

David Myatt

**Understanding and Rejecting Extremism
A Very Strange Peregrination**

Preface.

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Part Two. A Learning From Grief.

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Preface

The first, and by far the shortest, part of this work contains some of my reflexions on, and some of my conclusions concerning, my forty years as a practical extremist and my forty years of practical experience of extremism and of other extremists; a practical experience that began in 1968 and ranged from fascism, and the racism of National-Socialism, to radical Islam, and which practical experience included founding and leading a political organization; producing propaganda, organizing activities and demonstrations, some of which ended in violence; speaking in public and participating in marches, demonstrations, and brawls; formulating extremist ideology; imprisonment for racist and other violence; participating in and recruiting for paramilitary activities; inciting hatred, violence and prejudice; engaging in criminal activities to fund extremist causes; encouraging and supporting terrorism; and so on.

My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism.

Part two consists of transcriptions of some handwritten letters sent to a long standing friend following that tragedy in 2006. Since such personal correspondence is usually far more revealing - of personal views, motivations, and feelings - than some essay or other in which one pontificates about this or that, some readers may find this part more interesting and insightful than either part one or part three.

The third part consists of personal replies sent to individuals I did not personally know but who contacted me, between 2011 and 2012 and usually by e-mail, with questions about my extremist past, my 'numinous way', and my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. These replies may thus serve to place into perspective my rejection of all forms of extremism and as well as elucidate the development of my weltanschauung from that 'numinous way' to the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*.

For publication, I have occasionally added some footnotes to such personal correspondence and replies, usually to provide a reference and/or a translation of some quotation.

I have outlined in an Appendix how I understand and use certain terms, since (i) my particular usage of some common terms may differ from how they are ordinarily used or how they have been previously defined and used in some academic and other works relating to extremism and its causes, and (ii) I occasionally employ certain terms developed for or used by my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* (such as separation-of-otherness, abstractions, and masculous).

David Myatt
2013

Part One

Towards Understanding Extremism Some Notes From Personal Experience

Harshness, Hatred, and The Separation-of-Otherness

Some four years of reflexion concerning my forty years of experience have inclined me to consider that the genesis of extremism, and the making of extremists, may well be and may well involve three inter-related things: harshness, hatred, and what I term the-separation-of-otherness.

Thus, in my view, an extremist in active pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature, manifests a certain personal harshness, a certain propensity toward impersonal hatred, and makes not only a clear distinction between 'them' and 'us' but also between (i) some vision of or some belief in a particular past and (ii) the state of things now and how it is believed things will be, or should be, the immediate future. All of which predispose a person toward, or which can be used (by agitators, ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, leaders) to incite people toward, violence and - sometimes - toward terrorism.

The extremist therefore identifies with a particular category which is given certain characteristics or which is believed to be based on certain characteristics, and which category is invariably regarded - instinctively or otherwise - as either having a special (or even God-given) destiny or as being better than or superior to 'the others'. In case of racism, for example, the category is what is believed to be one's own particular ethnic group; in the case of radical nationalism, one's own particular country, land, or nation; in the case of radical Islam, of having the authentic interpretation and belonging with those who do adhere to that interpretation.

There thus exists, or develops, or there is cultivated, a distinct and a prideful sense of identity, dependant upon the belief - instinctive, or formulated in some manifesto, tract, doctrine, ideology, or dogma - that what exists now (society, or 'our way of life', for example) is under threat, and either (i) has deviated from a posited or some believed in ideal or idealized community/society/way of life that is said to have existed in the past or (ii) can and should move toward that new community/society/way of life demanded by the ideology, manifesto, tract, doctrine, dogma, ideologue, or interpretation.

This identity produces or can produce resentment, anger; caused by both (i) a perceived or a felt disparity between the now and the assumed ideal, past or future, and (ii) by the belief that someone or some many are responsible for the 'current state of affairs' and/or are preventing a return to, or the creation of, the ideal. For the problems or the conditions of the present are assumed, by extremists, to have certain identifiable and simple suprapersonal causes, just as the path to the goal is regarded as requiring that those causes be dealt with; with the causes of the problems often or mostly being the work of 'others'; not our fault, but instead the result of 'our enemies', and/or of some opposing ideology. That is, our enemies 'threaten' our way of life and/or are to blame.

Hence in order for extremists to return to this past perfection - or in order for them to create a new form of this past perfection, this past ideal, or in order for them to create a new perfection inspired by some past or newly posited ideal - the enemies, and/or opposing ideologies and those adhering to them, must be dealt with. There must therefore be struggle; the notion of future victory; and at the very least political/social/religious activity, and propaganda, directed toward political/social/religious goals; a moving toward regaining the authority, the power, the influence which supporters of, for example, an ideology believe or assume they and their kind have lost and which they almost invariably believe are now 'in the hands of their enemies' and/or of traitors or 'heretics'.

All this combines to provide the extremist with a simplicity of purpose, for their life now has a meaning which - instinctive or otherwise - vivifies, removes doubt, with the result that the goal, the ideal, the ideology, is given or assumes a high priority in the life of the individual, often to the extent that they are prepared - even willing - to use violence, and actively hate their perceived enemies, 'the others', whom thus they, in their harshness and intolerance, have dehumanized.

Extremism, Ideation, and Abstractions

Such violence, such hatred, such a dehumanizing of those deemed enemies with the consequent immoral denial of innocence [1], are inevitable consequences of all ideologies founded on notions of a prideful identity which glorify a past (real or idealized), which posit some future ideal or goal, and which involve a struggle against stated enemies to achieve such a goal or such an ideal.

For all extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of

"...a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future." [2]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'. For example, in nazism and neo-nazism, the basal ideation is the White (or the Aryan) race, so that for those who accept such a racial ideology a White or Aryan ideal (man and woman) exists, has existed, or should exist, with individuals judged or expected to judge themselves according to this standard and expected to strive to emulate or attain it; and with enemies (such as Jews - Zionists [3] - and Muslims) pejoratively contrasted with it, and thus viewed in a bigoted and a dehumanizing way. The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

For there is the belief or the assumption, implicit in ideation, that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that posited ideal thing or form, with the additional assumption or belief that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things, and ideologies of whatever kind assert or claim that (i) it is this essence or ethos that the ideology - or some leader or ideologue - has revealed or does reveal, and (ii) this essence or ethos can and should inspire and motivate individuals to strive and struggle to implement, to make real, their posited ideal or ideals even if, or especially if, such striving and struggle involves conflict and violence.

The Masculous Extremist

Given the foregoing, the extremist is a certain type of person; or at least, in my experience, the majority of extremists are: by nature, or become so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination. This type of person has or develops not only a certainty-of-knowing about their cause, faith, or ideology, but also a need or an enthusiasm for territorial pride and personal aggression. In brief, they have or they develop an inflexible masculous character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculous nature, the masculous ethos, of extremism. A character, a nature, unbalanced by muliebral virtues.

For it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of the masculous at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and *kampf* is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition; and - especially in ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, agitators, and leaders - the love of manipulation through the charisma of words.

For extremism certainly manifests - and is an example, par excellence - of the love some people have or seem to need for the manipulation of others through words both spoken and written. As I have noted elsewhere: It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the *pathei-mathos* of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal *pathei-mathos* - whose personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The 6

numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the infinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history. [4]

A Cure For Extremism?

Understood thus, extremism could be considered to be akin to bad (or rotten) individual *physis* [5]; as a manifestation of an unbalanced, an intemperate, *psyche* [6]; and as something which is or which has the potential to be contagious. Or, expressed less dramatically, extremism is a modern manifestation of hubris; of a lack of respect for, and a lack of appreciation of, the numinous. And, as hubris, is a manifestation of the error that is the genesis of the tyrant [7] as well as the genesis (in my view) of what has been termed the patriarchal ethos and in particular of how that ethos continues to not only survive but also still dominates the world.

It really does appear to be the case, as I perhaps somewhat controversially noted in a recent missive, that we men en masse have learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years,

For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical φύσις of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to? [4]

My only fallible suggestions are the empathy, the primacy of love and of pathei-mathos, and the appreciation of the numinous and of humility, that form the basis of my philosophy of pathei-mathos, and which philosophy is only my attempt to express what I believe I have understood because of and from my own personal pathei-mathos.

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Notes

[1] My understanding of innocence is that it is an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

[2] The definition is taken from the glossary in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] The term Zionist is often employed by contemporary neo-nazis as a euphemism for Jews, partly in order to try and circumvent racial hatred legislation in countries where such legislation is in force, and partly to try and avoid accusations of being a 'conspiracy theorist'.

[4] I use the term φύσις (physis) here in reference to the nature or the character of a person. As Heraclitus noted:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθεῖα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Fragment 112

[5] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2013

[6] Psyche is here used in reference to its classical origins and my philosophy of pathei-mathos; as an emanation, embodied in a fallible mortal, of Life qua being.

[7]

ὔβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:
ὔβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῆ μάταν,
ἃ μὴ ᾿πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,
ἄκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'
αἶπος ἀπότομον ὤρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκη
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ
χρῆται

Insolence [hubris] plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use

Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*. vv.872ff

Part Two

A Learning From Grief Transcriptions Of Some Personal Letters

The Scent of Meadow Grass

Four days on from Fran's death, and I am in one of the ancient meadows on the Farm - soon, the haymaking will begin, again, but for now I can smell that special smell - the scent - of meadow grass growing in hot June Sun.

