

THE DEATH OF PAN: THE INSTINCTIVE POWER OF NUMBERS

The “death of Pan” was a phenomenon that occurred before or around the time of Christ in the sense that it was reported that a loud voice was heard by sailors stated “Pan is dead”. As with all mythological information, at one level it is propaganda whilst at another it is history by allusion and at another it is true, especially when the culture absorbs it – in this case a culture with mythological roots going right back to prehistory.

As such therefore, Pan’s death is another marker of transition at the beginning of fuller historical record keeping. This keeping of history may indeed have spelt an end to the dominance of mythological thought by the increasing use of rationality to unlock the nature of the physical world whilst banishing the complex mental world of allusion. At the same time though, Pan was manifestly not dead as he had been absorbed into the pantheon of Rome via Greece. He was a goat god that helped the Olympians overwhelm the preceding Titans, they associated with Saturn, to impose Jupiter on the celestial throne. We have encountered this process in the gap between Minoan Crete and classical Greece where Zeus appeared. In fact, Cretans coming to be called liars because they retained part of the ancient matriarchal principle of the male king who must die, like the year, after a year and a day.

The Cretans said, not only was Zeus born on Crete but he also died there. This was infuriating for the new male order which had created immortal male gods to displace the matriarchal practices of the Mediterranean. The Goddess Metis was effectively recycled through Zeus’ head, in a virgin birth and “with a shout, fully formed”, thus disposing of any divine female history. In this way her Parthenon was so called because she was born without a second parent and

was always a virgin herself with resonances for the Virgin Mary. Thus, the appearance of parts of the previous pantheon into the new Olympians represents the inevitable process of reshaping the past familiar forms.

The new mind of classical times gave birth to now-familiar disciplines such as logic. In logical analysis, the facts are deduced without mechanisms such as allusion, metaphor and simile. In logic there has to be cause and effect that can be proved. It means nothing that a river looks like a snake. In such a high-level, intuitive description there is a strong similarity that can integrate water, erosion, headwaters, and flood plains into a holistic overview.

To continue with the river analogy, peoples who see a snake might invent a snake god and seek to appease it to reduce flooding and ensure a drought – as was done in the case of the Nile. In response, the modern evaluation is that these people were ignorant, wrapped up in a pathetic fallacy, pagan, irrational and so on, and such ideas are not educational but are entertaining. The children of such cultures are sent to school for a balanced education into the facts.

But what of the validity of the snake idea? As we have all seen, modern man has not reduced the likelihood of flood and drought but far from it. These events are being amplified whilst the modern world seeks to take control of nature to prevent them. Apart from changes to climate, one simple fact is that property owners and developers try to place limits on the constant snaking of the river, called meandering, using flood defences. Yet the flood plains are used for building, to make a profit. Whenever the path of a river moves, one land owner will lose out whilst another, eventually, come to gain on the other side.

We have taken the land of the snake and given it to men and this is the ultimate death of Pan, who represents the entire frame of instinctive forces in nature and in ourselves.

What is surprising is how, by killing Pan, a resulting blindness to cause and effect has taken place for, though a geographer would say you shouldn't build houses on the flood plain (because every 100 years or less it floods) yet local politicians, entrepreneurs and lawyers encourage the opposite.

The Binding of Fluid Thought

The Earth then has become a political, legal and financial entity. Meanwhile, all the possibilities of thought have been channeled into definite paths, as has happened with the flow of water across the land – another cause of flash flooding as drains compound with forest clearances and super-erosive events. In the ancient world, water was a primary element, one of four or five others. It is the powerhouse of the planet's surface features, driven by the heat of the Sun.

But Nature as a whole system is politically ignored in the modern mind that describes the whole system to its complete satisfaction, as parts. Where is the problem but in the death of Pan, who seems to have prefixed the word pantheism from the root meaning of diversity, presumably, within our thinking about Nature, the Other.

The worshipping of many gods was, we are told, accompanied by a foolish association of gods with the processes of Nature. The ancients, we are told, lived in fear of what they did not understand but fear has not been reduced but rather displaced into news of fearful events in the human world, historic events. If the modern world has been created by the pursuit of a single god or a rational society, then who is to blame for the results? Policies are increasingly irreversible and unresponsive because thought has been crippled by the

elimination of a type of thinking that accompanied the ancient world – direct analogical thought. Is reason being unreasonable?



Figure 10.1 Statue indicating that Pan (a) belonged to the Age of Aries, the Ram, and (b) was an animalistic and instinctive god who became “satanised”.

The world found at this terminus when Pan dies, by implication that of Christ, is not the same world as that which developed ancient knowledge, in the thousands of years before. But these changes, at the end of the Age of Aries the Ram who Pan represented, were quite likely incomprehensible to the common person. Yet there were signs of the majesty of what had been before.

