

Selected Essays And Effusions

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Preface

Collected here are some of my more recent essays and effusions together with those which were not included in printed compilations such as *Sarigthersa* (2015), *One Vagabond* (2014) and *Such Respectful Wordful Offerings As This* {2017} [1].

I have reproduced the essays and effusions as they were originally published even though there is some repetition of content and/or of quotations.

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For this second edition I have included my three essays about the Roman Catholic Church.

David Myatt
2019

[1] *Sarigthersa*, ISBN-13: 978-1512137149; *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, ISBN-13: 978-150239610; *Such Respectful Wordful Offerings As This*, ISBN-13: 978-1978374355.

**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.

January 2018

[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 be male and be biased toward the masculine, while spiritual ways tend to be either more female or incorporate female 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 abstract 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."

On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John, revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

July 2017

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

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

An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture

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

As recounted elsewhere [1] the allowance allowed me to travel and buy books, often from bookshops in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and one such purchase was of the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and almost every evening I loved

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

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

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

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

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

I used and use *σωφρονεῖν* in preference to *σωφροσύνη* (*sophrosyne*) to

suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of sophrosyne as "soundness of mind, moderation".

I used and use Δίκη instead of δίκη when the sense implied is "what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as [a] goddess", which is the natural instinct in those of noble physis (φύσις) for honour, fairness, and beauty - καλὸς κάγαθός [4] - and thus the natural balance rather than "the correct/customary/ancestral way" or an abstract, impersonal, modern-type of "justice".

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

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

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

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

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

Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate?

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

April 2019

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

[2] *The Joy Of Words*, 2013.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. 2018.

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

[5] *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2019.

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

The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth

A Question Of Hermeneutics?

As my translation of and commentary on the *Gospel According To John* so very slowly progresses [1] what I am (re)discovering is how different the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' - as presented in and by that particular Gospel over two thousand years ago - seems to me to be from what has so often been preached by so many and for so long regarding that religion which has become known as Christianity, dependant as such preaching so often is and has been on interpretations, and translations, of the Greek texts that form the 'New Testament'.

What emerges from my own translation - that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John - is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the

Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic - a more Greek - way, then one has:

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

Not only is this personal, direct - as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' - but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [2]

King James Bible:

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

Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.
[3][4]

King James Bible:

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' - of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the

Evangelist - contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans - with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds - and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - The Gospel According To John - contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceiveration and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mixion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presented in the divine. [5]

October 2017

Footnotes

[1] Volume I (chapters 1-4) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John was published in July 2017 (ISBN 978-1548913670) with volume II (chapters 5-10) scheduled for publication in 2018.

A version in html - including chapter 5 and >, which is subject to revision and updated as and when new verses and the associated commentary are available - is (as of October 2017) at <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

[2] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used

especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration - using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς - and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of *logos*, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος
(Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and *phaos* are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

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

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

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

[3] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about - does not even mention - the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[4] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

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

◦ *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

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

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

◦ *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινε (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ὃ δὴποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

° *no more missteps.* μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans.* Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/a-note-on-the-term-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

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

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[5] *Ἰερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos.* Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

Physis And Being

An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

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

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

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

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

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

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

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

such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of patheimathos might, in one way, be presented in a practical manner in the world.

2019

Notes

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

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin denotare -

not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within

them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

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

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

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

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

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

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

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

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

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

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

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether

personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Note Concerning θειότης

The Greek term θειότης occurs in tractate XI (section 11) of the Corpus Hermeticum - θειότητα μίαν - where I translated the term as "divinity-presenced." [1]

Plutarch, in *De Pythiae Oraculis* - qv. 407a, 398a-f - uses the word in relation to the oracle at Delphi with divinity-presenced also a suitable translation there.

The context of θειότης in tractate XI is:

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς, φανερώτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίτι γὰρ ἄλλωι ἂν καὶ πρέποι ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνωι τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός. †γελοιότατον†· καὶ τὸν μὲν κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἓνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις [2]

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

The "one" referred to in tractate XI is most probably the μονάς, Monas (Monad) as in tractate IV. As I noted in my Introduction to that tractate [1], John Dee used the term monas in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568*, a text included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, published in 1652.

An interesting part of tractate IV is:

μονὰς οὗσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἑτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any.

In respect of arithmos, ἀριθμὸς, as I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:10 and on XII:15, [1] the usual translation is 'number' but which translation is, in those instances in the Corpus Hermeticum, somewhat inappropriate and unhelpful.

