

Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief

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Contents

- Prefatory Note
- I Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations
- II Numinous Expiation
- III Blue Reflected Starlight
- IV Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Part One

°Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Part Two

°Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

°Jurisprudence and Society

°The Modern State

°Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

Part Three

°Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

°Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

Part Four

°Ontology and Denotatum

°The Simple Way of Harmony

Part Five

°A Very Personal Conclusion

- Appendix - Glossary of Terms and Greek Words
-

Prefatory Note

This compilation is of some letters and essays of mine written between during the past two years (2012 - 2013) dealing with questions of religion, redemption, expiation, humility, and spirituality in general, and thus compliments both the collection of my writings about the philosophy of pathei-mathos in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and my autobiography *Myngath*.

All translations, and interpretations of the meaning of texts (Quranic, poetic and otherwise), are mine, and, in the interests of clarity, I have included a glossary of terms and Greek words - taken from *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* - given that (i) I tend to use certain Greek words to express my meaning, and (ii) I often have a particular philosophical interpretation or understanding of certain English terms.

David Myatt
2013

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993
In Loving Remembrance of Frances, died 29th May 2006

I Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations

In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own

non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism; for older paganisms such as (i) θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, and (ii) άγνωστος θεός [1], and for the slowly evolving more recent paganisms evident for instance in a spiritual concern for the welfare of our planet and for the suffering we have for so long inflicted on other humans and on the other life with which we share this planet.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I am somewhat saddened by what appears to me to be the unwisdom and often the arrogance of those who, intemperate in words or deeds - or both - disrespectfully fail to appreciate such religions and spiritual ways and the treasure, the culture, the *pathei-mathos*, that they offer, concentrating as such intemperate people so often do on what they perceive to be or feel to be are the flaws, the mistakes, of such religions and such spiritual ways while so often ignoring (as such people tend to do) their own personal flaws, their own mistakes, as well as the reality that it is we humans beings - with our ὕβρις, with our lack of humility, our lack of appreciation for the numinous, and with our intolerance and our often arrogant and harsh interpretations of such religions - who have been the cause and who continue to be the cause of such suffering as has blighted and as still blights this world.

As Heraclitus mentioned over two thousand years ago:

ὑβριν χρη̄ σβεννύναι μάλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν [2]

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

As recounted of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago:

ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον.
[3]

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

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God,

or Allah, or θεοί or Nature, or δίκη or Wyrđ, or Karma or ψυχή or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - ὕβρις - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead.

This insight of humility is evident, for instance and for me, in the sacred music of the Christian church; from the simplicity - the numinous purity - of plainchant to the polyphony of Byrd, Palestrina, and Vittoria to the counterpoint of JS Bach. For I find in this music an expression both of κάλος and of the numinous mysterium that is at the heart of Christianity, manifest as this mysterium is, for Christianity, in the allegory of the life, the betrayal, the crucifixion, of Jesus of Nazareth and by a belief in redemption through both love and suffering. And this is essentially the same, albeit unallegorical and often wordless, numinous mysterium which we personally feel or we know or our touched by through that sadness born of our own pathei-mathos; by our acknowledgement of our mistakes, by our personal experience of suffering and grief, and by our heartfelt longing for, our hope for, the beautiful, for the redemption of innocence, for peace and love, manifest for example not only in the Christian allegory of Heaven, in the Muslim Jannah, in the Jewish Shamayim, but also in a very personal often private longing and hope for a better world and which longing and hope we so tearfully know is so often broken or forgotten or thrust aside by both our egoistical self and by other human beings: because of their, because of our, weakness, our failure to be the person we feel or we know we might be or perhaps could have been, born as such knowing and such feelings so often are in the inner intimacy that follows a personal grief or being a witness to or an accomplice in some act or acts of harshness and suffering.

This inner intimacy with the stark reality of our own being and with the world of suffering is what has caused so many people over thousands of years to try and not only reform themselves but also to try, in whatever way, to alleviate or try to alleviate some of the suffering of others, an effort and a reform so often aided by religion [4] and thus a tribute to those positive qualities, those personal virtues, which religions have so often revealed or reminded us of. Which is why - as I mentioned recently to another correspondent [5] - I incline toward the view that on balance the good that religions such as Christianity have done over millennia outweighs the suffering that has been caused by those who adhered to or who believed in some harsh interpretation of that religion.

