

Live Encounters celebrates 7 years 2010-2016

# Live encounters

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**NATIONALISM**  
MARK ULYSEAS





### Nationalism and the Herd

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### The Future of the United States of America

Dr Howard Richards

Dr Richards is a philosopher of Social Science who worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He is Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College; PhD in Philosophy, University of California, Santa Barbara; Juris Doctor (J.D.) Stanford Law School: Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) Oxford University (UK): PhD in Educational Planning from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. He now teaches at the University of Santiago, Chile. Dr Richards is a Catholic, a member of Holy Trinity (Santisima Trinidad) parish in Limache, Chile, and a member of the third order of St. Francis, O.F.S.



### Indian Lobbying and its Influence in US Decision Making: Post-Cold War

Dr Ashok Sharma

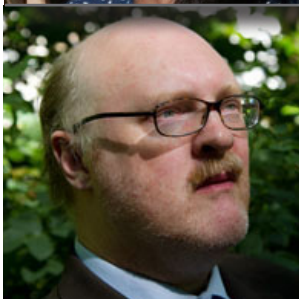
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### The Life of the Nation is a Daily Plebiscite

Cauvery Ganapathy

Cauvery Ganapathy is a Research Analyst of International Relations and Strategic Studies, with a focus on Energy Security. She has presented and published at various national and international forums as a Fellow of Global India Foundation. She has been a recipient of the Pavate Fellowship to the University of Cambridge as Visiting Research Faculty and a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Fellowship to the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently completing her PhD at Jadavpur University. As an intern at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, she has worked on the nuclear industry in India.



### A world of strange errors

David Morgan

David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter, occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications.



### Civil Society Resistance in Liberal Democracies in a Time of Rising Non-Accountability

Dr Cynthia Banham

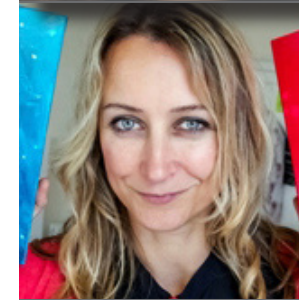
Dr Cynthia Banham is a University of Queensland Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of Political Science and International Studies. She is also a Visitor at the School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) at ANU. Her forthcoming book, *Liberal Democracies and the Torture of Their Citizens*, will be published by Hart Publishing in 2017.



### China is gearing up to conquer its final frontier: Outer Space

Dr Namrata Goswami

Dr. Namrata Goswami is one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building. She is currently an Independent Senior Analyst. Dr Goswami was formerly Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi where she specialized on ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution. She was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., She is a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Fellowship.



### Underwater Dream

Emma Barone

Emma Barone is a contemporary visual artist. She makes still life and landscape paintings in acrylic on canvas. She studied animation and has an eclectic design background that ranges from interior design to architectural ceramics, and from stained glass to jewellery design. Barone's work has been featured in various publications including The Irish Arts Review, Senior Times, House and Home, and the Sunday Independent. With 19 solo exhibitions under her belt, her work is in private and public collections throughout the world.



### Sea Fever

Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.



### The Salt Prints - II

Chaitanya Guttikar

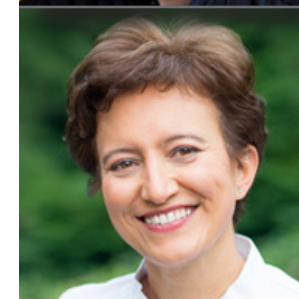
Chaitanya Guttikar became devoted to creating hand-crafted photographs while pursuing his doctorate in mathematics at Princeton. He first encountered alternative photographic processes in 2007 during a gallery visit in New York and fell in love. In May 2010, he left his professorial job at the University of Miami to return to India. He is now the director of the Goa Center for Alternative Photography (Goa-CAP).