The varied grasses are at least knee high; often higher - and I startle a Deer, hiding, as I walk through the grass: up it leaps to bound and leap away to escape through a hole in the far hedge where the Oak, now full in leaf, rises so tall above me, only a faint breeze to disturb its leaves. Over the field, a Buzzard circles, occasionally calling while small Cumulus clouds drift under the blue sky of another English Summer. Around, over, the pond where I sit, Damsel flies, and two dark blue large Dragonflies, skitting, dancing, mating, landing - for the flow of life goes on.

Why such warm almost cloudless weather? It is not as if I wish my sadness, my grief, my guilt to be lifted and taken from me - but, still, a certain beauty touches me, bringing a few moments of peace. Shall I strive to push these aside, and remember, again, as yesterday when I walked through nettles, letting them sting my bare hands and arms? Now, a stripped yellow Dragonfly ventures forth over the pond - to be attacked, driven away by the Blue as two Blackbirds, tree dwelling and five hedge-Oaks apart, sing their varied, long-lasting songs, for the flow of living goes on.

So many Damsel flies, now, I have lost count, and, then, a Ruddy Darter lands on a leaf, feet from my feet. For minutes, it is still, as, around me, Bumblebees and fastly-moving, loud, flies pass by in their seemingly random way. On a nearby fallen branch - some small, glossy, black, winged insect scoops out dead wood with its legs, having made a perfectly round, small, hole above the sunken leaf litter where black Beetles scutter, to dive down to what is their deep. Then, a Bumblebee drops, stumbly, briefly, down to the very edge, as if to drink, for the flow of life goes on.

Is there meaning, for me, here? It would seem so in these brief moments - and yet, and yet there is no Fran to return to, no Fran sitting here, sharing such moments. But is she, in some indefinable numinous way, here beyond the bounds of memory, Time, grief, and thought? I do not know, only knowing a certain vague, mysterious feeling, which might just be imagination. Now, I must arise and walk: no sleep, here, as in the years gone by when I would lie down among this warm grass to feel the peace that lives in such a place as this.

June 2006

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Bright Purple Orchids

It is just over one month since I sat on this hill - then, it was also in the Sun of an early Summer's morning, and only a few days after Francine had killed herself, tormented as she was by despair, anguish and a deep self-deprecation. For I called her Francine - and she liked it - since it seemed to capture something of her quixotic, individual, nature which the names Frances and Fran did not really express. Now, as in the past when she was alive, I find myself still saying to myself - and sometimes out loud - "I love you Francine," as if it were some mantra that might bring her back to life.

But, yet again, I am alone - here, where there are bright purple Orchids on the lower slopes just above the tree-line and where, below, a Deer stood on the narrow footpath, watching me approach until, apparently unafraid, it sauntered off into the bushes growing by and beyond the stream that runs down through that quite small wooded valley. Overhead - the resident Buzzard, calling. Around - flies, starting their day as the warmth of the Sun increases to slowly dispel the clinging mist that lingers cloud-like over the flat land between those not-too-distant hills.

The stark cry of a Woodpecker, as it flies, dipping, from tree to tree. The loud Bumblebee, feeding on the many small flowers - blue, yellow, violet, red. The many birds - whose personal names I do not and probably never shall know - singing, in the many trees and bushes below, up from where there is a small clearing, gently rising as the hill beyond, and in which clearing two chestnut horses graze, half a mile or more from the nearest cottage whose white walls and faded-red roof break the swathe of green which, furlong upon furlong, reaches up to the very top of the hill, making my horizon: fields of pasture; hedges bursting with English-summer green The ferns, since my last visit, are fully open, and almost all stretched fully out, and I sit on an old plastic bag, feeling the tragedy of Francine's death, and that I should be crying far more than I am now. For the tears, hours upon hour, day following day, hav lessened, until - yesterday - I wept only once. So I feel guilty, partly believing I should be mourning her far more. But Nature, here, is alive and I have begun to sense again the flow of Life, sensing somehow and strangely - and hoping it is not some delusion - that she, by her dying has given me this gift, this chance; these moments to reconnect myself with Life. A chance to redeem and be redeemed, to feel the beauty and the goodness inherent in life and to know, to deeply feel, the promise of human existence - as if she by her living and her dying has not only freed herself from her own inner pain, anguish and torment, but also finally, irretrievably, freed me from that lower part of myself that still kept me in thrall, even sometimes during our relationship, to abstractions, to a wayward questing after suffering-causing ideals.

So I am embodied, here, by my being, my thoughts, my feeling - as I sense she is, and somehow alive if I feel this, if I remember this, her, if I change; if I make her sacrifice worthwhile. For there is a depth not felt before; never quite experienced like this before; a depth of feeling; a depth of being; a deep connexion with Life, especially as it presences

itself, here, around me, in me, on this hill, site of an ancient hill-fort - as if the sadness and the sorrow and the tragedy have been transformed, melded somehow with the quiet reverential joy of being in such a beautiful, still numinous aspect of Nature, to form something new, strange, far beyond words, bringing a definite knowing of myself, of my failure, a knowing of humility never known before. Thus there is a letting-be; a simple dwelling through sitting in silence and in peace, exhaling wordless and wordfull words of love. Change, life, death - all around; all here, and one day I also shall change as my beautiful Francine has changed. No fear, now; only that knowing that knows the flow for the changing it is.

Yet do such feelings, such thoughts, demean her death? Or are they merely some escape or delusion? I do not really know - I never probably will know for certain - but I hope not, even as I know I might be mistaken, in this. But this is all I have: this, the result of my month of effort, the month of tears - these slight answers; these meagre answers; these so slight positive feelings, feelings which may fade, which could fade, bringing back such anguish as caused so many thoughts of bringing forward death. For over a month, a struggle to find answers to the questions, the despair, which perplexed and often almost overwhelmed me. Faith; prayer; redemption - seeking to believe; needing to believe; desiring to pray, trying to pray. Trying again to find the answers in God; in Christianity, in Buddhism, in Taoism, in Islam, and in and from many other Ways.

But there is now, for me it seems, only the quiet sitting in places such as this; only the answers of, the development of, The Numinous Way. Only the feeling of being one connexion; only the yearning to presence the good, to cease to cause suffering; to strive to keep that silence, that non-interference, which which may well be the beginning of my own redemption and a move toward, back, to being in balance with Nature, with the Cosmos, with myself - and with the Fran who has gone, leaving me behind.

There is, here, only sky, trees, hill, and history - and no one to share such beauty, such warmth of Summer Sun. No one to lie beside and feel the yearning for that short sleep which often overcomes us in a such heat as this.

Instead - a small brown spotted Butterfly passes; then, an even smaller one of brown-orange with black spots on its wings, and then a larger white of black-tipped wings. So many flowers to feed, upon - and the heat of the Sun has taken those almost-annoying flies off, away, perhaps bushward into shade, leaving me free to rest in my new strange sad-tragic-quiet-reverential-remorseful-joy while a small Cumulus cloud in an otherwise cloudless sky drifts above, to my right, making faces. A sad face; then of anger then of joy - until it, too, becomes almost formless here in this flicker of Life which passes quickly upon one planet in one Galaxy among a Cosmos, changing slowly, as it does.

So many flowers; and Grasshoppers, calling, in the longer grass, above where three Crows caw, as they caw. So much Life, bursting, burgeoning, forth, to mingle as I become mingled with a future and a past, one connexion among so many where, ten feet away, the wind-shaped sapling of Oak, no taller than a three Rabbits, hopping, curves gracefully out over lichen-covered rock.

June 29, 2006

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Existence Without End

This afternoon is hot, following the long hours of rain during the night, but there is a lovely breeze as the Sun dries the Clover-filled grass where I sit resisting the temptation to sleep, stretched out, warm.

For it is so beautifully warm, this Sun, taking away for a while the sadness of the sleepless night when dreams and memories of Fran kept me, often weeping and often silently hunched by the window, listening to the rain. No music of mine, then, as I yearned to capture, to express, the almost despairing sadness of it all. There were only words; only words such as these, and not for the first time I gently envied those gifted with the talent of musical composition. But no words can express what the sounds of numinous music can and sometimes have expressed, and I was left to sigh and close my eyes to try and dream such memories of happier days as have kept me alive as the days since her death turned first to a week and then to a month, no God to bring forth the comfort and the love so desired, so needed in the bleakness of that, of this, long night.

But this Sun brings something, while it lasts - something strange: a quite quiet remembrance of the joys and beauty of life when personal love lived to suffuse us with both happiness and dreams - no death to tear us apart. Yet how many times, how often and how stupidly, did I turn away from the sharing of such love - from its value, its humanity, its goodness known only, valued only, felt only, with its loss, with such a loss as this? Turned away from - for what? Some hard, unforgiving, inhuman ideal. Turned away from - too many times these past thirty years so that a storm now wells up inside me as the clouds of the night grew, waiting to break in a tempest of tears. So stupid, the man that I was, and maybe still am.

Swallows, sweeping low over the grass; a Honey-Bee, feeding, from the clover. A small Fly, by my hand. All emanations of that flow of Life which lives, presenced on this planet which is both a dwelling and a home.

Someday I - all this, here: the Fly, the Bee, the birds; the Clover - will be gone, as she is gone and as the Cumulus clouds that now drift past the hill will be gone. Gone - to where? Returned; continued; lost. changed... And what remains, of us? I do not know, and can only suggest or presume.

Yet there is something, here; some feeling, burgeoning in Sun - of Life in its essence; of consciousness, living, of compassion, love; droplets forming one whole, one river flowing from one source to one end in one sea in one moment

of one Time. Thus, a brief smile, a knowing of moments where the I is at least lost as it become lost in the happiness of such sharing as love makes. No God - but a warmth of being flowing from one small beginning to one Cosmic existence without end.