Similar to - but conveying a different meaning to - θεϊότης is the Greek term θεότης. Different, because θεϊότης relates to θεῖος (divine, divinity), and θεότης to θεός (theos, the god).

The word θεϊότης also occurs - and only once - in the New Testament, in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 1.20, where it led to some theological discussions regarding how and *in what* God is manifest, since some commentators apparently mistakenly equated θεϊότης with θεότης. The Latin of Jerome is:

invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas

which translates the Greek θεϊότης by the Latin *divinitas*, a word used by Cicero.

The Greek text of Romans, 1.20, as in NA28, [3] is:

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν

νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης

The Wycliffe translation:

For the invisible things of him, that be understood, be beheld of the creature of the world, by those things that be made, yea, and the everlasting virtue of him and the Godhead.

King James Bible:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead

Douay-Rheims, Catholic Bible:

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity

In contradistinction to such translations, were I to temerarily venture my own 'interpretation of meaning' of the Greek - that is, my non-literal translation - it would be along the following lines:

Through the foundation of the Kosmos, those unseen beings of that Being were visible, apprehensible by the beings which that Being produced, as also the sempiternal influence of that Being, and divinity-presenced.

In which interpretation I have endeavoured to express the metaphysical - the ontological - meaning, and have taken αὐτοῦ - literally, "of him/his" - as "of that Being" thus avoiding "gender bias", qv. the appendix - *Concerning Personal Pronouns* - to my commentary on tractate VI. [1] Also, δύναμις is - at least in my fallible opinion - more subtle than the strident "might" or "power" translations impute, suggesting instead "influence" as in tractate III:1, where it interestingly occurs in relation to θεῖος:

δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χάει, by the influence of the numen

My translation of tractate III:1 is as follows:

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance. In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen, Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos. Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground, Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence. And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιμ ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις. ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν, δυνάμει θείαι ὄντα ἐν χάει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη τὸ φ' ἄμμωι† ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ θεοὶ πάντες †καταδιερῶσι† φύσεως ἐνσπόρου.

Which, for me at least, seems to place the use of θεϊότης in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* into the correct Hellenic - Greco-Roman - metaphysical context.

28.iii.18

This article is a revised version of part of a personal reply sent to a life-long friend in answer to a specific question.

ooo

[1] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

[2] The Greek text is from A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972.

[3] Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012.

Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One

Causal Time and Living Beings

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the φύσις of beings [1], and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being and representing how a living being can change or may change or has changed, which such change being a-causal [2].

Thus, Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked hours, days, weeks, and years - is regarded as an abstraction [3], and an abstraction which attempts to interpret living beings as functions of or as limited to a linear cause-and-effect described by separated moments progressing from a past to a present and thence to some future 'time'. Such conventional measured causal time may therefore be said to contribute to the concealment of the nature of living beings.

This conventional idea of time can be conveniently described as linear or

causal-time, and considered as aptly represented by the term duration, a term which is a better translation of the Greek χρόνος than the English word 'time', as for example in Oedipus Tyrannus vv. 73-75:

καί μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνω
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα
ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου

But I have already measured the duration
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.

Such causal-time is the time of sciences such as physics and astronomy, with the universe, for instance, considered to be an entity 'expanding' as such expansion is measured by fixed linear points termed past, present, and future. Similarly, space itself is construed as a causal, dimensional, space-time manifold [4]. Thus and conventionally, to understand matter/energy is to 'know' (to observe or to theorize) how causal entities – such as elementary particles, or physical objects such as planets and stars – move and change and relate to each other (and other matter/energy in terms of composition and interactions) in this posited space-time manifold. There is thus a sense of physical order; a hierarchy of sub-atomic » atomic » 'classical mechanics' » gravitational » cosmological, with events occurring in the causal sequence past-present-future, and with interactions described in terms of certain fundamental physical forces, be such descriptions based on 'string theory', quantum theory [5], relativity theory, classical mechanics, or some theory which attempts to unify current descriptions of the aforementioned causal hierarchy.

This causal time is a quantity; a measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of 'things' according to a given and a fixed pre-determined scale, and which measurement and fixed scale allows comparisons to be made regarding the movement or 'change' in position of 'things'.

While this understanding of time, and of space, has provided a useful understanding of the external world and aided the construction of machines and the development of a modern technology – and thus enabled humans to set foot on the Moon and send spacecraft to photograph the planets in our solar system – it is nonetheless limited in respect of revealing and understanding the φύσις of beings and thus the relation between living beings.

