

David Myatt - Philosopher of The Numen



During the past three decades, many terms - some of them pejorative - have been used to describe David Myatt. This variety, and the pejorative nature of some of the descriptions of him, is not unsurprising given Myatt's peregrinations among the religions of the world, given his somewhat Promethean quest to find answers to philosophical and metaphysical questions, and given his former often violent political activism and his involvement with what has been called radical Islam.

However, I consider that the term Philosopher of The Numen is both the most apt, and the correct, term to describe him now, following the completion of his own, unique, *weltanschauung*, to which he has given the name The Numinous Way, with this *weltanschauung* deriving from, in Myatt's own words, his many and varied experiences over the past forty years.

The term Philosopher of The Numen, applied to Myatt, is correct, in my view, because Myatt is now, he has become, only a philosopher, having left behind, discarded, all the many and various other rôles that he had previously assumed and which he is still better known for. A philosopher, only - being no longer involved with or adhering to any religion, and having no political views or association with any political group or organization, nor adhering to, or believing in, any political ideology.

That is, Myatt is now just a philosopher; someone who seeks to understand, and to explain, Being, and beings - Existence, Reality - in a rational manner.

The term Philosopher of The Numen, applied to Myatt, is apt, in my view,

because The Numen, in Myatt's philosophy of The Numinous Way, is the source of the numinous; that which is presented in our causal phenomenal world, via what Myatt calls a nexion. What is so presented, is the numinous, the central concept of Myatt's philosophy.

It is my considered opinion that Myatt's philosophy of The Numen (otherwise known as the philosophy of the Numinous Way) is his most important work - indeed, his only valuable work - and that all his other previous writings (his poetry excepted), are now irrelevant, be those writings political, or religious, or esoteric; superseded, made irrelevant, by the philosophy he has developed in the past decade, firmly based as his philosophy is on the Western tradition, and giving precedence as it does to the human virtues of compassion and empathy.

The Philosophy of The Numen

In several recent articles - such as *Introduction to the Ontology of Being; Acausality, Phainomenon and the Appearance of Causality*; and *Life and the Nature of The Acausal* - Myatt has rationally set forth, as a philosopher should, his own understanding of the nature of Existence.

Indeed, in *Introduction to the Ontology of Being*, Myatt states, following Heidegger, that philosophy is the ontology of Being, and proceeds to define three types of being: causal being, acausal being and beings having both causal and acausal being.

He then defines what is meant by these three types of being, going on to argue - in that essay and in *Acausality, Phainomenon and the Appearance of Causality* - that philosophy hitherto has been limited by apprehending being only in terms of causality. This, according to Myatt, is the error of abstraction, and had led to an apprehension of beings in terms of causal separation.

Furthermore, Myatt argues that life - including our own being - cannot be understood in terms of causality, as separate beings, because all living beings have an acausal nature, and which nature is one of being connected to all other living beings via the simultaneity of acausal Time. That is, we, as living beings, are a nexion - a connexion - between causal and acausal. [1]

Myatt then defines a different, new, type of knowing, distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science. This other type of knowing, Myatt states, is derived from our faculty of empathy, and it is

empathy which, according to Myatt, enables us to apprehend or reveal other life, including other human beings, as that life is; an apprehension which, he maintains, causal abstractions cover-up or hide. It is this empathy - this *συμπάθεια* - which Myatt makes the basis for this theory of ethics [2], and which empathy, he insists, reveals our true, compassionate, human nature [3], in contrast to the un-numinous, artificial, nature which abstractions have manufactured for or imposed upon us, and which nature gives rise to hubris [4] and which hubris undermines, obscures, or destroys, the numinous.

Myatt concludes his *Acausality, Phainomenon and the Appearance of Causality* with what amounts to a good summary of his philosophy:

" For human beings, the true nature of being lies not in what we have come to understand as our finite, separate, self-contained, individual identity (our self) but rather in our relation to other living beings, human and otherwise, and thence to the acausal itself. In addition, one important expression of - a revealing of - the true acausal nature of being is *the numinous*: that which places us, as individuals, into a correct, respectful, perspective with other life (past, present and future) and which manifests to us aspects of the acausal; that is, what in former terms we might have apprehended, and felt, as the divine: as the timeless Unity, the source, behind and beyond our limited causal phenomenal world, beyond our own fragile microcosmic mortal existence, and which timeless Being we cannot control, manufacture, or imitate, but which is nevertheless manifest, presenced, in us because we have the gift of life. "

In respect of politics and conventional religion, Myatt - in his essay *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way - The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος* - revealing writes that both are founded on abstractions, and thus are un-numinous and can predispose us to commit hubris, and that it is personal *πάθει μάθος* that is a better guide to knowing and understanding than both politics and conventional religion. Thus, Myatt describes his *weltanschauung* as the philosophy of *πάθει μάθος*.

The Philosophy of The Numen in the Western Tradition

In several of his most recent articles [5], Myatt has provided a framework which places his philosophy firmly in the tradition of Western philosophy.

Thus, he relates several of his own philosophical concepts to pre-Socratic philosophy, stating that the error of abstraction, of a causal-only apprehension of being, began with Plato's idea.

In *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions*, Myatt writes that:

" ...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. "

Thus, for Myatt, both empathy and personal honor express, or manifest - that is, presence - the numinous, and hence are a revealing of The Numen.

Myatt, however, cautions us, at the end of his essay *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions* - regarding this framework:

" All these references to Greek terms are just general, common, philosophical reference points - a somewhat academic philosophical framework for aspects of The Numinous Way - provided for those who might be interested and who might find such a conventional framework useful in understanding The Numinous Way, and possibly relating it to other philosophies."

JR Wright
Oxford
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Notes:

[1] Myatt sets out the axioms of the acausal and the causal in *Life and the*

Nature of The Acausal.

[2] Myatt's theory of ethics is outlined in *Ontology, Ethics and The Numinous Way*.

[3] Empathy, according to Myatt, is a practical manifestation of the numinous. See, for example, the section *The Cultivation of Empathy* in his *Three Essays Regarding The Numinous Way*.

[4] Myatt's ideas regarding hubris are contained in several articles of his, including (1) *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions*; (2) *Homo Hubris and the Disruption of The Numinous*; and (3) *The Theology of The Numinous Way*.

[5] The articles are (1) *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way - The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*; (2) *Numinous Culture, The Acausal, and Living Traditions*; and (3) *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions*.