### Myanmar: a cosmos to discover

Joo Peter

Aka Joachim Peter is a Visual artist and writer based in Southwest Germany, presently working on documentary & travel photography in Asia right. He loves to explore and combine all arts in his work. Joo has studied Arts; painting and graphics, worked for theatre (designing stage, costume and light), did some work for television and film, went into teaching. He writes essays and a blog in his native tongue, German, for he feels his language combines philosophy and humour.



### Chocolate Cake with a tickle of Red Pepper flakes

Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the "Turkish Chefs of the World", "Dünyanın Türk Seferi" TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.



# Nationalism and the Herd

What makes people behave like lobotomized folk when they rally around the flag of their country?

And when one adds religion, then country and religion become two sides of a coin - A potent amalgamation of delusions that is highly contagious.

We have lost our ability to reason in a crisis and instead resort to mindless chanting of slogans while waving our blood stained flags. Is this self-induced brainwashing alienating us from life itself, from the natural order of things, and driving us against the force of Nature onward to our extinction?

Those possessing the power to herd people together like cattle have successfully created their own niches in the form of countries, countries that barricade themselves with borders, checkpoints and religion. These powerful people project an illusion of greatness, while in fact they have feet of clay. But their mesmerized followers choose to ignore the obvious and prefer to accept the standard fare dished out by spin doctors whose sole objective is to turn the populace into dumbed down citizens with a herd mentality. They are winning. Look around and witness the controlled order in the chaos amidst the inhumanity and the rising tide of frenzied flag waving.

Why do we need to respect a flag and national anthem? And why does disrespect translate into one being called a traitor? Should such indignation in fact be directed at growing poverty, homelessness, physical/mental/sexual abuse, lack of education and rape of the environment? Or, are these man-made afflictions unimportant when it comes to flag and country? And does religion override these festering sores of humanity?

The theme song of nationalism, often spiced by religion, has morphed into a catchy advertising jingle. The brand name, colour coding and strategic media placing has colonised the sub-consciousness of the herd...a herd that is proliferating at an alarming rate. Often the herd is frightened into stampeding, destroying everything in its path. The mechanism used to frighten the herd is a non-existent internal or external threat often engineered for profit at the expense of innocent lives and the truth.

The warped understanding of the term *our values* is used as a weapon to drive out or destroy those who are alien to it and therefore viewed as a threat.

“National boundaries are not evident when we view the Earth from space. Fanatical ethnic or religious or national chauvinisms are a little difficult to maintain when we see our planet as a fragile blue crescent fading to become an inconspicuous point of light against the bastion and citadel of the stars.” - *Carl Sagan, Cosmos*

It matters little if the concerned herd has invaded, occupied and turned another's land into their own grazing ground.

It matters little if a herd descends on a land and displaces those living upon it for centuries, citing excerpts from a book as proof of previous ownership.

It matters little if a herd creates its own grazing ground and builds borders and hoists its flag... dividing a land in a bloody encounter, displacing millions and creating a permanent state of hostilities with another herd.

It matters little if the history of a herd has been creatively reinvented by self-appointed guardians with the sole intention of developing an exceptional brand of nationality.

It matters little if a herd anoints the founders of their herd as *Founding Fathers*. As if these 'Fathers' were the ones that fathered the herd.

It matters little if members of a herd commit mass murder on behalf of the herd for it is good to kill and/or die with honour not protecting one's country but annexing others or simply destroying the homes of innocent people for land and/or natural resources and/or for political purposes.

It matters little if the national anthem is sung with great pride above the cries of squabbling vultures feeding off corpses on a battlefield or those who are starving to death in the herd.

However, what does matter is the sanitised history of the herd, its religion and *our way of life* (whatever this means).

The rest is unimportant; like the sanctity of life, preservation of Nature and the adherence to one's Faith of peace, love, charity and forgiveness.

*Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om*



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DR HOWARD RICHARDS

## THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



What I most want to say is that social chaos and ecological disaster cannot be avoided without *transforming basic cultural and social structures*. Otherwise no economic policy will work. For structural reasons, all economic policies lead to unacceptable results. The reason why this is the case is that the basic social structure has unacceptable consequences, while the economy lives, and moves and has its being inside it. Operating inside the basic structure, the economy cannot, with any model or with any policy, reliably meet the needs of all the people in a sustainable harmony with nature.

Let me now relate these abstract concepts (whose meanings I will explain below) to today's politics. I believe the popularity of Donald Trump and Paul Ryan and their fellow believers in America First and in 18th century French natural rights philosophy and 20th century Austrian economics will soon suffer a precipitous decline. Although I personally agree with Trump on rapprochement with Russia and on anti-globalism, and I agree with Ryan that something must be done about the fiscal crisis of the state, I expect Trumpism to tank and Ryanism to recede regardless of whatever you or I may agree with or disagree with.

I regard these hypotheses as probably true: Progressives will succeed in loosening the establishment's grip on the Democratic Party. 2017 will bring disillusionment and misery. 2018 will bring a Democratic congress. Then, and starting now, the time will be ripe to *transform basic cultural and social structures*.

The American people already know from recent experience with Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama that the Democrats do not have good answers either. I will argue that not even the best and the brightest Democrats, and specifically not even Robert Reich<sup>1</sup> and Joseph Stiglitz<sup>2</sup>, have proposed solutions that will work without structural change. I do not mean that Reich and Stiglitz and Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and other voices of sanity are wrong. I mean that the best progressive proposals will only work *with* and *as* part of structural change.



## FUTURE OF THE US OF A

As history has turned out, in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the European peoples conquered the other peoples of the world. They turned the entire planet into one big market - in the process marginalizing innumerable indigenous basic cultural/social structures. In Immanuel Wallerstein's terms the European world-system became the modern world-system.

Since the phrase "social structure" is a contested concept<sup>3</sup> that is used in many ways, I begin by explaining how I use it. My point of departure is Chapter Four titled, "What ever happened to social structure?" in Douglas Porpora's new book *Reconstructing Sociology*.<sup>4</sup> After reviewing the main current uses of the phrase, Porpora endorses a critical realist definition: Social structure is material relations among social positions and social constructs.

Here the main point is that the social world with all of its rules and roles is material. When the law—a social construction—punishes alike the rich and the poor for sleeping under bridges and for stealing bread, or decides who is legally entitled to eat (those with money) and who is not entitled to eat (those without money) in a famine<sup>5</sup>, the bridges, the bread, and the human cells that die for lack of nourishment are material.

Although the social relations (like the relation of buyer to seller, or the relation of employer to employee), the social positions (like the position of owner), and the social constructs (like contracts) are constituted by cultural rules, the social structure thus constituted is material.<sup>6</sup> It cashes out on the ground as some eating and others not, some sleeping under dirty blankets on sidewalks while others sleep between clean sheets in beds, some living and others dying. Agreeing with Jürgen Habermas that in our contemporary world the primary institution is the market, and that governments are secondary to it,<sup>7</sup> I use the phrase "social structure" mainly to refer to the relations and positions established by the legal and moral rules that constitute markets. Those rules can be placed in these four categories that I call the four sides of "the box":<sup>8</sup>

1. Property, who owns what
2. Contracts, the rules of buying and selling
3. The autonomous juridical subject capable of owning property and making contracts
4. Prohibitions against intentionally harming other people. Without them there could be no markets because the strong would simply overpower others and take what they wanted.  
(But there is no affirmative duty to help people.)

Where there are such rules, there are markets; without them there are no markets. To the extent that such rules prevail, people are no longer in a traditional social structure where one's livelihood depends on mutual duties among kinfolk and clan folk, but in a modern social structure. In a modern social structure, one's livelihood depends on selling enough to get enough money to be able to meet one's needs by buying.



Suppose you know that the basic social structure is established by the constitutive rules<sup>9</sup> that organize market exchange (i.e. the box just outlined). You know that people sell for money and buy with money.