The Error of Causality As Applied to Living Beings

The understanding of Time as a manifestation of the φύσις of beings is derived from the acausal knowing that empathy provides [6]; and a knowing that allows us to make a philosophical distinction, in respect of Time, between an observed or posited movement and 'a change'; with the former – movement – applicable to observed or posited physical things and the latter – change – to living beings. For example 'change' describes how a tree – a

living organism - grows and which change includes, but is not limited to, the measured movement (in causal time and causal space) of its branches and its trunk as measured in fixed units such as girth and height and the position and size of branches in relation to other branches and nearby objects. Such change - of a living being - is an effluvium, a fluxion [7].

That is, living beings possess or manifest a type of Time - a species of change, manifest as a fluxion - that is different from the movement (the time) of things and thus different from the time used in sciences such as physics.

Furthermore, there is not only a distinction between a living being and a thing, but also the distinction regarding the assumed separation of beings. As a finite emanation (or presencing) of ψυχή, a living being is not, according to its φύσις, a separate being; as such, it cannot be 'known' - its nature cannot be understood - by external causal observations or by 'measuring'/describing it (in terms of 'space') in relation to other living beings or to 'things' and/or by using such observations/observational-classifications/measurements /descriptions to formulate a theory to characterize a 'type' (or genus or species) that such a living being is regarded as belonging to. For its φύσις is manifest - known - by its acausal relation to other living beings and by the acausal interconnectivity of such beings. Such a knowing is numinous; that is, an awareness of living (and often dependant) connexions and of the unity of Life beyond the finite, mortal, emanation we, as an individual human being, are.

In personal terms, the error of applying causal time, and the perception derived therefrom, to living beings is most evident in causal abstractions, and in what we may refer to as the dialectic of egoism: of ourselves as one distinct, self-interested, human being contrasted with (or needing to be contrasted with) and often opposed to (or needing to be opposed to or seen to be opposed to) other humans. Thus, for millennia we have manufactured causal abstractions and identified with one or more of them, sought to bring them into being; as we have opposed other abstractions and especially those humans who identify with some abstraction or whom we have assigned to some abstraction, such as some group or some faith or some nation or some ethnicity or some ideology regarded as 'inferior' to 'ours' or as 'bad' compared to 'ours'. Similarly, we humans have for millennia often felt compelled to place our own self-interest, our welfare, before that of other humans - and before the welfare of Nature [8] - just as we have been often compelled and often are still compelled to strive, competitively or otherwise, against other humans in order to establish or reaffirm our personal identity, our difference from them (or their 'inferiority' compared to us). Thus has there been, and thus is there, hubris and suffering. Thus has there been, and thus is there, a lack of appreciation of the numinous and a lack of understanding of our φύσις and that of the φύσις of the other living beings (including other humans) who share this planet with us.

In summary, applying causal time to living beings creates and maintains division and divisiveness; while the perception of acausal time brings an appreciation of the numinous and thus a knowing of the inherent unity behind our ordinary understanding of separate living beings.

November 2012

Notes

[1] While it is convenient to understand φύσις simply as the 'nature' of a being, the term, as used in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, implies a revealing of not only the true 'nature' of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

[2] In respect of the acausal, refer to my text *Toward Understanding the Acausal* (2011).

Furthermore, it is useful to make a distinction, in terminology, between living beings/existents and non-living beings/existents. Thus, a 'thing' is used to describe matter or objects (natural or constructed) which do not possess the quality termed life, and which life is possessed by organisms. Currently, we observe or assume life by the following seven attributes: a living organism respire; it moves or can move without any external force being applied as cause of such movement; it grows or changes; it excretes waste; it is sensitive to, or aware of, its environment; it can reproduce itself, and it can nourish itself.

ψυχή is 'Life qua being', with our own being (as a human) understood as a mortal emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις, as human beings. ψυχή is also how we can begin to apprehend Being and how we relate to Being.

[3] An abstraction is defined, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, as:

"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." *Vocabulary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (2012)

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 *ἀρμονίη, 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.

[4] Current exotic theories - such as 'string theory' (including M-theory) - are still based on an ideation of space-time that involves a causal-only time (time as a measurable and a separate quantity).

'String' theories posit not only transformations of a non-zero 'string' or strings in a causal space-time instead of a 'zero-dimensional point' (or points) as in a classical three-dimensional Lorentz transformation or a four-dimensional Riemannian space, but also in possible manifolds whose dimensions are > 4 (as in a Hilbert space). Also, while they do not describe space-time as a Riemannian manifold (as general relativity does), such theories posit manifolds or structures - such as H-flux and topological 'branes' - which, and whose changes, are described by or come to be described by mathematical equations which involve a causal time - a measured or measurable movement - in relation to other properties (such as extension/space), be those other properties mathematical (as in a topology) or physical (as in a metric, Riemannian or otherwise). Thus, in perturbation theory and in order to consider possible experimental results of the theory, a space-time is posited consisting of a four-dimensional extended Minkowski space combined with a compact Riemannian manifold; and as in M-theory where an 11-dimensional Minkowski space has been assumed with the extra seven dimensions being 'compactified' or compactable.