Yes - she is there; as I, the Bee, the Fly, the Clover, the Swallow, the rain, the river, will be there, transformed, transmuted, one infinitesimal emanation of Thought among so many where the Cosmos evolves to be, there, where Time shall never end. Am I dreaming - or just listening to, feeling, the quiet soft emanations of a Cosmos dreaming, breathing, seeing, being, existing in both the sadness and the love?

Now, thinking ended, I can drift into that warm sleep that so often heals... And then, for a moment, such peace it is as if the joy of death reached out to touch me, claim me. Is this, then, what touches some in that their last moment of decision? For it feels as if it is the dying which is easy - and the living which is, which can be, which will be, hard, as the despair, the burdens remain to reclaim them, me, us. But have I strength enough, dreams enough, hope enough to help me here? Yes, perhaps I have again, for a while...

Afternoon of 6th July, 2006

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The Joy-bringing Sky-blue

A wonderfully warm and sunny day with no clouds to cover the joy-bringing sky-blue. The Sun was warm even as it ascended, early, while I cycled rural lanes almost totally devoid of traffic because of being Sunday, and early. So pleasing, this simple joy of an English morning in late late Summer when I - tired from hours of work yesterday - leant against a fence to just-be in each slowly passing moment. Such peace, as if the measure of life was at last not only known but felt, lived, loved, when no human-made noise intrudes and one feels the strength, the giving, of the Sun; feels the growing that is in the fields, trees, bush, hedge, as if they are all - as they are - connected, parts of one living, growing, presence; one living-being, breathing... So much, so much so simply known and felt as warmth and the natural silence brings a sleepy calm and there is the brief-sleep of lying in warming welcoming grass before one awakes to feel all living-life knowing thus human-caused suffering for the blight, the stupidity, that it is.

To be, to let-be, to leave-alone is it seems an answer - and so I am slowly, so slowly, returned to my dwelling where now, three hours later, I sit on the grass in the garden feeling knowing my weakness of months years decades past.

So I am haunted, here and again, where again the Swallows gather as they gather at this time of year: chirping to each other and preparing in some weeks to leave. Thus do they skim the fields, catching, eating, their food as the cycle of natural life upwardly repeats and a cooling breeze dims a little of the humid heat of the day, here in a greening part of a still-living England.

Haunted, here and again - amid such joyful growing warmth - with, by, because of, her death; with by, because of, the multiplicity of my multitudes of suffering-causing and so stupid mistakes...

3rd of August 2006

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The Sun of Mid-September

A small black winged insect lands on my knee as I sit on the grass waiting, to write - I do not know what this insect is, but it is slowly cleaning its long antennae and then its wings which briefly catch the Sun and iridess. Such complexity, in miniature - such life, living, as it lives.

It is just past mid-September and warm, very warm, with small Cumulus clouds beneath a joyful sky of blue and I am awake, it seems, at last, from the daily dream of the past six or more weeks when I sleep-walked through life to wake only briefly, so briefly, to cry unexpected as when I two days ago walked one narrow path where trees reared up, arching over as some cathedral isle, and bright morning sunlight filtered and fractured to touch me, the ground, the life that grew, seeping, around. I cried then such tears as saw me crouched, hunched up, then kneeling - feeling the sorrowful tragedy of her loss, her dying: of my mistakes. A sorrow which the wakeing-dreaming-sleep of those past weeks kept me distant from as I, again and foolishly, meddled, wrote, postured, to keep pain and experience away through a desire, a hope, to believe; through the gestures and words of prayer; through articles written. For I had felt again that I knew; that I had words to issue forth - some role again to help me live and keep such life as mine alive beyond that tragedy of self-inflicted death.

Such tears began to break such illusion, such wakeing-dreams, down. Now - so green this grass, so warm this Sun of mid-September that I cannot sleep or hold this role any longer. There is, can be, nothing but the flow of life which I as one living being cannot hope to contain, constrain, for I am, in being, no-one and nothing; only one fleeting flicker of life as that insect, living, flickers briefly to fly away lost to sight under Sun.

There are images, of Space, to remember: one nexion, here, sitting upon grass, among the billions presented here on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy among billions. So many, so many - that I am become again what I am, was, one fallen leaf drifting, flowing down one stream in one field in one land on this one planet among so many. I have no power to really change what-is, what-was; no power of bringing-into-being; no power to even really know; only living,

breathing, dying.

So there is a smile, fine words flowing of knowing not to cause suffering again - words written before this failure, born from weakness. For I know my failure, here, these past weeks - no excuse, not even that wordless, strong, desire to live beyond the grief, beyond the nothingness without her, beyond the faith that clung to life, hoping for redemption in a total loyal submission to the one God beyond all gods. Such loyalty is troubling, still... But it is the warmth of Sun, the green of grass, that brings me back, for there is only the brief touching of such beauty as we can find, discover, know; only the thin, faint, hope to somehow bear and carry this to others - to pass the numinous knowing on so that someone, somewhere, somewhen can transcend, themselves, feeling the living matrix, beyond, where in ending we merge, again, one being-become.

All else is insufficient, illusion, delusion, for there is what there is. Yet I am weak, worn out from experience, loss upon loss, mistake following mistake, so there is, shall be, can be, only a living from moment to moment; no plans to follow then deny; no aims to strive or hope for.

The Swallows of Summer have gone, and I smile as I run my hand through the warming, growing, grass in this field where the breeze does not move the acorn as it falls, tree to ground, here by the pond set and drying below leaf-shedding Willow. My tears can never fill this - and it might be good to die now, in this peaceful warmth as the Craneflies rise to stumble to briefly live before life leaves them without a knowing such as this.

So, there is now only the living of existence; only the quiet slow semi-joyful waiting for this life to slowly, quickly, painless or with pain, dimly end to be returned, perchance transformed. Only being, beyond desire: one cloud but briefly passing making many faces under Sun...

September 2006

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Crouched Up Over Muddied Earth

Who is there to hear the words of remorse, to see, feel, such tears of anguish as bring me down, crouched up over muddied earth? Who - if there is no God, no Saviour, no Heaven, Paradise, and no personal life beyond that ending which is death?

Who hears? Who can forgive? She who could, might, is gone, dead, lost to me and to life, and here - on this wooded hillside where the strong breeze creeks trees and fastly scutters cloud - there is only a faint hope: dim, as the dimness on the far horizon where the Sun is still nearly one whole hour from rising. It would be good to believe - as I tend to believe, as I tend to hope - that the Life, the living-beings, here can and do hear, and can and could respond. But I am only one being, one human, for them - tree, bird, deer, rabbit, the very hill itself - to be wary of as they, each in their life in their own way, are wary, and even the two Ravens, prukking as they skim the trees above, are only Ravens. No omens, there. So there seems only fantasy while I whisper, slowly, to the life that lives here. No answers; no answers: only the breeze bringing darker clouds, and rain.

Here, among brambles, I sit where the fallen leaves of Oak, Ash, have covered the grass, and the breeze no longer carries the sound of a distant traffic-filled road. For it is Sunday, and still, with only this human who stirs in the gibboning gloom of Dawn on a Winter's day warm for the time of year.

Soon, there will be weariness to take me back along the muddied path that seeps over hill - no one to meet, walking, while such earliness lasts. And it is good, this solitary silence - once, a few times, I have, being late, seen strangers approaching, and shyly, wary like an animal, have crept away into woods, or beyond some hedge, keeping thus my own strange company: no human words to break the bleakness or the slight joyness of mood.

So there is a kind of living, a kind of thinking, for me - seven months beyond her death, with no religious faith, belief, to bring me company. Thus, I am alone, again. And yet, there is this, this being-here, where the rain washes away the tears that some leaves briefly held after they fell as they fell from one man, anguished in one moment of one walk on one day one warmish Winter. No bright Sun, today, rising over hill: although somehow, for some reason, there comes that slow muted joy to bring a slight brief smile - for there is Life, around, beings living as they live; one future, one present, to connect one consciousness since I am a living in illusion.

So brief, the insight, and I am become again one man ambling toward old age, slowly climbing with my Ash walking-stick the steep slope of a hill.

Soon, there will be tea, toast, a seat by the window, as the rain of dull day beats down, again. So brief, that insight: but sufficient as often to keep me dreaming, replete, for many hours, today...

December 2006

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A Time To Reflect

A time to reflect as I - tired from long days of manual work - sit in the garden watching the clouds clear to bring some warm Sun on this windy day of a coldish wind. On the horizon to the South: Cumulus clouds billowing up to herald more showers, and I, for a moment as a child again, watch a few cloud-faces change to disperse; as if the clouds are for that

moment, just that one moment, a memory of a person who lived, once, on this Earth: reaching out to be remembered as they the cloud move as they are moved in their so-brief and new existence.

The hedgerows are greening; the branches of trees coming into leaf, and life is renewed while I wait for the Swallows to return, here, to this Farm. This is Life: in its purest truth devoid of the empathy-destroying, suffering-causing, abstractions that we humans have manufactured to blight this planet and so grievously injure our fecund still beautiful but now suffering Mother Earth who gives us, and who gave us, life.

The brief warm Sun renews as it almost always does for me, and so – for this moment, this one moment – I am happy, again; feeling the measure of Meaning, of happiness, of joy itself; which is in a simple just-being, sans abstractions, sans thought, and beyond the dependency of, the addiction to, anger.....

Here – the child, again; free to watch the bee bumble from flower to flower; free to feel a certain playful awe. Here, the concern with only what is seen, touched, known, smelt, in the immediacy of dwelling.