If you already know these things about the basic social structure, then you already can deduce basic economics: In this kind of society (our kind) in order to live people have to produce a product, or else sell their labor-power for wages to someone who produces a product,<sup>10</sup> or else position themselves to capture some of the surplus left over after the products have been sold and all the costs of production have been paid. I call this social structure "basic" because it governs meeting the basic necessities of life. Thus, for the Hopi people the basic cultural structure organizes the production and distribution of corn; for a pastoral people the basic cultural structure revolves around their herds. (I prefer the word "cultural" rather than "social" when speaking of non-modern societies, and I prefer it in some contexts even when speaking of modern societies.)

Once you know the basic rules of the game that organize livelihoods in a society you can deduce a great deal more about it. Concerning the United States and similar societies you can deduce two staggering never-to-be-forgotten facts:

1. Life depends on investor confidence. Meeting the basic needs of life depends on consumption, which depends on production, which depends (not entirely but mainly) on investment, which in turn depends on the expectation of profit, i.e. "confidence".
2. Life depends on selling. Meeting the basic needs of life depends on buying, which depends on selling something to generate the money needed to do the buying.

These staggering facts are not empirical findings of economists. They are sociological facts or historical facts more than they are economic facts. Sociologically, they are consequences of the basic social structure.

As historical facts, they are outcomes of long processes.

As history has turned out, in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the European peoples conquered the other peoples of the world. They turned the entire planet into one big market - in the process marginalizing innumerable indigenous basic cultural/social structures.<sup>11</sup> In Immanuel Wallerstein's terms the European world-system became the modern world-system.





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Schematically, we can represent key tendencies of history as stages in the evolution of markets. In the first stage, peasants brought their geese and cabbages to market-fairs to buy a fat pig, and then went home again jiggety-jig to salt it and save it for sustenance during long cold winters (selling in order to buy); and then as a second stage merchants went to market to buy grains in order to sell them again in the winter when the price of grain would be higher, or else in order to move them elsewhere to where the price of grain would be higher (buying in order to sell); and then entrepreneurs bought labor-power and other inputs in order to produce merchandise to sell (buying in order to produce in order to sell). And then financial calculations estimated from the get-go the net return from investing in order to produce in order to sell for profit (buying to turn money into more money). Since money turned into more money can then be thrown afresh into new and larger investments, it can accumulate as compound interest accumulates (capital accumulation). Increasingly in recent times, finance capital dominates productive capital, and often prefers the global casino to the real economy.<sup>12</sup> Money turns into more money without the intervening phase of producing goods and services<sup>13</sup> (capital accumulation divorced from the real economy). Adam Smith was among the first to observe that the accumulation of capital made possible the navies and armies that in turn made possible the European conquest of the rest of the world.

I want to suggest that it was not an accident that history has turned out as it has, nor has its outcome been mainly the result of the intentional actions of individuals and groups. There is a tendency to exaggerate the power of people, for example the power of the 1%. But the main power, i.e. the main cause moving history, is social structure. Once market exchange gets started, it is virtually inevitable that human life will come to depend on investor confidence and on selling. At the point where capital accumulation becomes the objective, then something like Alfred Marshall's law of substitution comes into play.<sup>14</sup> When a more effective and more efficient way to accumulate capital is found, it will tend to expand and grow and, correspondingly, older ways of profit-seeking will tend to shrink and decline.