All such theories are currently 'exotic' because they have not yet [as of 2012] led to any unique predictions that could be experimentally verified.

[5] Like 'string theory' and cosmological theories (such as general relativity) quantum mechanics is based on a posited causal space-time. Therefore, a quantum theory cannot be used to describe the *φύσις* of living beings or acausality.

[6] In respect of acausal knowing, see 'The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy' in *The Way of Pathei Mathos: A Philosophical Compendium*.

[7] The use of the term *fluxion* dates from the sixteenth century (ce) with the

term describing a change that occurs naturally and also one that arises from or because of itself (an effluvium). A description used by John Davies in his 1616 (ce) work *Mirum in Modum*: "If the fluxion of this instant Now Effect not That, nocht wil that Time doth know."

As used here, fluxion describes how a particular living being not only changes/develops/manifests (that is, in an acausal manner) but also the fact of its (acausal) relation to other living beings and to Being.

[8] Nature is here understood as 'the creative force' that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth, and which life includes ourselves. This 'creative force' (or manifestation/presencing of ψυχή) can be and often has been understood as a particular type of living being, as 'Nature' personified.

That Heavy Dust
Extract From A Letter To A Friend

Since you mentioned an old, all but forgotten, scribbling of mine [1] in which I quoted the post-classical Latin phrase *memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris* [2] I recall similar expressions of the impermanence of mortal life in classical literature from Homer on. For although that Latin phrase is often regarded as deriving from the Book of Genesis in the Septuagint, dating as that book does – according to papyri texts so far discovered – to around 250 BCE, [3] the sentiment it expresses is centuries older and part of the weltanschauung of Ancient Greece.

Thus in the Iliad – Book XVI, 775–776 – there is an ancient expression similar in sentiment to the reminder that prowess and life are transient given to a Roman General centuries later during their Triumphus [4], their victory parade in Rome.

Ὅ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κούρης κείτο μέγας μεγαλωστί, λελασμένος ἵπποσυνάων

He of great strength lay in the swirling dust, his skill with horses taken away.

In Book VI, 146–149, there is the beautiful, poetic,

οἷη περ φύλλων γενεὴ τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη:
ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ' ἀπολήγει

Just as the genesis of leaves is, so it is with mortals:
Leaves scattered upon earth and yet the trees
Burst again when the growing season returns
With one generation of mortals leaving and another brought forth.

In the Agamemnon of Aeschylus – vv. 438–442 – we have the poignant

ὁ χρυσαμοιβὸς δ' Ἄρης σωμάτων
καὶ ταλαντοῦχος ἐν μάχῃ δορὸς
πυρωθὲν ἐξ Ἴλιου
φίλοισι πέμπει βαρὺ
ψῆγμα δυσδάκρυτον ἀν-
τήνορος σποδοῦ γεμί-
ζων λέβητας εὐθέτους.

And Ares - exchanging bodies for gold
And holding his scales among the combat of spears -
Has, from Ilion by his fire,
Conveyed to their loved ones a painful lament - that heavy dust
He had exchanged for their men: ashes, stuffed into easily-stowable
urns.

Personally, I find the sentiments expressed in Homer, in Aeschylus, and in so many other Greek and Roman writers, far surpass those of the Old Testament, and recall many times in the choir stalls of a monastery while chanting Matins - replete as that night Office was with verses from the Old Testament - desiring instead to recite something from Homer, in Ancient Greek of course.

28th August, 2018

Nota Bene: For publication here I have added two footnotes - [1] and [4] - to the two appended to the letter. All translations are mine.

ooo

[1] *Telesmata In The Picatrix*, 2017.

[2] "Recall, mortal, you are dust and you will revert to being dust."

[3] As I wrote in a footnote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*,

"The archaeological - the physical - evidence seems to indicate that the Greek text of the Old Testament is older than the Hebrew text, with the earliest manuscript fragment being Greek Papyrus 458 currently housed in the Rylands Papyri collection - *qv.* Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 20 (1936), pp. 219-45 - and which fragment was discovered in Egypt and has been dated as being from the second century BCE.

In contrast, the earliest fragments of the Old Testament in Hebrew date from c.150 BCE to c. 70 CE, and are part of what has come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition, the earliest known Greek - and almost complete - text of the Old Testament, Codex Vaticanus, dates from c.320 CE with the earliest complete Hebrew text of the Tanakh, the Aleppo Codex, dating from centuries later, around 920 CE.

