humiditas et spissitudo non esset, quae solis flammam separaret a creaturis, omnia subsistentia sol combureret.

The Arabic of Muḥammad ibn Umayl al-Tamimi (c.900–960 CE) from *Kitab al-ma 'al-waraqī* containing the quotation is:

قال أكسميدوس الجرعاني [. . .] فالماء والنار عدوان ليست
بينهما قرابة واشجة لأن النار حارّة يابسة والماء بارد رطب
فأمّا الهواء فحارّ رطب فأصلح ما بينهما برطوبته مع حرارته
فصار الهواء مصلحا بين الماء والنار. والأرواح كلهم من لطيف
بخار الهواء تكون لأنه إذا اجتمعت السخونة مع الرطوبة فليس
لهما بد من أن يخرج من بينهما لطيف يصير بخارا أو ربحا لأن
حرارة الشمس تُخرج

My interpretation of meaning:

I inform you that stars are Igneous, that Aeros ¹ bounds them, and it is the moistness and consistency ² of Aeros which keeps the flames of the Sun separate from created beings for otherwise the Sun would consume them.

1. Aeros. Here as in hermeticism and alchemy, ἀήρ is a particular philosophical principle, substance, or archetype. As in Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for example v.5:

καὶ ὁ ἀήρ ἐλαφρὸς ὢν ἠκολούθησε τῷ πνεύματι, ἀναβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ πυρὸς ἀπὸ γῆς καὶ ὕδατος, ὥς δοκεῖν κρέμασθαι αὐτὸν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ

Since Air [ἀέρος, Aeros] is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water [Acua] and as far as Fire [Pyros], to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

2. spissitudo from spissus, qv. σπιδής and cf. πυκνός. Here 'consistency' rather than 'broad' or 'dense'.

The Greek Text

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 ¹ ...>

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment ² to balance, ³ one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. ⁴

1. 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 ἐποίπνου. ἦλθε μὲν ἄρ βοῦς
ἐκ πεδίου, ἦλθον δὲ θοῆς παρὰ νηὸς εἰσης
Τηλεμάχου ἔταροι μεγάλητορος, ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς
ὅπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκήϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,
ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' ἐυποίητόν τε πυράγρην,
οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν εἰργάξετο

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.

2. 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' Ἐρινύες.

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.

3. 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.

4. 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?

Imbalance And Opposites

What I find in these fragments attributed to Anaximander is germane to our perception of our human physis and of how we have tried to understand it through words - denotata - and thus by certain named 'principles', and that ultimately we have to accept that we cannot, should not, attempt to understand it through words which bring-into-being a named opposite and thus a conflict between those perceived, believed in, and conflicting dialectical opposites with their attendant strife, discord, enmity, hatred, and suffering. That such a wordful perception is un-definitive because the tools we have hitherto manufactured and rely on are useless.

Thus, my own fallible answer to Aristotle's question of whether or not such principles are universal or individual is that they are ineluctably personal, with all we can presently hope do is use the wordless knowing of our empathy, and of our own pathei-mathos, as a guide.

David Myatt

21st February 2024

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 <...>

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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

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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.

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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.

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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 ἀπάντων ὧν

The numen of all beings is The Theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is The Theos, who is Perceivation 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 θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὧν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινας ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται.

The Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female [ἀρρενόθηλυσ] being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, 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 Copenhaver] 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 δὲ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίον 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 Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

5. πρᾶος. 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, perceivation, 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/>

