



Three Essays In Praise of Empathy and Honour

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Introduction

These three recent essays of mine elucidate certain important matters concerning my philosophy of The Numinous Way; in particular, moral questions regarding war, violence, authority, and the relation between empathy, compassion, and honour.

As I mentioned in a previous essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State* -

" The essence of the numinous view - of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen - is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity."

Because of empathy there arises compassion - the desire not cause or contribute to the suffering of other living being - and, as I explain in *The Natural Balance of Honour*,

" Honour establishes both boundaries for and, to an extent, the content of compassion as compassion is understood by The Numinous Way, and thence represents the natural - the Cosmic - balance of human life. Or, expressed another way, honour manifests, presences, the numinous for us as human beings, and is a means whereby we can live in a more numinous way."

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Image Credit:

Attic Red Figure Vase c. 480 BCE, depicting Athena, in Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany

War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way

The Morality of The Numinous Way

In order to understand the concepts of war and violence in terms of the philosophy of The Numinous Way, it is necessary to begin by outlining the morality of The Numinous Way, since war and violence are inseparably bound up with how one understands morality.

Morality is, for The Numinous Way, a consequence of individuals using the faculty of empathy [1] - that is, a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. This insight and knowledge is of how we are not isolated human beings, but rather only one fragile microcosmic nexion and thus connected to all Life, sentient and otherwise, human and otherwise, of this planet and otherwise. Consequently, there is a cosmic perspective - a cosmic ethic - and compassion: that is, the human virtue of having *συμπάθεια* with other living beings, and the feeling, the knowledge, that we should treat other

human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, dignity, and respect.

The morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as εὐταξία [2] is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance, and is linked to other personal virtues as mentioned, for example, by Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus." [3]

This morality is therefore a personal one so that it is the living individual of honour - someone who possesses certain virtues - who represents, who is, the cosmic ethics of The Numinous Way. For,

"the Cosmic Ethic [...] cannot live in some law, in some Institution, in some Court, in some dogma or in some abstract theory. To be numinous, to presence the numinous, what is ethical requires a living honourable person, not some abstract theory of ethics." *The Natural Balance of Honour* (2011)

Thus the source of, the authority for - and the reason for choosing - such a morality is and can only be the judgement of the individual, deriving as this judgement does from their empathy and their unique πάθει μάθος.

The Source of Authority

For The Numinous Way, there is no authority other than that of personal empathy, personal honour and πάθει μάθος. That is, the source of authority is personal, and the bounds of this authority are defined by honour, with The Numinous Way thus being:

"the Way of the numinous and individual authority of πάθει μάθος where one's own empathy and one's own learning from practical experience take precedence and are considered a means for us to become a *friend of σοφόν* and thus acquire the virtue and the skill that has been termed wisdom." Preface, *Selected Writings Concerning The*

Numinous Way (2011).

In practical terms, this means that the individual following or being guided by this Way relies on and is guided by their own judgement, their own experience, and a Code of Honour, and does not relinquish these in favour of some chain-of-command or in favour of accepting the authority of some supra-personal institution, of some law, or of some association, political party or whatever. In place of accepting and submitting to such external authority there is only the giving of personal loyalty according to a Code of Honour, with such giving by its honourable and personal nature never involving the individual in relinquishing their own judgement or acting contrary to that Code of Honour.

Violence, War, The State, and Leges Regiae

Used in its correct, original, non-pejorative way, violence is using physical force against another person sufficient to cause some physical injury. However, a fairly recent synonym for violence is *force* - a term often used by politicians and castellans and theorists of The State, among others, when they attempt to try and justify the use of violence by those persons (such as the police) such politicians and castellans (and others) believe have some 'lawful authority' to inflict injury on people.

The distinction that such politicians and castellans and others thus attempt to make between violence and force reveals their reliance, stated or unstated, known or unknown, on the principles of *Leges Regiae*. That is, on the principles used historically by kings and emperors and their courts where someone or some group assumes authority over others, and thus exercises command over them, makes decisions for or on behalf of them, and, ultimately, by the use of violence and the threat of punishment are able to force or persuade others to obey them and their commands.

Principles, for example, manifest in the ancient *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius:

"After Romulus had distinguished the persons of higher rank from those of inferior condition, then he passed laws and apportioned the duties for each to do...