While it is and has been a common presumption that the Hebrew version of the Old Testament is older than the Greek version, my inclination is to favour

the extant physical evidence over and above presumption. Were physical evidence of Hebrew texts earlier than Greek Papyrus 458 discovered, and of there existing a complete Hebrew text dating from before Codex Vaticanus, my inclination would be to revise my opinion based on a study of the new evidence."

[4] qv. M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007. p. 272f.

Telesmata In The Picatrix

Telesmata is from Greek τέλεσμα via the post-classic Latin telesma and is possibly the origin of the English word talisman, dating as that English word does from 1638.

τέλεσμα in Ancient Greek meant a payment, or an offering to offset a debt or for services rendered. According to my fallible understanding, in Hellenistic times it acquired the sense of an object intended as an offering to the gods, and to lesser divinities such as daemons, as a mark of respect or in order to seek their favour or ward off their wrath. Thus if a person had toiled to make the offering, the telesma, or had at the very least exchanged goods or money for it, it was believed that such labour or such an exchange revealed that one had earned their protection or their help. The more valuable the object, the more help or protection they might expect.

This belief in such offerings and their efficacy was an integral part of not only the diverse Greco-Roman paganus weltanschauungen but also of many other paganus weltanschauungen around the world, past and present, founded as such weltanschauungen are on the understanding, on the ancestral wisdom, or on the intuition that we mortals are part of a living cosmos with the gods (the divinities) and Nature considered as living beings (or as archetypes, manifestations of cosmic forces) who and which can affect us and who have affected us – as individuals, and as communities – in terms of good fortune and misfortune.

For such understanding, such ancestral wisdom, or such intuition included the insight that some mortal deeds were wise and some mortal deeds were unwise because wise deeds were those which aided or did not upset the natural cosmic balance and because unwise deeds – acts of hubris – did upset the natural cosmic balance and invited, sooner or later, retribution by the divinities, be such retribution personal (against the hubriatic individual) or against the family and descendants of that individual or against the community that the hubriatic individual was a part of. A pattern of hubriatic deeds which both Aeschylus and Sophocles so well described: Aeschylus in the *Oresteia*, and Sophocles in his *Antigone* and his *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

In respect of the Greek belief in such divinities and asking for their help there is of course that beautiful poem by Sappho [1]

ποικιλόθρον' ἀθανάτ' Ἀφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον,

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κἀτέρωτα
τὰς ἔμας αὖδας αἰοῖσα πήλοι
ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα
χρῦσιον ἦλθες

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον
ῶκεες στρουῖθοι περὶ γᾶς μελαίνας
πύκνα δίννευτες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνωϊθε-
ρος διὰ μέσσω·

αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,
μειδιαίσαισ' ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳ
ἦρξ' ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι
δηῦτε κάλημμι

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι
μαινόλαι θύμῳ· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω
μαῖσ' ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ
Ψά]πφ', ἀδικήει;

καὶ γὰρ αἶ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
αἶ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἶ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κῶκ ἐθέλοισα.

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι
θῦμος ἰμέρρει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὖτα
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

Deathless Aphrodite - Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares -
On your florid throne, hear me!
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain
But come to me as when before
You heard my distant cry, and listened:
Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile
To bring you to her love?

Who now injures you, Sappho?
For if she flees, soon shall she chase
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

By the time the manuscripts of the *Picatrix* were written, as translations of a translation of an Arabic manuscript dating from some three or more centuries earlier, the concept of *telesmata* seems to have become somewhat divorced from its pagan origins since the *Picatrix* begins with a doxology to a singular God - *Ad laudem et gloriam altissimi et omnipotentis Dei cuius est revelare suis predestinatis secreta scienciarum* - echoing as it does the doxology to Allah, *Al-Ahad*, in that earlier Arabic manuscript and containing as that Arabic manuscript does several quotations from the Quran.

Thus, and again according to my fallible understanding, it seems to me that, given the importance attached in both the Latin and the Arabic text to *telesmata* - the locus has, despite such doxologies, moved away from the pagan understanding of mortals as an integral (Ciceronian) balancing part of the cosmos, as part of Nature and of their community and personally aware of the consequences of hubris, toward the εἶδος - the abstraction - of mortals as individuals who can by *telesmata* and other means achieve certain personal desires or bring about certain changes beneficial to themselves. Almost as if *telesmata* and other similar means have replaced the numinous, the pagan awareness of our status as mortals who depend on the harmony that the older divinities represented, manifest as this awareness is in the phrase *memento homo* [2]. A phrase adopted by the Roman Catholic church in the form "memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris," [3] and which church, despite its faults, perhaps for centuries kept alive at least something of the pagan understanding of the error of hubris, its awareness of our temporary mortal life and of our fallible mortal nature.

