
A Personal Uncertainty of Knowing

The Bad of Extremists

For some forty years, from 1968 to around 2008, I as a fanatical idealist placed some ideal - some illusory, some believed in perfection - before people, hubristically believing (as fanatics and extremists always seem to do) that some ideology [1] and its attempted implementation was more important than personal love, than fairness, than compassion, than kindness, than tolerance, than empathy, than peace, than wu-wei.

Thus, as a fanatical idealist, I was so dissatisfied, so discontented, with the societies of the West - especially with the society I regarded as my homeland, the United Kingdom - that I actively sought to undermine and change them by political and revolutionary means, by incitement to disaffection and even by terror.

For the first thirty years of this discontent (1968-1998) my desire was to establish, in Britain, a neo-nazi - a racist - society, believing as I did in the superiority of 'the Aryan race' and enamoured as I was of National-Socialist Germany and of Hitler's struggle for power between 1919 and 1933. Thus the idealized, the romanticized, National-Socialism I believed in and the historically-inaccurate NS Germany I admired were my inspiration, and with the dedication and the hardness and harshness of a fanatic, an extremist, I joined several racist, fascist, neo-nazi, and paramilitary organizations; engaged in street brawls, wrote and distributed propaganda, gave vitriolic speeches; organized demonstrations, incited hatred and violence; founded two new neo-nazi groups; was imprisoned for violence and arrested nearly a dozen times for a variety of other criminal offences.

Between 1998 and 2008 - following my conversion to Islam - my activities were directed toward undermining the societies of the West (and especially those of Britain and America) and toward aiding Muslims fighting elsewhere - undertaking Jihad - for the establishment, in their lands, of Shariah as the only law.

During these forty extremist years I ranted and I railed against what I believed were 'the problems of the West', the 'decadence of the West', and propagandistically trumpeted the ideal type of society I believed in and thus considered was better than all existing societies. During my neo-nazi years, this ideal, this idealized, society was a new National-Socialist one, an ideal that I in perhaps some small way helped create through voluminous writings written during the 1990's with titles such as *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, *Why National-Socialism Is Not Racist*, and *The Complete Guide to the Aryan Way of Life*. During my jihadi-supporting years, this ideal, this idealized, society was one inspired by the Khilafah and was to be established in some Muslim land or lands by a return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah, and by Jihad 'against apostates, and the kuffar and their collaborators'.

The error here - the error I persisted in for some forty years - is the error of faulty, unbalanced, judgement, deriving from extremism and hubris; an error that leads to, that develops, that nurtures, bad individuals and thus leads to inhumanity, to violence, prejudice, anger, discontent, hatred, brutality, terrorism. An error caused both by the distorted view of people and of existing societies that extremist ideologies cause or at least encourage, and by some ideal, some ideology, being cherished more than human beings.

For the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people. Thus violence, prejudice, hatred, brutality, killing, and terror, are not judged by the moral criteria of how they affect and harm people but instead by whether they aid the goal - the implementation of the cherished ideal - or, worst of all, by whether they provide excitement and/or provide the individual with a sense of purpose, a 'destiny', a sense of being special, a 'hero' to their kindred extremists, or at least of being remembered.

In my own case, I justified what I did - my extremism - by appeals to the goal I ardently believed in and ardently desired, and thus ignored or overlooked or dismissed as unimportant the many benefits that Western societies provide and have provided, concentrating instead on the faults, the problems, of such societies, or on assumed faults and problems. In addition, and most importantly, I arrogantly felt I 'knew', that I 'understood' - that I, or my cherished beliefs, my ideology, were right; correct, the solution to all problems, personal and of society, and that these problems urgently needed to be dealt with. There was, therefore, a desire in me to interfere, to act, based on this arrogant misplaced feeling of having 'the right answers', of being right; of having 'seen the flaws' in society and/or in people.