There should be nothing more; nothing to wreck such simple being; nothing to bring the-suffering. But I, we, are stupid, weak, vain, addicted – and so in our failing repeat and repeat and repeat the same mistakes, and so cause and maintain the pain of our, of their, of other, suffering. Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa; Mea Maxima Culpa...

April 2007

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Almost Mid-Summer

Another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with the light remembered from childhood years in Africa and the Far East: so different from the normally dullish light of temperate England.

Thus, here in the warm Sun and as so often, there is a time of reflexion; a stasis as life becomes reviewed through memories. And it is occurring to me more and more that this is all that there is, beyond the immediacy of the moment: only memories of moments past.

So many memories which slowly fade as bright colour exposed to Sun: as the bright checks of my Tweed cap have slowly faded over the years, unrenewed as the greens of the grass, the bush, the tree, become renewed each year, through Spring. Only memories, as of Fran; to be savoured but perhaps now not too much to be dwelt upon in almost unbearable sadness, for thus is – for thus has the – a type of balance returned; that balance, that dwelling in immediacy, which I from learning feel and know is the essence of wu-wei.

This is a change within me, regarding the life and death of Fran, and the life and death of Sue; regarding my own diverse journeys and explorations. A change toward a being-settled that has partly arisen from at last forsaking abstractions and partly from accepting that it is immediacy and remembrance of memories which convey the only correct meaning we human beings have or can find and which is numinous. No projection, thus, of an abstractive life-beyond this mortal life; no need for a religious type of faith; no battle or desire to strive to be in accord with any abstraction; and even no need to believe in, or even un-numinously desire, some-thing. No depth of unfathomable wordless sadness to bring that ultimate life-ending despair such as I assume Fran felt in the last hours of her own mortal living.

For there is only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled there in the old Orchard of old Apple trees whose lower branches have been windfallen, or become broken with age, or stripped of bark by the two Goats who roam there, where Chickens range, food-seeking. Only the passing billowing fair-weather white Cumulus clouds below the sky-blue of Earth's earthly mortal life.

Across from where I sit – at the back of the Farmhouse – that Barn whose Summer Swallows swoop in and out to feed their still nesting young who gape and chatter as their food is brought. And I am only this moment, only this moment, as the young Farm dog who comes to lay down in the grass beside me is only the young Farm dog. He looks up at me once – three times – tail wagging, before settling down to sleep.

There is no world beyond, for us here; for the life here. Only the weather; only the changing weather; only some natural need to move us, slowly by our limbs. A need for shelter, water, food. Only the Seasons changing as they change. Only the gentle companionship of a gentle acceptance that lives, grows, changes, slowly, as all natural life lives, grows – changes – slowly, as Sun through cloudless Summer sky.

My decades long mistake of unbalanced stupidity has been to be un-rooted; to be of unnatural unneeded haste. To cease to dwell within each immediacy of each moment. To be swayed by, persuaded by, in thrall to – to even love – un-numinous and thus un-ethical abstractions. To be thus that which we human beings have become: a stage between animal – talking – and compassionate, empathic being aware of and treasuring each small pulse of life that lives near, within, us because there is no separation unless we in hubris and by abstraction create such separation.

Thus are we now struggling, halting, wasting ourselves and all of Life around us; infected now with the virus of abstractions so that, upon this living Earth, we – in our new de-evolution – despoil, disrupt, destroy the Life that is our Life and the genesis of The Numinous, often in the name of that un-ethical abstraction called “progress”. And yet we have a cure for our millennia-long debilitating sickness; have always had a cure, although so many for so long, as I,

have failed in our blind stupidity to see it.

So, this is all that there is: only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled here where, now, The Numinous lives, on another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with light remembered...

June 2008

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This Flow of Feelings

The truth is that I am not able to contain, restrain, the sorrow, the sadness felt through this knowing of my multitudinous mistakes. Unable: and so I am become, am now, only a flowing of moments remembered with such a ferocity of engagement that I am there, reborn, again:

There... to smell, to feel, the sultry freshness of warm Spring morning when off I cycled to work some twelve miles distant and she, first wife, was left to cry in loneliness, alone: no ending to that argument the dark night before as I in selfish concentration enjoyed the greening grass of vergeful country lanes, the birdful treeful songs, passing as they passed while the clouds above that brought the heavy warming rain depart. So glad then to be alone again among and cycling such peaceful Shropshire lanes...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have returned to clasp her in my arms and be the love she then so needed. To late this seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so blind.

The truth of there, again:

There... where the warmth of English Summer took to us seat ourselves in picnic beside the river Avon flowing as it flowed through rural counties. You - new wife, for our family living; while I - for ideations that I carried in the silly headpiece of my head, so that I with misplaced stupid passion could only talk of strife, somewhere. You, breathing hope as the very breeze breathed such warmth as kept us slim of clothes...

And only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have embraced you there to return in sameness the gentle love so freely given for years until my selfish self so self-absorbed rightly broke your patience down. Far too late now my seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so subsumed with ideations.

The truth I am reborn there, again:

There... where Fran stood beside her whiteful door as morning broke that late Spring day when I with firm resolve turned to take myself away: no doubt, no love, to still such hurt as walked me then. No empathy from sadful eyes to turn me back to try to try to try in love again. Instead - only such selfish hope as moved me far to meadow fields of farm where warm Sun kept me still, and smiling, while she remained bereft abandoned to lay herself down until her breath of life left her: no hand, no love, of mine to save her there where she died silent, slow, in loneliness alone...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling so intensely how I should have stayed: love before all excuses.

Thus, such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no presentiment of so many pasts: so much unforgivable, unliveable now - that I become my tears of failing to hope to sleep to dream to still this flow of feelings.

But there is no present - only moments with which to mesmerise myself, as when the Blackbird beyond this window sings and I am there, there again on meadow-fields of farm where work and living kept me safe, secluded, for five full years and more. Such peace, such hope, until death of Fran came to claim me for the failure that made me who and what I was and am.

For the truth is of failure; my failure of so many years and decades past. To fail to simply love to dream to hope as they my loves so loved in dreamful hope as kept them made them far better beings than I in insolent pride ever was or even now could ever hope or dream to be. No faith, no deity, no sacrament of absolution now to charm away, explain, redeem such a feckless selfish failure. Only more remorseful days - and darkful nights - alone that bear some winsome hope of words as this in weaksome recompense for wreakful storm I was upon those lives when I, dark tempest, tore their fragile human hopes asunder.

To die, here now, is easy: one example from far too many, with nothing here for needful Pride to gorge myself upon, again. Only such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no excuse for the stupid arrogance of such a prideful past. Only a hope for this example to void for one - some others - such ideation as kept and made me slave; one unreligious allegory for perchance not so many. Since

If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,
At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same

I am no exception. So, perhaps, five thousand years remain before our species - whimpering after such bouleversements as still befits us now - fails, to fall, to perish, to be replaced: unless we change. But how?

The truth is, I have no answers. I only live other than I have lived, in empyrean hope of abatement of suffering, somewhere, somehow: and knowing a shared, loyal, love for the beautiful, the numinous, truth it is.

March 2011

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And What You Thought You Came For

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

TS Eliot: Little Gidding

There is now for me a quite simple, solitary, almost reclusive life, almost ended; as if the Cosmos - Wyrld - has contrived to place me exactly where I need to be: in, with, such a situation and surroundings as makes me remember the unwise deeds of those my pasts, and which placement offers more opportunities for one fallible human being to learn, especially about how people are not as, for many decades, I with my arrogance and abstractive purpose assumed.

For now I of the aged poor have no purpose, no ideation, to guide; no assumptions founded on, extrapolated from, some causal lifeless abstraction. No politics; no religion; not even any faith. There is instead only the living of moments, one fluxing as it fluxes to, within, the next. No dreams of Destiny; no supra-personal goals; no desires of self to break the calm of day and night. Only walks, and a being, alone to mingle with weather, Life, Nature as one so mingles when happiness is there inside unsupported by some outer cause or expectation of or from another.

Few possessions, belongings, as if I am a Gentleman of The Road again, but briefly staying here in this some un-heated house; or perhaps some almost-monk of one half-remembered paian apprehension, with neither monastery nor home, who feels now the hidden meaning of life: that this is all that there is or should be, this peace brought because there is a freedom from desiring desires. Someone sad, burdened by a deep naked knowledge of himself, but who and now, too sensitive perhaps, smiles too often and tries to hide the burgeoning tears of joy that sometimes seem to so betake him unawares...

I, now, someone - who unlike so many millions world-wide - fortunate indeed to have shelter, food adequate to feed his gauntness for a day; clothes sufficient to keep-in warmth; and health - though agely ageing, slowly fading - enough to keep him fending for, and fendful of, himself. There could be more; there was far more, but that seems long ago; unneeded now. For this is all that there is, this happiness in moments when - needs fulfilled - no lust for change, having laid in wait within, bursts forth bringing thus such breaking difference as so often causes two, more, far more, humans to break or drift apart.

Emotions governed, basic needs supplied, with memories - of lives - sufficientized for years of daily dreams, what more remains, becomes required? Little, so very little, except we being human, external still, do still so cause such suffering, so much - for what?