2017

Note: This text is an edited version of a communication sent this year to someone who had enquired about the relation, if any, between the talismans described in the Latin text entitled *Picatrix* and Greco-Roman pagan beliefs.

ooo

[1] My translation. The Greek text is that of Lobel and Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1955.

[2] Although the use of a similar phrase about mortality in the *Triumphus* is disputed, there is evidence to suggest that during those victory processions in Rome the triumphant General was reminded by someone of his mortality, qv. M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, Belknap Press of Harvard University

Press, 2007. p. 272f.

[3] "Recall, mortal, you are dust and you will revert to being dust."

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:
ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: 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 ἀρμονίη (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 presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [3]

This understanding and appreciation of ἀρμονίη 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 both medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue – presencing the numinous as it does and did – is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

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

January 2018
(Revised March 2018)

[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. Ἐρμοῦ 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.

A Pre-Socratic Fragment: Empedocles

Text

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
αἰδίδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·
εὐτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μίηνη,
νεΐκει θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσηι,
δαίμονες οἶτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,
τρὶς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φουμένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βίοτιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γὰρ σφε μένος πόντουδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἔς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσσε, γαῖα δ' ἔς αὐγὰς
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἔξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἶμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
Νεΐκει μαινομένωι πίσυρος.

Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115

Translation

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution

Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -
Has their own hands stained from murder
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

Notes

Ananke (Ἀνάγκη) is the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of wyrd - of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being.

The usual translation of "necessity" - as for example by Copenhaver in section 1 of tractate III of the *Corpus Hermeticum* [1] obscures both the subtle esotericism evident in that ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote centuries earlier about Ἀνάγκη. [2]

Disagreement (νεῖκος) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

Which expression of how the immortal deities (θεοὶ) often differ and of how the Fate of mortals depend on those deities and, quite often on disagreements between them, exemplifies the ethos of Ancient Greece.

2017

This is a slightly revised version of a comment published in my 2015 translation of and

commentary on the ἱερός λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum.

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

[2] The Greek text of tractate III:1 is

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις. ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν, δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χάει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη <ὑφ' ἄμμωι> ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ θεοὶ πάντες <καταδιερώσι> φύσεως ἐνσπόρου.

A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972

In my translation I have endeavoured to express something of the classical mysticism which this tractate, in particular, embodies:

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:

The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.

For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,

Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.

Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,

Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.

And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

My commentary on the text - in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, ISBN 978-1976452369 - explains my interpretations of words such as δόξα, νοῦς, σοφία, ἐνέργεια, and δύναμις.

The Beatitudes

The Learning On The Hillside

Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

The Gospel According To Matthew

5:1-10

Text ^[1]

1 Ἴδων δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·

2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·

3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῆ καρδία, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Translation

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

Commentary

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

2.

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

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

3.

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

On a pedantic note, English translations invariably add "are" after μακάριος whereas the Greek - μακάριοι οἱ - reads "fortunate, the..."

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), cf. my commentary on John 1:32, [2] from which this an extract:

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

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

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

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

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

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῆ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [3] where as in Luke 11.41 - γν. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30.iii.18

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Notes

[1] Greek Bible text from *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, copyright 2012 Deutsche

Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

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

[3] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John - a work in progress [1] - I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose - perhaps controversially - to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words *gyv*/*gyw* and *Iewe*) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin *iudaeus*); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (*iudeas*) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, *æfter iudea geclensunge*, "according to Judaeian cleansing".

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was

"necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans - as is apparent from the Gospel - shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general - with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχρόμαι) Samaritan things - arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' - better than Samaritans - with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans - an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" - exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

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In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former - entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας - should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter - entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου - should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημνησμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις

γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους - Romaeans - implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθηρμηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here - as throughout the New Testament - has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV [Anglo-Saxon Version] has *gewrite* - 'what was written', writing, inscription - with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλώσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεὺς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῆ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified

town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish - although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE - the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὅφ' ἦς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ
κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν
ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

Conclusion

As noted in the Preface to my translation of The Gospel of John, I have endeavoured to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations - and given in lexicons - may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. In the matter of Ἰουδαία the translation by the relatively recent term 'Jews' has suggested meanings which, at least in my fallible opinion, are irrelevant to the milieu of the Gospels and which thus distorts, or which can distort, the narrative of the Gospel of John.