In addition, my judgement derived from, was based on, was dependant upon, The Cause, the ideology; and so was unbalanced, bad, flawed. For The Cause, the ideology, gave meaning and set the boundaries, the limits, of knowing, of doing. For example, in the case of National-Socialism, there was the boundary of duty, which was "to promote National-Socialism [and] to strive to act in accord with Nature's will by preserving, defending and evolving one's own folk." [2]

There was the meaning of 'pursuing idealism/excellence/the will of Nature' over and above 'personal happiness' as well as the need to 'overthrow the existing System based on materialism' [3]. There was the knowing that 'race and Nature' defined us as human beings so that our most essential knowledge was to know our kind, our 'destiny', and the 'will of Nature', a will manifest, for example, in *kampf* and idealized in such abstractions as 'a new Reich', *Homo Galactica*, a Galactic Imperium, and so on and so forth.

The flawed judgement, the lack of critical balance - the lack of humanity - that resulted meant that I did not take individual responsibility for the harm I caused, I inflicted, I incited. Instead, I shifted the responsibility onto the ideology, thus justifying or trying to justify the consequences of my deeds, of my incitement, by appeals to the ideology ('the end justifies the means') and by the belief that the ideology needed to be urgently implemented 'for the good of the people', with 'the people' of course always being viewed abstractly (as a race or folk), being idealized or romanticized and divorced from, or more usually considered as being built from, the harsh consequences of striving to implement such a harsh ideology.

Therefore, it seems to me now that a reasonable illustration of extremism might be to liken it to some contagious disease, some sickness, or some ailment. One that alters not only the behaviour of individuals but also their perception, their thinking; how they perceive the world; and one that inclines them toward being bad and toward ignoring the good that already exists in society and the credit due to society for aiding such good. A disease or an ailment or a sickness that inclines them toward acting in an unbalanced and unethical manner, disruptive to other people and disruptive to society, and careless of, or indifferent to, the harm they do, the suffering they cause.

The Good of Society

The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right.

Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism. [4]

This truth about the good [5] in our current societies, so evident now, leads me to ask how could I not have seen it before? How can extremists, in general, not see, understand, appreciate, this truth? How can they - as I once did - seek to destroy that balance; destroy all that such societies, despite their flaws and their problems, have achieved? How can they ignore the good work of the plethora of individuals seeking to change those societies for the better in a reasoned and tolerant manner?

I can only, in truth, answer for myself, based on some years of introspection. As an extremist in thrall to an ideology and thus seeking to disrupt, change, to overthrow an existing society - to incite disaffection - I had no reason, no incentive, to emphasize the good that had and has been wrought by successive governments, by the introduction of laws, and by the people, such as the police and the security services, who in their majority tried from the best of motives to do and to uphold what was good by striving to counter and bring to justice those who were bad, those who in some way harmed or sought to harm others from whatever motive and for whatever reason.

Indeed, I was for the most part wilfully ignorant of this good, and when mention or experience of it could not be ignored for some reason, or might prove useful for propaganda purposes, what was good was almost always attributed to something which the parameters of the ideology allowed for. For instance, the good actions of an heroic policeman would be judged by the parameters of whether he was 'Aryan' - in which case 'the good' resulted from him being Aryan, having an Aryan nature - or whether those actions in some way, however small, helped 'us' and our Cause, as for example if the person in question had dealt with and caught 'black people' rioting or committing crimes. There was thus a biased, a blinkered, a prejudiced, a bigoted view of both events and people.

In my own case, and for example, I have some forty years experience of interaction with the police, from ordinary constables and detectives, to custody sergeants, to officers from specialist branches such as SO12, SO13, and crime squads. During that time, I have known far more good police officers than bad - corrupt - ones. Furthermore, I realized that most of those I came into contact with were good individuals, motivated by the best of intentions, who were trying to do their best, often under difficult circumstances, and often to help victims of dishonourable deeds, catch those responsible for such deeds, and/or prevent such deeds.

But what did I during my extremist years attribute their honourable motivation, their good character, to? Yes, of course - to them being 'Aryans' who just happened to be in the police force. Or, on one occasion, to having an 'Aryan nature'

(accorded honorary Aryan status) even though the officer in question was 'of mixed race'... Thus the ideology I adhered to, I believed in, set the parameters of my judgement; prompted the correct ideological response [6].

But in truth they, those officers, as one of them once said to me, were guided by what 'was laid down' and did not presume to or tried hard not to overstep their authority; guided as they were by the law, that accumulated received wisdom of what was and is good in society; a law which (at least in Britain and so far as I know) sought to embody a respect for what was fair and which concept of fairness was and always has been (again, at least in Britain and so far as I know) untainted, uncorrupted, by any political ideology.

