

## Weltschmerz And The Conflict In Gaza

Question: Given your past, which included anti-Zionist tirades when you were a neo-nazi and then when you were a supporter of al-Qaeda, I would be interested in your view of recent events in Palestine.

Reply: Does the term Weltschmerz express what I feel after decades of experiencing and inciting extremism and a decade of reflexion on and rejection of such extremism? Possibly, at least in some ways; [1] for in respect of the current (2023) conflict in Gaza I feel sadness, and am not surprised that such a conflict has arisen with the subsequent destruction of infrastructure, of homes, and the injuries, the deaths, including of women and children.

Not surprised, given what I understand is our human physis and our seemingly inability to avoid the error of hubris and our obvious ability to favour our own certitude-of-knowing. Will we, can we, as a species learn to develop empathy and thus be compassionate and appreciative of the numinous breeding as such empathy and appreciation of the numinous do a certain personal humility and thus an uncertainty-of-knowing? Will we, can we, as a species learn from our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos*?

It would seem not since we in the West, en masse, apparently have not learned from the horrors of the First and Second World wars; from the Vietnam war; from the invasions and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. Instead, hatred and certitude-of-knowing have triumphed again over personal empathy aided as in all those previous conflicts by propaganda both emotive and cunning.

Contra the *bellum iustum* of Augustine, since adopted as a principle by modern nation-States and others, where some elected or unelected official or President or Prime Minister or Congress or Parliament or potentate or whatever assumes or believe they have the authority to declare war, my understanding is that impersonal war, whenever wherever, whatever the alleged or assumed justification by whomsoever, is contrary to empathy, compassion, awareness of the numinous, and the personal learning that *pathei-mathos* engenders.

For such impersonal war with its necessary obedience to a chain-of-command abrogates personal judgement and what I have described as 'personal honour in the immediacy of the moment'. As I wrote in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, personal honour

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of *pathei-mathos* and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it [is] only through such things as a personal study of the culture of *pathei-mathos* and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal *pathei-mathos*." [2]

Hence, my fallible understanding now is that honour cannot be abstracted out from a personal moment and enshrined in some supra-personal written or aural code. Which, of course, is the exact opposite of what I believed during my thirty years as a neo-nazi extremist. Such a change of view was a painful, sorrowful, learning from experience:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused [...] No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by others..." [3]

A gift, a Phoenix, from the deaths of Sue and Francis who

"died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed [...] A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my *pathei-mathos* I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss." [4]

In further explanation all I have now are the words of TS Eliot in his poem *Little Gidding*:

And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled  
If at all. Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment.

In respect of wars and supra-personal conflicts, are we then, as a species, doomed to repeat the errors, the hubris, of the past? Almost a decade ago I asked myself a rhetorical question: what opinion would a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system form about us? [5] My answer then was that the alien would probably consider us an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate otherwise.

Have we, since the outbreak of World War One in 1914 to the 2023 conflict in Gaza, demonstrated otherwise?

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Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent.

[1] Postscriptum: "in some ways" as Weltschmerz might be applied to some of the poems and letters of TS Eliot.

[2] *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/12/viator.pdf>

[3] *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*. The essay is included in <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>

[4] *Myngath*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

[5] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/non-terrestrial-view.pdf>

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