

Editorial Note: We reproduce here a 2010 article by David Myatt (revised by him in January 2011) and which article - about his 'numinous way' - was one of the many he, post-2012, rejected when he evolved that 'numinous way' into his 'philosophy of pathei-mathos'. In a 2014 note titled 'Disclaimer' he wrote:

{quote} I reject and disown all my pre-2011 writings and effusions, with the exception of my Greek translations, the poetry included in the published collection *One Exquisite Silence* (ISBN 978-1484179932), some private letters written between 2002 and 2011, and those few items about my since much revised 'numinous way' which are included in post-2012 publications such as *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* (ISBN 978-1484096642). {/quote}

The reason for his rejection of this *Introduction to the Philosophy of The Numen* article seems inscrutable to us, given that it raises some interesting points which as far we know he has not subsequently returned to and given that - at least to us - it does not, with one exception, seem to conflict with his post-2012 writings about his 'philosophy of pathei-mathos'. That exception is his paragraphs about democracy and 'the state' in footnote 7. Whatever the reason for its rejection, it reveals something about the evolution of his thought; an evolution he wrote about in his 2012 essay *The Development of the Numinous Way*.

Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen

Numinous Philosophy

It is perhaps necessary to make a distinction between conventional (academic) philosophy and what we may term esoteric, or perhaps more accurately, numinous philosophy.

Conventional Western philosophy - from Plato to Nietzsche, and beyond - is basically the process of trying to determine, or to posit, certain fundamental causes, then giving or manufacturing names and terms to the causes so found or so posited, and then analysing being, beings - existents/objects ("things") - including ourselves, in relation to what has been so supposed, so posited. This is the process of causal ideation - where some fundamental form, or cause, is sought; the positing of some ideal or perfect form for beings and "things"; making connections between a subject (some form, being, thing) and an object (an attribute or value or quality assigned to such a form, being, or thing), and which subject and object are named and classified according to some category, and which category is determined by attributes of inclusion/exclusion.

Knowledge is then assumed to be a knowing, or the discovery of, such object-subject orientated connections; of such fundamental causes; and of the relations (in causal Space and causal Time) between the various posited categories and ideals/forms. Thus, Being, and beings, are perceived ("known") in terms of what

is apparent to us by means of our known physical senses - Phainómenon - and what is posited about what is so perceived in the causal, phenomenal, reality that such senses make us aware of. Hence, the essentials which Aristotle enumerated: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Furthermore, this process, of a causal ideation, this knowing via our physical senses, also underlies Natural Philosophy - that is, experimental science - where the subject-object relation is often expressed in mathematical terms; where there is a positing of certain fundamental, or universal, laws (of Nature, the Cosmos, Physics, and so on); and where theories (models) are developed, from observational, empirical, data to explain the relation between "things" (beings, objects) and the axioms, or laws, which form the basis of a particular theory. However, one important difference between conventional philosophy and experimental science is the use, in experimental science, of observational data and of experiments to determine if what a theory or model predicts or assumes is valid or not.

For myself, I understand philosophy according to what the etymology of the word itself imputes - φίλος, a friend, of σοφόν; so that a philosopher is someone for whom knowledge, understanding, and thence wisdom, are important. In addition, I make a fundamental, an important, distinction between *causal knowing* - derived from both conventional philosophy and from experimental science - and *acausal knowing*. Causal knowledge - and thus the causal knowledge of conventional philosophy and experimental science - derives from the process of causal ideation, whereas acausal knowing derives from, and is thus dependant upon, the human process of empathy.

Thus, a friend of σοφόν - a philosopher - should seek both causal and acausal knowledge in order to approach an understanding of Reality and in order to move toward wisdom. Since esoteric, or numinous, philosophy is the knowledge that arises from both causal and acausal knowing, it thus follows that the knowing of both conventional philosophy and experimental science is limited and incomplete, and therefore is not or cannot be a reliable guide to, or a reliable means to find, wisdom.

