



The Strange Life Of David Myatt

One of the interesting things about the strange life of David Myatt is that there are several different interpretations of both his motives and his personality. The three most common interpretations - advanced and commented on by academics, by journalists, and others - are:

- (i) That he is Anton Long, founder of the Occult group the Order of Nine Angles (ONA, O9A), and an "extremely violent, intelligent, dark, and complex individual" {1} who is "paramount to the whole creation and existence of the ONA," {2} whose "Nazism and Islamism are merely instruments for the ONA's underlying sinister esoteric plots." {3}
- (ii) That his somewhat itinerant adult life has been a Faustian, experiential, quest, with him drifting toward an unknown destination.
- (iii) That he has been on a life-long 'sinister-numinous' quest, both Occult and practical (esoteric and exoteric), and has now discovered the wisdom and the self-understanding that is the goal of such a quest.

According to the first interpretation, his poetry {4}, his published private letters {5} and post-2011 writings about his philosophy of *pathei-mathos* are either a clever ploy by a real-life Trickster to disguise his real 'sinister' nature or were written by someone else, or some others, as a deception.

According to the second interpretation - advanced by Myatt himself and some of his supporters - such writings are genuine and document the interior struggles, the vacillation, and the learning from experience, that occurred from around 2002 until 2010; struggles, vacillation, and a learning that he makes mention of in both his autobiography *Myngath* and in his essay *The Development Of The Numinous Way*.

According to the third interpretation - advanced by some supporters of the O9A - such writings document the feelings and the understanding germane to someone who, questing for decades along the O9A Seven Fold Way, has

entered and passed beyond the Abyss and thus discovered Lapis Philosophicus.

In respect of which interpretation of Myatt's life is the most plausible, it is my contention that Myatt's poetry, his published private letters, and his post-2011 writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos, can provide the answer: that they hold all the clues necessary to arrive at a satisfactory and rational solution.

The Necessary Research

What is most surprising about those who advance and write about and believe one of the above explanations is that it appears that none of them have actually studied, in detail, and critically commented upon, Myatt's poetry, his published (pre-2009) private letters and his post-2011 writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos.

For among the questions that should be asked, in relation to such works, are the following. (i) What do they express in terms of personal feelings and weltanschauung? (ii) What do they reveal about the writer and his style of life? (iii) Are they internally - and over the time span under consideration (2002-2011) - consistent? (iv) How do they relate to Myatt's life at the time they were written? (v) Are they all consistent with Myatt's own explanation of his life as described in his autobiography *Myngath* {6} and in his post-2011 essays such as *The Development Of The Numinous Way*? (vi) Could someone who faked the letters - for whatever reason - maintain a consistency of feelings for so many years? {7}

Is what Myatt explained in *Myngath* the truth of his life or the sly words of a trickster? He wrote:

"For the reality of my past nine or so years is not that of some sudden life-changing revelation, but rather of a profound inner struggle whose genesis lay years before - in my experiences with and passion for women; in my time in a monastery; in my ever-growing love for Nature and my involvement with English rural life; in Sue's illness and her tragic death.

This intense struggle was akin to an addiction, and I an addict addicted to abstractions. A struggle between my empathy, my understanding, my pathei-mathos, and my life-long belief, itself an abstraction, that somehow in some way I could make a positive difference to the world and that such abstractions as I adhered to, or aided or advocated were or could be a beginning for a better world, and that to achieve this new world certain sacrifice were, unfortunately, necessary.

A struggle which gave rise to what became - refined, and extended, year after year - *The Numinous Way*, and which struggle was an interior war to change myself, to actually live, every year, every month, every week, every day, suffused with an empathic

awareness and a desire not to cause suffering; the struggle to abandon abstractions.

For nine years or so this interior struggle wore me down, until it gradually faded away. It was akin to cycling up a long steep mountain climb in mist and drizzly rain, struggling on against one's aching body and against the desire to stop and rest; and not being able to see the end, the summit, of the climb. And then, slowly, the drizzle ceases, the mist begins to clear, the road becomes gradually less steep, and one is there - in warm bright sunshine nearing the summit of that climb, able to see the beautiful, the numinous, vista beyond, below, for the first time, and which vista after such an effort brings a restful interior peace, the silent tears of one person who feels their human insignificance compared to the mountains, the valleys below, the sky, the Sun, and the vast Cosmos beyond: the wondrous nature of one fleeting delicate mortal microcosmic nexion which is one's own life."