Orpheus is the paragon of poetic integration for the later classical culture. In India the Ramayana mythically spoken by Valmiki wandering about the forest speaking only verse.

The Poetic Vision

Unlike extensive speech, held together by grammar, poetic utterance was held to express the thing spoken of through some system of inner connectedness, displaying a magical awareness of the reality spoken of. Metre was said to protect the gods in this communication. This level of integration is indicative of pure pattern and of a higher energy, belonging to the cosmos and only resident in the human, when receptive. An oral tradition appears to have played an important part in prehistory, and writing in the forging of the historical period.

The inner connectivity of poetic description speaks of wholeness and it could represent a lost mode of description. It is present within the arts that have survived from the ancient world and gains its veracity not from logical connections built up from a factual baseline but is arrived at through the exploration of interrelationships and allusions. The human mind happens to be eminently suited to this type of work for it resembles the activity of living in the biosphere, the life of the brain developing through natural selection or possible epi-genetic factors also.

In many ways the human brain and the mind it supports are not fundamentally adapted to modern cultural conditions but have rather been adapting to these through a denigration of its poetic potential. Human activity is largely made up of consuming the ready meals of a hyperactive marketing system serving up instant politics, unsought opportunities and me-too activities.

The poetic modality may hold the key to the genius of the past that created a full system of thought and staggering achievements (without a modern science).

It was a type of thinking that has been given a bad name by the modern propensity for logical and analytical thought.

The Science of the World View

In a holistic science every whole is a complete world defined by the boundaries put on it by nature or by its own sufficiency as a system. Ideas about God with many different flavours exist: Monotheism, Dualism and Pantheism, each having major variations. It could be said that each of the different views of the divine have validity for us in our thinking about this subject, the whole called God.

With regard to the universe as a whole it seems eminently likely that the idea of one god is relevant though, with eyes turned to the Sun also a single God seems appropriate. But then in the planetary system there are multiple lesser players and historical precedents for identifying them as the prime pantheistic group of gods. They can have a leader and all of them can have unique and necessary characters within the whole. An elemental view can easily lead to a more dualistic approach with major principles such as light and dark being venerated as sources in their own right, of one of them rejected as being the problem for man and the creation.

This natural division of wholes into multiple term systems was named by J. G. Bennett as *Systematics* in that the properties of systems appear to vary as to whether they are divided into a different number of significant terms. Thus the pantheon of twelve in classical times is different to the planetary gods of, typically, seven as in the week day names. You would experience a difference of living in a different week length but within systems the differences lead to relationships between the terms.

I have shown in my books that a strong relationship exists between Saturn and Jupiter, the Moon and Sun and between Mercury and Venus. Each can be considered as a valid dual as can the sense of difference between inner and outer planets, relative to the Earth.

Sun, Moon and Earth make a fine triad since many phenomena rely on all three bodies and their position, such as the lunar month. In the lunation triangle this reconciliation of the 12 and 13 sides within the intermediate hypotenuse of 12.369, the number of month in a solar year, makes this very clear. The Moon mediates between the realm of the stars or night and the solar realm of day since it orbits around the Earth.

In chapter one of *Matrix of Creation*, the numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 were explored in terms of primordial astronomy whilst in chapter nine, the idea of Twelve-foldness so ubiquitous to the Indo-European world was seen to derive from Jupiter but only within the solar year.

To return to poetry, it is all about relationships such as these. When texts are analysed, numerical structures are often discovered revealing both a design component and a representation of something real through the original work.

“Like an anthropologist cutting through the bush to discover a lost civilization, Mary Douglas has opened up a new path for Biblical research, through the jungle of source criticism. In the first four chapters of *Leviticus as Literature* she demonstrates that ‘Bible students have to choose between accepting the muddle made by imposing a Western linear reading upon an archaic text, or trying to

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read the book through its own literary conventions.” Moshe Kline in *The Literary Structure of Leviticus*¹

Therefore I tend to see structuring things as representing the most lost “traditional art” of Prehistory, an art which led to their surviving world-views which today we would call their cosmologies.