The Axiom of Empathy

The fundamental axiom (the foundation) of numinous philosophy - and thus of The Philosophy of The Numen - is that of empathy [συν-πάθος]. That empathy is a natural faculty possessed by human beings, and presents to us, or can

present to us, a type of knowing - a perception - quite distinct from that posited by both conventional philosophy and experimental science. That is, numinous philosophy adds the faculty of empathy to our physical senses; adds the perception of empathy to the perception of Phainómenon, and thus to the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

The perception which empathy provides is both of acausality and of the personal immediacy-of-the-causal-moment, and it is these which make numinous philosophy quite distinct from the causal reductionism, the impersonal abstractions, of both conventional philosophy and experimental science. For the essence of the faculty of empathy is a sympathy, συμπάθεια, with other living beings arising from a perception of the acausal reality underlying the causal division of beings, existents, into separate, causal-separated, objects and the subject-object relationship which is or has been assumed by means of the process of causal ideation to exist between such causally-separated beings. That is, and for instance, the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of Being and beings.

In essence, empathy presents the perception of the acausal-causal unity that forms the basis of Reality (of Being) - a perception which moves us, for instance, beyond the assumption of the isolated separateness of (and assumed importance of) our own individual selves, and which thus has important ethical, aesthetic, and social, implications.

But, one might with reason enquire, does this posited faculty of empathy really exist? I would argue that yes it does, and for two basic reasons, the first one of which is possibly more important from the viewpoint of conventional philosophy, based as it is to some extent on the causal type of knowing familiar to conventional philosophy.

(1) This first reason in favour of the axiom of empathy is that the evidence for its existence is manifest particularly in what we may term the numinous: that is, in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; and which distinction is manifest, for example, in that understanding of ὕβρις and Δίκη which can be obtained from the works of Sophocles, and Aeschylus [1], and from an understanding of Φύσις evident in some of the sayings attributed to Heraclitus [2]. This understanding is, in essence, the natural balance manifest in the prized Hellenistic personal quality of ἀρετή, and in culture itself [3].

Understood by reference to such classical illustrations, empathy is thus what predisposed us to know Δίκη and avoid ὕβρις, as empathy itself was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. From a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering [4]. That is, a certain empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for numinous culture: for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for

balance, for ἄρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.

In effect, therefore, living, numinous cultures - and the Art, literature, and religious awareness, of previous numinous cultures which are available to us - present us with an understanding of how empathy, emerging (as in the proclamation of the Zeus of Aeschylus), and still rather primordial, came to be valued and understood.

(2) The second reason for the axiom of empathy is that it explains, in a rational way, what conventional philosophy and experimental science cannot currently explain, which is the nature of life itself. Why, for instance, some physical matter we perceive and know is alive, while some is not. Previous explanations, before the emergence of experimental science, regarding life centred mainly around the notion of some deity or deities; or on some notion such as the Greek ψυχή, said to be connected to Αἰὼν [5]. The conundrum for experimental science is that living beings obviate many of the laws postulated by sciences such as Physics, since a living being, for example, changes and can act (can grow and can move) without the application of any external force. Furthermore, no amount of experimental science can imbue inert, inorganic, matter with ψυχή and so make it alive - or can even describe what animates matter to make it a living being and so distinguish it from non-living matter.

Empathy, however, explains life by presenting to us the knowing, the perception, of the acausal continuum [6].

The Development of Empathy

It is my contention that, previously, historically, empathy was not understood as a personal, individual, living faculty that could be developed and which, being so developed, could present each of us with a new, and valuable, type of knowing.

Instead, empathy was often or mostly understood by reference to existing, or manufactured, causal ideations - for example, in relation to myths and legends of gods and goddesses, and in relation to avoiding a retribution from, or misfortune being brought by, such deities. Furthermore, the empathic perception of the acausal-causal unity that forms the basis of Reality (of Being) was often understood in relation to a hypothesized unity, or the transcendence, of some deity, supreme, monotheistic, or otherwise, with there in consequence being, over historical periods of causal Time, a move away from the original empathic insight or insights or one or more individuals (often manifest in a particular Way of Life), and instead toward a more causal religious attitude, often evident as such a causal religious attitude is in the veneration of certain texts, and the need for exegesis regarding such texts [7]. One important example of an empathic insight - of a knowing deriving from the empathy of an individual or individuals - is in that Way of Life which is now known as

Buddhism. Another is in that Way of Life now known as Taoism.