Post-2009 Letters And Writings

In 2012 Myatt was contacted, via e-mail, by a journalist employed by the BBC and, over subsequent months, they exchanged correspondence via that medium. In 2013 Myatt published edited extracts from some of this correspondence in Part Three of his book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* (ISBN 9781484854266). He also included some of this correspondence - and some other correspondence with a few other individuals around the same time (2011-2012) - in a posting on his weblog under the title *Just My Fallible Views, Again*. {8}

This correspondence is not only quite remarkable, given the various assumptions made about Myatt since at least the 1980s, but also is a significant development of the feelings expressed in his pre-2009 private letters. In those pre-2009 letters a certain lofty (even an arrogant) presumption of knowing - of having understood himself and the world - emerges time and time again, as well as certain pontifications based on various abstractions, while the later letters are replete with a certain humility. For instance, in one of these 2011-2012 letters he writes:

"The problem in the past had been me, my lack of understanding of myself and my egoism. It was my fault: not the place, not the time, not the people, for I so desired with that arrogance of youth to exchange this paradise, here, for those ideas, the idealism, the abstractions, I carried around in my prideful hubriatic head. Seldom content, for long, since happiness came with - was - the pursuit, or the gratification of my personal desires. So destructive, so very destructive. So hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, profane [...]

In a letter sent to the BBC journalist he wrote:

[My] recent propensity to be somewhat subsumed with a certain sadness [arose] from not only pondering on such questions as

pathei-mathos, the causes/alleviation of suffering, and the nature of religion, expiation, and extremism, but also from understanding, from feeling, just how much suffering I personally have caused during my extremist decades and knowing that had it not been for the tragic death of a loved one some six years ago I would most probably have continued my career as a suffering-causing extremist.

He was even more explicit in another letter to a different correspondent and dated November 2012:

"The reason why I now do not - and have no desire to - "get involved with social change" (or to "go out into the world and try to give something back" as another correspondent recently expressed it) is the reality of me having made, and knowing and feeling I made, so many mistakes, shown such poor judgement, been so arrogant, so selfish, for so many decades - for most of my adult life. Given this reality, I simply do not trust myself anymore not to cause suffering, not to make even more mistakes, not to show poor judgement again. Just as I know my responsibility, my blame, for those my past mistakes and their human consequences. Thus, why would I want to inflict myself on the world anymore? [...]

For the simple honest truth is that I now feel, in my very being, that I have no right to, can find no justification for me to - beyond that necessitated by personal honour in the immediacy of the moment - interfere in the lives of others, in however small a way even if my initial motives might be (or seemed to me to be) good. For who I am to judge, decide, things beyond the purview of empathy and a very personal honour? I am just one fallible exceedingly error-prone human being with a long proven history of impersonal interference, of hubriatic, suffering-causing, and selfish, deeds. Someone who does not trust himself anymore and who values and tries to cultivate wu-wei."

In a rather remarkable letter dated December 2nd 2012, he explained that:

"In respect of religion, there seems to have grown within me, this past year, a feeling regarding prayer, especially contemplative prayer, or rather that quiet way of being when - with no expectation of or belief in God - no words are desired or required and one is aware of the numinous in such an unaffected way that there is a calmness emanating not from within - not caused by our knowing or feeling of self - but from that ineffable vastness beyond which includes us and all the life that seeps into us, there in our stillness: emanations, of not only the dreams, the hopes, the love, the sadness, the sorrow, the grief, the pain, the joy, the tragedy, felt, known, experienced by we humans millennia after millennia, but also of the being, the essence, of the other life around us, here as Nature, and elsewhere, which, as we, 'hath but a short time to live'.

A feeling, an intimation, of perhaps in some small way now understanding the Latin *Opus Dei - Officium Divinum* - as a needful daily reminder of our needful humility, as the plaintive cry *Miserere Mei, Deus* so reminds, and as the *Namaz* of Islam also so reminds with its *Ruku, Sajdah*, and recitation of *Subhana Rabbiyal a'la*. A needful daily reminder that we are transient beings, prone to dishonour, selfishness, and hubris, but who can be loving and kind, and beings prone to the charisma, the temptation, of words, either our own or those spoken or written by others. A reminder that we can so easily forget, have so often forgotten, that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*."

All these sentiments, these feelings, are so consistent over so many years, chime so well with his poetry, with the feelings that run through his pre-2009 letters, with his autobiography *Myngath*, and with post-2011 writings about his philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, that it seems inconceivable to me that they are artful constructions - fakes - by someone else (or by some others) or the product of some 'sinister trickster' who has consciously adopted a certain persona in order to try and fool people. Also, what they express is a mysticism, a reverence for and an appreciation of the numinous, so at odds with the ethos and the practice of Satanism - of whatever variety - that it is also inconceivable that they were written by a Satanist or even by a practising Occultist.