For the king, he chose the following prerogatives ... to maintain the guardianship of the laws and the national customs, ... to judge in person the greatest of crimes ... to have absolute command in war. "

[4]

Notice how Romulus - the legendary King of ancient Rome - assumed the authority to divide individuals into categories - high and low - and how he manufactured laws, and told individuals what their duties would be, and assumed absolute command in war.

Modern nation-States have, via people such as Augustine of Hippo [5], simply replaced kings and emperors with Prime Ministers, Presidents, or representatives (or whatever) and covered or attempted to cover their use of violence (by their police forces and armies) and the threat of punishment (such as prison) by rhetoric about 'law and order' and by social and political theories (such as that of democracy). But the demand that individuals accept some supra-personal authority remains the same, as does the threat or the use of violence against individuals by officials appointed and approved by such personal authorities, as does the demand that individuals forsake their own judgement and rely instead on the judgement of ministers, governments officials, and on the Courts of Law of The State. In addition - as it was for the Roman kings and Caesars - the individual is expected to obey the laws they manufacture, with such laws being regarded as 'just' and moral.

Thus justice - far from being a personal virtue, defined by honour - becomes what some king, some Caesar, some *τύραννος*, or some government decrees it is according to the laws they manufacture and which their officials and their Courts uphold and enforce, by violence (or the threat thereof) and by imprisonment (or the threat thereof). Hence all the rhetoric by castellans and officials of The State that individuals "should not take the law into their own hands", whereas true - natural, numinous, living - justice only exists in living honourable individuals and their actions.

This usurpation of personal judgement and natural justice is overtly manifest in war. War - the *bellum* of Latin writers such as Cicero and Livy - is armed conflict involving large opposing groups where there is acceptance, by those fighting, of some recognized chain-of-command and of some supra-personal commanding authority who or which is or are personally unknown to most if not all of those accepting such authority, and where the conflict is mostly if not entirely non-personal for all or most of those involved. That is, war mostly or entirely results from the pursuit of some abstraction, or from the desire, the beliefs, of some leader or commander, or from the political or social or religious agenda or policies of some supra-personal authority such as some government.

In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and *combat* in that combat refers to *gewin* - similar to the old Germanic *werra*, as distinct from the

modern *krieg*. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often between just two adversaries - as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way - to the Cosmic Ethic - not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' - for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness.

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Notes

[1] For a basic explanation of empathy, see my essay *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[2] εὐταξία is what I would describe as the quality, the personal virtue, of self-restraint; of personal orderly (balanced, honourable, well-mannered) conduct especially under adversity or duress.

Regarding εὐταξία, Cicero wrote:

" Deinceps de ordine rerum et de opportunitate temporum dicendum est. 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. Itaque, ut eandem nos modestiam appellemus..." *De Officiis*, 1, 40, 142

[3] M. Tullius Cicero, *For Lucius Murena*, 10, 23. My translation is: 'For your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of justice, of good faith, and all other good qualities...'

[4] The quotation is from the reconstruction of the texts given in: Allan Chester Johnson, Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, and Frank Bourne. *Ancient Roman Statutes: A Translation with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary, and Index*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961

[5] The assumed need for individuals to accept supra-personal authority is much in evidence in Augustine, especially in his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* in which he champions a order, a hierarchy, with God its pinnacle and ordinary individuals at the bottom. In between are those appointed to oversee individuals and ensure 'order' with everyone in their rightful place: "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio." (XIX, xiii)

As Augustine writes in *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (XXII, 75): "The natural order, which would have peace amongst men, necessitates that the judgement about and the authority to declare war should reside in those who have authority over others [a monarch/prince]."

In addition, his rhetoric regarding the necessity of waging war is remarkably similar to that of modern politicians:

"War is undertaken to bring about peace. Therefore, even during war, remember the value of peace so that when those you have fought are conquered you can show them the advantages of peace..." (*Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum ad Bonifacium Papam*, CLXXXIX)

He also, it seems, in writing about a 'just war', provided them with rhetorical justification for castigating their enemies as 'evil', as 'wicked' and they themselves, even though they may cause suffering and death, as doing what is 'right', what God decrees, as, for example, Bush and Blair did during the invasion and occupation of Iraq, and as with the desire of some nation-States to humiliate and vanquish those deemed as enemies. As Augustus wrote in *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*:

"Nam et cum iustum geritur bellum, pro peccato e contrario dimicatur; et omnis uictoria, cum etiam malis prouenit, diuino iudicio uictos humiliat uel emendans peccata uel puniens." [For even when we wage a just war, our enemies must be sinners, for every victory then, even though gained by evil men, results from divine decree, with the vanquished humiliated and their sins either punished or wiped away.] XIX, 15

The Natural Balance of Honour

Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way

Some Definitions

Before proceeding to analyze the connexion between honour, empathy and compassion, it would perhaps be useful to give definitions of the terms themselves since such definitions (and etymologies, if applicable) might help to avoid confusion and mis-understandings in respect of the use of these terms in the philosophy of The Numinous Way.

Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in the philosophy of The Numinous Way) means *benignity* [1]. Hence, compassion is 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 is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure, and thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

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 Numinous Way, honour means an

instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus refined: that is, they are noble and cultured and hence distinguished by virtue of their character, which is one of manners, fairness, natural dignity, culture, 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. [2]

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." [3]

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 Numinous Way, empathy - *ἐμπάθεια* - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by The Numinous Way, 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.

The Connexion Between Honour, Empathy, and Compassion

Compassion - the human virtue of having *συμπάθεια* with other living beings - often or mostly derives from, has its genesis in, our natural (and thus still

undeveloped) faculty of empathy: from that translocation of ourselves that empathy provides. In essence, to be compassionate is to not cause or contribute to the suffering, or to aid in the alleviation of the suffering, of other living beings.

The Cosmic Ethic is the expression used to describe the ethics of The Numinous Way, and the Cosmic Ethic is essentially that presencing of ψυχή [Life] which occurs when the insight (the acausal-knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion balanced by and manifest in and through personal honour.

Thus, honour establishes both boundaries for and, to an extent, the content of compassion as compassion is understood by The Numinous Way, and thence represents the natural - the Cosmic - balance of human life. Or, expressed another way, honour manifests, presences, the numinous for us as human beings, and is a means whereby we can live in a more numinous way.

This natural human balance which honour presents is the principle of Δίκη - and the boundaries of compassion are most obvious in the principle of honourable self-defence. For The Numinous Way allows for the use of physical force sufficient to cause injury ('suffering') to another being - and allows for, if honourable, the use of lethal force - both in self-defence and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) in defence of someone close-by who is dishonourably attacked or threatened or bullied by others. Such action is the honourable - the fair, the valourous - thing to do so when faced with someone or some many acting dishonourably; when personally faced with someone whose nature inclines them toward, or subsumes them into, committing the error of ὑβρις thus upsetting the natural balance and undermining the numinous. Such a dishonourable person thus may be said to have a bad (a rotten) φύσις - that is, they lack or are deficient in ἀρετή and thus have little or no understanding of Φύσις [4] and do not possess the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν, of a reasoned, a balanced, judgement.

Hence, for The Numinous Way, compassion - benignity - is not (as it tends to be in some other Ways) unconditional, but rather must be balanced by and be in accord with honour. To so balance compassion by the ethical guidelines that honour provides is, from the perspective of The Numinous Way, the human thing to do; that is, consistent with our natural numinous nature, consistent with Nature, and thus with how Φύσις is revealed to us by both empathy and πάθει μάθος.

The connexion, therefore, between empathy, honour and compassion is the living human being, or rather a type of human being, for a well-manned

individual adhering to what is fair, dignified, and valourous, presences the Numen [5], aids the cultivation and development of empathy (and embodies such empathy), and has benignity, that is, is compassionate in a manner consistent with the natural human balance that is Δίκη.

Expressed simply, such a type of human being is the Cosmic Ethic - and thus Δίκη - just as such an Ethic cannot live - exist, be found - in anything other than such a living being; that is, this Ethic cannot live in some law, in some Institution, in some Court, in some dogma or in some abstract theory. To be numinous, to presence the numinous, what is ethical requires a living honourable person, not some abstract theory of ethics.

Thus, in essence, it is the cultivation of such empathic, honourable, individuals - individually, and by, for example, a culture of ἀρετή - that is the simple praxis of The Numinous Way.

As mentioned elsewhere:

" The culture (the ethos, the way) of ἀρετή is, in essence, the self-education of discovering and knowing, intellectually and personally, that noble balance between our natural human tendency to commit ὑβρις - to go beyond the respectful, noble, limits of behaviour - and the necessity of learning the hard way, from πάθει μάθος, from direct personal experience. Δίκη is this balance; a balance manifest in us - or which can be manifest in us - through thoughtful reasoning, that is, by a well-balanced, fair, noble, personal judgement.