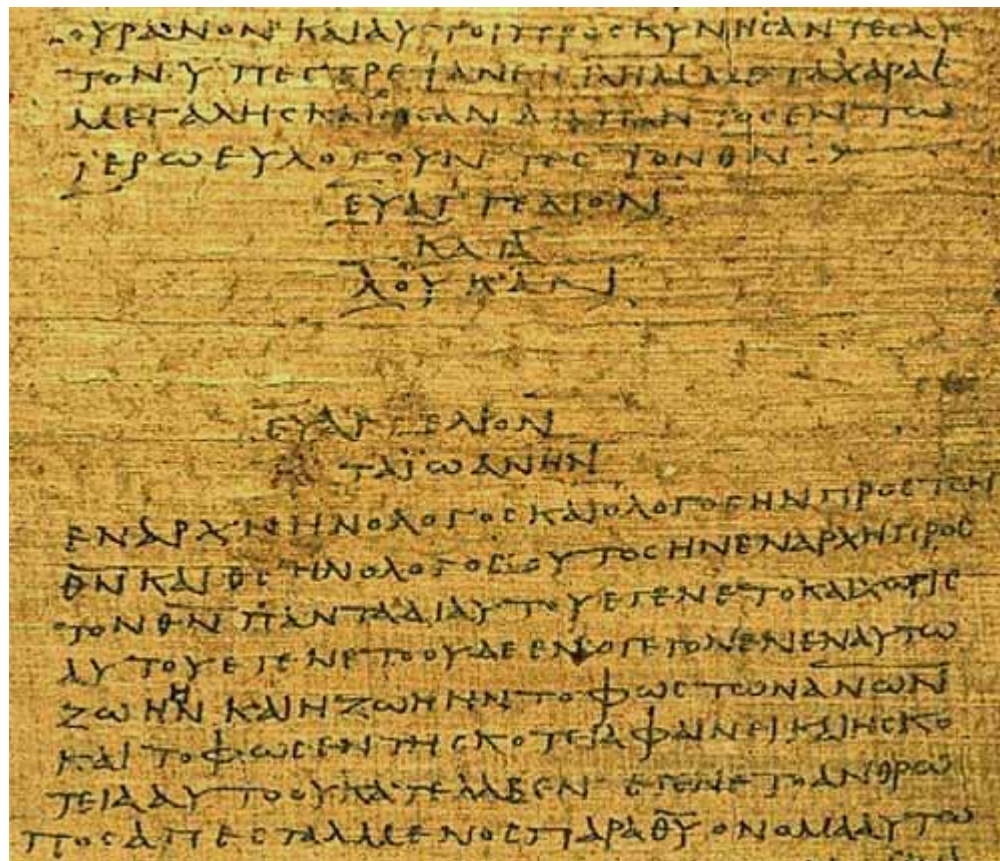
[2] D. Myatt. Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*,
<https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>



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



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Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE.
Gospel of John, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library

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Religion, Exegesis, And The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority

One of the many questions I have sought to answer over the past decades concerns religion, exegesis, and the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority; and in particular regarding religions which rely on written texts such as in the matter of Christianity the texts of the New Testament, the oldest of which were written in Hellenistic Greek. ¹

However, and again in the matter of Christianity, most of the followers of that religion depended on, and depend upon, translations of such written texts with, for example, Ministers and preachers and others quoting whatever translation(s) they accepted or accept when sermonizing about Christianity. In effect, therefore, they were mostly unknowingly committing the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority ² with regard to the translation or translations they accepted or accept as their authority. In effect, their faith, their belief, was and is rooted in others, not in their own research using primary sources and on logical deductions based on that research.

in the matter of Christianity this committance of the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority resulted in accusations of heresy, in schisms, in reformation, counter-reformation, with the attendant conflicts, intolerance, personal suffering, imprisonment, and deaths. Basically because one side believed (often fanatically, as in the matter of Cromwellian English Puritans) that they were 'right' and doing God's work. Was Cromwell, for example, or any of his followers, familiar with the Hellenistic Greek text of the New Testament and did their own translations of those texts and thus made decisions based on such translations? Or did they simply accept some translation or translations as their authority and thus committed the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority?

Which questioning was one reason I developed my individualistic philosophy (pedantically, weltanschauung) of pathei-mathos where it is personal empathy, pathei-mathos, and personal research using primary sources, ³ which inform and guide us. In the matter of Christianity my research inclined me to conclude that Johannine Christianity as evident in τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον (the Gospel according to John) was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations," ⁴ with my interpretation of τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον (the Gospel according to Matthew) chapter 5, verses 1-10, ⁵ also suggesting similar sentiments.

In addition, in the 2024 text *The Johannine Weltanschauung* ⁶ I went so far as to suggest that there were several passages in the Gospel of John which inclined me to answer a question I had posed in my 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli lanua*, of whether:

"a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - [would] be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of

Tertullian, Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aeque ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum." ⁷

I then proceeded, in that 2024 text, to analyze those passages in detail, providing in the footnotes the Greek texts and commenting on my translation of those texts, such as οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ from v.22 of chapter five.

However, these and other such interpretations were and are only my personal fallible ones and therefore have no authority external to me. Which is one reason why my preferred way of life now is a personal, wordless, contemplative, appreciation of the numinous in the immediacy of the living moment, and not the wordful way of religions, of ideologies, of causal abstractions, of ideas, contemporary, organized, or otherwise.