For there has come upon me these past few years, of this so simple living, a certain understanding. Of how I am never, was never, ever, totally alone, being only one briefly born connexion. Of just how easy it is to be content, breeding happiness in oneself and others, and how even easier it is to lapse, to fail, to fall; to let feelings, abstractions, guide, control, as when in the past I would breed discontent within myself, with loved ones and others, never satisfied with this or that. For happiness, I presumed, lay in better things - a better home some better place; better food clothes holidays finer wine; that other woman, there; and, perhaps far worse, lay with better way of life for those unknown, a way wrought by deeds done, by pursuit of lifeless ideation as if I, that temporary self, might have made some difference and that those causal shells had or might be given meaning or even by violence, blood, become somehow gifted with the breath of life.

So little self-control. So much love, hopes, lives destroyed; and how much suffering I by hubris caused. So much - for what? Some selfish passing pleasure; no external change that lasted; that ever could, would, last. Since real change, discovered, is only and ever within ourselves, alone - there, interior, ready to gently touch another, one gift of one person personally known so that only now perhaps I am with, of, the numen living.

Thus I am returned to sometimes where I so briefly was, my purpose altered, far beyond the goals I in arrogance so vainly figured. For I am nothing special, unique; only some half-remembered vague aspirations of this age, whose words, life - as so many - perhaps uncovers divinity as the divine but whose past concerned creating illusion, illusions, in expiation of a humanity then so lost.

Returned, as when I with tent, wandered, roamed. Returned, as those sunny warm days that Summer in Leeds when - before a monastery claimed me - I would walk barefoot inanely smiling so pleased to be free, young, alive.

Returned as when, bus-arrived, love caught me and she that April day embraced me with such hope, such gentle hope, such simple sharing dreams that remembrance now brings so many tears of sadness. For I in selfishness broke them.

Returned as that day - so many many years on - when love for me lived within another as we two so slowly walked some Worcester streets...

How foolish, how so very foolish, to have lost such times, such love, by lust for change, by such selfish stupidity as lived within me still and still until years years further on that other dying came in May to almost break betake me.

Now, I am only someone living - a simple living - with a certain fallible inner understanding, born of suffering, deaths, distress, despair. So there is so aptly now only slow quiescent walks alone and such memories, such memories, as I hope I hope have made a better man.

August 2011

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This Only This

In the garden, heard through the large open window, the birds having sensed the onset of Spring sing as they sing at this most glorious time of year. And I, I overwhelmed again by the sadness emanating even here from my knowing of the suffering-causing personal deeds of my past. So many, so many I had not thought to count so many - until now. So many how could I while buoyed by hubris have hurt that many? So much deception, so many lies, while they - the friends, family, wives, lovers - trusted with that goodness born of heavenly-human hope.

No prayers, no supplication, to wash away, remove, the manifold stains. If only, if only I (as once, those several times) believed, so that penance, absolution - embraced - might bring the chance to dream, to-be, to see, to love again. But no apologies possible nor by they desired, for they are gone - deceased, or lost those many years ago; no words sufficient, of meaning, to redeem a memory of such a scarring pain.

No mechanism, manufactured, to return before the time of such hurtful hurting with such knowing as so bends me now, down, down and kneeling sans any means of prayer. Only emotion falling, fallen, keeping such memories as some music makes numinously plaintive the joy the pain, century folding folded to century while they the multitudinous I's made the good the trusting suffer. No past of expiations. No Spring of goodness to burgeon forth to herald they through pathei-mathos changed.

Which is why, perhaps, so many still need desire - to trust in - God. For there is this only this: to write to rest to sleep to dream to cease to feel. And the world will still be there when I am gone.

March 2012

Part Three

A Rejection of Extremism Perhaps Explained Some Personal Replies (2011-2012)

No Words Of Mine Can Describe The Remorse

Yesterday was one of those glorious English Summer days of warm Sun, blue sky, when I - after a long walk - had sat down in the tufted grass on that slope of a hill to view the vista below. The river curving as it curved through the hedged-in fields of crops and pasture; the far distant greenful hills unclear in heat-made haze; the country lane that, now devoid of vehicles, would give access again to scattered houses and those well-separated working farms. It felt - perhaps was - paradise on Earth, for I fortunate to have water, food enough to feed me for a day; clothes and boots - though worn - sufficient for their purpose; even a place - dry, undamp, with bed - to sleep such sleep as might by night be gifted. It felt - and was - good to be alive, touched a little and for a while by some type of inner peace. So little, so very little, really needed...

The problem in the past had been me, my lack of understanding of myself and my egoism. It was my fault: not the place, not the time, not the people, for I so desired with that arrogance of youth to exchange this paradise, here, for those ideas, the idealism, the abstractions, I carried around in my prideful hubriatic head. Seldom content, for long, since happiness came with - was - the pursuit, or the gratification of my personal desires. So destructive, so very destructive. So hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, profane.

The defining moment, for me - in terms of understanding myself, in terms of understanding politics and the error of my decades of extremism - was the tragic personal loss of a loved one in May 2006. In the hours following that event I just knew - tearfully knew without words - my own pathetic failure; what I had lost, what was important. Thus there came upon me that day a sense of overwhelming grief, compounded by a remembrance of another personal loss of a loved one thirteen years earlier. For it was as if in those intervening years I had learned nothing; as if I had made the life and the dying and death of Sue, in 1993 - and of what we shared in the years before - unimportant.

I have no words to describe how insignificant, how worthless, I felt that day in May 2006; no words to describe, recall,

retell, the remorse, the pain. Suffice now to recount that my life was never, could never be, the same again. Gone – the arrogance that had sustained me for so many experiential decades. Gone – the beliefs, the abstractions, the extremisms, I had so cherished and so believed in. That it took me another three years, from that day, to finally, irretrievably, break the bonds of my Shahadah sworn six years earlier – and the oath of personal loyalty that I believed still bound me to one person still alive then in a far distant land – most certainly says something more about me, about my character, about my interior struggles.

Thus it was that I came to know, to feel, how irrelevant politics and political organizations were for me, personally. So that ever since I have had no desire whatsoever to involve myself in politics – or even in trying to somehow change the world be it by politics, or by religion, or by whatever. Instead, my concern has been to try to [fully] understand and thence reform myself; to reflect upon my four decades of diverse involvements, discovering as I did those involvements for the extremisms they were; and to try to, and finally sans all abstractions, answer important questions such as Quid Est Veritas.

As I wrote in my May 2012 essay Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing:

"What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance – the human necessity, the virtue – of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism – usurping such humanizing personal love – replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others – personally unknown and personally distant – on the basis of such a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when – as in all extremisms – what is masculous is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via pathei-mathos and whose subtle scent – the wisdom – words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption."

Therefore I have no political views now; I do not and cannot support any political organization, as I do not adhere to nor believe in nor support any particular religion or even any conventional Way of Life. All I have are some personal and fallible answers to certain philosophical, personal, ethical, and theological, questions. No certainty about anything except about my own uncertainty of knowing and about the mistakes, the errors, of my past.

Having written so much - far too much - for so many decades and having made so many suffering-causing mistakes, I also have no desire now to write anymore about anything, except perchance for a few missives such as this, as part perhaps of my needed expiation, and in explanatory reply when asked of certain things. Such as in exposition of my mistakes, my remorse, and particularly in explanation of the personal love, the gentleness, the compassion, the humility, the peace, that I feel - feel, not know - might possibly enable us to find, to feel, our paradise on Earth, and so not cause suffering, not add to the suffering that so blights this world and has so blighted it for so long, mostly because of people such as me. The ideologues, the extremists, the fanatics, the terrorists, the bigots, the egoists. The unhumble ones unappreciative of the numinous: those whose certainty of knowing - and those whose sense of a personal 'destiny' - makes them uncompassionate, unempathic, hateful, prejudiced, intolerant, and devoted to either 'their cause' or to themselves. Those whose happiness comes with - and is - the pursuit, and/or the gratification of their so selfish desires.

Just how many more seasons - years, decades, centuries, millennia - will we humans as a species need to find and to live our mortal lives in compassionate, empathic, paradisaal peace?

June 2012

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Letter To My Undiscovered Self

For nearly four decades I placed some ideation, some ideal, some abstraction, before personal love, foolishly - inhumanly - believing that some cause, some goal, some ideology, was the most important thing and therefore that, in the interests of achieving that cause, that goal, implementing that ideology, one's own personal life, one's feelings, and those of others, should and must come at least second if not further down in some lifeless manufactured schemata.

My pursuit of such things - often by violent means and by incitement to violence and to disaffection - led, of course, not

only to me being the cause of suffering to other human beings I did not personally know but also to being the cause of suffering to people I did know; to family, to friends, and especially to those - wives, partners, lovers - who for some reason loved me.

In effect I was selfish, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist. Naturally, as extremists always do, I made excuses - to others, to myself - for my unfeeling, suffering-causing, intolerant, violent, behaviour and actions; always believing that 'I could make a difference' and always blaming some-thing else, or someone else, for the problems I alleged existed 'in the world' and which problems I claimed, I felt, I believed, needed to be sorted out.

Thus I as a neo-nazi, as a racist, would for some thirty years and by diatribes spoken, written, rant on and on about these alleged problems: about 'the Jewish/Zionist problem, about 'the dangers of race-mixing', about the need for 'a strong nation', about 'why we need a revolution', about 'the struggle for victory', about 'the survival of the Aryan race', and so on and so on. Later on, following my conversion to Islam, I would - for some seven or so years - write and talk about 'the arrogance of the kuffar', about 'the need for a Khilafah', about 'the dangers of kufr', about 'the need for Jihad against the kuffar', and so on and so on.

Yet the honest, the obvious, truth was that I - and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me - were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability - a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger - and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killinInstead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia.