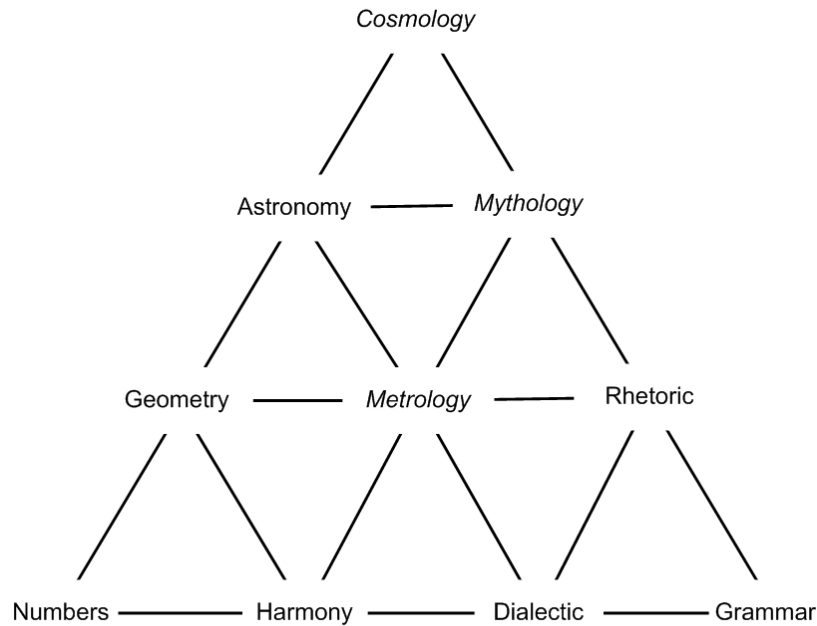


Figure 10.2 The Pythagorean Tetraktis is a type of Systematics that can be used to relate ten terms as part of a single whole – in this case the seven traditional arts and the three missing ones of Cosmology, Mythology and Metrology. Astronomy always seemed apart from the natural triads of pure linguistic and numeric arts and forms a triad with Cosmology and Mythology.

The art of creating a world-view starts with having some ideas or clues as to the structure of reality. In the numerical world views, the idea came from the tools available and the observation of number in nature through counting and then mapping through angular measurement. In modern science the current world view there is also a cosmology, called the Big Bang (Membrane/String Theory etc), preceded for centuries by the study of physical behaviours, material objects and then fields and particles. The foundations of modern

¹ based on Mary Douglas' *Leviticus as Literature*, Oxford University Press

science were modest but the destination pretty well defined, given some genius at the many steps required on the way, to create the unexpected world view as we have it today. We see that the ancients had cosmologies that worked in the numerical creationism that emerged willy-nilly from a wholly different baseline than that of modern science.

Whilst Bennett was a scientist and philosopher he had been exposed to Gurdjieff's own world-views, which apparently hailed from traditional sources. However, Gurdjieff was changing his presentation of ideas, making one in Russia as reported in *In Search of the Miraculous*, making changes in the 1920s in his Prière period and then, writing an epic which was outwardly different again, called *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*.

Gurdjieff was the son of an Armenian epic story-teller and recounts how he was never encouraged towards certainty when he was a young man being always provoked by his father and friends. He appears to have become a one man world-view factory by his forties, appreciating the fact that fixed ideas had a very limited benefit and a dangerous side-effect of making people think they understood something when they only had knowledge of something. This characteristic was due to what he called the *formatory apparatus* creating buffers, in his early work, which became the *organ kundabuffer* in his epic about All and Everything, *Beelzebub's Tales*.



Figure 10.2 Beelzebub's Encounter with the Whole of Human History, as his horns of wisdom grow with the story. He had been exiled for criticizing the creation, a crime that fits the punishment. (drawn by Bob Jefferson and based on the Cologne Bible.)

The influence on Bennett was to see cosmology was a set of systemic yet philosophical thoughts about the nature of reality and that these could develop “Reason-of-understanding” rather than the regular “Reason-of-knowing” and that, in a theme that should be familiar by now, the properties of systems of low number, having between One and Twelve terms, appeared significant. Gurdjieff himself had brought knowledge of a nine-term system, the Enneagram, to the West. His world laws were of a musicological seven foldness and of three terms, the Triad, by which all cosmic processes occurred through the interaction of three forces of different character. We have seen that Aristotle had defined a

Tetrad and in any case the ancient world was full of antique systems of thought, all now fixed but at some stage emerging from some type of understanding and new ways of thinking in prehistory.

Of course, using the first twelve numbers is basic to the traditional arts and so too the sacred geometrical shapes created by number that are sometimes used in the representation of cosmologies themselves. But as with the cathedrals of Europe, in cosmology the numbers have broken free of any direct relationship with the world and have become forms within a different realm, that of ideas, symbols and thinking with pure number. There is still the notion that these cosmologies are real but their reality, like language, is more to do with how civilizations conduct a cultural life. But their outer complexity can only collapse to the original simplicity providing one can understand them through a “Reason-of-Understanding” or Art of *initiating oneself* to understand such structures of meaning.

The poet achieves a simplification of the world through their work and in this there is the sense that work has been done, by the poet that then has to be done by the audience to the work. This is a cultural work that is parodied by simplifying scenarios within sales pitches or reviews of films and so on. But a presentation is received only as a “Reason-by-knowing” unless it is actively received so as to further transform it.