However, given our understanding of living, numinous, cultures, and the knowledge and understanding derivable from the Art, literature, conventional philosophy and religious awareness, of previous and existing cultures - including that one often termed Western culture, with its genesis in the Hellenic - we now have an understanding, a knowing, of empathy *qua* empathy. Of, in particular, the perception of the acausal-causal unity *sans* all causal ideations, all causal abstractions, including those previously regarded as, or actually being, religious, and including those which were originally empathic Ways of Life but which became, over time, dependant on texts and their interpretation with the consequent reliance on ritual, religious observance, interpretation, and religious techniques.

The faculty of empathy *qua* empathy - and the knowing deriving from the use of this faculty - is quite simple.

" Empathy... is only a translocation of ourselves; only a letting-go of the illusion of our self and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being *is*, as that living-being (human or otherwise) is presenced, manifest, in the causal world of causal perception. In the simple sense, empathy is a numinous sympathy with another living-being; that is, a becoming - for a causal moment or moments - of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between *them and us* - there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself. Thus do we or can feel in such moments - because of and through empathy - the Unity itself, and thus may we feel or know or have some apprehension of, how the Cosmos itself, how Nature, is living, changing, and can evolve by what we do or suffer because of what we do not do." *The Cultivation of Empathy (Three Essays Regarding The Numinous Way)*

That is, empathy presents us with the perception of the acausal-causal unity as that unity is - which is of there being no subject-object division, no them and us, but instead a connexion between all life, and of ourselves, as mortals beings, being an indivisible part of that unity, which our actions capable of harming and causing suffering to other life.

The Consequences of Empathy

The two most important consequence of the acausal knowing that empathy presents to us, are that of the personal immediacy-of-the-causal-moment, and that the notion of our separateness from other living beings (human and otherwise) is a causal-only perception, an illusion.

The personal immediacy-of-the-causal-moment means that empathy is an attribute of and dependant upon the individual living being, in the moment of empathy, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being - that is, it cannot have any causal ideation. It cannot be constrained or contained by any causal form, any ideal, or by any causal theory, as it cannot have any causal, non-living, non-immediate, value or quality assigned to it or used to classify it. Thus, no theory of ethics, applied to others or applicable to others, at some other time and place, can be developed from empathic knowing, just as no law or laws, no theory of government, or whatever, applied to others or applicable to others, at some other time and place, can be developed from empathic knowing.

Empathic knowing is an awareness that the notion of our separateness from other living beings (human and otherwise) is a causal-only perception and thus, essentially, obscures the true nature of Reality and of our own being, our own nature. Such empathic knowing therefore reveals (uncovers) the connexions between beings, and the sympathetic dependant nature of beings, and predisposes us, by its very nature - by συμπάθεια - toward compassion, which is a practical manifestation of empathy, and of the natural balance of Life, of which Life the individual we assume we is only a microcosmic, fragile, mortal part:

" Empathic awareness of other Life - the basis for compassion - is just being sympathetically aware of, and sensitive to, other Life, and letting such Life *be*. This letting-be - this *wu-wei* - is not interfering in that Life by un-naturally imposing ourselves and/or some manufactured causal abstraction upon that Life, but rather allowing ourselves to be in harmony, in natural balance, with Life because such balance allows us to be aware of, to become, the nexion we are to all Life, to Nature, to the Cosmos itself, and thus reveals the Unity, the matrix, of all living beings, which Unity the illusion of our self, and all abstractions, conceal, or disrupt or destroy.

Such empathy makes us aware of how other Life, other living-beings, can suffer, and how some-things, some actions, do or can cause suffering or have caused suffering." *Living The Numinous Way (Three Essays Regarding The Numinous Way)*

The alleviation of suffering, by means of using and developing our faculty of empathy, and acting upon the acausal knowing empathy reveals to us, is thus a natural and necessary evolution of ourselves.