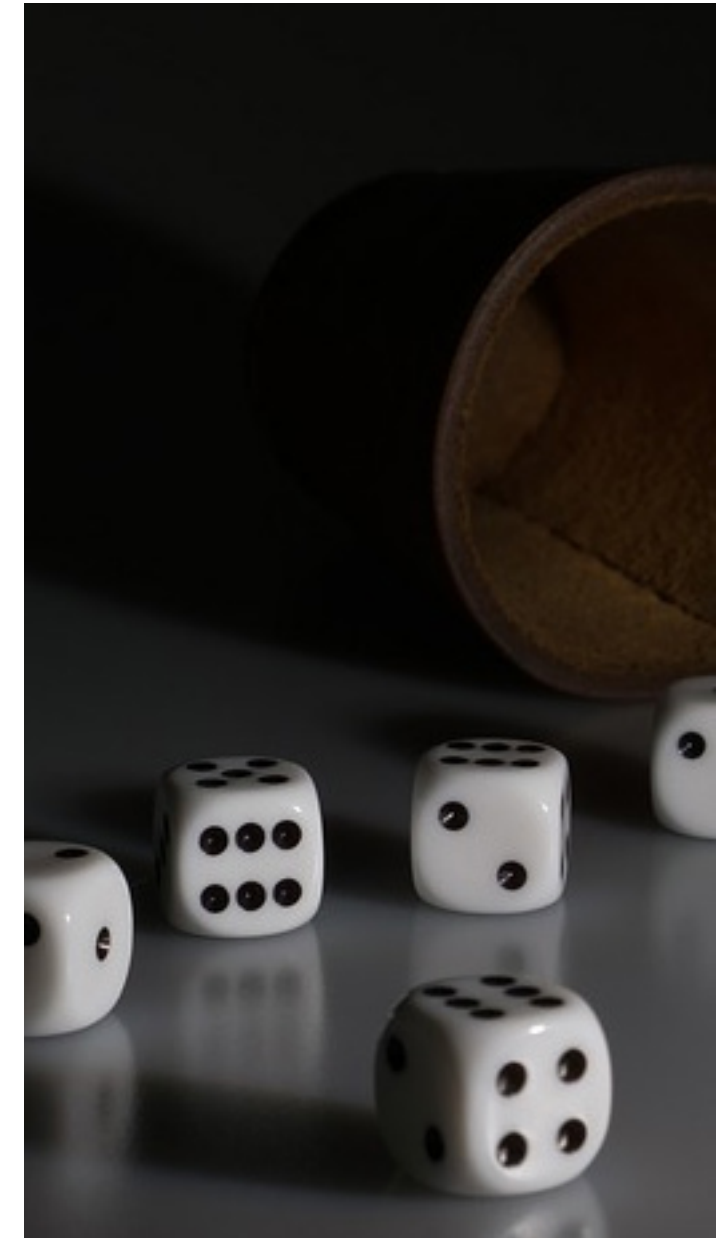
The full significance of these causes that push history step by step from Simple Simon selling pies on the way to the fair to Lehman Brothers selling derivatives on the way to the crash, cannot be understood without considering two corollaries of the two Staggering Facts. The corollaries –like the Staggering Facts themselves—are consequences of the basic social structure. They are:

1A. There is a chronic insufficiency of inducement to invest.<sup>15</sup> It is not only the case that the bread and butter of the people, their employment and their dignity, depend on the confidence of investors. It is also the case that investor confidence perpetually flags, lags, and threatens to collapse. For example, in the USA today “inner city” denotes “a place where there is little or no inducement to invest.”

Increasingly in recent times, finance capital dominates productive capital, and often prefers the global casino to the real economy. Money turns into more money without the intervening phase of producing goods and services (capital accumulation divorced from the real economy). Adam Smith was among the first to observe that the accumulation of capital made possible the navies and armies that in turn made possible the European conquest of the rest of the world.

2A. There is a chronic insufficiency of effective demand. This is no small matter because profits depend on sales, while investment, and therefore output and employment, depend on expectations of profit. Putting 1 and 2 together with 1A and 2A yields a double whammy. Life depends on investments and on sales. Both are fragile and tend to fail. For those who cannot think outside the box, whenever the machine stalls, as it did in 2008, the motive to do whatever it takes to crank up the stalled old machine and make it go again, could not be stronger. “Whatever it takes” includes bailouts, zero or near zero interest rates, quantitative easing, astronomical public and private debt and so on. In general, the chronic insufficiency of effective demand implies that cash sales are never enough; the world must run on credit and ever more credit. Ever higher mountains of unpayable debt are also consequences of the social structure.

