

Esoteric Notes Concerning The Numinous

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Preface

Given that the term *numinous* is part of the O9A expression 'the sinister-numinous tradition' - and thus relevant to understanding the esotericism of the Order of Nine Angles - we present here two articles which discuss the term in some detail.

The articles provide the required historical, metaphysical, and esoteric, context for correctly understanding the term and which context reveals, contrary to a popular misunderstanding, that the term 'numinous' - implying "of or relating to a god or a divinity, revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual" - was used in English centuries before Rudolf Otto appropriated it to describe *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* and thus restricted it to religions and to religions experience, which restrictive religious use is quite different from Myatt's metaphysical usage:

"The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) 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."

Since the two articles were written some months apart and were first published on different weblogs there is some slight overlap of content.

Three Wyrd Sisters Nexion
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I. A Note Regarding The Term Numinous

As a chapter of a book by Christopher Pankhurst – *Numinous Machines*, published in December 2017 by the 'right-wing' San Francisco based Counter-Currents organization – is titled *Nexus of Life: David Myatt & the Acausal*, it is fitting that we examine the origin of the term 'numinous' and what Myatt himself means by the term, especially as the blurb for the book on the publishers website repeats the common but mistaken belief that "Rudolf Otto coined the term numinous to refer to the primal experience of the holy."

A mistaken belief since as a certain "Anton Long" pointed out in his text *Alchemical Seasons and The Fluxions of Time* published in 123 yfayen (2011 ce) that

"despite the now common belief that the use of the word 'numinous' is fairly recent, deriving from the writings of Rudolf Otto, its first occurrence in English – so far discovered – is in a religious tract published in London in 1647 ce, entitled *The simple cobbler of Aggawam in America. Willing to help mend his native country*. The author, Nathaniel Ward – a scholar at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, an English clergyman, and a Puritan supporter – emigrated to Massachusetts in 1634 ce."

The meaning of the term numinous in that book, and in later books such as *The Quest of the Sangraal* by Robert Stephen Hawker published in 1864 (where it is spelt numynous), is "of or relating to a god or a divinity, revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual," derived as it is from the classical Latin 'numen', which Latin word implied a deity, a divinity, a reverence for what is divine.

In his 2013 book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos* Myatt described how he then philosophically used and understood the term:

"The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) 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. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή."

Prior to that 'Pathei Mathos iteration' (c.2011 – present) Myatt had frequently used the term 'numinous' during his 'National Socialist iteration' (1968-1998) writing in his 1990s text *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, {1} published by George Dietz in his Libery Bell magazine and also circulated by Myatt's National-Socialist Movement, not only that

"Something is numinous if it has beauty and awe. Something which

is divinely-inspired or divinely-representative is numinous. What is numinous is generally what is revered, or regarded as sacred – as spiritual or divine. Nature herself is numinous – a wonderful, awe-inspiring mystery. The numinous is an expression of the acausal – of the Unity behind causal, temporal, appearance,"

but also that

"a folk is not an abstract, easily defined, static, "thing" like the concept of race. It is a living, changing, evolving, being – a unique type of life. What defines a folk is thus far more than a certain set of physical or physiological or genetic characteristics. A folk is a symbiotic being – in symbiosis with the being which is the homeland of that folk, with that community or that collection of folkish communities. All this makes the culture, the Way of Life, the ethos (or soul) of that folk living as well. And it is this living which is numinous, which presences the numinous."

Since Myatt uses and used the term *numinous* in specific ways, and always seemed to avoid using the English word 'holy' both in reference to that term and in his Greek translations, it is interesting and relevant to mention his commentary on the Greek word ἅγιος in section 5 of the Pymander chapter of the ancient Corpus Hermeticum. {2}

The Holy

In regard to ἅγιος – conventionally translated as 'holy' – Myatt, quoting Rilke and providing his own translation of the German, writes that the numinous has two aspects:

{Begin quote}

Numinous is better – more accurate – than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, [the] numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous – in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance – which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the Agamemnon of Aeschylus (and the Orestia in general) to the Antigone and the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

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

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

wenn ich schrie. 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on schrie, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

der Engel Ordnungen. The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty (and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

{End quote}

Myatt thus provides a new - yet ancient, and most certainly pagan - interpretation of the term, so very different from the understanding of that of Christianity, which Christian understanding is "pertaining to God; belonging to God, commissioned by God, or persons devoted to God; conforming to the will of God, entirely devoted to God."

Three Wyrd Sisters
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{1} A copy of Myatt's text is available (as of November 2017) here:
<https://regardingdavidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/myatt-ns-meaning-v3.pdf>

{2} David Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017. ISBN-13:
978-1976452369

II. The Muliebral Numinous

In the *Numinous Metaphysics* chapter of his 2017 book *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, David Myatt iconoclastically wrote that in his view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral and can be apprehended through a personal, an interior, balance between masculous and muliebral." {1}

He then asks the important and relevant question as how can the "numinous balance between masculous and muliebral be metaphysically expressed, given that the culture of pathei-mathos has moved us, or can move us, beyond anthropomorphic deities, whether male or female; beyond myths and legends; beyond reliance on texts regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired; and even beyond the need for denotatum and religion."