There has thus developed within me these past seven years an understanding of my past hubris, my past multitudinous mistakes, and of how a lack of humility on my part - my extremism, my certainty of knowing

about myself, my certainty of knowing about some cause or ideology or harsh interpretation of some religion I accepted and adhered to - was probably one of the most significant factors in that hubris and those suffering-causing mistakes. Which personal understanding, together with a decades-long experience of others such as I, led me to hypothesize that one of the fundamental causes of extremism is a masculous certainty of knowing and that, therefore, religions and spiritual ways are and can be - when not interpreted in a harsh, hubriatic, way but rather via that personal humility and that appreciation of the numinous I believe are intrinsic to them - affective and effective answers to such extremism and to the harm that extremists cause.

In essence, therefore, my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* - my much revised 'numinous way' - is my own spiritual answer, born of fifty years of diverse peregrinations; my personal answer and response to the certitude of knowing, the harshness, that all extremisms (political, religious, and social) manifest, as well as also - perhaps, hopefully - being (as a spiritual way) in some small manner, and now sans a personal belief in *judicium divinum*, some expiation for all the suffering that I over decades caused or contributed to.

The numinous, the beautiful - the divine - remain, to remind us. As someone so beautifully expressed it:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäh,
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. [6]

DWM
2012

Notes

[1] *qv.* Pausanias. Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις 1.1.4 -

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Σκιράδος Ἀθηναῖς ναὸς ἐστὶ καὶ Διὸς ἀπωτέρω, βωμοὶ
δὲ θεῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων Ἄγνωστων καὶ ἠρώων καὶ παίδων τῶν
Θησέως καὶ Φαληροῦ

Also here is a shrine [ναός] to Athena Skirados and, further afield, one to Zeus, and others to [the] un-named unknown gods, to the heroes, as well as to those children of Theseus and Phalerus

[2] Fragment 43

[3] John, 8.7

[4] For example, I well remember, decades ago, in the first month or so of my training to be a nurse doing some research into the history of nursing as preparation for my turn in giving a talk and presentation to our class as part of our nursing course; and finding just how entwined religion and the origins of organized nursing were, from the fourth century (CE) Roman lady Fabiola to the monastic infirmaries of medieval Europe to the al-Nuri al-Kabir bimaristan in Damascus [qv. Ahmad Isa: *Tarikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* [History of Hospitals in Islam]. Damascus, 1939] to the Hospitallers of St John to Florence Nightingale and beyond.

I also remember the hundreds of people met over some forty years whose faith inspired or aided them to endeavour, in social or political or legal or personal ways, to alleviate some of the suffering of others, and who each, in their own way - and whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or Buddhist - helped make a positive difference.

[5] qv. *Just My Fallible Views, Again - Replies to Some Enquiries*. 2012

[6] Rilke, *Die erste Duineser Elegie*

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve
Into his very existence.
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen
Which we can only just survive
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.
Every angel is numinous

II Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for

suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are *ὑβρις* and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond *πόλεμος* and *ὑβρις* and thus beyond *ἔρις*; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

*εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυγόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ
γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεῶν]*

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of *Δίκη* [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - *σωφρονεῖν*, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of *ὑβρις*, a humility which our *πάθει μάθος* makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong

deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition, by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless. That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other “thing” we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos.

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward *σωφρονεῖν*; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, wu-wei, and a knowing of the wisdom of Δίκη.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

DWM
February 2012

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - ἐναντιοδρομίας - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80. qv. my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις."