David Myatt
November 2024

1. For instance, Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75) dating from c.175-225 CE, qv. https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/moduli/BodmerVoicu_ing.pdf
2. qv. *Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/myatt-a-neglected-aspect.pdf>
3. As I noted in *Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit,

"Among primary sources are original manuscripts germane to the subject or to a historical person, such as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, Papyrus Bodmer in the Vatican Library, and in the case of Sappho fragments of papyri such as P. Oxyrhynchus. XV, 1787 fr. 1 and 2; archaeological or fossil remains from an historical period; contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials which describe or relate (i) events in which a person or persons participated in or observers of, (ii) ideas or creations, such as music, a philosophy, works of literature, poetry, and art-work which a person was responsible for and also their published writings in their original language, and authenticated manuscripts published and unpublished.

The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about such subjects or persons are secondary sources, with tertiary sources a collection or compendium of such secondary sources. In regard to the original language of primary sources, if a person venturing an opinion about such material cannot read the original language, and does not personally translate such a work or passages from such a work and thus has to use the translations of others then opinions and conclusions about that work are secondary sources."

4. *The Johannine Weltanschauung*, included in *Selected Writings 2012-2024*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/dwm-selected-writings-second-edition.pdf>

5. The Beatitudes, included in *Selected Writings*, op.cit

6. The work sans the Appendices and with a correction to the footnotes - the omitted footnote [2] has been added - is included below as an Appendix. The essay with Appendices and corrected footnotes is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/johannine-weltanschauung.pdf>

7. Tu Es Diaboli Ianua, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

Appendix

The Johannine Weltanschauung

Preface

In verse 26 of Chapter Four of The Gospel of John (τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον) Jesus, speaking to a Samaritan woman, is recorded as saying: Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀληθεία.

The first part - Ἐγώ εἰμι - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which in my view seems to somewhat lessen the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a 'being' the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is I AM who is speaking to you," which expression is what I, during my short perambulation as a Catholic monk wrote, near the verse in the margin of my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

Revisiting such marginalia decades later during my translation of and commentary on eight tractates of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I began to translate the Gospel itself and which translation and the accompanying commentary ^[1] given the relevance of the Gospel to particular verses in some of those tractates, for example φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος (phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being) from the Pœmandres tractate and ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν (Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings. And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark) from Chapter One of John.

This led to further questions some of which I discuss here.

David Myatt
Feria sexta in Parasceve
2024 CE

[1] Volume One: *The Gospel According To John*, Chapter 1 -5, Translation and Commentary, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

A Rhetorical Question

In my 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* I asked if:

"a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of Tertullian, Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequè ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum." [1]

The origin of such a questioning was threefold: (α) my translation of the Gospel of John [2], (β) what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus, such as the expression "let us then try what love can do" from William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*, with all three, according to my reading, emphasizing the importance of love; and (γ) what I sometimes felt as a monk in Choir when passages from the Old Testament regarding 'fire, brimstone, vengeance' - which seemed to me to be discordant with love - were chanted as part of Liturgia Horarum or, often as part of a Mass, read out.

Apropos (α) there were several significant passages from that Gospel which inclined me to consider whether the life and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth annulled the Old Testament both as a guide to understanding and appreciating Theos, the supreme deity, and as a guide to daily life and remembrance through ritual and prayer, with the proviso that my answers were and are just my fallible answers just as my translation, or rather interpretation of meaning, of that Gospel was fallible and neither possessed nor professed any authority.

The first significant passage was from Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [3], with my use in my translation of the term Judaeans, rather than the traditional 'Jews', explained in Appendix One.

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.
19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,
20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you
21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,
22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son
23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.
24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.
26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,
27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

Are the following phrases indicative? "He annulled the Sabbath", "for the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son", "whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him",

"whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting", "gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing".

The second passage was from Chapter Three, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [4],

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 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.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

Of significance here are: "so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting", "their deeds were harmful", "anyone who does what is mean", and "lest their deeds be exposed".

As noted in my commentary [4] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional translations of this passage such as this from the King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

There is a personal trust instead of a believiing; harmful deeds instead of 'evil' deeds; being mean instead of being 'evil', and being manifest instead of being 'exposed'.

The third passage returns us to Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [5]

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.

2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades

3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water

4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.

6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

Again, and as noted in my commentary, [5] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional

translations of this passage such as this also from the King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

There is, most noticeably, Envoy of Theos (ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου) instead of 'angel', 'no more missteps' instead of 'sin no more' and harass (διώκω) instead of 'persecute' with my interpretation of ἁμαρτία as 'error' or 'mistake' or here as 'misstep' rather than 'sin' explained in the Introduction of my translation:

(i) In 8.7 I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) 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 seems to express what the Beatitudes express, [6] and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her."

