One Perceiveration

Contents

Preface

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to 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 those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceiveration - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata - and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθὸν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κἀγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character.

But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Pœmandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the *Introduction* to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt
2020
Second Edition

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos.* ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on Ιερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

> In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α:
>
> ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ᾗ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη 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, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.
>
> Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement 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.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/

[5] In respect of physis, refer to Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos.* 2017. ISBN 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua.* 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/

On Translating Ancient Greek

Given that I have numerous times over the past ten or so years been asked by various individuals (including Greek scholars) about my Greek translations, and given that it seems some of my translations (such as parts of the Corpus Hermeticum) are regarded as "iconoclastic and controversial", it seems

fitting to provide a rather more detailed explanation of my methodology over and above my few, short, previous remarks.

When studying New Testament Greek while a monk in a Christian monastery in the 1970s - and being already familiar (from schooldays and later studies including at that monastery) with Homer's Greek and the way that Aeschylus often omitted 'the article' and invented new words to express his meaning - I began to wonder, in respect of translations, about what I have since termed 'retrospective re-interpretation'. As I mentioned in my essay *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, included as an Appendix to my Poemandres translation and commentary:

> "I incline toward the view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning, or an interpretation, somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed.
>
> Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial or iconoclastic they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.
>
> For example, 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 and the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided."

I then proceeded to give various quotations and argued that the original sense of the English word 'sin' was "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." Hence why in translating John 8.7 I eschewed the much overused and now often pejorative word sin:

> 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.

While such a translation may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which to me seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Pen many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. This seeking after meaning beyond what a particular English word now often denoted - in common usage or otherwise - I applied to my translations of some fragments of Heraclitus, to my translations of three tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and am applying to my on-going (as of 2016) translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John. I also used this principle, albeit then in a mostly intuitive way, when undertaking my translations, decades before, of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Thus I saught to try and understand - to apprehend, both intuitively and by scholarly means - what the author was expressing or saught to express all those centuries ago; which necessitated understanding the milieu, the ethos, the culture, of the time and the place where the author lived. My approach was therefore more than strictly grammatical; more than lexicographical. Why is why, in the Hermetic tractates the translation of such words as ἀγαθός and εὐσεβέω and θεός were considered in the necessary context. [1]

What, for example, did θεός mean and imply in the Hellenic times that the texts were written? My view is that to translate as 'god' is to miss the variety of possible meanings, since 'god' to so many people in the West imparts the sense of, if not the God of Christianity, then of 'the one deity' of neo-pythagoreanism and gnosticism. This then leads and has led to speculation as whether God and 'the one deity' are the same and whether the texts are neo-pythagorean and/or gnostic and/or possibly influenced by early Christianity. The texts under consideration, however, are unclear as to exactly what and who θεός is, especially given (i) that in the Poemandres tractate θεός is described as being both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλυς) and (ii) that 'archetypes'/deities from classical Greek culture are mentioned, from Psyche to Hermes, and (iii) that Poemandres is described as 'changing their form/appearance' (shapeshifting) in the manner of Greek divinities such as Athena in The Odyssey and Demeter in mythological poems and legends, and (iv) the mention of 'daimons'. This θεός might thus refer to a deity in a classical sense, with the texts describing a mysticism that is essentially a development of existing and past Greek ideas.

To translate θεός as god is therefore, in my view, not helpful given that 'god' is not, in our milieu, a neutral world and therefore tends to impose a certain meaning on the text. In contrast, the transliteration 'theos' is neutral and also aids the curiosity of the reader who might well then ask: what and who, here, is theos?

In regard to εὐσεβέω, is what is meant what we understand by terms such as reverent and pious? Again, given the influence of Christianity over the past two millennia, what such terms now so often denote is redolent of that religion so that such words are not neutral in respect of understanding the spirituality of such ancient Greek texts. Hence why my choice was for an expression: 'awareness of the numinous', which expression encompasses - or seems to me to encompass - an essential aspect of all spirituality, from ancient Greece to Greco-Roman times to Christianity and beyond. There is therefore, yet again, no retrospective re-interpretation of the text resulting from a poor choice of English words.