If one accepts Myatt's understanding of the numinous as "primarily a manifestation of the muliebral" then it follows that all extant representations of the numinous, from Christianity, to Islam, to Judaism, to Buddhism, to most contemporary pagan revivals, as well as ancient Greco-Roman paganism, do not or did not adequately presence the numinous.

For such a muliebral presencing would, according to Myatt, be manifest in "a predominance of female deities; or in a dominant female deity; in legends and myths which celebrate muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion."

Hence a modern and metaphysical presencing of numinous would be "beyond the need for denotatum," {2} whether the denotatum be a named anthropomorphic divinity or named divinities, or whether such denotatum involves texts, since it is manifest "in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural."

Thus the numinous is not and cannot be - as Rudolf Otto argued in his *Das Heilige* - manifest in the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (chapters X, XI); nor is it manifest in the writings and sermons of preachers such as Martin Luther (chapters XII); nor in anything - ancient or modern - which involves 'worship' (chapter XIII ff). Nor even in some philosophical theory and thence described by a term such as *a priori* (chapter XVII).

Which would seem to lead us back to Myatt's understanding of empathy as a *human faculty* which cannot exist beyond the personal horizon of the individual, with the knowing gleaned by such a faculty limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment {3}. As a human faculty, it does not involve denotatum, and is personal and individual {4}. For empathy "reveals or can reveal the nature (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time." {5}

This empathic revealing - involving as it does a συμπάθεια (*sympatheia*) with 'the living other' - naturally inclines a person toward muliebral virtues such

as compassion {6}. Thus,

"morality resides not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous. Personal virtues such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία, that quality of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct." {7}

In effect, empathy presences - provides an apprehension of - the numinous, revealing the natural balance of ψυχή, and what upsets or can upset that balance within us as individuals. This leads him to suggest that

"the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example." {8}

However, in his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, he expands upon this by writing that the personal, the interior, balance between masculous and muliebral involves

"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 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."

Conclusion

For many people, all this will seem hopelessly idealistic, or impractical. Others will dismiss it as irrelevant because of how they perceive our 'human nature', believing that "what a piece of work is Man," no more, no less than a talking beast who happens to walk upright.

But a few might perceive it as the musings of a modern mystic, or as the musing of someone "Above Time", for such musings are only, as Myatt himself admits, the fallible result of his own pathei-mathos (8).

Three Wyrd Sisters
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{1} Since Myatt goes to explain what he means by both masculous and muliebral it is worth quoting the passage from *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* in context:

"If the numinous is a presencing, and an apprehension by us, of the divine, of the sacred, then is divinity, is the sacred, the sole domain of, a presencing of, the masculous - or such that the masculous dominates - or is it the domain of the muliebral; or the domain of such a balance between masculous and muliebral as the culture of pathei-mathos seems to indicate it is and should be. My own pathei-mathos certainly indicates that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral and can be apprehended through a personal, an interior, balance between masculous and muliebral.

A masculous presencing is and has been manifest in a predominance of male deities; or in a dominant male deity; and/or in legends and myths which celebrate masculous values, such as competitiveness, a certain harshness, a desire to organize/control, a perceived conflict between some-thing, some abstraction, denoted 'good' and some-thing, some abstraction, denoted as 'evil', and a following of or an adherence to abstractions in general (such as a perceived divine law or some interpretation of religiosity) over and above personal love. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a masculous presencing is manifest in a religion, with the attendant organized worship and devotion, with there existing a hierarchy, a creed or an article or articles of faith, and usually some texts, whether written or aural, regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired and which invariably require interpretation.

A muliebral presencing is or would be manifest in a predominance of female deities; or in a dominant female deity; in legends and myths which celebrate muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural.

Historically, it seems that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous [...]

Historically, while the paganus apprehension of Greco-Roman culture was also primarily masculous it did presence aspects of the muliebral, manifest for example in female deities such as Athena, Artemis, and Gaia, and thus was somewhat more balanced, more

harmonious in terms of re-presenting our human physis, than Christianity."

{2} In a footnote in *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, Myatt explains that he uses "the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is 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. Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata."

{3} *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Part I. Wisdom, Pathei-Mathos, and Humility.

{4} Op.cit. Part III. Some Personal Musings On Empathy.

{5} Op.cit. Appendix II.

{6} Op.cit. Part I. An Appreciation of The Numinous.

{7} Op.cit. Part V. Modern Society and The Individual.

{8} Op. cit. Preface.

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