My conclusion, therefore, is that his somewhat itinerant adult life has been a Faustian, experiential, quest, with him drifting, stumbling, toward an unknown destination, which destination he has finally reached and which destination he in his post-2011 writings and letters has striven to describe.

JRW
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Notes

{1} Raine, Susan. *The Devil's Party* (Book review). *Religion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, July 2014.

{2} Senholt, Jacob. *The Sinister Tradition*. Paper presented at the international conference, *Satanism in the Modern World*, Trondheim, 19-20th November, 2009.

{3} Per Faxneld: *Post-Satanism, Left Hand Paths, and Beyond* in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen (editors) *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*, Oxford University Press. 2012, p.207

{4} DW Myatt. *Relict: Some Autobiographical Poems*. 2014. ISBN 9781495448386.

{5} Letters dating from 2002 to 2009 are currently (September 2016) available at <https://regardingdavidmyatt.wordpress.com/selected-letters/> with a few of these (and other) letters included in Part Two of Myatt's book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, published in 2013, ISBN 9781484854266.

Some letters dating from 2011 were included in Part Three of the aforementioned book.

{6} David Myatt. *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. ISBN 9781484110744.

{7} While those who believe the 'fakery theory' might object that there is no proof the letters were written on the dates given - that is, they might all have been faked within a relatively short period of time - the evidence indicates otherwise. For many of the letters were published on the website of a Myatt supporter from 2005 onwards, as the following link reveals: <http://web.archive.org/web/20050205011512/http://www.geocities.com/davidmyatt/>

The letters that are in the pdf compilation {5} and also available in that web archive, and in some subsequent archives, include the following: (i) Preco prehemencie, (ii) A Fine Day in Middle June, (iii) One Hot Sunny Day, Almost Mid-July; (iv) The Buzzards Are Calling Again; and so on.

{8} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/about/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

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Appendix

Some Quotations From The Letters of David Myatt (2002-2009)

[Untitled] February 2003

How foolish, to forget my own understanding: to forget the remembering, the pain, that shaped, changed, evolved such empathy as I possessed so much that - when alone as now in such places as this - I knew the past, felt the future, and, burdened by such knowing, tried hard to keep away the tears of so many centuries of sorrow, so little insight lived.

So hard, it seems, to renounce the passion of a life, as when a relationship of lovers falters, stalls, restarts to stall again; seldom a clean and sudden leaving. Feelings, memories, linger. And there is guilt. Let us not forget the guilt, the hope; the guilt of a duty abandoned [...]

Tomorrow, I could have been elsewhere, in a teeming city, talking words of war as if my old hope of inspiring noble deeds to aid those far less fortunate than me was still real in a modern urban world too tired of silence, patience, and too afraid of numinous stillness. I choose not to go; not to speak, and instead will - the goddess permitting - sit here again suspended in time between brown, green and blue [...]

If I have anything real to leave in remembrance, let it be such words as these: not the strife; not the anger; not the deaths; not the agitation for action. These are the words of a Spring, newly born between Sun and earth, bringing joy to a man whose hands, back and face have borne the cold toil of outdoor work in Winter.

I hope I do not forget this warmth, this beauty, again...

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One Week Beyond Mid-Spring, 2003

It was hope - and another lost love - which took me, once and a decade or more ago, to Egypt to travel in the desert as if such traveling might bring a forgetful peace. It did not work, despite the grim toil of that long journey, and it was only when I returned to Cairo that I forgot. I remember it so well: I had gone, out of politeness, to a concert to see and listen to some singer which some Egyptian I had met enthused about. And there was such beauty there, in her, her voice, in the music, as she sang of many things. Such sadness; such joy, such an embracing, for me, of another world, another culture. I was at home there, listening, feeling, with the audience as the beautiful Samira Said sang, and ever since - in times of personal sadness, rejection, such as this - I remember her concert, or listen to her songs {1}, reminding me of how I am not alone, of how others have, and do, suffer, and have cried, and laughed, and sang of their problems, personal, political, social and otherwise. But most of all I remember that there is another world out there of different, vibrant, cultures, of good people striving in their daily mostly toiling lives with hope for a better more honourable world for themselves, their family, their children, their land.

