
Meditations on Extremism, Remorse, and The Numinosity of Love



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Preface

The recent essays in this compilation were the result of six months or so of interior reflexion - of meditation - upon my extremist past and the pathei-mathos that, over a period of several years, led me to develop my ethical philosophy of The Numinous Way. Consequently, these essays deal, in a personal way, with matters such as remorse, extremism, expiation, sorrow, and the reformation of individuals.

As I wrote in the essay *So Much Remorse*, included here,

" So much remorse, grief, and sorrow, within me for the unwise suffering-causing deeds of my past. Yet all I have in recompense for decades of strife, violence, selfishness, hate, are tears, the cries, alone - and words, lifeless words, such as this; words, to - perhaps, hopefully - forewarn forswear so that others, some few, hearing, reading, may possibly avoid, learn from, the errors that marked, made, and were, my hubris."

David Myatt
March 2012 ce

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 [1]. 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 [2], 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, killing. Instead 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 [3]

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.

David Myatt
February 2012 ce

Notes

[1] As mentioned elsewhere - in the missive *So Much Remorse* - by the term *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that 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. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. Thus in simple terms an extremist is someone who lacks empathy, compassion, reason, and honour.

In addition, by fanatic is meant someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

[2] In respect of racism, I accept the standard definition, which is that racism is a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the belief some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

[3]

ἔγω δὲ φίλημμι ἄβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε.

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

Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are *ὑβρις* and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conjecture, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond *πόλεμος* and *ὑβρις* and thus beyond *ἔρις*; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of *Δίκη* [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - *σωφρονεῖν*, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of *ὑβρις*, a humility which our *πάθει μάθος* makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition,

" ...by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless.

That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other "thing" we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos." [6]

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, we-wei, and a knowing of the wisdom of Δίκη.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

David Myatt
February 2012 ce

Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 9)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions]*

with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - ἐναντιοδρομίας - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80 - qv. *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80* and also *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus*.

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις."

[4] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to my short essay *The Principle of Δίκη*.

[5] As mentioned elsewhere, wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective - that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

[6] The quote is from my essay *Humility, Abstractions, and Belief*.

Pardonance, Love, Extremism, and Reform Some Reflexions On Numinous Change

My own somewhat tempestuous, experiential, extremist, and suffering-causing, life - and my quest among various religions - seems to have made me personally aware of the ability we, as human beings, possess or possibly can acquire to change ourselves in a positive, a virtuous, way; of the ability we possess to exchange hatred for love, injustice for fairness, prejudice for tolerance, and violence and killing for peace. The ability, that is, to become compassionate, empathic, honourable, human beings, and thus cease to be the type of beings who have caused or contributed to so much suffering over so many millennia.

This ability to change ourselves, it occurs to me, is the basis for reform, for numinous change, both personal and social; that is, for change that is good, human, humanist; which betakes us away from causing or contributing to suffering, and which thus leads us to restrain ourselves and refrain from causing further pain, distress, injury, harm, grief, to other human beings and to other life.

Such numinous change, in my view, begins with shrift [1], and not necessarily with some confession (of some sin or sins) to some deity or some representative, howsoever appointed, of such a deity, but rather the admission, the confession, to one's self of one's errors, failures, mistakes. This is the self-knowledge, the self-learning, of how one's deeds have harmed others and thus caused or contributed to suffering. There is thus a placing of one's self into a human, into a numinous, perspective and therefore an admission of fallibility and a certain, and a necessary, personal humility. And it from such humility - founded on such self-knowledge - that there arises, or there can arise, within the reformed individual, a genuine and necessary remorse.

Pardonance

To so accept - or to be open to - such a numinous change in someone is, at least according to my weltanschauung, a human, a virtuous, thing to do, requiring as it does empathy enough to recognize and be appreciative of the new individual that so emerges or which can emerge from such shriftness, such self-knowledge, such

humility.

Thus, to try and cultivate such acceptance of such individual change - the virtue of pardonance - and of the empathy required to recognize it, may well be a means for us to encourage reform in ourselves, in others, and perhaps therefore also in our societies in a manner which is numinous: gentle, loving, and which does cause further suffering.

To not do this and to instead be harsh in a generalized way and thus to not take into account individual circumstances, the possibility of change, and the virtue of empathy in recognizing genuine change, is perchance to commit the error of hubris and thus to add to the burden, to aid the cycle, of suffering.