In retrospect it was easy to be, to become, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist - someone pursuing some goal, someone identifying with some cause, some ideology; someone who saw 'problems' and felt such 'problems' had to be sorted out. For such extremism, such goals, fulfilled a need; they gave a sense of identity; a sense of belonging; a sense of purpose. So that instead of being an individual human being primarily concerned with love, with and responsible for personal matters - the feeling and issues and problems of family, friends, loved ones - there was a feeling of being concerned with and part of 'higher more important things', with the inevitable result one becomes hard, hardened, and thence dehumanized.

Easy to be thus, to be an outward extremist; just as it is easy for some other humans (especially, it seems, for men) to be and remain extremists in an inner, interior, way: selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling, and thus obsessed with themselves, their physical prowess, and/or subsumed by their personal desires, their feelings, their needs, to the exclusion of others. For - despite our alleged, our believed in, 'idealism' - we the outward extremists were, we had become like, those selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling humans; only that instead of being slaves to our personal desires, feelings, needs, we were enslaved to our ideals, our goals, our ideologies, our abstractions, and to the phantasmagorical problems we manufactured, we imagined, or we believed in.

In essence, it was a failure of humanity on our, on my, part. A failure to see, to know, to feel, the human - the individual - reality of love, of peace. A failure to personally, as individuals, be empathic, compassionate, loving, kind, fair.

For love is not some ideal to be striven for, to be achieved by some supra-personal means. It is just being human: among, with, other humans, in the immediacy-of-the-moment. From such a human, individual, love - mutual and freely given, freely returned - there is peace: tranquillity, security.

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:
For me, love has brought the brightness
And the beauty of the Sun [1]

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings.

For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer.

February 2012

Notes

[1]

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε.

Sappho, poetic fragment: P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

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Four Replies: Just My Fallible Views, Again

The following extracts are from several personal e-mail replies, sent between June and September of 2012, to a lady correspondent originally from England but then living in an Eastern European country.

Reply 1

You seem very much preoccupied with lessons you have learned from grief and regret, pain and suffering [...]

[My] recent propensity to be somewhat subsumed with a certain sadness [arose] from not only pondering on such questions as *pathei-mathos*, the causes/alleviation of suffering, and the nature of religion, expiation, and extremism, but also from understanding, from feeling, just how much suffering I personally have caused during my extremist decades and knowing that had it not been for the tragic death of a loved one some six years ago I would most probably have continued my career as a suffering-causing extremist.

Also, having spent decades trying to idealistically inspire people or manipulate them, and being manipulative either for allegedly idealistic reasons (some political or religious cause) or for purely selfish reasons, I finally came to know just how easy it is to make excuses for one's mistakes and unethical behaviour, especially in relation to some ideology or some political or religious cause. Having good intentions, I discovered, is not a valid reason to cause suffering, although believing one acted from good intentions does and can salve one's conscience. For I came to the conclusion that idealism itself was one of the fundamental causes of suffering, and that ultimately it is matter of us taking individual responsibility for ourselves and all our actions; for the suffering we cause, have caused, or can cause. To shift that responsibility onto others (as in some chain-of-command) - or onto some political cause or some faith - is just, in my fallible view at least, unethical.

As is positing or believing in some supreme deity who will decide matters for us (and judge us and others) and/or who has, apparently, laid down what is right and what is wrong.

There are somewhat complex and difficult questions here (or at least they seem complex and difficult questions to me). Questions such as if there is no God/supreme-deity - and no mechanism such as karma and thus no rebirth - then how to understand suffering and what do reformation of ourselves and expiation mean, and do they even have, or should they have, any meaning sans religion? How do we - sans religion and ideology - decide, know, what is ethical and what can motivate us to act ethically? What is innocence? Horrid things happen every day to people who do not deserve them. Every minute of every day somewhere some human being suffers because of some deed done to them by some other human being. Should that concern us? If so, why, and what could/might we do about it, and will what we do cause more suffering?

What I have termed 'the philosophy, the way, of *pathei-mathos*' - that is, my now much revised 'numinous way' - is just my attempt to answer such questions. And an attempt born from me accepting the truth about myself and my suffering-causing past. To do otherwise, I feel and felt, would have been to somehow in some way demean - to not learn from - that tragic recent death of a loved one. To, instead, continue with the arrogance, the hubris, of my past.

Perhaps it would have been easier for me to just accept the answers of some existing Way or of some religion. Certainly, a religious expiation could have eased the burden, relieved and relieve some or most of the grief, felt. A burden, a grief, which certainly has fuelled and infused my writings these past few years and some of which writings are my rather feeble attempts at a non-religious but hopefully still numinous expiation.

[...]

Reply 2

Perhaps all we can do is try and communicate, in some way (but gently) that wordless (empathic) knowing of another human being to others. A wordless humanizing knowing that I have come to appreciate many men seem to so often lack or believe or feel is far less important than their macho posturing and their love of and seeming need for conflict, control, competition, and war. Perhaps if women were more assertive, empowered, accepting of themselves, and perhaps if men appreciated women more - and men (heaven forbid) developed within themselves certain muliebral qualities - there might be less suffering in the world.

[...]

In my personal experience at least there is and was a positive aspect to Catholicism, as there is (again in my view and my experience) a positive aspect to most if not all conventional religions from Islam to Judaism to Buddhism to Christianity.

This is, they have the propensity to remind us of the need for humility by setting certain limits regarding our behaviour, and by in some way and in their own manner making us aware of the numinous, the sacred. Which is why, over the decades, I have learned to respect them and their adherents while accepting that their answers, their way, are not my answers, my way.

In respect of the sacred, for instance, I still find that one of the most beautiful expressions of the numinous is Catholic chant: Gregorian, Cistercien, and Vieux-Roman. Indeed, one of my favourite pieces of music is now, as it has been for decades, *Répons de Matines pour la fête de Saint Bernard*. One of my treasured memories is, as a monk, singing the office of Compline and then, in the sublime silence of the church, going to the Lady Chapel to kneel in contemplative wordless prayer on the stone floor in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Such peace, such purity, in those moments. Another treasured memory is, decades later and when a Muslim, travelling in the Western Desert and with my Egyptian guide stopping to face Makkah and pray Zuhur Namaz while the hot Sun beat down and a hot breeze blew sand to cover part of my prayer mat. Again, a purity of silence – no one else around for perhaps a hundred miles – and a wordless warm feeling of connexion with something pure and far beyond and balancing our human hubris: to place us into the necessary supra-personal perspective.

Perhaps on balance the positive, humanizing, virtues of such religions now outweigh their negative qualities? Certainly, it seems to me, that most of the worst excesses of – for example – Christianity are now and hopefully historical (and one thinks here of excesses such as the Inquisition).

You just seem so sad... and it's such a pity to waste time being sad when there are a million and one reasons not to be.

In a strange way a certain sadness seems to keep me focussed, balanced, and human, preventing – sans religion – the return of that arrogant, hubriatic, violent individual who incited and preached hatred, intolerance, violence, killing, and who was responsible for causing much suffering.

[...]

Thus consciously recalling my own pathei-mathos, and that of others, and feeling the sadness that is part of such a learning, is I feel somewhat necessary, at least for me and for now.

Reply 3

As I type this I am listening to the orchestral version of Ravel's Pavane pour une Infante Defunte, and the beautiful music, your message, remind me yet again of our strange human condition; of our ability, our potential, to do what is fair, to be kind and to love, and also of our propensity to hate, to resort to violence, to be barbaric, as if the suffering of so many for so many millennia meant nothing, with nothing learned, except by a few.

A while ago, when I chanced to be travelling in England the train stopped at a station to allow new passengers to embark, I noticed a group of some four young men, in their early twenties. Yet even had not two of them been wearing (what I am informed are called) 'hoodies' embroidered with the name and symbol of their organization I would have recognized them. For forty years ago that would have been me, there, at such a place on such a day as that. A young man enthusiastically on his way to some political demonstration, or some meeting; proudly, defiantly, displaying his allegiance to his extremist cause, and standing, walking - holding himself - in such a way that you know he is ready for, even eager for, a fight.

This distant, momentary, and regardable encounter caused this ageing man - a when beyond three score - a certain sadness. What value, then - what purpose - my writings these past few years? For it was as if the pathei-mathos of that aged man, as that of so many others - our knowing of the human cost and consequences of hatred - had little or no effect. The same prejudice; the same propensity and need for violence; the same disruption of so many non-harming innocent lives; the same lack of empathy, understanding, love; the same intolerance and the same spewing forth and distribution of ignorant propaganda. Only the names, the people, the symbols and the flags, change; year following year, decade after decade.

I well knew the perceived enemies of these latter-day types: the people hated, reviled; the subject of the speeches, the propaganda, of their leaders.

I well knew how they hated, and why. I well knew the slyness of their leaders, of how they desired to describe, to positively portray, themselves - and the excuses made regarding violence. Above all, perhaps, I know so well the ignorance, the intolerance, the inhumanity, on which their beliefs, their cause, was founded, and which ignorance, which intolerance, which inhumanity, was indeed their cause, whatever the words, whatever the name, whatever the flag, whatever the year.

Not long after that impersonal encounter I did personally try to rationally engage with a few supporters of that organization, in an effort to correct - from personal experience - at least some of their prejudices about Islam and Muslims. To no avail, of course, so deep, irrational, was that prejudice, so strong the hatred of their perceived enemies; so alien to them was any vestige of humility. And would I, some forty years ago, have listened to some old man pontificating about his experiences, his life, his learning? I doubt it. For I then, as they now, had that certainty-of-knowing, that arrogance, that is one of the foundations of extremism, of whatever kind.