Now I know, I understand, I appreciate, that for that reason - of so being mindful of the limits of their authority, of being guided by what had been laid down over decades - those people, those police officers, were far better individuals than the arrogant, the hubriatic, extremist I was; an arrogant extremist who by and for himself presumed 'to know' what was right, who presumed to understand, who presumed he possessed the ability, the authority, and the right to judge everyone and everything, and who because of such arrogance, such hubris, most certainly continued to contribute to the cycle of suffering, ignoring thus for so long as he in his unbalance did the wisdom that Aeschylus gave to us in *The Oresteia*.

Balance and The Uncertainty of Knowing

One error of unbalance and of hubris - and an error which is one of the foundations of extremism - is that of allowing or of encouraging some imagined, idealized, or posited, future to affect one's judgement, and/or to determine one's actions, and behaviour in the present.

Thus one becomes not only dissatisfied with what-is, but concerned with - if not to some extent obsessed with - what should-be or what might-be if what should-be (the goal or ideal of the extremist ideology) is not realized or not fought for. Furthermore, this assumed what-might-be is often the result of someone making some generalization or some prediction based on some ideology and which ideology, being an ideology - an abstraction - is founded on the simplicity of linear cause-and-effect and of problems/enemies having to be dealt with in order for some perfect future or some ideal or some victory to be achieved or brought-into-being. That is, what-might-be - and extremist action and incitement based upon it - requires a certainty of knowing.

This is one error I persisted in even after - as a result of *pathei-mathos* - I began to fully develop my philosophy of The Numinous Way with its emphasis on empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour. An error which, for example, led to me, for some two or more years, to eviscerate the abstraction of 'the clan' as some sort of embodiment of 'the numinous' and of honour and as an idealized means of manufacturing a new type of society as if such a future, such an assumed, hypothesized, society might offset some of the suffering in the world.

An error which the uncertainty of empathic knowing most certainly reveals. For empathy - the living, the numinous, way to know another living being - is a *sympatheia*, sans all ideations, with a living being in the immediacy-of-the-moment and involves an individualized proximity, and thus discovers only the knowing of that one living being as that living being is in that one moment, or those moments, of empathy. A discovery applicable to only that specific being and a knowing which some future empathic discovery in respect of that same being might change. For living beings are subject to change; their life is a flow, possessed of an a-causal living nature; and thus another encounter with that same living being may reveal it changed, altered - perhaps better, or matured - in some manner. Certainly, in respect of human beings, *pathei-mathos* is or can be a vector of interior change.

Thus, the faculty of empathy - over a succession of moments linked in causal time by a duration of days, weeks, or months - may intimate to us something about the character, the nature, the physis, of another person. A subsequent meeting with that individual - months, years, later - may intimate a change in that nature, possibly as a result of *pathei-mathos*.

There thus arises the knowing of the *wu-wei*, the humanity, of empathy; a knowing of the transient, the a-causal, nature of the living-knowing, the revealing, the a-causal knowledge, that empathy may provide, and hence the need not to judge, not to prejudge, some past or future living being (or even the same being once known) unknown to, or as yet untouched by, such empathy or by another empathic encounter. For certainty of knowing - presumed, assumed, or otherwise - is causal, fixed, or the result of some posited linear extrapolation of such a static causal knowing into the future or back into some past.

Extremism - of whatever type - depends on this certainty of knowing, past and future, and which certainty amounts to a tyranny against the flow of life; certainly there is a lack of empathy, as well as the imposition of and thence the cultivation of a rigid harshness within the psyche of the individual which at best displaces, or which can displace, the human capacity for *pathei-mathos*, and which at worst may remove the capacity for *pathei-mathos*.

The future certainty of this hubriatic knowing is the given and fixed goal or ideal; and the certainty of struggle being necessary to reach that future goal or make real that ideal. The past certainty is of a given idealized past and/or of past glories (if indeed they were glories). And the present certainty is that of identity - of 'we' being different from and better than 'them'. A certainty of identity and of assumed difference that gives rise to prejudice, hatred, intolerance, and all the other characteristics of the extremist.