(ii) In 1.10 - ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο - I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among - with - those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' - etymon: Latin praesentia - suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

Vexata Quaestio

The question is one of not only the interpretation of particular Hellenistic (κοινὴ) Greek words, such as ἁμαρτία, which over centuries have acquired various meanings not necessarily germane to the milieu of the author of the Gospel attributed to John, but also the authority of the ancient Church which pronounced what constituted Christian belief and doctrine and thus what was considered to be heresy. Thus, to provide just one example, the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεὸς and the denotatum ὁ θεὸς in the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

In this context my interpretation of John, evident in the above three passages, may well be heretical because it presents both a different Jesus and a different teaching where he annuls not only the Judaeen Sabbath but also the authority of the Old Testament since he is gifted by Theos "with the authority of choosing" with anyone trusting in him having "life everlasting".

Thus, it could be argued that Jesus abrogates the Old Testament because it is no longer needed since "whomsoever

hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting," with the Logos as expounded in the Gospel of John:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [Chapter One, v.2]

In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός), πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας [Chapter One, v.14]

And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

Apropos authority and Christianity, and the 'heresy' or unorthodoxy of various interpretations of texts, the schisms, the reformations and divisions, over the past two millennia, my answer derives from one of the the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos: that it is the empathy and the pathei-mathos of individuals 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. Which, given the personal and the individual nature of empathy and pathei-mathos, implies that it is for us as individuals to decide.

My own pathei-mathos inclines me to favour the message of personal love, of humility, of trying not to repeat our mistakes, of appreciating that there is some-thing, a type of Being, beyond and more powerful than us and whatever we bring-into-being be it an idea, an ideology, a creed, a nation, a State, a jurisprudence, or an Empire. Some of us may name this Being as 'God'; or θεὸς or 'the gods' to which they give personal names. Some may describe it, as many hermeticists do, as The One, The Monas, The Father who is both male and female: ἀρρενόθηλυσ. [7]

I have discovered this message in the Gospel of John; in the Corpus Hermeticum; in many of the writings of Cicero; in the poetry of Sappho and TS Eliot; in the music of JS Bach; and in many other writings and Cræfts ancient and modern. [8]

Notes

[1] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

[2] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[3]

Text:

¹⁸ διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυε τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ. ¹⁹ Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν, ἐὰν μή τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. ²⁰ ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάντα δεικνυσιν αὐτῷ ἃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ· καὶ μείζονα τούτων δείξει αὐτῷ ἔργα, ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζητε. ²¹ ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὓς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ. ²² οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκε τῷ υἱῷ. ²³ ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱόν, καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱόν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν. ²⁴ ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων, καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με, ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. ²⁵ ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ νεκροὶ ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσονται. ²⁶ ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. ²⁷ καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ καὶ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστί.

Commentary:

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeian laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son.* οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing.* εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened.* ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.* καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

[4]

Text

¹⁶ Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ¹⁷ οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ. ¹⁸ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. ¹⁹ αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ κρίσις, ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς· ἦν γὰρ πονηρὰ αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα. ²⁰ πᾶς γὰρ ὁ φαῦλα πράσσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς, καὶ οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. ²¹ ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα φανερωθῇ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ἐν Θεῷ ἐστὶν εἰργασμένα. ²² Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν· καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβε μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτιζεν. ²³ ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν Αἰνῶν ἐγγὺς τοῦ Σαλείμ, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ· καὶ παρεγίνοντο καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο.

Commentary

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[5]

Text

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. ² Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα, ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα. ³ ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος πολὺ τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν, ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν. ⁴ ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγίνετο, ὃν δὴποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι. ⁵ ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ. ⁶ τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλεις ὑγιὴς γενέσθαι; ⁷ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα, ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ, βάλλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν

ὧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. ⁸ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγεῖραι, ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου, καὶ περιπάτει. ⁹ καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράββατον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιπάτει. Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. ¹⁰ ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, Σάββατόν ἐστιν· οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἄραι τὸν κράββατον. ¹¹ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. ¹² ἠρώτησαν οὖν αὐτόν, Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπὼν σοι, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; ¹³ ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστιν· ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν, ὅχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. ¹⁴ μετὰ ταῦτα εὐρίσκει αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας· μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χειρόν τί σοι γένηται. ¹⁵ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἀνήγγειλε τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὸν ὑγιῆ. ¹⁶ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον τὸν Ἰησοῦν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ.