A Personal Perspective - Dealing With Extremism

A question, relevant to reform and personal change, that I have often asked myself in the past few years is what, or who, could or might have prevented me from causing the suffering I caused during my four decade long career as an extremist of various kinds. Which leads to the general question as to what might be one effective way to deal with extremism and extremists, and thus possibly lead to some or many of extremists being reformed, changed; that is, acquiring certain virtues and having those virtues replace the negative, harsh, ideas, ideologies, and emotions, which made them and marked them as extremists and vectors of human suffering.

After a great deal of reflexion, the one tentative answer I have is the answer of learning, personally, from those who suffered because of, or who were affected by, such extremism. In effect, individuals being shown the personal consequences of such actions, such deeds, such violence, such hatred, such prejudice, and such terrorism, as I and others like me supported and/or incited. How the victims of our extremism, and their families and relatives, were affected; how they suffered; what in human terms they lost and was taken from them. A personal encounter with their grief, their sadness, their sorrow, their pain, their loss. Not some history lesson; not an impersonal reading of some books; but personal encounters with victims, with the family and the relatives of victims; or at the very least factual documentaries and recallings that tell the personal, the moving, stories of victims, of the family and the relatives of victims.

A revealing thus of the terrible, the horrid, human cost of extremism and of the idealism that I personally now believe is one of the roots of extremism. For such idealism assuredly dehumanizes, for one places some ideal, some ideology, some goal, some principle, some abstraction, before the human virtues of empathy, compassion, gentleness, and love.

Yet this raises an interesting and important question: are all extremists redeemable, capable of change? Can they all be changed by such a knowing of the human consequences of their extremism?

In all honesty, I have to answer no. For my personal experience over some forty years has unfortunately shown that some people (whether extremists or not) are, or appear to be, just bad, rotten, by nature and thus possibly/probably irredeemable. I could be mistaken, as I hope that there exists some means to reveal, to nurture, the humanity of such individuals, although I do not know and cannot conceive of what such means might be. What I do intimate, however, is that such irredeemable individuals are, and probably always have been, a minority.

A Personal Philosophy

As I have tried to intimate in some of my recent essays, making empathy, compassion, honour, gentleness, wu-wei, and love, the pre-eminent virtues of my philosophy of The Numinous Way derives from my own pathei-mathos, my own shrifting, and from my reflexion on the self-knowledge, the feelings of remorse and sadness, that arose from them. Hence the ethics of this Way have their genesis in my personal meditations, and are not the result of some critical, academic, detached, study and revision of the various ethical theories that have been proposed by others, ancient or modern.

Furthermore, I admit that I do not have all the answers, or even many of the answers to important moral and philosophical questions, and that the few answers I have arrived at in recent years are only my own fallible tentative and quite personal answers derived from much interior reflexion on the suffering I know I have caused through and because of past deeds, deeds both extremist and personal. A knowing, a reflexion, that I feel has changed me, reformed me.

I would like to believe - to hope - that this personal, this interior, change, possibly evident in some recent writings of mine, and possibly also evident in my philosophy of The Numinous Way, is positive, good; in some way counter-balances the hubris of my past, and is thereby some expiation, some propitiation, for at least some of the suffering caused.

But it is for others, not for me, to judge whether that is so.

David Myatt
March 2012 ce

The text of this article is taken from - and thus summarizes - my answers to some questions recently asked of me by an undergraduate student, and which questions concerned my extremist past, my rejection of extremism, and the ethics of my philosophy of The Numinous Way.

[1] " I will give him a present shrift and advise him for a better place." *Measure for Measure*, Act iv, scene ii

So Much Remorse

(Extract from a letter to a friend)

So much remorse, grief, and sorrow, within me for the unwise suffering-causing deeds of my past. Yet all I have in recompense for decades of strife, violence, selfishness, hate, are tears, the cries, alone - and words, lifeless words, such as this; words, to - perhaps, hopefully - forewarn forswear so that others, some few, hearing, reading, may possibly avoid, learn from, the errors that marked, made, and were, my hubris.

Such an elixir of extremism ^[1] which I, with paens born of deluded destiny, refined, distilled, made and - like some medieval fake apothecary - sought to peddle as cure for ailments that never did exist.