Perhaps my political opponents of decades past were right and that the only effective way to deal with such people of intolerance, hatred, violence, and prejudice is to oppose them 'on the streets' and take every opportunity to reveal them for the bigots they are... But I no longer have any definitive answers, having only a certain certitude about my own unknowing.

Reply 4

[...]

To have such [youthful] certainty might make life easier and perhaps - in my case - as enjoyable as I remember those now long gone decades of youth and early manhood. I, as I am sure many others do and have done, have occasionally day-dreamed about returning to some such time in the past with the understanding and the knowledge gained in the intervening years and so perhaps act differently and (at least in my case) thus avoid causing the suffering so caused then.

But I do believe that my lack of certainty now is - even at the cost of a certain sadness - a good thing for me, as it prevents that arrogance of my youthful self from returning and seems to somehow better enable me to appreciate, to feel, the numinous and thus the distinction between what is good and what is bad.

Hence I find myself in the curious position of now possibly understanding and appreciating the wordless *raison d'etat* of Catholic monasticism, manifest as this is in a personal humility; a humility that during my time as a monk my then still hubriatic self could not endure for long. Which recent understanding and appreciation led me for a short while at least, and only a few years ago, to wistfully if unrealistically yearn to return to that particular secluded way of life. And unrealistic because for all that understanding, appreciation, and yearning, I no longer had the type of faith that was required, the type of Christian faith I did have when I had lived that monastic way of life. A lack of faith I really discovered and felt when I went, during that not-too-long-ago period of yearning, to stay once again and for a while in a monastery...

You really do seem to have been born with an overwhelming urge to fix the world, don't you? Is that why you're so sad? Because you can't fix it?

Unfortunately, I do seem to have been cursed, for some forty years, with idealism and with a hubriatic, fanatical, belief in what I deludedly believed was 'a good cause'. Which idealism and which belief caused me, as an extremist, to inflict and contribute to suffering; to incite violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance.

But my sadness now is because of that extremist past; because of my arrogance; because I did cause such suffering; because I for so long incited violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance. Because I did what was wrong, and cannot undo the harm done.

This sadness - this knowing of my own mistakes, this knowing of my own arrogance, this knowing of the harm I have done - means that I have no desire whatsoever to try and 'fix the world'. Rather, it means a deep personal remorse, a desire - however silly it might seem to others - for expiation. It means I do not like myself - as a person - knowing what I did, what I was capable of, and maybe still am capable of. It means I have to remember - every day - my mistakes, my uncertainty of knowing, and what is good, numinous, beautiful, innocent. It means living a quiet and quite reclusive life.

Which sadness and which remembering were part of the genesis of my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. Of my feeling that perhaps we - as compassionate individuals aware of our fallibility and past mistakes - should not concern ourselves with what is beyond the purview of our empathy. Which in practice means the living of a private, a very personal, life where we do not concern ourselves with things we admit we do not really understand and have no personal knowledge of; that we do not meddle in the affairs of people we do not know and do not interact with on a personal basis; and that we only ever get involved in valourous defence of someone unfairly treated or unfairly attacked if we personally encounter such a situation or such an event.

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One Error-Prone Self

The reason why I now do not - and have no desire to - "get involved with social change" (or to "go out into the world and try to give something back" as another correspondent recently expressed it) is the reality of me having made, and knowing and feeling I made, so many mistakes, shown such poor judgement, been so arrogant, so selfish, for so many decades - for most of my adult life. Given this reality, I simply do not trust myself anymore not to cause suffering, not to make even more mistakes, not to show poor judgement again. Just as I know my responsibility, my blame, for those my past mistakes and their human consequences.

Thus, why would I want to inflict myself on the world anymore? External engagement might in theory (just might) be possible for me again were I to have the guidance, the oversight, of others; a moral authoritative framework provided by good people I could empathize with and trust to guide, advise, correct me. But even then, even then given my past propensity to be hubriatic and selfish, I might veer away from doing what was right.

For the simple honest truth is that I now feel, in my very being, that I have no right to, can find no justification for me to - beyond that necessitated by personal honour in the immediacy of the moment [1] - interfere in the lives of others,

in however small a way even if my initial motives might be (or seemed to me to be) good. For who I am to judge, decide, things beyond the purview of empathy and a very personal honour? I am just one fallible exceedingly error-prone human being with a long proven history of impersonal interference, of hubriatic, suffering-causing, and selfish, deeds. Someone who does not trust himself anymore and who values and tries to cultivate wu-wei. Which is the major reason why some months ago I ceased to write (to pontificate) - about anything; leaving me with only some few and sporadic (and soon also to cease) personal correspondences such as this [2].

In effect, I feel I am not - by being reclusive - retreating from the world, just seeking not to inflict my error-prone self on the world, on others. An error-prone self, a person, I admit I now do not like very much. Which is why there is also no longer any desire, not even any secret desire, to share my life, in however small or complete a way, with anyone or even with others be they friends old or new. Of course I could be wrong, and am just being silly or stupid. But it is how I have come to feel.

All I now have therefore are the brief human contacts that this type of reclusive non-religious life allows or finds is fitting. The smile, the cheery return of a 'hello' or a 'good morning' when a person is passed while out walking. Or perchance talk of the weather. No reason for me to be gruff, aloof or rude. Quite the contrary - a need to smile; to be polite; perhaps even a little charming and briefly. As if such small so human things so briefly made might be some minuscule emanation of that wordless quiet quite inexplicable inner joy and peace which somehow in some strange manner seems to flow within when I am out, outdoors, wherever whenever, able thus to feel the freshness of the air, see clouds and sky, feel this living planet as Nature lives and changes, and be again one particular if fragile brief mortal emanation, one microcosmic none-harming connexion, to all Life. For there, alive, it is as if I am who and what I now should be: no thought, no words, to spoil or soil earth, wind, sky, sea, clouds, heavens, or water.

But yes, there is a certain inner emptiness, and often, and bearing grief and sadness, when alone indoors. Inner vacant sometimes colding spaces which perhaps a belief in God - or the gods - might fill, and which certainly a partner or prayer or both would warm and dissipate. Yet this certain inner emptiness, such sadness, I sense is perhaps as it should be for me, as part expiation for the varied harm my varied pasts - in this one life - have caused.

So many, so very many many, others in so many places world-wide far less fortunate than I, so that I have to - must - accept my pottering hopefully now non-harmful way of life, remembering. Always remembering that *θάνατος δὲ τὸτ' ἔσσεται, ὁππότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'* [3] and the suffering I personally have caused, balanced (perhaps) as such remembering is by a (perhaps naive) hope that someone or some many may learn and change as I seemed to have learnt and changed: learned to see, to feel, to try to gently be, the goodness we humans are capable of and have often shown ourselves to be capable of. A goodness revealed by empathy, and thus presenting to us an understanding of innocence, peace, forgiveness, honour, love and joy, far beyond any words I know.

The grievous reprehensible sadness-causing mistake I as extremist, with my fanatical hubriatic certitude of knowing, made for some forty years - and which all extremists of whatever kind always make - was/is to place some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, before the innocence of human beings and before those quite simple things which empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal and which express our humanity:

"...the desire for personal love and the need to be loyally loved; the need for a family and the bonds of love within a family that lead to the desire to protect, care for, work for, and if necessary defend one's loved ones. The desire for a certain security and stability and peace, manifest in a home, in sufficiency of food, in playfulness, in friends, in tolerance, in a lack of danger. The need for the dignity, the self-respect, that work, that giving love and being loved, provide..." [4]

and a knowing of, a feeling for, and acknowledgement of, innocence: where those who are personally unknown to us are unjudged by us and are given the benefit of the doubt, since this presumption of innocence of others - until or unless direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, proves otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

That reprehensible mistake I made is why extremists embody and manifest hate and violence and conflict; because extremists dehumanize, as well as so often enjoying and needing the exhilaration, the sense of identity, the 'enemies', that hate and violence and conflict and abstractions give birth to and always thereafter nurture. A dehumanization so evident in the truth that extremists place some goal, some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, some political/social/religious agenda, before a personal love, before a personal loyalty, before stability, peace, and innocence; blind as extremists mostly are - willfully or neglectfully, or naturally because of their character - to the good and to the good people of human intentions which and who exist and which and who have existed in those societies such extremists almost invariably, because of their hubriatic certitude-of-knowing, seek to undermine, destabilize, decimate, overturn, revolutionize, or destroy.

But I have no chanted, sung, or contemplative *Opus Dei* to try, in monastic peace and with hope and faith, to balance - *Soli Deo Honor et Gloria* - the unwise deeds of so many; nor any longer a desire or need to interfere in the lives of others. So there is for me only the living of each moment as it passes: no aim, no goal. Instead:

The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling

November 2012

Notes

[1] As I mentioned in *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*,

"[The] personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

[2] The minor reason why I some months ago ceased to write is that my *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* contains (in my fallible view) all that is required for an understanding of, and all that is relevant to, my now completed *weltanschauung*.

[3] 'Our ending arrives whenever wherever the Moirai decide'. Attributed to Καλλίνου, as recorded by Ἰωάννης Στοβαῖος in his *Ἀνθολόγιον* (c. 5th century CE).