[4] As mentioned in my *Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, Δίκη is that noble,

respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

*Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει*

In respect of *Δίκη*, I write and spell it thus - in this modern way and with a capital Δ - to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general *δίκη*. As a numinous principle, or axiom, *Δίκη* suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of *δίκη* personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, *Δίκη* implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - *σωφρονεῖν* - that *πάθει μάθος* brings and restores, and which accumulated *πάθει μάθος* of a particular folk or *πόλις* forms the basis for their ancestral customs. *δίκη* is therefore, as the numinous principle *Δίκη*, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between *ἀρετή* and *ὑβρις* - between the *ὑβρις* that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for *ἀρετή* becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, is *ὑβρις*. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective - 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 of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

III Blue Reflected Starlight

As it departed toward the vastness of interstellar space, the Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft in 1990^(ce) transmitted an image of Earth from a distance of over four billion miles; the most distant image of Earth we human beings have ever seen. The Earth, our home, was a bluish dot; a mere Cosmic speck among the indefinity, visible only because of reflected starlight and - in the solar panorama imaged by Voyager on that February day - of no observed importance. One speck in one galaxy in a vast Cosmos of billions upon billions of galaxies, and one speck that would most probably appear, to a non-terran, less interesting than the rings of Saturn, just visible from such a distance.

Yet we human beings, en masse, continue to live in a manner which not only belies our Cosmic insignificance but which militates against the empathy, the humility, that such a Cosmic perspective can and does engender. Thus do we individually, as well as collectively, have pride in our lives, our deeds, our 'accomplishments', just as we continue to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself: and exploit for pleasure, or profit, or from some desire or because of some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation we believe in or support. Either believing or asserting, in our hubris, that we 'know' - that we 'understand' - what we are doing, or reckless of consequences because unable or unwilling to control our desires; unable or unwilling to control ourselves or our addiction to some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation.

Thus does the suffering we here inflict on other life - human and otherwise - continue. Thus does our human-wrought destruction continue, as if we are in thrall consciously or otherwise to the ideation that our planet, and its life including other humans, are some kind of 'resource', a means to supply our needs or a way to satiate our desires. So easy, so very easy, to injure, hate, and kill. So easy, so very easy, to satiate the desire to be in control. So very easy to place ourselves first; even easier to have our feelings, our desires, subsume, overcome, whatever consideration we might give, or previously had given, to others and to other life. So easy, so very easy, to make excuses - consciously or otherwise - to ourselves, and to others, for what we have done or what we are about to do; for always there is the excuse of self-interest or self-preservation, or the excuse of desires or some cause or some faith or

some ideology or some ideation. So easy, so very easy, to spew forth words.

It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the pathei-mathos of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal pathei-mathos - whose personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the indefinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history.

As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical *φύσις* of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to?

Are we, we men here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves, and are given, no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for our thousand year upon thousand year of violence against women? Are we capable of such a reformation of our kind that such reprehensible violence against women by cowardly men becomes only historical fact?

Are we, here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for wars, armed conflicts, brutality against perceived or stated 'enemies', and murderous intervention? Such a reformation of ourselves that wars, armed conflicts, such brutality, and such interventions, become only historical fact?

Or are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?

Or will we, or some of us, betake ourselves away to colonize faraway non-terran places, taking with us our unreformed paradoxical *φύσις* to perchance again despoil, destroy, as some of our kind once betook themselves away to forever change parts of this speck of blue reflected starlight which gave us this fortunity of Life?

Yet again I admit I have no answers.

DWM
2012

IV

Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

Some Personal Musings

Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion

and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny',

hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

DWM
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Part One

Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἂν ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ,
διανοιχθήσονται ὑμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ
γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν? Most translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves,

an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׂרָפָה - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׂרָפָה can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדָעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract 'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν - also suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy

and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκειται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας
ὕδαρεϊ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνήρ,
τούμδον παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although

the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοούμενοι καλὰ
ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel

message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

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Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] *qv. A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] *qv. the Chimaera* (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἡ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄπιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

Part Two

Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الخبيث - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطيبات - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَىٰ الْأَلْبَابَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [أعجبك] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طيبة - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ذنوبكم] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِتَّخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَن تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنَىٰ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [تَيَمَّمُوا] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

Jurisprudence and Society

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the

success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, *تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the

law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

The Modern State

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Κάισαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of *pathei-mathos* a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this