Then her - Francine's - death that day late May such that for so long a time such feelings of remorse, grief, and sorrow, overwhelmed so that Sleep when he deigned to arrive arrived to take me only fitfully, slowly, back to Night and usually only after I, in darkness, lay to listen to such music as so recalled another aetheral, beautiful, older, world untainted by the likes of me; a world recalled, made manifest, to me in the sacred music of Josquin Desprez, Dunstable, Tallis, William Byrd, Tomás Luis de Victoria...

Such a longing then in those lengthy days longer nights to believe, to reclaim the faith - Christe Redemptor Omnium - of decades past to then presence, within, a sanctified expiation that might could remove that oppressive if needed burden. Of remorse, grief, sorrow, guilt. But was it only pride - stubborn pride - that bade me resist? Or some feeling of failures, before? Some memory primordial, pagan perhaps, of how why Night - She, subduer of gods, men ^[2] - alone by Herself brought forth day from dark and caused us all to sleep to dream to somewhere and of Necessity to die? I do not know, I do not know that why.

For there was then only interior strife until such time as such longing for such faith slowly ceased; no words in explanation, expiation. Ceased, to leave only the pain of a life mis-spent, left in memories of tears that lasted years. No prayer, no invocations; not even any propitiation to redeem, protect, to save. Only, and now, the minutes passing to hours to days as Sun - greeting, rising, descending, departed - passes from to return to the dark only to be born again anew; each newness unique, when seen.

I have no excuses; the failure of decades was mine. A failure of compassion, empathy, honour. A failure as a human being. There are no excuses for my past, for deeds such as mine. No excuses for selfishness, for a hubris of personal emotion. No excuse for deceit, deception, lies. No excuse for extremism, for racism, for the politics, the religion, of hate. For the simple truth - if so lately-discovered by me - is that the giver the bringer the genesis of Life is Love.

Awed by her brightness
Stars near the beautiful Moon

Cover their own shining faces
When She lights earth
With her silver brilliance
Of love...^[3]

David Myatt
February 2012 ce

Some Notes (Post Scriptum)

[1] It might be useful to explain how I, in the light of my forty years practical experience of and involvement with extremism, understand terms such as extremism. By *extreme* I mean *to be harsh*, so that 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. Thus *extremism* is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In simple terms, an extremist is someone who lacks empathy, compassion, reason, and honour.

Racism is one example of extremism, with racism being a prejudice and antagonism toward people regarded as belonging to another 'race', as well as the immoral belief that some 'races' are better than or superior to others, and that what is termed 'race' defines and explains, or can define and explain, the behaviour and the character of the people considered to belong to some postulated 'race'.

[2] Homer, Iliad xiv, 259 - εἰ μὴ Νῦξ δμήτεια θεῶν ἐσάωσε καὶ ἀνδρῶν

[3] Sappho, Fragment 34 [Lobel and Page] -

Ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος,
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη
γᾶν [ἐπὶ πᾶσαν]
[...] ἀργυρία [...]

And What You Thought You Came For Is...

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 - Wyrð - 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 païen 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,

as when that warm late Summer's evening I chanced up that family, there, where a town's centre gave way to greenful Park and when, Sun descending, young mother helped her daughter light that paper lantern. Such joy, such joy, upon those faces, there, as slight breeze carried high perhaps some wistful wish, away.

As when before that walk in rainy woods alone I chanced to smile as dog with youthful lady, towed, came via pavement to pass this old man by. Such brief contact of courteous words exchanged, a smile returned, and off they went their way, their world, to leave only a glimpse, only a glimpse of futures-present-past - and her perfume, lingering, there. I - melded with tree, sky, soil, increasing rain - feeling such a burden of promise there. And there was nothing left to do but walk-on, hoping that someone might, did, treasure the goodness captured there, presenced within one more so mortal human life...

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.

David Myatt
August 2011 ce

Some Personal Perceiverations

Being, Death, Becoming

In the course of the past forty-five years or so of my adult life, I seem to have arrived at an unplanned destination so far removed and so different from where I started it is almost as if I have found not only another world but also another person. As if the I, the youthful self, who existed at the beginning of my journey, has vanished, died, to be mysteriously replaced by another being. For how did that young, that violent, that fanatical, that thuggish, that racist, neo-nazi become transformed into this aged man of the greying hair for whom the most important thing is a loyal love shared between two human beings and who now quietly, peacefully, preaches personal virtues such as empathy, gentleness, compassion, and *εὐταξία*, and who understands racism for the inhumanity it is?

