



Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race

Empathy and Reason

Empathy is a human faculty which, according to *The Philosophy of The Numen*, compliments the four Aristotelian essentials [1] of conventional philosophy and experimental science, and the fundamental principle which Isaac Newton eloquently expressed in his *Principia*:

" We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance..... for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

The particular perception that arises from empathy therefore provides us with a knowing that is different from the perception of Phainómenon that arises and has arisen from these four essentials and this fundamental Newtonian principle.

As mentioned in my *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*:

" The perception which empathy provides is both of acausality and of the personal immediacy-of-the-causal-moment, and it is these which make numinous philosophy quite distinct from the causal reductionism, the impersonal abstractions, of both conventional philosophy and experimental science. For the essence of the faculty

of empathy is a sympathy, *συμπάθεια*, with other living beings arising from a perception of the acausal reality underlying the causal division of beings, existents, into separate, causal-separated, objects and the subject-object relationship which is or has been assumed by means of the process of causal ideation to exist between such causally-separate beings. That is, and for instance, the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of Being and beings...

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

The personal immediacy-of-the-causal-moment means that empathy is an attribute of and dependant upon the individual living being, in the moment of empathy, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being - that is, it cannot have any causal ideation."

Thus, the quality - or what we might describe as the excellence (*ἀρετή*) - of empathy is the knowledge that *the separation of otherness* is an illusion, mere causal ideation, the product of a limited causal knowing.

Empathy provides us with acausal knowing:

" Acausal knowing reveals (uncovers) the connexions between beings - the dependant nature of beings - and thus places beings in the context of Being, and thus uncovers the acausal nature of beings, with Being having both a causal and an acausal nature." *On The Nature of Abstractions*

This acausal knowing, this uncovering, is not "irrational" in the sense of being *ἄλογος* (a-logos), since, as I briefly mentioned in *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Question*:

λόγος is manifest to us in both empathy and reason, with reason being both what has been termed logical reasoning (logic) and also empathy as *ἁρμονίη*, as that letting-be (wu-wei), that natural balance presenced within us, which uncovers what has been hidden by ideation, by abstractions. Thus, *λόγος* is how we can understand, come to know, *Φύσις* - and which understanding and knowing leads

us to Αἰὼν, to an appreciation and understanding of the acausal, of acausal Time, beyond all causal abstractions.

For, as my interpretation of Heraclitus Fragmentum B 123 suggests:

"...logos is more than some idealized (or moralistic) *truth* [ἀληθεία] and more than is implied by our term *word*. Rather, logos is the activity, the seeking, of the essence - the nature, the character - of things [ἀληθεία akin to Heidegger's revealing] which essence also has a tendency to become covered by words, and an abstract (false) truth [an abstraction; εἶδος and ἰδέα] which is projected by us onto things, onto beings and Being. Thus, and importantly, λόγος - understood and applied correctly - can uncover (reveal) Φύσις and yet also - misunderstood and used incorrectly - serve to, or be the genesis of the, concealment of Φύσις. The correct logos - or a correct logos - is the ontology of Being, and the λόγος that is logical reasoning is an essential part of, a necessary foundation of, this ontology of Being." *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [2]

Thus, λόγος is correctly understood as the revealing it is: both a causal and an acausal knowing. [3]

In addition, the aspect of λόγος that is logical reasoning [cf. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 583, εἰ διδοίης γ' ὡς ἐγὼ σαυτῷ λόγον] is the opposite - τοῦ λ. ἐόντος ξυνοῦ - of an idea, of an abstraction.

This is so because, I have mentioned before, classical (traditional, formal) logic, is:

"...the dispassionate examination of the collocation or collocations of words and/or terms (or symbols) which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocation or collocations are considered to be or which are regarded as being, by their proponents, as representative of, or actually being, knowledge or a type of or a guide to knowing. For logic, what is or what may be represented by such collocations (the content) is fundamentally irrelevant. What is relevant - what determines the logical validity of any any examined collocations - is the natural unfolding, or the form, behind and beyond all ideation."