The Instinctive Mind

As John Shirley puts in a nut-shell:

“Gurdjieff called us “three-brained beings”, each “brain” corresponding to an inner center: the intellectual center, the emotional center, the body-ruling instinctive/moving center. Each of these three

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centers is divided into sub-centers, for example, *the intellectual segment of the instinctive center*, which does most of our so-called "thinking" for us. Much of our "thinking" is simply a lower center's mis-use of intellectual faculties, a squandering of inner energies in desire-based brain activity. [my italics]

We stand here on the edge of understanding in that the Dragon and Pan represent the instinctive perception of the world. As Ouspensky clarifies,

“The difference between the instinctive and the moving function is very clear and can be easily understood if one simply remembers that *all instinctive functions without exception are inherent and that there is no necessity to learn them in order to use them*; whereas on the other hand, none of the moving functions are inherent and one has to learn them all as a child learns to walk, or as one learns to write or to draw.” [my italics]²

The arrangement of the world into patterns and the ability to do so, conjoin in the instincts which are not learned. The instincts exist as faculties within the human frame, body and brain. This can explain the problem of the Dragon and other equivalent totems in that they too represent something both external and found in the Earth's surface in life and also found in the life within of our instincts in which lies unlearned knowledge. If so then explained too are the role of the dream life, prophecy and apparent outside agencies such as angels that ancient texts make such a meal about.

The depth psychology of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud map the instinctive realm. Freud's work, with some sense of hopelessness and fear, posits that such

² *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* by P D Ouspensky, RKP, 1952

irrationality can only be contained in modern populations through public relations and mind control – it is a dragon. That it will never go away yet could bring down the whole edifice of civilization if not sublimated, was the hidden subject of many centrist horror films of the 1950s. If this sounds familiar it was a continuing tradition of the historical period to kill the instinctual knowledge. What better sign of this is the gruesome symbol of Christ still hanging on the Cross? The attitudes of self mortification prevalent in the face of original sin hang still in the air.

Jung called the instinctive life of the person and the planet the Personal Unconscious and the Collective Unconscious, respectively. How the collective unconscious might operate brought him to ideas of synchronicity and the nature of symbols, time and recurrence. He pioneered in many respects dream analysis and also the collection of symbols from all the world traditions.³

Connected with this is the idea of Gurdjieff that the sinking of Atlantis signified the sinking of the subconscious mind out of conscious reach.

“I wish to bring to the knowledge of what is called your "pure waking consciousness" the fact that in the writings following this chapter of warning I shall expound my thoughts intentionally in such sequence and with such "logical confrontation," that the essence of certain real notions may of themselves automatically, so to say, go from this "waking consciousness"—which most people in their ignorance mistake for the real consciousness, but which I affirm and experimentally prove is the fictitious one—into what you call the subconscious, which ought to be in my opinion the real human consciousness...”

³ *Man and His Symbols*, C G Jung, Doubleday, 1969

Combine this with the sinking of stars beneath the celestial equator and we have multiple views of the same thing that concerns us here.

Over millions of years human brains have learned to make sense of their environment and only in the last couple of millennia the claim has been made that man is a fully conscious and rational being, rational in that the ability to work with language and logic gave a way of describing things that was better than anything already existing so that other modes should be ignored.

Couple this with the unreasonable achievements of the prehistoric period recorded earlier and a conflict is seen to arise in our "waking consciousness", one that the modern is only slowly finding the reason for. The rationality of the logical and linguistic mind is not the whole identity or intellect of human being and without the other parts, a reduction of intelligence has taken place. On the surface of our thought however, the descriptions just keep on running and so there seems no space for anything else. Added to this there is an instinctive fear of the unknown seen from the perspective of the rational mind and its island of tied up facts.

Far from the fear of the earth energies harming us they actually interact through the sense of place and individuality, creating fresh meanings. A perfect example of this is pilgrimage which today we have more or less lost and in its place have a monolithic tourism that places people on beaches or seeking adventure sports, retail therapy, drinking, gambling, etc. The difference is that spiritual travel is self-initiated and led by genuine interest or guidance.

Another connection is that the Earth affects the human and as we have seen may do so instinctively as was the case with the Normans in their formative period. The traditional arts might be seen as another approach towards the instinctive centre of the universe itself in that it is numbers that appear to create

the universe and end up in the planetary environment of the Earth and the human.

Number appears to form an interface with meaning, something not created in our heads but rather connected with the world as a whole and its transformations. Our modern culture denies its foundations as being in the numeric sciences of previous civilizations, just as the modern intellect denies its creative intelligence as emanating from an instinctive mode of problem solving.