No, it was not several terms of imprisonment for violence that led to the death of that egotistical arrogant self; nor even nearly two years as a Christian monk. Not even a year spent working in a hospital as a student nurse in those days, long-gone, when such training was mostly practical. Nor even being arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to murder with the prospect of years, possibly decades, in jail.

No, not that conversion to Islam and the almost eight years lived after that. Nor even the forthsithe of the first of two loved ones suddenly unexpectedly taken from me: her death no end then of that, my so selfish vainglorious self.

No, it was none of those, and similar things, in isolation. For that selfish self lived on. Slightly changed, but never changed enough. A self though increasingly divided and struggling within with certain moral dilemmas never divided enough, never struggling enough, since always always a fateful thread unwoven from abstractions began to

bind, repair, restore.

For decades, no satori, no enlightenment, engulfed, overwhelmed. No one moment, no one defining event, to change, transform one forever as understanding suddenly dawned. Instead, it was the steady accumulation of experience; the accumulation of personal mistakes, of personal folly year following year, of moral dilemma following moral dilemma; a slow learning - a very slow learning - drip drip dripping away at my surety, my arrogance, my beliefs, as sea-water surging drips away at seemingly stronger rock.

No, no satori - until a second forthsithing came to shock, shake, betake, me; her death a potion to that self but six warm Summers ago. But even then, the poisoned dying self lingered on: three more Winters until a new Spring burst forth with healing Sun so that his dying finally became his death and brought forth a new individual replete, complete, with sorrow.

Sorrow and Love

Following the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 ce, one of the first practical things I instinctively did - I was moved, felt almost compelled, to do - was travel to visit the nearest Catholic Church and, in remembrance of her, light a candle in the Lady Chapel before the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This instinctive heart-felt act following such a personal tragedy afterwards rather surprised me, an act perhaps brought forth by my upbringing as a Catholic and my time as a monk. Surprised me, for I was still then, nominally at least, a Muslim, and so in theory should have made dua to Allah or travelled to the nearest Mosque. Thus began an intense interior process of reflexion which was to last some three years, and which was to lead to me developing, refining, my philosophy of The Numinous Way and thus to turning away from the way of al-Islam, away from all causal abstractions.

Part of the personal understanding so developed was that, in respect of other spiritual ways, there was for me a tolerance, a respect; a knowing that my own answers are just my own fallible answers, and that, as I wrote last year:

"...any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the *raison d'être*, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of." *Soli Deo Gloria*

Furthermore:

Beȝ sume men bo þurȝut gode,
an þurȝut clene on hore mode,
ho[m] longeþ honne noþeles.
Þat boþ her, [w]o is hom þes:
vor þeȝ hi bon hom solue iborȝe,
hi ne soþ her nowiȝt bote sorwe.
Vor oþer men hi wepeþ sore,
an for hom biddeþ Cristes ore.

The Owl and The Nightingale, c. 1275 ce [1]

Though some men be thoroughly good
An thoroughly clean of heart
How longeth they nonetheless
They be not here
For though their soul be saved
They seeth nought but grieving here:
For they for men's sorrows weep
And for themself biddeth Christ have mercy

For there was, and remains, a deep sorrow within me; born from a knowing of inexcusable personal mistakes made, inexcusable suffering caused, of fortunities lost; a sorrow deepened by a knowing, a feeling, a learning, of how important, how human, a personal love is. Indeed, that love is the most important, the most human, the most numinous, virtue of all.

The Infortunity of Abstractions

The fateful sorrow-causing thread which ran through and which, for nearly four decades, bound and blighted my adult life is the thread of idealism born of the belief that in order to achieve some posited, imagined, 'ideal', generalized, and future, state of affairs, certain sacrifices have to be made by people in the present 'for the greater good' - sacrifices of their happiness, their love, even of their lives. And not sacrifices for one's self, one's loved ones, one's family - but 'for the greater good', with this 'greater good' being described, championed, by politicians, by 'statesmen', by leaders, by 'representatives of the people', or even in former times by potentates, religious leaders, and military commanders.

A 'greater good' variously described and named. For many, it is their 'nation'; for others, 'patriotic/religious/political duty'; for others, it is 'their people' or their 'race'. For others still, it is called 'freedom', or 'democracy', or 'justice' or even, in former times, 'destiny' or God or 'Empire'. The names change, are even sometimes interchangeable, but the thread of love-destroying idealism remains.