In considering ἀγαθός my basic guide was ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός in ancient Greece and Greco-Roman times with the sense being not some abstract god-given 'what is good' and 'what is evil', nor of some impersonal idea of 'good' contrasted with some other impersonal idea of 'evil', but rather the difference between good (noble) and bad (rotten) individuals, and which difference (according to so many authors of those times) was revealed, became known, through the deeds done by individuals. An interesting passage illustrating ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός occurs in section eight of the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

> τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἐχόντων, ὦ Τάτ, τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τε ὑπῆρξε καὶ ὑπάρξει· τὰ δὲ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀκολουθησάτω καὶ μὴ ὑστερήσατω· ἐπεὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἴτιοι τῶν κακῶν, ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν

Nearly all past translations have opted to use the English words 'good' and 'evil', as did John Everard and G.R.S. Mead whose respective translations are,

> These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from us, without any scarcity or sparing. For God is innocent or guiltless, but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.

> This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press onward and have no delay; for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

A more recent translation is that of Brian Copenhaver,

> Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be available to us. May what comes to us be suited to it and not deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who chose them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's.

In contrast, I interpret as,

> Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours
> So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.
> For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour
> With theos blameless in this.

Which interpretation emphasises the personal origin of what is done and why what is bad, in personal terms, is - as the author of the text later writes, αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον - a privation of what is good:

> This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different
> With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Which contrast between personal honour (a nobility of character) and dishonour (a doing of rotten deeds) is rather different from abstract "evil things", and well expresses an important aspect of the ethos of ancient Greece and of Greco-Roman culture; an aspect well-expressed by Sophocles: πόλεμος οὐδέν᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ἑκὼν αἱρεῖ πονηρόν ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεί battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable Philoctetes, v.437

This interpretation of ἀγαθός - in the personal terms of such an ethos, rather than as some abstract existent external to the individual as posited by Plato, ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα - is why the author of text also writes,

> ὁρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον, πόσα ἡμᾶς δεῖ σώματα διεξελθεῖν, καὶ πόσους χοροὺς δαιμόνων καὶ συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων ἵνα πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον σπεύσωμεν; ἀδιάβατον γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές, αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἄναρχον, ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν. οὐκ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχὴ γίνεται ἡ γνῶσις
>
> Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse - How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations - So that we hasten to the Monas. For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it It yields to us the origin of our knowing. [2]

For Plato's explanation requires a questioning, a philosophical search for ἀληθεία, a type of anados, resulting in a knowing of 'the good', ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, and which knowing - which knowledge - is the source, the origin, of all other knowing. Here, the opposite is clearly stated: that such knowledge of 'the good', of what is honourable, is not 'the knowledge' - the conclusion of our anados - but instead only the source of what we know about ourselves

and about others.

This understanding of 'the good', of ἀγαθός, is indeed somewhat controversial - the opposite of what Plato et al theorized and what some seem to have assumed regarding the Corpus Hermeticum - but one which presents an alternative (a somewhat paganus) understanding of such hermeticism as is described in the three tractates under consideration. And an interesting alternative that, to my knowledge, has been long neglected, given the various and the numerous assumptions made regarding the meaning of certain Greek words in texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

2016

[1] In order to elucidate my methodology I for brevity only consider here three Greek terms.

[2] As I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:

> Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiveration," having won that prize gifted by theos [...]

> The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονίη, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκα (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδρομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings

thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

> χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ· ἔστι δ᾽ ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ
> σημαινομένου χρῆται.

2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay in included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed

details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is available at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/

Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the pathei-mathos which such literature – and often the associated mythoi – can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, in the melding of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) and τὸ ἀγαθὸν (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

> Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;
> Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰών.

> But the Sophia of the theos is what?
> The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, τὸ καλὸν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty – the beautiful – but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in Hellenica, Book V, 3.9,

> πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

> Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni

utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

> ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες
>
> The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

December 2019

[1] https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεὸς – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεὸς is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

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 develope my philosophy of pathei-mathos and saught 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 presenced 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 Δίκα 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 κἀγαθός [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 Δίκα 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 κἀγαθός, 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. https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/the-joy-of-words/2013.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy/2018.

[4] I have described καλὸς κἀγαθός 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. https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/02/10/physis-and-being/

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

Concerning The Gospel Of John

A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὑρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινὴ) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [1] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of

Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἀμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develope a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἀμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

> I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

> It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

> Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

> 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. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖᾰ) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and

his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

2017

[1] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

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 βάθη 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 [3], 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."