July 2017

This article is based on, and includes quotations from, my commentary on John 1.19, 2.22, 4.4, et seq.

[1] As of July 2017, the translation of and a commentary on chapters one to four of The Gospel of John have been completed, which partial translation and commentary is available at: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus.

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a

mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt
scribaturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[3] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio
functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

The Joy Of Words

It was while living in the Far East, and around the cusp of fourteen, that I discovered the joy of learning and the joy of words. My formal education before then was patchy, at best. A private school, with a rather lovely quadrangle, in colonial Africa; a rather brief sojourn in a Catholic boarding school in England, where I received six strokes of the cane several times, once for leaving the dorm and talking after 'lights out'. Another brief spell at some other school; and even a spell of 'private tutoring' or months when I had, joy of joys, no school or lessons at home to attend. A patchy education not because of my parents, but rather because of my irascible and rebellious nature as a young boy. For I seemed to be trouble; a scallywag.

For example, I remember one incident at some school I attended for a while around the age of eleven: a teacher, annoyed with me at the end of a lesson after I had vaulted over a desk in my haste to get outside, shouting "Myatt, you think the sun rises and sets in you!" A haste, because I really did dislike being cooped up inside, forced to sit at some desk and expected to pay attention to what was being said or what was written on some blackboard. Which is probably why, around the age of ten, I deliberately, petulantly, failed a written examination and why at that same school I once turned up for lessons wearing a brown leather jacket and with a sheath knife attached to my belt, which naturally led to me being sent to the headmaster and having to wait around, in some sort of detention, until my father arrived to escort me home.

I was just so bored, so uninterested in what was being said or taught. So bored, uninterested, so irascible, I assuredly (and unintentionally and for many years) caused problems for my parents, although it is possible that one cause of my dislike of formal learning - and school - was due to a combination of myopia and astigmatism, which remained undiagnosed until the age of thirteen, and which diagnosis resulted in me having to wear spectacles for the first time.

My discovery of the joy of learning and the joy of words - around the cusp of fourteen - was, as recounted in my apologia *Myngath*, almost certainly due to the influence of the English teacher at what was then for me another colonial, and new, school. Not that I had some sort of schoolboy crush on the blonde and young Miss D. Rather, it was a combination of her enthusiasm for and indeed love of her subject, her gentle style of teaching, and the trouble she took to explain things if we - or, as often if I - did not understand or appreciate something. For she treated us as adults, not as children, and was

just such a contrast, or seemed to me at the time to be such a contrast, to the other teachers there and encountered previously. For example, at that same school, our mathematics teacher would often shout at us if we made some error and had even been known to throw the blackboard rubber in the direction of someone if he was particularly annoyed for some reason.

My English lessons became for me a place of revelation, a pleasure; something anticipated with joy; and I well remember Miss D reading to us a story from *The Golden Apples of The Sun* by Ray Bradbury, for she – those words – conjured up for me another time and place and a strangeness that I found enticing and enchanting; as if I was there in that place listening to the sound of that foghorn... Once, we were given the task of reciting aloud before the class a poem and I choose and memorized *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for I had a short time previously and at her suggestion read it and was enthralled; the words, the rhythm, transporting me to another and very different world. In brief, and because of her, I had discovered and begun to use the gift that is our human imagination.

Books thus became for me not things I was told by some teacher to read (and which thus became ignored) but a means of discovering new worlds and a new sense of Time. Previously I had no real awareness of the past and no feeling or concern for the future, having lived in and for the moment and to be outside; swimming, running, climbing trees, walking, travelling to new places and observing new sights and hearing the sounds of life, feeling the warmth of the heat of the Sun and the sensation of tropical rain beating down; learning a Martial Art...

Now, there was an awareness of things, people, events, places, beyond that immediate world of mine, so that I became eager to learn to such an extent that many other subjects interested me, including mathematics, geography, history, astronomy, even the Latin and the Ancient Greek that some teacher at some school had previously tried to teach me. So much eagerness to learn that, within a few months, with my whole attitude to school and to books having changed, I came top in several subjects – and second in some others – at end of term exams, much to the delight of my parents and much to the surprise of my well-adjusted and studious sisters.