1) In a recent letter Myatt added: "In the past few years she has changed her style somewhat, less Arabic, more Western. While this new style is interesting, some - myself included - prefer her earlier songs and recordings."

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[Untitled] April 2003

There is, of course, peace here, while the warm Sun lasts and there is some physical tiredness from the hours of physical work, and the very early, Dawn, start. But there is also not only an undercurrent of sad loneliness - for she whom I love has gone, to another - but also an intimation of the past when action, violence, in the world to change the world, brought that exhilaration which true, honourable, warriors know and often seek and which is an end to such loneliness.....

So, to be honest, there is temptation, even here, amid this quiet rural splendour: the temptation to be again what I was when action, a goal, a seeking, an assignment, made me a harmony of body, mind, soul, and life became suffused with a glory redolent of the gods because life was lived on a

different, higher, level. There were then no obstacles that could not be overcome; no doubts; not even any self-reflexion.

Is this, then, just one of those periods in my life - of months, maybe a year - when I quietly drift, suffused with the numen, before returning to that other world, of duty, of exploration, of challenges, where lives the honourable warrior? I do not believe it is one of these periods, but I could be wrong; I have been wrong in the past.

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We Have Been Led Astray, May 2003

How many times have I myself known the simple, gentle, warmth of a love shared? And how many times have I turned away from that toward what I assumed or believed or felt was a duty, thus hardening myself? So much lost, for so little. So much suffering and sadness created by me, in others, in the world: and for what? So much sadness and suffering caused within myself by such a loss.

The truth I have painfully, slowly, discovered in this, the fifth decade of my strange wandering life, is that there is no noble, no good, no honourable duty to anything or anyone which can contradict such love, or reject it, or place it second. What honourable, noble, duty there is can only arise from such love or join with that love in a natural, dwelling, way as when two people, a family, settle to dwell on the land and through their dwelling, their labour, their toil, their love, they create a way of life which is in harmony with all other life, with Nature, and especially with their own loving, rational, honourable, human nature.

This is the quiet numinous way of restraining ourselves by concentrating on what is beyond words, beyond ideas: the way that some of the beautiful music of the past several hundred years is an intimation of, reminding us as it can of the greatest suffering, the greatest joy, and of our own place among Nature, in the Cosmos.

This is the quiet return that is needed - beyond all rhetoric; beyond all propaganda; beyond all ideas, political, religious, otherwise - and beyond all the forms that constrain and try to mould our human nature to some abstract theory or construct. For what is human is this love, this symbiosis between such love, such dwelling, such a gentle seeking yearning born of our questioning nature. All else - all other types of yearning, seeking, striving, duty - detract us and distance us from, or even destroy and negate, our true human nature, and from that evolution of this nature of ours which great music, great Art, great literature, rational ethical Science itself, provide us with an intimation of, a gentle yearning for.

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The Buzzards Are Calling Again, 2004

Many times, like the growing tree, there by that breeze, I have been swayed

- swayed by the sleeping warrior within, who, awakened, has tempted me. So much dishonour in this world; so much I had to again strive to avoid involvement, ready as I was to go to defend the oppressed against the ignoble oppressor. It was, for me, the battle against dishonour that mattered, that called, that awoke - the living of the life of a warrior.

It was not the ideology, not the ideas, not the cause, or even the goals, for these were and are mere causal forms which do not, cannot, contain the essence itself even though, sometimes, they may presence part of it, as a Buzzard, circling, presences one small part of Nature's life. What mattered then was the striving - the exhilaration of living which presenced honour in a moment, in an explosion of moments, so raising life up, upwards, towards a new living, a new way, nexion as it was to the essence itself, manifest as this essence was, is, can be, in the honour of a warrior. What mattered, then, was such a presencing by someone to redress the balance and bring some honour back into this world. Thus was I, am I, through such diverse presencing, such diverse involvement, a mystery to some, but not to myself... So I was swayed, tempted, and several times became alive again, a different alive as I forsook this quiet reclusive peace to travel, to engage, to live for a while a different way. And now, my work here having ended, I strain again against myself, feeling, feeling the presencing of that past, of those moments of life's ecstasy.

What of my words, this past year, born of such peace, of such silent wisdom as has kept me here in this place? Have they changed anything, anyone? I do not think so. Are they then as flowers thrusting forth in Spring, born only to die each year, seeding themselves with the hope of rebirth in some future? I do not know, and shall lay this pen aside to close my eyes to I lie on my old coat upon the growing greening grass of one more burgeoning beautiful English Spring.