Commentary

2.

the place of the sheep. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

named in the language of the Hebrews. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

the infirm. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

awaiting a change in the water. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ὥς δήποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete.* ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll.* κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete.* καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated.* Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps.* μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἁμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass.* διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[6] My translation of The Beatitudes is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>.

[7] qv. my *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[8] Cræft: "this older spelling in an esoteric context implies [...] a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned or received in the traditional manner from a master of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte that "is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires". *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, op.cit.

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Questions Of Hermeneutics And Exegesis

For over twenty years questions of hermeneutics and exegesis in relation to religions, ideologies, and philosophies have interested and concerned me, leading to my conjecture that the use of denotata to express a revelation, a spirituality, an idea, an ideal, or a philosophy, results in not only a dialectic of opposites - for example in the Gospels of Christianity ἁμαρτία (conventionally interpreted in Gospel translations as sin) contrasted with 'righteousness' (and being saved, rewarded by God with everlasting life in Heaven) and φαῦλος (conventionally in interpreted in Gospel translations as evil) contrasted with 'good' - but also in problems of exegesis: as in how Hellenistic Greek is expounded in terms of a modern language such as English. Thus, is the interpretation of 'sin' from the Hellenistic Greek ἁμαρτία imposing a meaning that may not have been germane to the milieu of such an ancient period in all or certain instances? [1]

In the matter of the Gospels of John did the author use ἁμαρτία to express, to expound, something - 'sin' - which might well have been a foreign concept to speakers of the Greek of that time when there was a common belief among many of them in a hierarchy of pagan deities and of propitiation (such as offering gifts or a sacrifice to the gods) for misdeeds or for 'offending' a god or gods or to ask for their help?

Consider the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum some arguably written around the time or not long after that Gospel, with the Poemandres tractate centred around θεός as in this from v.3:

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν·

"I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." [2]

Is theos here the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the God of Christianity? Or is it better to understand theos in a non-anthropomorphic way as Being, the source of beings, mortal and otherwise? If the interpretation is 'God' then this tractate, and many of the others, arguable express early Christian weltanschauungen with an implicit dialectic of opposites, unlike the neutral, non-anthropomorphic Being which can metaphysically be understood as 'the divine', the numinous. [3]

Such a dialectic, as I have previously endeavoured to explain, [4] invariably leads to conflict both internal, within some individuals, and external between individuals and entities, such as religious or political groups or factions who or which claim to have the correct or a better interpretation or understanding of their beliefs or ideology. Hence extremism [5] and the suffering that such extremism causes.

My personal experiences, over some four decades, and my subsequent reflexion on that experience, have led me to conclude that, rather than denotata, the personal experiencing of the numinous through empathy and pathei-mathos is of fundamental importance in understanding both our physis (φύσις) - and thus our relation to Being and to beings - and Being, the numinous, itself. [6]

To illustrate the dialectic of denotata and the subsequent suffering caused there is the National Socialism of Germany between 1933 and 1945. This was a way of life centred around denotata such as kampf, nation, and ethnic identity, with individuals judged by, and expected to judge others by, the primary criterion of ethnicity, with particular ethnicities assigned a certain value (high or low), and each individual judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land) and the ethnicity they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, ethnicities, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

This German National Socialist way of life was therefore a collective, supra-personal, one with the empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals, and the personal judgement and compassion derived from them, ignored or suppressed in favour of obedience to the 'will of the collective' (the folk, the nation) embodied by Der Führer and through the führerprinzip and with disobedience not only disapproved of but liable to be punished. This dialectic of opposites - of certain types of individuals or ways of behaviour being better than others and with The Third Reich having a particular destiny achievable through kampf - naturally led to the impersonal harshness of the Nürnberger Gesetze, as well as to the invasion of Poland and thence to the Second World War with the attendant deaths and suffering of millions of human beings. German National Socialism was thus from its beginnings to its ending in 1945 an extremism whose principles, causes, and characteristics promoted and incited harsh, uncompassionate, actions.

In contrast, the personal empathy and pathei-mathos of individuals provides a natural balance devoid of denotata, expressed or implied, and can only promote individual actions consistent with compassion. It cannot be extrapolated from the individual experiencing to form anything supra-personal expressed by a denotatum or by some denotata such as an -ism or an -ology be such religious, ideological, or political or otherwise, since in doing so its individual physis, its natural nameless balance, is replaced sooner or later by a dialectic of opposites.