Conclusion

There are two fundamental errors of conventional philosophy. First, the application of a causal perception and a causal ideation - a causal denoting - to

living beings; and, second, the assumption of a causal-only knowing.

These errors lead to and have led to ὕβρις and to the imposition of causal abstractions [8] - to the artificial separation and classification of living beings, and to ideals of "otherness" and impersonal "value" - and thus have caused or contributed to suffering. Empathy, however, being always of the immediacy of the moment, and always personal, and being a translocation of ourselves, uncovers the reality which is the connexion between all living beings, sentient and otherwise, and thus predisposes us toward compassion, thus avoiding ὕβρις and thus dispensing with causal abstractions.

Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that a Way of Life such as The Numinous Way, which is based upon empathy and acausal knowing and thus upon balanced reasoning (σωφρονεῖν), can restore to us, as individuals, the numinous balance which uncovers our true connected nature as living beings and also enable that compassion which can lead to the cessation of suffering, and which cessation of suffering is the only goal that is numinous (and thus wise) by virtue of manifesting the acausal nature of ψυχή (Life) itself.

There is, therefore, a numinous will to love and a numinous personal desire to cease to cause suffering, as opposed to the causal "will to power", the causal "desire for self", and the causal love of and need for impersonal abstractions, that have for so long blighted our human, suffering-causing, lives.

David Myatt
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(Revised January 2011)

[1] In particular, *The Agamemnon* of Aeschylus; and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and *Antigone*, of Sophocles. In respect of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, refer, for example, to vv.863ff and vv.1329-1338

In much mis-understood verses in *The Agamemnon* (1654-1656) Clytaemnestra makes it known that she still is aware of the power, and importance, of Δίκη. Of not "killing to excess".

μηδαμῶς, ὧ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν κακά.
ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰδ' ἔξαμῆσαι πολλά, δύστηνον θέρος.
πημονῆς δ' ἄλις γ' ὑπάρχει: μηδὲν αἱματώμεθα.

The aforementioned verses are often mis-translated to give some nonsense such as: "No more violence. Here is a monstrous harvest and a bitter reaping time. There is pain enough already. Let us not be bloody now."

However, what Aeschylus actually has Clytaemnestra say is: "Let us not do any

more harm for to reap these many would make it an *unlucky* harvest: injure them just enough, but do not stain us with their blood."

She is being practical (and quite Hellenic) and does not want to bring misfortune (from the gods) upon herself, or Aegisthus, by killing *to excess*. The killings she has done are, however, quite acceptable to her - she has vigorously defended them claiming it was her natural duty to avenge her daughter and the insult done to her by Agamemnon bringing his mistress, Cassandra, into her home. Clytaemnestra shows no pity for the Elders whom Aegisthus wishes to kill: "if you must", she says, "you can injure them. But do not kill them - that would be *unlucky* for us." That would be going just too far, and overstep what she still perceives as the natural, the proper, limits of mortal behaviour.

As Sophocles says of such limits in *Antigone*:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῆ μάταν,
ἄ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'
αἶπος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
χρῆται.

Insolence [*ὑβρις*] plants the tyrant:
There is insolence if by a great foolishness
There is a useless over-filling which goes beyond
The proper limits -
It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights
And then that hurtling toward that Destiny
Where the useful foot has no use.

Soph. Antig. vv.872ff

[2] Two fragments attributed to Heraclitus are of interest in this respect - 112, and 123. For 112 refer to my *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus*. For 123, refer to my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*.

[3] Where culture may be defined as the arts of personal manners, of personal dignity, of civility, and of a received and living (and thus numinous) tradition (often aurally transmitted), and which tradition is therefore both respected and regarded as a source of practical wisdom and practical knowledge, and which practical wisdom and practical knowledge is often (or mostly) derived from the accumulated personal experience, accomplishments, and observations, of the elders and ancestors of that tradition. In all such numinous, living, cultures, there is an understanding, if only intuitive, of the difference between the sacred (the numinous, the gods, the natural) and the profane (the ordinary, the common, the vulgar) and of the necessity for some kind of natural balance to be

maintained.