The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος

And in causal knowing - that of conventional philosophy, for example - there is the process of causal ideation:

"...where some fundamental form, or cause, is sought; the positing of some ideal or perfect form for beings and "things"; making connections between a subject (some form, being, thing) and an object (an attribute or value or quality assigned to such a form, being, or thing), and which subject and object are named and classified according to some category, and which category is determined by attributes of inclusion/exclusion." *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

Thus, for logic what is so posited, denoted, or so assigned some value, by the process of causal abstraction - the content - is irrelevant; meaning the content of some causal abstraction (often represented by some term or word or idea), or some value assigned to some abstraction, cannot be said to be logical in and of itself or even be said to unequivocally manifest or represent that particular aspect of *λόγος* which causal knowing, either philosophical or derived from experimental science, may be said to explain or manifest.

Hence, and for instance, it would be fallacious to argue that not only is the acausal knowing of empathy irrational, but also that some posited abstraction deriving from conventional philosophy or some theory (model, axiom) renders such acausal knowing invalid.

The Abstraction of Race

Let us consider, for example, the causal ideation that has been termed "race" as applied to human beings, and which ideation has sometimes been used as an argument against not only the acausal knowing that empathy uncovers but also against the necessity for compassion which such an acausal knowing imputes and logically implies, deriving as this compassion does from the revealed dependant nature of (the acausal connexion between) living beings: of ourselves as but one microcosmic nexion, one causal unfolding, of *ψυχή* [4]. For empathy [*συν-πάθος*] by its very nature - by its relocation, translocation, of ourselves into, and *σμπάθεια* with, *the living other* - naturally disposes us to such compassion. For to harm *the living other* is to feel, to know, that harm, and to harm the *ψυχή* we share with that *living other*.

The proponents of the particular aforementioned argument regarding race accept or believe that what has been termed "race" exists, often on the basis of some definition dependant on observed physical characteristics, and/or some biological (genetic) markers, and/or on other traits such as assumed or provable genealogy.

In the context of *ψυχή*, race is a manifestation of the causal *separation of otherness*. Which directs us to one of several fundamental problems with the notion of race. Race is a causal ideation - an abstraction - which separates, divides, human beings into manufactured categories, and which leads to, and has led to, the assignment of value to such categories, and which abstraction, like almost all causal abstractions denotes or implies the principle of exclusion/inclusion.

What occurs is that some general category is posited, based on some observations or some data (or more accurately, on the median values of such observations and data), and then this category is assumed to not only exist, but to define and explain the nature of the being of those assigned to such a posited category. Sometimes, one such posited category is assigned a higher "value" than another or other categories, on the basis of other assumptions, for example, that of "being civilized" [5].

The problem here with such a posited category of race is of *the when* to begin the exclusion/inclusion - the categorization - of human beings so that they meet the posited, abstract, criteria for being said to belong to a specific race. One related problem is the stasis implied by such categorization. Thus, if one human being is assigned to the abstract category Caucasian because, for instance, they have fair skin and blue eyes, then (1) when did this category first arise - what start point is posited for this category, and (2) what attribute or attributes of this posited category are assumed not to change?

But in terms of *ψυχή* such categories are irrelevant because they obscure the natural process of Change, of *ἀρχή* which we apprehend as *Φύσις* - as Heraclitus expressed in fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.

This suggests [6] that what is most excellent [*ἀρετὴ*] is thoughtful reasoning [*σωφρονεῖν*] - and that such thoughtful reasoning is a process which not only expresses and uncovers meaning, but which is also in accord with, in harmony or in sympathy with, *φύσις* - that is, with our own nature as mortals and with the nature of Being itself.

The nature of Being is Change; to presence as the natural unfolding we perceive as *φύσις* and as the natural process underlying this (which process we often greatly mis-understand) named *Πόλεμος* -

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ

ἐλευθέρους. Heraclitus, Fragmentum B53.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

As for Πόλεμος - while Heidegger suggested a similarity with λόγος, Πόλεμος is in my view what the λόγος that is both causal and acausal knowing can uncover, rather than λόγος itself. That is, the ἀρχή of, the changing, the presencing and re-presencing of Being which is ψυχή through Αἰών. Hence Πόλεμος is the whole, the complete, the natural, the cosmological, process which includes ἀρχή, ψυχή, Αἰών, and Φύσις, and our revealing or coming-to-know these through λόγος. That is, through that thoughtful reasoning, that balance (ἀρμονίη) of both a causal knowing and an acausal knowing. In other words, by means of both empathy, and also by philosophy and experimental science. In effect, Πόλεμος is an expression of the acausality beyond our causal ideation, the acausal nature of which both ψυχή and Αἰών manifest.