I loved to read, and to not only find new words and their meanings but also to use those words, not always correctly and often pretentiously, in some English essay or other, as I recall in one essay beginning a sentence with 'And' and being gently informed by Miss D that such usage was not correct, leading to an interesting discussion, after class and making me late for my next one, about grammar and about who decides what rules are correct and why. Several similar discussions followed over the next few weeks, several about spelling, after I had discovered, and used, not only the older form connexion instead of the 'correct' connection but also some older spellings found in the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. After a while, when I added my exercise book to the pile she had to mark after class, Miss D ceased to correct my 'misspellings' perhaps intuitively understanding my schoolboyish and rather arrogant desire to be different, to still need to rebel and in however small a way.

A few years later, and then living in Blighty, one small goal, conceived during that Far Eastern year, was achieved. For I, by then quite the bookish young man, had acquired the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and loved, almost every evening, to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility, quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata.

Interstition

All too soon, however, and - in hindsight - alas, this love made way for and then was for many decades rejected in favour of another. For I had discovered extremism, and became, most regretfully, an extremist. Someone who, because of his fanaticism and his political involvements, became an altogether different person; a pseudo-revolutionary street-agitator and violent neo-nazi thug; someone who associated with criminals and who indeed himself became a criminal and who thus developed a 'street-wise' persona rather at odds with his former 'prep-school days' and his somewhat 'well-educated' accent.

Books, and study, were replaced by private and public rhetoric, and by rallies, meetings, and brawls; and, in letters to 'comrades' and to friends who were sympathizers or to those who were during those times useful, my misspellings and my grammar became increasingly exaggerated, almost an affectation of someone who, having accepted and indeed enjoyed the rôle that he was expected to play in order to accomplish some shared and extremist goal, could sometimes be mischievous in a schoolboyish, idiosyncratic, kind of way. For instance, one of my favourite misspellings, in such communications with such people, as sometimes in the polemical tracts I wrote and sent to others, was 'appearance', in imitation of more Chaucerian times; another, 'existence', in similar imitation of those now long gone days when spelling was often individual or regional and before the move toward standardization.

An interstition of some three decades, marked in ending by the move toward Islam and thus by the cessation of such written communication with those aforementioned types of people. And it was my attempts to learn Arabic which irretrievably returned both my boyish love of words and my interest in questions of interpretation; a love and an interest that had - but only briefly - touched me twice during those extremist decades interspersed as those decades were with many itinerant years.

The first such period was while a Catholic monk, with the reading of LXX and Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη. The second, over a decade later, when a settled domestic life of a shared love of alas only some four years duration renewed my interest in and enthusiasm for the classical literature of ancient Greece,

leading me to translate a few such works in the confines of a study lined from ceiling to floor with bookcases replete with books, including of course another copy of the complete OED.

Now, through the past two bookish years and by recent translations and exegesis and philosophical musings, I seem to have found, and at last, a certain equilibrium; even that particular type of studious happiness I knew for a while as a boy in the Far East when I would sit on that sandy beach by the South China Sea - not far from my home - reading the latest book bought from a bookseller in Singapore city or loaned by she, my English teacher, whom I still remember so very well and who, quite without me knowing it then, taught me so much.

For it is if I am that boy again; or at least the type of person content with so little who, inwardly young in a world all their own, has no cause, no ideology, and who harms no one and nothing. The quiet person who, having become still, is as

A falling leaf turned Autumn brown
Following the wind of the moment:
Neither clinging to, nor striving against,
The force of existence ever a dream in the end

and who, if he is to be remembered at all, would hope it to be for his translations of Aeschylus, Sophocles, tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum, and/or for his philosophy of *pathei-mathos*.

March 2013

This is a slightly revised version of part of a letter written in November 2012 to a personal correspondent who enquired about my early education.

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase *pecados y crímenes* - sins and crimes - seems to

indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - cultura del abuso - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression cultura del abuso and writes that la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos *pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presented for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand

themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is paganus and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my paganus metaphysics is that of

- (i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence *καλὸς κἀγαθός* and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of

hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

David Myatt
7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

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[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*;

(iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos.*

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua.*

**In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church
Part One**

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung - the mystical individualistic numinous way of *pathei-mathos* - now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults - recent and otherwise - and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion,

presence - as it has for centuries presented - aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing - an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom - before the journey could begin - for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was - who am - I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was - I am - just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

David Myatt
2.x.18

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have

mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus - Book II, vii, 13 - in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

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Part Two Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession - now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation - and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and 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 [...]

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." [3]

This personal - and via the Confessional, this priestly - connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual - the eternal - dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no - to use a vernacular term - "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life - in Heaven or in Hell - which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I - with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes - to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine - however the Divine is presented to and in us - enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὄπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

David Myatt
4.x.18

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[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation *Halig Spiritus*, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word *Halig* - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

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

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs
wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim /believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the

word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

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

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

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/> and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

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