[4] As I wrote in my *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way*:

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

However, this expression should be understood in context, for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and this new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos. Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous authority.

The context (Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 174-183) is:

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:
ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοῦς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;
Of he who guided mortals to reason,
Who laid down that this possesses authority:
Learning from adversity.

[5] In terms of pre-Socratic philosophy, Αἰὼν and ψυχή are related, with the later dependant on, or considered as deriving from, the former. Alternatively, we may describe Αἰὼν as the acausal, presenced as the progression of Aeons, as Change (ἀρχή), manifest to us as the natural unfolding that is both Φύσις and λόγος. Expressed another way, ἀρχή is that changing, the presencing and re-presencing of being, that is ψυχή through Αἰὼν.

Thus, for Heidegger, Αἰὼν is manifest in Φύσις and λόγος. For Nietzsche, Αἰὼν is manifest, symbolically, in Zeus - although, to be exact, in the Zeus of Aeschylus (Agamemnon, 174-183) who guides mortals to reason, and whose new guidance, whose authority, whose logos or aeon, is expressed (presenced) in pathei-mathos (πάθει μάθος).

For Heraclitus, as recorded in fragment 53, Αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληίῃ. [For the acausal, we are a game, pieces moved on some board: since, in this world of ours, we are but children.]

[6] In essence, Reality may be considered to consist of a causal continuum, and

an acausal continuum. The causal continuum is the phenomenal Universe evident to us by means of experimental science, and currently described by a causal Space of three spatial dimensions and a linear, single, dimension of causal Time.

The acausal continuum is most evident to us by means of *ψυχή* - that is, by Life; that which makes us and keeps us mortal (alive) - the essence of our causal being. Hence, every living being is a nexion (a connexion) between the causal and the acausal, and that which animates our being is acausal energy, from the acausal continuum, with this acausal energy being quite distinct from the causal energy known to, and described by, experimental science.

Technically, the acausal can be described by an acausal Space of n acausal dimensions, and an acausal, un-linear, Time of n dimensions, where n is currently unknown but is greater than three and less than or equal to infinity. For more details refer to my *The Physics of Acausal Energy*.

[7] Refer, for example, to my *Exegesis and The Discovery of Wisdom in The Numinous Way and Religion - Three Essays Concerning The Nature of Religion*.

[8] Causal abstractions derive from the process of ideation, and are thus the manufacture, and use of, some idea, ideal, "image" or category, and thus some generalization, and/or some assignment of an individual or individuals - and/or some being, some "thing" - to some group or category with the implicit acceptance of the separateness, in causal Space-Time, of such being/things /individuals. The positing of some "perfect" or "ideal" form, category, or thing, is part of abstraction, as are the *-isms* and the *-ologies* that are abstracted from types of causal knowing, be such *-isms* and such *-ologies* described as political, religious, or social.

Thus, the theory of "democracy" is such a causal abstraction - based on some ideal (in this instance, a type of government) and used as a guide, a template, for people to aspire to and strive to implement, and which guide or template is said to have or be capable of having some abstract quality termed "good" by its very nature as an abstraction. That is, "democracy is by its nature a good thing, therefore this ideal should (or must) be aspired to."

Similarly, the idea of a State is a causal abstraction - based on some perceived and theorized (and alleged) need for large-scale centralization of resources, especially fiscal and military, and for an abstract "law" and an impersonal justice (based on some abstract theory of ethics) to be required to control and "improve" individuals, or facilitate some notion (some ideal, some theorized abstraction) of happiness and peace (of "the greatest number" or whatever).

All abstractions by their very nature usurp the immediacy and personal nature of acausal knowing, and all demand, or expect, in varying ways, the individual accept such impersonal abstractions over and above, or in place of, their own

immediate acausal knowing and the personal judgement arising from such immediate knowing. That is, all abstractions are assigned some value which is always greater than the personal immediate compassion arising from empathy.