[3] http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html

Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὦ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ἀεί - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν Ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἠράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἠράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - 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 ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead

as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεὸς as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, 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.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

March 2017

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

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Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

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

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/

[4] To be pedantic, when θεὸς is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos
Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

Abstraction

An abstraction 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. 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.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization – a concept – deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that

wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (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, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; 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.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

> "We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the

knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

ἁρμονίη

ἁρμονίη (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin benignitatem, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from com, meaning together-with, combined with pati, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin passiō. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are compassivity and benignity.

Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good

fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Denotatum

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used 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.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκην of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκα - spelt thus in a modern

way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκα from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκα thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, 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 - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing 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.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

Enantiodromia

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

> ἥ τ᾽ ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδησι μετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.
>
> Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus
>
> Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

> Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio
>
> Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...   [My translation]
>
> De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

> And riht in such a maner wise
> Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,
> So that Achilles underfongeth
> As to a yong ladi belongeth
> Honour, servise and reverence.
>
> John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

> " Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."
>
> George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, 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. That is, as a means 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, ἁρμονίη.

Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to 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.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Immediacy-of-the-Moment

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, 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. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside 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 - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

Innocence

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise.* Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits,

abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Numinous

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 predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus 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.

See my *From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous* for more details.

Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος 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.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those

individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Πόλεμος

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

Physis (φύσις)

See Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis.

Religion

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

Separation-of-Otherness

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 ἁρμονίη, 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.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

σωφρονεῖν

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.

State

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling – over a particular and

large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/clique/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Time

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

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

ὕβρις

ὕβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement – σωφρονεῖν – and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance – is contrary to ἀρμονίη [harmony] – and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὕβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ᾽ Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαιμόνων.

Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. 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 develope 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.

Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develope ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἁρμονίη.

Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from

empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

Appendix I

The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ιερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develope. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be.

Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [3].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [4] with physis often mystically personified:

> "This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...
>
> [For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pnuema, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiveration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiveration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...
>
> When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [5]

Physis is also personified in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate:

> "The divine is all of that mixion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presenced in the divine." [6]

The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

> (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature '- that is often obscured by denotatum [7] and by abstractions [8], both of which conceal physis;
> (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [9] is a concealment of that relationship;

(iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
(iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
(v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings. [10]

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

March 2015

Notes

[1] See my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions.*

[2] πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὂν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[3] See https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/

[4] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[5] Pœmandres 16-18.

[6] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[7] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use 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."

[8] An abstraction 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. 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. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[9] Refer, for example, to *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness* section of

in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos.*

[10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One.* 2012.

Appendix II

Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

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

> σὺ δ᾽ ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ᾽ ὕβριν ὄφελλε:
> ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς
> 215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς
> ἐγκύρσας ἄτῃσιν: ὁδὸς δ᾽ ἑτέρηφι παρελθεῖν
> κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ᾽ ὑπὲρ Ὕβριος ἴσχει
> ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν 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

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

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

> Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.
>
> How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is

cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθὸν - 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 ἀγαθὸν, and thus the numinous.

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

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

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

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

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

On Ethos And Interpretation

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully renew interest in them beyond conventional current, and past interpretations, which - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - makes them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? For two reasons.

First, because the choice of English words hitherto in respect of Greek terms such as λόγος, νοῦς, θεός, ἀγαθός, φῶς, and φύσις, seems to me to be based on various assumptions such as that those and other terms express something definite and philosophical and relate to various ancient 'schools of thought'. I dissent from this view; instead, regarding such terms as descriptors used by individuals to express their own often mystical weltanschauung based on their own personal insights or, more probably, on what they had learned from others and/or from various MSS they had read. That is, many of the tractates present mythos, and/or ancient aural esoteric traditions, rather than the teachings of some established and philosophical 'school of thought'. Thus, such Greek terms require contextual interpretation and are often best transliterated or at least referred to the ethos underlying such weltanschauung and such mythos.

Second, because such texts seem to me to be, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as Ιερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1] .

In respect, for example, of the Ιερός Λόγος tractate, my view - as noted in the Preface of my translation of and commentary on that tractate - is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility, τὸ ἀγαθὸν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in brave,

noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals - exemplified in legend by the likes of the hero Leonidas - which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, just as the expression τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy,and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well express and have expressed.

Thus, such an iconoclastic interpretation of such an important ancient Greek word - in terms of individuals and their physis, as opposed to in terms of some abstract, moral, impersonal schemata or dogma or as part of some conjectured philosophy - might provide a new perspective on some of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

But whether this particular insight of mine regarding ἀγαθός is valid, others will have to decide.

2017

[1] (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.