In respect of Μοῖραι (τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες) - Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies - cf. Aeschylus [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, and Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 130:

Μοῖρ' ἀλαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαιον
...by the purging Moirai subdued

[4] *Some Personal Musings On Empathy* [Part II of *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*]

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A Slowful Learning, Perhaps

"And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living." [1]

Perhaps it is incumbent upon us to now celebrate, remember, transcribe, only the kind, the gentle, the loving, the compassionate, the happy, and the personal, things - and those who have done them - and not the many things that have caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. For, so often it seems, we human beings have and have had for millennia a somewhat barbaric propensity to celebrate, to remember, to transcribe, our seeming triumphs of personal pride and of victory over others - be such others some declared enemy or some designated foe - always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the deaths, the destruction, that such a seeming, and always transient, victory over others has always involved, and always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the hurt, the unhappiness, that our selfish prideful desire to triumph, to succeed, causes in someone or some many somewhere.

For millennia so many have been fixated on either our selves - our pride, our success, our needs, our desires - or on the pride, the success, the needs, the security, the prosperity, we have assigned to or we accepted as a necessary part of some ideal, some entity, some supra-personal abstraction.

Thus, anciently, in the name of some Pharaoh or some Caesar, or some King, or some Chief, or some leader, or some religious faith, or on behalf of some interpretation of some religious faith, we sallied forth to war or to battle, causing suffering, death, destruction, and doing violence, to others. Invading here; invading there. Attacking here; interfering there. Defending this, or defending that. Destroying this, or destroying that.

Thus, latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible.

Whose voice now tells the story of all or even most of those who suffered and those who died in conflicts four thousand years ago? Three thousand, two thousand, years ago?

It is as if we, as a sentient species, have learnt nothing from the past four thousand years. Nothing from the accumulated pathei-mathos of those who did such deeds or who experienced such deeds or who suffered because of such deeds. Learnt nothing from four thousand years of the human culture that such pathei-mathos created and which to us is manifest - remembered, celebrated, transcribed - in Art, literature, memoirs, music, poetry, myths, legends, and often in the ethos of a numinous ancestral awareness or in those sometimes mystical allegories that formed the basis for a spiritual way of life.

All we have done is to either (i) change the names of that which or those whom we are loyal to and for which or for

whom we fight, kill, and are prepared to die for, or (ii) given names to such new causes as we have invented in order to give us some identity or some excuse to fight, endure, triumph, preen, or die for. Pharaoh, Caesar, Pope, Defender of the Faith, President, General, Prime Minister; Rome, Motherland, Fatherland, The British Empire, Our Great Nation, North, South, our democratic way of life. It makes little difference; the same loyalty; the same swaggering; the same hubris; the same desire, or the same obligation or coercion, to participate and fight.

How many human beings, for instance, have been killed in the last hundred years in wars and conflicts? Wars and conflicts hallowed, or justified, by someone or some many somewhere. One hundred million dead? More? How many more hundreds of millions have suffered because of such modern wars and conflicts?

It is almost as if we - somehow flawed - need something beyond our personal lives to vivify us; to excite us; to test ourselves; to identify with. As if we cannot escape the barbarian who lies in wait, within; ready to subsume us once again so that we sally forth on behalf of some cause, some leader, or some ideal, or some abstraction, or as part of some crusade. As if we human beings, as Sophocles intimated over two thousand years ago, are indeed, by nature, and have remained sometimes honourable and sometimes dishonourable beings [2], able to sometimes be rational, thinking, beings, but also unable to escape our desire, our need, our propensity, to not only be barbaric but to try to justify to ourselves and to others our need for, and even our enjoyment of, such barbarity.

Or perhaps the stark truth is that it is we men who are flawed or incomplete and who thus need to change. As if we, we men, have not yet evolved enough to be able to temper, to balance, our harsh masculous nature with the muliebral; a balance which would see us become almost a new species; one which has, having finally sloughed off the suffering-causing hubriatic patriarchal attitudes of the past, learnt from the pathei-mathos of our ancestors, from the pathei-mathos of our human culture, born and grown and nurtured as our human culture was, has been, and is by over four thousand years of human-caused suffering. A learning from and of the muliebral, for the wyrdful thread which runs through, which binds, our human pathei-mathos is a muliebral one: the thread of kindness, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of empathy; of the personal over and above the supra-personal.

A learning that reveals to us a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only [3] we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far.

Is that then to be our human tragedy? That most of us cannot or will not learn - that we cannot change - until we, personally, have suffered enough or have encountered, or experienced, or caused, one death too many?

November 2012

Notes

[1] TS Eliot, Little Gidding

[2] As Sophocles expressed it:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing
Has more strangeness than a human being...
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning
In inventive arts - he who arrives
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

[3] The one exception is personal honour; the valourous use of force in a personal situation, as mentioned in The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary.

Miserere Mei, Deus

In respect of religion, there seems to have grown within me, this past year, a feeling regarding prayer, especially contemplative prayer, or rather that quiet way of being when - with no expectation of or belief in God - no words are desired or required and one is aware of the numinous in such an unaffected way that there is a calmness emanating not from within - not caused by our knowing or feeling of self - but from that ineffable vastness beyond which includes us and all the life that seeps into us, there in our stillness: emanations, of not only the dreams, the hopes, the love, the sadness, the sorrow, the grief, the pain, the joy, the tragedy, felt, known, experienced by we humans millennia after millennia, but also of the being, the essence, of the other life around us, here as Nature, and elsewhere, which, as we, 'hath but a short time to live'.

A feeling, an intimation, of perhaps in some small way now understanding the Latin Opus Dei - Officium Divinum - as a needful daily reminder of our needful humility, as the plaintive cry Miserere Mei, Deus so reminds, and as the Namaz of Islam also so reminds with its Ruku, Sajdah, and recitation of Subhana Rabbiyal a'la. A needful daily reminder that we are transient beings, prone to dishonour, selfishness, and hubris, but who can be loving and kind, and beings prone to the charisma, the temptation, of words, either our own or those spoken or written by others. A reminder that we can so easily forget, have so often forgotten, "that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος." [1]

A feeling, thus, of again understanding the necessity we humans seem to have for prayer and for God, for Allah, for the gods, for the divine; and why this need, and its varied expression over millennia, should be respected and not profaned by that hubriatic personal certitude-of-knowing which enthralled, and has enthralled, so many especially in more recent times, making many of them prejudiced against organized religions and often against other expressions of spirituality.

Personally, I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers [2]. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal.

Fallible answers such as an appreciation of - and the presumption of - innocence, understood as innocence is as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us - of whom we have have no empathic knowledge - are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt until direct personal experience and

individual and empathic knowing of them prove otherwise; and fallible answers such as appreciating how the separation-of-otherness leads to, is the genesis of, hubris.

Which leads me, and has led me, to other related questions. Without religions or some form or forms of social spirituality - without a belief in Heaven or Jannah or in a promised afterlife, or in rebirth and karma - how can humans change and so avoid the rotten behaviour, the hubris, that causes or contributes to suffering, and should we, as individuals or collectively, even try to change others, or should we concern ourselves only with our own inner and outer reformation? Has The State [3] assumed such a moral rôle by means of laws, punishments, and other mechanisms of authority or persuasion, and should The State assume or be allowed to assume such a moral rôle? My own answers, fallible and such as they are [4], are that our change, our reformation, are personal; consequences of *pathei-mathos*, a balanced judgement, and of empathy, and thus involve an appreciation of the numinous; and that the only non-suffering, non-hubriatic, way to change or try to change, to reform, others is by personal, direct, example and by valourous deeds in the immediacy of the moment. These answers are thus spiritual, apolitical, and imply that

"...what matters [is] our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." [5]

December 2nd, 2012

Notes, Post Scriptum:

[1] *Toward Humility - A Brief Personal View*, included in *Pathei-Mathos: A Path to Humility* (2012)

[2] In addition to that recueil, the text *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* provides a reasonable overview of such answers.

[3] As mentioned in *Politics, Society, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, The State is 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/cliq̄ue/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.

[4] Outlined in *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* and *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

[5] The quotation is from my *Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture*.

Appendix

Usage of Terms

Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify /distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value /identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some

'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of

values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process 51 of ideation and opposites.

Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its *physis* (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term

'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

Extremist/Extremism

By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my *weltanschauung*, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris.

Fanatic

Someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for and/or commitment to some cause or ideal or ideology is excessive, intemperate.

Ideation

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

Ideology

By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

Incitement

Incitement is used in the sense of 'to instigate' or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

Indefinity

var. indifinity. Unmeasurable; immeasurable; endlessness; of no known limit. [Derived from indefinite c.1600 ce]

Innocence

In general, innocence is regarded as the attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence - until personal experience and individual knowing of them prove otherwise - is the fair, the moral thing, to do.

In specific instances, such as quite young children, innocence implies actions are blameless, without harmful intent,

and thus should be understood as causing no harm.

Masculous

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence

/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

Muliebral

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

Politics

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Radical Islam

By radical Islam is meant a particular modern harsh interpretation of Deen al-Islam. This is the belief that practical Jihad against 'the enemies of Islam' and the occupiers of Muslim lands is an individual duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim; that Muslims should live among Muslims under the guidance of Shariah; that Muslims should return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah and distance themselves from the ways and the influence of the kuffar.

Many though not all radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah; are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar; and believe that 'martyrdom operations' against enemies are permissible according to Quran, Sunnah, and Ijmah. In addition, many supporters of such operations also believe that the deaths of non-combatants in some or all such operations are permissible according to the aforementioned criteria.

Separation-of-Otherness

The separation-of-otherness is a term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict, hatred, violence, and suffering.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

Society

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence.

State

By the term The State is meant:

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/cliq̄ue/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.

Terrorism

A useful definition of terrorism is that it is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological.

The Good

The good is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced.

Violence

By the term violence is meant the use - by a person or persons and in pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological - of physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons.

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