Thus, in the name of such things one justifies the use of deadly force and violence so that one goes to war, or supports war; or supports violent revolution. One kills, or supports killing. In the name of such things one justifies a war, an invasion, a revolution, violence, the killing of 'the enemy'. All in the hope that the world of tomorrow will be better than the world of today. A hope alive, kept alive, while thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions, of human beings are killed, injured, and suffer, century upon century, millennia after millennia.

For decades this idealism, this hope, such justification, that thread, gave life, vigour, to the selfish person I was: violent, inciting, propagandistic, fanatical, preacher of revolution, war. But now that thread has, wyrdfully, thankfully, been broken at the cost perhaps of a beautiful life, her death a constant painful reminder that, for me, such love-destroying idealism is:

"...fundamentally wrong and inhuman. That is, it is a manufactured abstraction, a great cause of suffering, and that nothing - no idealism, no cause, no ideal, no dogma, no perceived duty - is worth or justifies the suffering of any living-being, sentient or otherwise. That it is empathy, compassion and a personal love which are human, the essence of our humanity: not some abstract notion of duty; not some idealism. That it is the impersonal interference in the affairs of others - based on some cause, some belief, some dogma, some perceived duty, some ideology, some creed, some ideal, some manufactured abstraction - which causes and greatly contributes to suffering, and which moves us far away from empathy and compassion and thus diverts us from our humanity and from changing ourselves, in a quiet way, into a more evolved, a more empathic and more compassionate, human being." *A Change of Perspective* (2010 ce)

Now, all I - touched by sorrow - can do now is gently, quietly, reclusively, strive to capture, recapture, a little something of the world of love.

The moment of sublime knowing
As clouds part above the Bay
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain
Still falling:
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder
Have given way to blue
Such that the tide, turning,
Begins to break my vow of distance
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,
Splashes sea with sand until new interest
Takes him where
This bearded man of greying hair

No longer reeks
With sadness.
Instead:
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer
Presents again this Paradise of Earth
For I am only tears, falling [2]

David Myatt
February 2012 ce

[1] vv.879-886. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922. The attempted rendering into modern English is by DWM.

[2] *Dark Clouds of Thunder*, by DWM, 2010 ce.

Absque Vita Tali, Verbum Quoad Litteram Est Mortuum

Outside, rain and the un-warm wind of December, with no Sun - no Summer - to warm and bring that joy of wakeing to see the sky deep full of blue so that one smiling is eager still, as youth again, to egress forth toward the sea.

Now I in a rainy month - and approaching my three score and ten - possess both an internal and an external knowing of just what the passing of earthly Time doth to we fragile biological beings, for:

I am an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces

And yet the flow of Life flows on, here - there - when the outer husk, failing, dies, so that I reminded of what I pastly wrote to a friend, having now been so gifted with the gifts of one more solar year:

What, therefore, remains? What is there now, and what has there been? One genesis, and one ending, of one nexion whose perception by almost all others is now of one who lived and who wrote *ἐξ ἀνιγμάτων*.

τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν

ὁδοῦς
στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων
ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. [1]

For there does seem much worth now, a special new species of slowly-joy, to so and so shadowly wander, supported by a stick, since Time itself, unmeasured, stills and one is able to feel the numinous as if flows through, with, such presencings of Life as one meets, greets, passes. As when that other day I walked to wander - never now far from home - and that young unknown stocky man, girlfriend beside and smiling, bade me compliments of the season. Such life there, such potential there, in both, and one was glad to be alive, still, even if no Sun broke forth in warmth. Or glad as when in slow walk in woods nearby wind shook trees to breathe again one's wordless connexion with this living Earth, so strong so strong it became as if one could go back there to where one's loved ones lived, unbroken by such selfish deeds as might have saved them or at least made happier their so short time on Earth. And I was so happy, so happy there remembering those good times, shared, with them.

There has thus grown, within because of age, both a new knowing of how needful is our need for compassion and of a new if sad perception: of just how many many centuries we forgetful biological beings may need. But all I can do now is walk, remembering, hoping: my words, my dreams, a bridge.

For I am no enigma, my life bared by writings such as this. For words live on to tell just one more story, of redemption. But who will read them when life lives within this husk no more?

David Myatt
December 2011 CE

[1] Thus, he of great Age, his foliage drying up
And no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels,
Wanders - appearing a shadow in the light of day.

Aesch. Ag 79-82

cc David Myatt 2012

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