In practical terms this implies the mortal individual could, at best, be a fallible example or inspiration for some others, since to claim or to be perceived by others as other than fallible and mortal, and other than a possible and personal inspiration, is ὕβρις (hubris) and a contradiction of the nameless balance that for centuries we have, according to my

understanding, erroneously denoted by appellations such as θεός, ὁ θεός, and God with the inevitable dialectic of exegesis and conflict and of suffering.

In relation to hubris,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύνθει 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

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218

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. [7]

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ
δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν. Anaximander [8]

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. [9]

David Myatt
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[1] I expounded on the matter of the word sin in *Interpretation and The Question of Sin* which forms part of my 2013 essay *Exegesis and Translation, Some Personal Reflexions*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

[2] My translation, from *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[3] From *Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*, appendix II of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] In Part Seven, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>; and in the essay *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[5] In *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* I defined extremism and an extremist thus:

"By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that 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 nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) 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 philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[6] My conclusions are outlined in two works: *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>, and *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] 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 ὥς 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).

[8] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[9] 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'.

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Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos

In my recent (2023) essay *A Sacramental Link?* I mentioned that my interpretation of the Gospel of John inclined me to suggest that Johannine Christianity was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations." [1]

My interpenetration of that text is however just one of thousands over centuries with many of those other interpretations, of that and the other Gospels and the Scriptures in general, causing schisms, conflicts, and accusations of heresy as in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

Which returns us to the problems of exegesis and denotata, and the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos which are:

- (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 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 to Being;
- (iii) that denotata 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 our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceiverations 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." [2]

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.

In practical terms this knowing implies a certain humility since empathy and pathei-mathos inform us that we are fallible beings, arising as this personal knowledge does from the intimations of the numinous that empathy and pathei-mathos almost invariably provide: of our connexion to other beings, human and otherwise; of our minute place in the Cosmos as one mortal, short-lived, being on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies; and of the suffering of so many human beings, century after century, often caused by wars and conflicts often based on some certitude of belief in some cause, or on some passion, or on some interpretation of some religion, or some ideology or notion or 'destiny' with such wars and conflicts generationally replaced by others based on other certitudes of belief or on the same old passions.

A forgetting of this humility, will-fully or otherwise, has however frequently occurred and still occurs with the individual seeking to make their pathei-mathos the basis for some -ism or -ology or more often some interpretation of some existing -ism or -ology. However, a remembering of such humility can often lead to the life of the reclusive mystic or to a life of compassionately seeking to alleviate in some non-confrontational and practical way at least some of the suffering of other life, human and otherwise.

As I noted in *Soli Deo Gloria*,

"all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological

allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals. " [3]

A Personal View

While I appreciate how various Ways of living and codified religions can presence and often have presented the numinous and thus have been and are for many a conduit toward a personal humility and compassion, my personal perceivration has been for over a decade and remains my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which is just some recollections of my experiences and contemplations regarding the loss of loved ones, of working and living on farms in England, and of solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of rural English Shires.

Given the 'personal horizon' of these recollections and contemplations they cannot not, without removing from them their essence of a personal wordless experiencing of the numinous, form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a philosophy or a Way to guide others, just as the recollections and contemplations of others ancient and modern, and the authors themselves, should not be or become or be seen as a guide or even as a meritorious example.

As it says in Ayat 63 of Surah 25 of the Quran:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are those who walk on earth in humility and, when the arrogant speak to them, they reply Salaam." [4]

As the poetess Sappho wrote:

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἄβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε [5]

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun

As it says in the Beatitudes:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean. [6]

Which interpretations of mine illustrate the problems of exegesis, and why my preference, now and for over a decade, is and has been for the wordless perceivations of empathy and of a personal pathei-mathos.

David Myatt
October 24th, 2023

[1] The essay is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[2] *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022. www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf

[3] *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011. Included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

[4] Ar-Rahmaan is one of the names of Allah, signifying The Most Merciful. The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are the Believers who follow the Word of Allah in the Quran and as manifest in the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

[5] P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

[6] The Gospel According To Matthew 5: 3-10. My translation and commentary of The Beatitudes is included in www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf

Since I have used unusual words - for example, the spiritus instead of the conventional 'the spirit', and Empyrean instead of 'heaven' - I append here extracts from my commentary.

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 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 Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

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 ἐξελθοῦσα: 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 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. [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>