This *culture of ἀρετή* is thus a particular and an acquired balance - born from personal honour, from πάθει μάθος (from the personal knowing of the error, the unbalance, that is ὑβρις) and from using reasoned judgement (σωφρονεῖν), and both of which make us aware of the true nature of our φύσις [our own individual character] and of the nature of Φύσις itself." *A Glossary of Some Numinous Way Terms, Version 1.09*

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Notes

[1] The word benignity derives from the Latin *benignitatem* and the sense imputed by the word is of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character,

disposition, or deed. It 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.

[2] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. *The Works of John Gower*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

[3] 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

[4] In respect of *φύσις* and *Φύσις* see, for example, my brief essay *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 123].

[5] That is, presences beauty - *τὸ καλόν* - culture, grace, a respect for 'the sacred', and imputes a knowledge of the need to avoid what is vulgar, dishonourable, and undignified.

Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way

The Legitimacy of Authority

Authority is: (1) the direct power to enforce compliance and obedience upon others, 'the subjects', or (2) the indirect power of (a) manipulating others so that they are compliant and obedient, or (b) having influence over others of such a sufficiency that others are compliant and obedient.

It is from such power - however obtained, presumed, or acquired - that someone, or some many, assume or claim they have a mandate to rule, govern, and command, and thence also claim that they, and those appointed by them, represent or are *an*, or are *the*, legitimate authority, and thus claim to possess the moral right, the duty, to command, lead, and decide what is lawful and unlawful and punish those who do what that authority has decreed is unlawful.

Thus, what is legitimate and what is lawful is or become what those who have power decide or decree is legitimate and lawful, with there being the expectation, the assumption, or the demand, that 'the subjects' accept what is,

in effect, this imposed legitimacy.

Before the rise of the now almost ubiquitous nation-State [1], power was most usually direct power, acquired by individuals and groups through physical force; for example, by victory in combat or war or by the violent removal of someone or some many who already had power over others in a certain geographical area or territory. Once obtained by such means, such power was often legitimized and transferred by those having power decreeing that their progeny - or those appointed by them - were 'the rightful rulers'/the legitimate authority, with such decrees, and the authority of the powerful, being enforced if necessary by the use of physical force, the threat of such force, and the punishment, by execution or imprisonment, of those actively opposed to such a transfer of power.

That is, those with the authority acquired by such force - initially or subsequently - relied both on their subjects being compliant and obedient, and on the use or the threat of physical force in order to enforce such compliance and obedience.

With the rise and the development of The State direct power has, for the most part, been replaced by indirect power; that is by some person or some minority influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliq/ue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority. One of the mechanisms developed to enable some person or some minority to so gain and exercise power is the abstraction that is modern democracy where political parties compete for votes (from those entitled to and interested in voting) with such party representatives - said to be 'of the people' - being invested with power and influence usually by gaining the most votes, and with the leader of the political party that gains the most representatives usually assuming the primary role in governance.

However, the authority of those who acquire power by such indirect, non-forceful, means is - like the authority of those who acquire power through physical force - still an authority where there are subjects who are expected to be compliant and obedient to 'a higher authority', and where there is the use or the threat of physical force in order to enforce such compliance and obedience.

For elected governments always reserve to themselves, and their appointed officials or functionaries, the right, should they deem it appropriate, to use physical force, and imprisonment, as a means of curbing dissension and unrest among the subjects (the citizens) of The State. That is, those with such power regard themselves as the legitimate authority and thus as invested with the lawful and moral authority necessary to use force to quell public disorder. In

addition, they invest themselves with the authority to declare war on another State or States, so that a legitimate (or just) war is considered to be one declared and fought by such State authorities.

In effect, therefore, The State/the government is of necessity predicated on the assumption of the obedience/acquiescence of individuals; that is, on the assumption that individuals within the territory controlled by The State accept its authority and accept that such authority is legitimate - whomsoever is deemed to be or appears to be the government - even though most of the individuals in that territory have given no formal personal pledge of allegiance or pledge of loyalty to the ruling authority.

