

Three Emanations

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I.

From Mythoi To Empathy Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in

terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used 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. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide 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.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"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." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level;

and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of

the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

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[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"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."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculous, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2103. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"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, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

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."

II.

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
ὑβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρῦθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with
Mischief.

The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218 [1]

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος

κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [2]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

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

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [3]

This understanding and appreciation of ἄρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on

καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos* and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

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[1] My translation. Some notes on the translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness. In this work, as in *Θεογονία* (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of the ancestral tradition of ancient Greece, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals.

Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

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

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

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

ignorant).

[2] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[3] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda, XXVI. This is also a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

III.

Perhaps Words Are The Problem

Of the many metaphysical things I have pondered upon in the last five or so years, one is the enigma of words. More specifically, of how nomen - a name, a term, a designation - can not only apparently bring-into-being abstractions (and their categories) but also prescribe both our thinking and our actions, with such abstractions and such prescription so often being used by us, we mortals, to persuade, to entreat, to manipulate, to control, not only ourselves but through us others of our human kind. Whence how denotatum can and so often does distance, distract, us from the essence - the physis - that empathy and its wordless (acausal) knowing can reveal and has for certain mortals so often in past millennia revealed.

For we seem somehow addicted to talk, to chatter - spoken and written - just as we assume, we believe, so often on the basis of nomina that we expand our pretension of knowing beyond the local horizon of a very personal wordless empathy breeding thus, encouraging thus, such hubris as has so marked our species for perhaps five thousand years. With such hubris - such certitude of knowing - being the genesis of such suffering as we have so often inflicted on others and, sometimes, even upon ourselves.

Would that we could, as a sentient species, dispense with nomen, nomina, and thus communicate with others - and with ourselves - empathically and thus acquire the habit of acausal wordless knowing. There would then be

no need for the politics of propaganda and the rhetoric of persuasion; no need - no ability - to lie or pretend to others. For we would be known - wordlessly revealed - for who and what we really are. And what a different world that would be where no lie, no deception, would work and where guilt could never be concealed.

For some, a few mortals, such a wordless knowing is already, and has been for centuries, the numinous reality, born as such a personal reality is either via their pathei-mathos or via their innate physis. Which is perhaps why such others often secrete, or desire to secrete, themselves away: an isolated or secluded family - rural, or island - living, perhaps, and perhaps why Cistercians, some mystics, some artists, and others of a similar numinous kind, have sought to dwell, to live, in reclusive or communal silence.

There is - or so there seems to me to be according to my admittedly, fallible, uncertainty of knowing - a presencing of the essence of almost all religions here in such a knowing of the value, the mysterium, of silence. Of that which we so often in our hubris forget, have forgotten, or never known: that wordless, that empathic, that so very personal acausal knowing, that personal grief and personal suffering - that the personal awareness of the numinous - so often engenders, so often breeds, as has been so recounted for millennia in our human culture of pathei-mathos.

Given this culture - so accessible now through institutions of learning, through printed books, through art, memoirs, and music, and via this medium of this our digital age - shall we, can we, learn and apply the learning of that culture to significantly change our lives, thus somehow avoiding that periodicity of suffering which for millennia our hubris, our certainty of knowing born of nomen and nomina and the resultant abstractions, has inflicted and continues to inflict upon us?

I do so wish I had an answer. But for now, all I can do is dwell in hope of us en masse so evolving that such empathy, such wordless knowing, has become the norm.

David Myatt
2016

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

cc David Myatt 2016-2018

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