Thus, for a neo-nazi or a racist, 'Aryans' (or 'Whites') are regarded as superior to 'blacks' and Jews, and the 'separation of the races' is regarded as the ideal goal. This superiority is a given, an affirmed, certainty, and regarded as fixed, past, present, future, and applicable to most if not all of the 'inferior' group or groups. There is thus no uncertainty of

knowing in the individual; no interior balance; no wu-wei; no empathic discovery of the character, the nature, the physis, of other individuals as individuals in the immediacy-of-the moment; no allowance made for change, even by pathē-mathos. There is only harshness; generalization, supposition, assumption; a rigid adherence; the arrogance of certainty, of 'knowing' some are superior/inferior, that there is black/white, Aryan/Jew; that separation is 'necessary' and desirable. A need for stasis, and/or the desire to inhumanly try to make living, changing, individual, human beings fit some static category and thence the prejudice and intolerance and hatred based on or resulting from such an assumed or idealized static category.

As I know from my own experience, the certitude of knowing and the certitude of identity that an ideology provides displaces personal love, fairness, compassion, kindness, tolerance, empathy, peace, and wu-wei; or at least assigns to them a far lower importance than hate, injustice, harshness, intolerance, prejudice, strife, and disaffection to society, to what-is. Such certitude, such a lack of the humanity of empathy, also provides us with a fixed, an - according to my pathē-mathos, my experience - incorrect, answer to an important question attributed to Aeschylus and asked over two thousand years ago, and which fixed incorrect answer encourages, breeds, plants, the τύραννος within us [7] - our hubris, our inner egoist - and which wrong answer encourages, which breeds, which plants, tyrannical societies as well as allowing such a τύραννος as Hitler to gain an abundance of followers obedient to his hubriatic will.

The important question is τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος [8]. And the fixed and the incorrect answer is always the same: some leader, some τύραννος, some sovereign, some ideology, some goal, some rigid identity, is there to guide us, to provide us with meaning, to justify our actions. To explain away or justify our lack of empathy, our lack of compassion, our intolerance, our suspicion, our hatred; our lack of wu-wei; and our lack of respect of the numinous, our lack of respect for other life, for human beings different from us. A wrong answer to explain our amnesia, our forgetting or ignorance of the wisdom of the past; a wisdom embodied in what - at least according to my admittedly fallible judgement, born from my pathē-mathos - is the correct answer given to that question asked thousands of years ago and which correct answer is in my view an excellent reply to extremism. An answer which embodies that uncertainty of knowing that is the essence of balance and which uncertainty the faculty of empathy makes us aware of. For the answer to preventing the extremism of hubris, to who guides us, who steers us, to whom we should look, and whom respect, is: Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [9].

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Notes

[1] I outline in the attached glossary what I mean by terms such as ideology.

[2] *The Meaning of National-Socialism* (dated 108yf, i.e. 1997)

[3] *ibid.*

[4] In my essay *Society, Social Reform, and The Numinous Way* (dated February 2012) I briefly touched upon 'a numinous approach' to social change and reform. Which was the apolitical, non-violent one of personal example, and of fostering, encouraging, the natural, slow, interior and personal change of individuals.

[5] The good is what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do.

[6] It was such experiences - personal and political - which eventually, after two and half decades, prompted me in the late 1990's to modify my ideology and thus develop what I termed non-racist 'ethical National-Socialism'. But even that did not alter my commitment to extremism, my extremist activities, and my desire to undermine and overthrow British society.

[7] ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον. 'Hubris plants the tyrant.' Sophocles: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, v. 872.

[8] "Who then compels to steer us?" Aeschylus [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515

[9] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 516

Glossary Of Selected Terms

Extremism

An extremist is considered to be 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, where by harsh is meant rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence 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 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.

Ideology

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

To instigate, or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

Politics

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.

Racism

Antagonism, prejudice, discrimination, or an intense dislike directed against an individual or individuals considered or assumed to be of a different race or of a different people, which feelings or behaviour or actions derive from the belief that one's own race or people are superior.

Radical Islam

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 radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah and are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar.

Society

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.

Wu-wei

Used to imply 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, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, wu-wei is the cultivation of a certain (empathic, 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 (the physis) of things/beings /ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.