'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἀρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

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Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of *أَعْجَبَكَ* , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85 - *وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ* - do not let their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and *الرُّعْبَ* :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an

unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre
because they, without any authority revealed about such things,
associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that
harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of pathemathos, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of fiqh) is لعادة محكمة . That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

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Part Three

Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the

understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of *pathei-mathos*, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter
Because [the goddess] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement
And the radiant splendour of her face
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour... [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5], non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of *pathei-mathos*, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of *pathei-mathos* reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life,

and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται·
πά]γχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
π]άντι τ[ο]ὔτ', ἄ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθουσα
κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
τὸν [ἀρ]ιστον
καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα
κωῦδ[ε πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
[]σαν
[
[]αμπτον γὰρ [
[
[]...κούφως τ[]οη[.]ν
[
..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-
σ' οὐ] παρεοίσας,
τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κὰν ὄπλοισι
[πεσδομ]άχευτας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is

repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

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Part Four

Ontology and Denotatum

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of *pathei-mathos*, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of *ψυχή* [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of *ψυχή*.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of *φύσις* (*physis*). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our *φύσις*, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our *φύσις*, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presented as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in

ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπίροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν
διαίρων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους
ἀνθρώπους λαυθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα
εὔδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

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]

The Simple Way of Harmony

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative

way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

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

Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. *qv.* my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] *qv.* *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and 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 respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purview of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal

situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

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Part Five

A Very Personal Conclusion

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems

fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature en masse - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of *δίκη*, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our *pathei-mathos* and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the *ἀρμονία* we, in such honourable moments, are.

Appendix

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

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

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

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

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

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

Acausal

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

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

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

ἀρετή

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

Aristotelian Essentials

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

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

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

ἀρμονία

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

Compassion

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

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

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

Cosmic Perspective

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

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

δαίμων

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

Descriptor

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

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

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

δίκη

Depending on context, *δίκη* could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way,

or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

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

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

Empathy

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

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

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

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

Enantiodromia

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

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

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

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

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

ἔρις

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

ἦ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρείδησι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

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

Extremism

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

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

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

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

εὐταξία

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

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

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

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

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

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

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

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

The second is from several centuries later:

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

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

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of *ψυχή* - of Life, of our *φύσις* - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of

necessity, balanced by *σωφρονεῖν* and in accord with *δίκη*. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of *ὑβρις*, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, *ἀρμονίη*.

Humility

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

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

Ideation

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

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

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

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

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

Morality, for the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that

empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and *εὐταξία* - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

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

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

Masculous

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

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

Muliebral

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

Numinous

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of *ψυχή*; a balance which *ἄβρις* upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to *ψυχή*, and which relation is that we are but one mortal

emanation of *ψυχή*.

Pathei-Mathos

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

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

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

Politics

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

Πόλεμος

Πόλεμος - Heraclitus fragment 80 - is not some abstract 'war' or strife or Kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as *δίκη* but also accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by *enantiodromia*.

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

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

Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

φύσις suggests either (i) the Homeric usage of nature or character of a person, as for example in *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3, and also in Herodotus (2.5.2):

Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρης τοιήδε

or (ii) *Φύσις* (Physis) as in Heraclitus fragment 123 - that is, the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance, and which natural nature we, as human beings, have a natural [an unconscious] inclination to conceal; either because of *ὑβρις* or through an ignorance, an unknowing, of ourselves as an emanation of *ψυχή*.

In terms of the nature or the character of an individual:

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

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

Heraclitus fragment 112

Religion

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

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

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others,

to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

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

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

Society

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

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

State

By the term The State is meant:

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

The Good

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

Time

In the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the *φύσις* - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of *ψυχή*, differing from

being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

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

ὑβρις

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

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

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

Way

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

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

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, *σωφρονεῖν*, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature,

to other life and other human beings: *rerum divinarum et humanarum*. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἀρμονίη*.

Wu-wei

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

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

ψυχή

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

cc David Myatt 2013

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