Our own nature as mortals is that we are part of this acausal change - we have our genesis (both our life, and our type of living) in this change, in and through and because of Πόλεμος - and which change unfolds in us and around us, and which we strive to comprehend - or should strive to comprehend - by a thoughtful reasoning, by acquiring both causal and acausal knowing, given the nature of λόγος. This knowing - the prehension of σοφόν - predisposes us to ἀρετή, that is to not commit the error, the unbalance, of ὕβρις [7]. Expressed simply, ὕβρις at best conceals one's natural relation to ψυχή and at worst undermines that presencing of ψυχή within us.

The philosophical error of the abstraction of race (as of many other abstractions) is that the abstraction is either purely static in the causal (a desire to try and maintain what-is in the causal) or of a manufactured linear, causal, nature (a desire to maintain or to attain an ideal form of the posited abstraction). Both contradict the nature of Being and our own nature, as mortals. That is, the abstraction of race ignores Πόλεμος.

Hence, instead of there being a move toward a revealing of Being and beings through λόγος, there is instead more concealment of Being and beings - no ἀληθεία, no σοφόν. No knowing of the acausality inherent in all Life, including ourselves, we mortals, whether we be unfettered or still bound.

In addition, according to The Philosophy of The Numen, such separation, such division, of living beings by means of such a static and linear abstraction, and especially the assignment of value to such categories and to those included in or excluded from them, is immoral. Why? Because what is ethical is that συμπάθεια with *the living other* which reveals, and presences, our true

(revealed) nature as human beings, as mortals whose genesis is *Πόλεμος*.

Furthermore, this immorality of such an abstraction is independent of any existing, any past, or any future causal evidence (for example, from experimental science) which might seem to confirm that such a causal division of human beings is "factual". It is independent of such purely causally established "facts" because such "facts" are only "facts" of causal, un-living, non-numinous, knowing, whereas empathy provides us with that acausal (numinous) knowing which is beyond such causal-only "facts", and it is this acausal knowing which, as explained above, is the origin of the ethical because suffused with, manifesting, *ψυχή* - which such causal "facts" are not suffused with and never nor can ever manifest by virtue of being linear, causal. For such causal "facts" just project causal (linear) abstractions onto the acausality manifest in living beings whose nature and genesis is *Πόλεμος*. In the simplistic sense, the causal can never describe (represent) what is acausal.

Concerning Evolution

The fairly modern abstraction of race is often used in conjunction with the term evolution, with proponents of the abstraction of race often taking and writing about "evolving" a races or races, by various means. Therefore, such usage of the term evolution by such proponents requires some consideration.

Evolution - as used in theories of experimental science - is not in itself, in that specific context, an abstraction, but only an assumption or axiom, deriving from practical observation and experimentation, about how living beings (organisms) on this planet, Earth, and certain observed types of physical matter (such as stars) have over long periods of causal time changed or adapted to certain environmental and/or other conditions. That is, it is one particular rational explanation of such change and adaptation, and an explanation which, currently, seems to explain certain observational data better than such alternative explanations as have been proposed.

However, when the term *evolution* is used other than as an axiom in this context of experimental science and living beings, but in the more general sense of a willed or directed human change whose starting point is some posited category applied to human beings or other living beings, it is or it becomes an abstraction. That is, it is then a causal assumption about how things can or should or might work if there is some causal human input (hubris-like interference) to induce or cause or direct such change.

Also, when notions of or concerning human value or quality are projected onto or embedded into the biological change of living beings, the term evolution

also becomes an abstraction. Thus, and for example, when it is claimed that one particular group of human beings who may be or who are assumed to be distinct from or different from another group of human beings according to certain observed criteria (such as cranial capacity) are "more evolved" than other groups of human beings, the term evolution is used in the abstractive, subjective, sense.