In practical terms, the subjects of The State - just as much as the subjects of some potentate, tyrannos, or some monarch - are expected to defer to those in authority in certain and important matters of judgement. Hence it is The State - on the assumption that the government is the legitimate authority of the territory of The State - which judges when the people should go to war or when its armed forces can use lethal force in some land in pursuit of some goal or aim. [2]

Indeed, The State increasingly expands the matters on which, and where which, it expects its authority to be obeyed (on pain of arrest and punishment). Thus in a modern State such as Britain the individual is expected to defer to the authority of the government in all manner of personal matters; for example, where, when (or even if) they can assemble to protest; in what places they can smoke cigarettes or a pipe of tobacco; in what and what is not 'an offensive weapon'; if and under what exact circumstances a parent or a teacher may discipline an unruly child or pupil; and so on etcetera.

Judgement, The State, And Authority

This usurping of individual judgement and this presumption or imposition of authority by others on individuals - be these others some government, some State, some monarch, some 'people's representative', some military commander, in the 'name of democracy' or whatever, and be such usurping, presumption or imposition done by direct or indirect power - is a perpetuation of a primitive way of life and a concealment and suppression of our true human nature.

It is a primitive way because it involves the control and manipulation of individuals by others, and the use of or the threat of using physical force and punishment in order to ensure or obtain compliance, obedience, or acquiescence. It is primitive also in that the main method of punishment employed is imprisonment and which imprisonment is the praxis of the bully

and the abandonment of those imprisoned to a life governed by primitive instincts, brute force, intimidation, and physical restraint and control. All modern nation-States employ and indeed rely on imprisonment as a punishment, as a 'deterrent', and as a means of social control.

This usurping of individual judgement and this presumption or imposition of authority by The State is a concealment and suppression of our true human nature because we possess the ability, the potential, to make our own decisions using our own judgement. To so make and to so exercise our own judgement, to act honourably, is the basis of our freedom as human beings: that is, of being free from servitude and being responsible for ourselves [3].

For, in practical terms, The State - as did potentates, monarchs, and others of that ilk - treat people, their subjects, as children. Restraining them; manipulating and influencing them; telling them what they can and cannot do; threatening to punish them if they misbehave; deciding how and in what manner they should be 'educated'; placing restrictions of where they can and cannot go; making judgements and decisions on their behalf; and so on. That is, it is those in authority who manipulate, influence, and who constrain us, and who decide what our liberties will be, and who possess the power to restrict or deny such liberties when it suits them or when their judgement (not ours) deems it necessary.

Abstractions As Manipulation

The indirect power of modern governments - and thus of nation-States - and thence their presumption of authority, is mostly the result of two factors: (1) the manipulation of people by a minority by means of causal abstractions [4]; (2) the influence of such causal abstractions on people. Once power is attained, such abstractions are used to enforce compliance and obedience; that is, to provide some sort of assumed moral legitimacy for the actions and the policies of those who have gained or assumed power.

Thus, abstractions are used to provide a pretext for authority, with some abstractions being regarded as having or as representing a certain moral worth which other abstractions do not possess.

Thus, the system of governance that is called democracy [5] is regarded, by its theorists and supporters, as possessing a certain moral worth and indeed as representing what is 'good' and allowing for, or producing, or promoting, a way of life which it is said is preferable to and/or better than that produced or promoted by others means of governance. Hence these theorists and supporters

of democracy invest this system of governance with a higher moral value than, for example, what has been termed anarchism [6] with many further claiming that democracy is the only moral, legitimate, way of governance so that a nation-State with a democratic government has the moral authority to not only declare war (a 'just war') on those considered to be non-democratic but also a duty to instigate 'regime-change' and that such violence as is used, and such suffering and deaths as may be caused, are morally justifiable [7].

Basically, abstractions have been and are used as a means of control, as mechanisms of manipulation and compliance. Thus, instead of some person - some monarch, prophet, or some tyrannos, for example - being said to have some 'divine right' or some 'destiny' to rule and thus being possessed of authority, it is said that some abstraction has worth and authority. Then it is assumed that those individuals striving to implement this abstraction are imbued with its authority so that what they do is 'right' and moral - provided their actions are in accord with, are a mimesis of, or approximate to this abstraction - and that they and others like them have a 'right' and a moral duty to lead and to govern and thus to exercise authority on behalf of this abstraction.

Among such moral-giving abstractions are and have been democracy, the *Führerprinzip*, capitalism, *socialisme* (society-before-self), communism (collective ownership), and religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Authority In The Numinous Way

For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual - arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour - that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals - by virtue of their honour, their empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority - that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others.

Hence, The State, and all governments - elected or unelected - are not

considered a legitimate authority since there can be no compliance to others other than that which is mutual, agreed, which arises from a personal knowing and a mutual personal respect, and which allow for the exercise of both empathy and personal honour.