This is in contrast to the above biological and observational usage of the term, as an axiom of experimental science, which usage is an assumption of how living beings have worked and/or are observed to now work, in and of themselves, without any interference from human beings.

Empathy, Ethics, and Honour

The acausal knowing that empathy reveals is of the nature of *Πόλεμος* and hence of the acausality beyond all our causal abstractions - a knowledge of both *ψυχή* and *Αἰών* and of how they are manifest, and importantly, are and have been concealed and can become concealed, by us.

What is numinous reminds us of *Πόλεμος* and is thus a means of maintaining both *ἀρμονίη* (within ourselves) and a knowing of *Δίκη* and its importance:

" The numinous is what predisposes us not to commit *ὑβρις* - that is, what continues or maintains or manifests *ἀρμονίη* and thus *καλλός*; the natural balance - *sans* abstractions - that enables us to know and appreciate, and which uncovers, *Φύσις* and *λόγος*, and *τὸ καλόν*, the virtuous beauty known to us mortals as personal honour." *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions.*

For personal honour is a practical code of personal conduct which manifests the essence of empathy, and is thus a guide to behaving in a balanced, fair, and ethical way.

Conclusion

The ideation - the causal abstraction - of race is a manifestation of *ὑβρις*. It conceals both the true nature of Being, and our true nature as human beings, which is that of *Πόλεμος* - and a revealing of which true nature is through the *λόγος* that is both causal and acausal knowing. A part of this acausal knowing is the dependant nature of (the acausal connexion between) living beings, and thus of the compassion that such a knowing logically leads us toward. This abstraction of race - like all causal ideations - distances us from the numinous,

removes us from *ἀρμονίη* and thus *καλλός* and thus displaces us from that knowledge of *Δίκη* which is the basis for *ἀρετή*. In place of *σωφρονεῖν* there is instead the arrogance of a causal presumption.

As such, this abstraction of race is unethical, immoral, and thus dishonourable.

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Notes

[1] These four Aristotelian essentials 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 - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

[2] See also my *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus*, which deals with Fragment 112.

Fragment 112 is *σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.*

Fragment 123 is *Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ*

[3] For further details, refer to my *Numinous Culture, The Acausal, and Living Traditions* and especially footnote number 3 there:

λόγος is both Reason and Empathy. Reason as logical reasoning and *Δίκη* (Judgement); and Empathy - akin to *wu-wei* - as *ἀρμονίη*, cf. Heraclitus: *Οὐ ξυνίασι ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἕωυτῶ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἀρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης*

[4] *ψυχή* (as mentioned elsewhere) should be understood as Life qua being [see, for example, its usage in Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, *etcetera*].

Thus, *ψυχή* could be described as the "acausal energy" that animates matter and makes such matter "alive".

Furthermore, in terms of pre-Socratic philosophy, *ψυχή* derives from *Αἰών* and we may describe *Αἰών* as the acausal, presenced as the progression of Aeons, as thus as Change (*ἀρχή*), manifest to us as the natural unfolding that is both *Φύσις* and *λόγος*.

Expressed another way, *ἀρχή* is that changing, the presencing and re-presencing of being, that is *ψυχή* through *Αἰών*.

As mentioned in my *Numinous Culture, The Acausal, and Living Traditions*, for Heidegger, also, *Αἰών* is manifest in *Φύσις* and *λόγος*.

For Nietzsche, *Αἰών* is manifest, symbolically, in Zeus - although, correctly, in the Zeus of Aeschylus (*Agamemnon*, 174-183) who guides mortals to reason, and whose new guidance, whose authority, whose logos or aeon, is expressed in *pathei-mathos*, for which see my *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way: The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*.

In respect of *Φύσις* see, for example, my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*.

[5] For a brief analysis of the ideation of civilization and of the civilizing process, refer to my *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[6] In respect of this saying, see my *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus*.

[7] Empathy is what predisposes us to know *Δίκη* and avoid *ὑβρις*. For an overview of *ὑβρις*, *Δίκη*, and the numinous refer to (1) *On The Nature of Abstractions*; (2) *Quid Est Veritas?*, and also to footnote 3 of my *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way*.

[8] *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions*.