For it is honour and empathy - not the authority, the laws, of some government or some State - which set the mode, the boundaries, for such agreement and such cooperation between individuals, and in practice this means a co-operation on a non-hierarchical basis, with empathy providing the personal knowing of another while honour determines how that knowing is made real through one's personal behaviour and interaction with others.

Thus The Numinous Way is the way of such numinous authority - of the individual authority of empathy, of personal judgement, of honour, and of personal responsibility. A way quite different from that of religions, States, governments, potentates, monarchs, and others of such ilk, who and which all expect and who and which often demand the compliance and obedience of individuals, on the threat of punishment; who and which expect/demand that individuals forsake their own judgement in favour of that of some 'higher authority'; and who and which place their own manufactured un-numinous laws before the natural human and numinous principle of personal honour.

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Notes

[1] The State may be defined as 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/cliq/ 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 State thus divides people into those so governed and controlled – subjects –

and those who govern or who are employed by those who govern to organize and control the subjects, with both subjects and those who govern or who are employed to organize and control the subjects being regarded as citizens of The State. In addition, The State designates and decides what is public and private (for example, in relation to land, or particular places) as it appropriates to itself the authority to control what it has so designated as public.

Given that the modern State controls and assumes authority over a certain geographical area, and given that these geographical areas are described by the term nation, a useful alternative term for The State is the nation-State.

[2] Thus do the politicians and functionaries of The State echo the sentiment and words of Augustine, written over one and half thousand years ago, in *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* (XXII, 75): "The natural order, which would have peace amongst men, necessitates that the judgement about and the authority to declare war should reside in those who have authority over others [a monarch/prince]."

[3] Honour is an expression of our nature as individuals, as free human beings. It is honourable to use our own judgement, be responsible for ourselves, and not to submit to those who would oppress or constrain us. It is honourable to defy those who use force in an effort to obtain our obedience, and honourable to defend ourselves when attacked.

[4] An abstraction is:

"A manifestation of the primary error of conventional causal thinking; that is, of assuming only a causal linearity – of using causal reductionism: that simple cause-and-effect that excludes the acausal knowing that empathy provides and which knowing the numinous is a manifestation of. Implicit in abstractions is the notion of – the illusion of – the separateness of beings.

An abstraction is the manufacture, and use of, some idea, ideal, "image" or category, and thus some generalization, and/or some assignment of an individual or individuals – and/or some being, some "thing" – to some group or category with the implicit acceptance of the separateness, in causal Space-Time, of such being/things /individuals. The positing of some "perfect" or "ideal" form, category, or thing, is part of abstraction.

Abstraction-ism – and the ideation that derives from it – can be philosophically defined as the implementation, the practical

application, of ὑβρις." *A Glossary of Some Numinous Way Terms.*
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[5] The ideal of modern democracy is somewhat different from the reality as manifest in modern nation-States. In reality, it is not government by the people for the people, but rather government by a rather privileged oligarchy in the interests of that oligarchy, in the interests of implementing some dogma or some political programme, or in the interest of some vested often hidden lobby group.

It is not even a fair and reasonable vote, since topics the oligarchy, the privileged elite, and the Media and the vested interests do not want to discuss are not discussed, and voters are shamelessly manipulated, lied to, and shameless appeals are made to their instincts, their prejudices, their fears, with the elected government seldom if ever being truly representative of the people it governs (for example in terms of gender, occupation (or lack of it), ethnicity, standard of living) and most certainly most or all elected representatives being personally unknown to most of those who vote for them, and often or mostly voting 'along party lines' or according to what may benefit some interest group or lobby rather than according to the views of the majority of those who elected them.

It also happens that those who form the government - and thus who make decisions 'on behalf of the people' - do not represent the majority of voters, often receiving less votes than the combined votes of opposition parties.

In particular, all candidates of major parties liable to form a government have to undergo a rigorous 'selection procedure' by their already elected peers in order to ensure the loyalty of the candidate to the status quo. Thus, the candidates that the people get to vote for have all or mostly been pre-selected according to criteria which ensures they will represent their party - or some vested interests - first, rather than the people.

[6] A loose definition of anarchism is that it is that way of living which regards the authority of The State as unnecessary and harmful, and which instead prefers the free and individual choice of mutual and non-hierarchical co-operation.

[7] This was the type of argument used by the governments of America and Britain for their invasions of and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

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