Some see 1A (lagging investment) and 2A (lagging sales) as truths discovered by Thomas Malthus, and then operative in economic reality but swept under the rug by economic theory until they were rediscovered a century after Malthus by John Maynard Keynes; and then in the capitalist revolution that began on or about September 11, 1973, they were once again<sup>16</sup> swept under the theoretical rug by Chicago economics and similar bogus pseudo-sciences.<sup>17</sup> Like a repressed trauma simmering away in a Freudian unconscious, 1A and 2A (the weakness of the inducement to invest and the weakness of effective demand) continued throughout the eighties and the nineties to act at levels of reality invisible to mainstream economics.



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For Joseph Stiglitz, a central message of his latest book is that “..the level of inequality of America is not inevitable; it is not the result of inexorable laws of economics. It is a matter of policies and politics.”

Then (some say) what politically dominant but scientifically bogus economics swept under the rug exploded into full view in 2008.<sup>18</sup>

The above is what “some say.” My view is slightly different. 1A and 2A are consequences of 1, 2, 3, and 4. Malthus and Keynes noticed the tip of the iceberg, not the whole iceberg, not the social structure. I hope these numbers are not too confusing. 1A means too few investors. 1B means too few buyers. Both are consequences of basic social structure, i.e. the box. The box is 1 2 3 4. 1 is property. 2 is contract. 3 is the individual autonomous juridical subject. 4 is the duty not to harm others with the conspicuous absence of a duty to help others.

The basic social structure also might be summarized in three words as “liberty without solidarity.” (Thinking, as Milton Friedman and similar thinkers often do,<sup>19</sup> of 1 2 3 and 4 as four aspects of the one idea of liberty, also called freedom). In five words the basic social structure is “liberty without equality and fraternity.”

Once again, the corollary Staggering Facts are not so much economic facts as facts about the basic cultural and social structure. The basic rules of the game of life already provide as a matter of law, as a matter of morals, as a matter of custom, and as a matter of conventional common-sense, that although everybody is expected to earn a living by selling something, nobody has a duty to buy. Although people need jobs, there will almost always be more job-seekers than job-offers.



<https://pixabay.com/en/> New York 1890



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Reliably meeting human needs in harmony with the natural environment is not even the objective. It is not likely to be achieved. From the moment when the game of life is constituted as the buy-and-sell-game, the double whammy begins to operate. The double whammy –i.e. everybody’s bread and butter physically depends on keeping investor confidence strong, while investor confidence is perpetually shaky because sales are perpetually shaky-- has made it inevitable, or nearly so, that history would turn out as it has in fact turned out.<sup>20</sup>

Insufficient appreciation of the force of the double whammy explains why Robert Reich, when interviewed on television shortly after the 2016 election,<sup>21</sup> could declare himself unable to comprehend why the president-elect had chosen as head of the Environmental Protection Agency someone who does not believe in global warming, as Secretary of Education someone who does not believe in public education, and as Secretary of Labor someone who does not approve of the labor laws he is supposed to administer. Reich described their thinking as “neolithic.”

But the double whammy is not neolithic. Capital accumulation is the motor that drives the economy now in the 21st century. It is a perpetually defective motor. It tends to stall. It is not simply a matter of the greed of the capitalists outweighing the needs of the people because the capitalists buy the politicians. No. It is worse than that. It is a matter, ceteris paribus, of the poor not eating, and the government not having any streams of income to tax, unless the rich have confidence that their investments will be profitable. More often than not (here comes the double part of the whammy), there are reasons to fear that if investment (“growth”) does not improve quickly, the tendency to low confidence coming from the chronic insufficiency of effective demand will breed even lower confidence in a negative feedback loop spiraling downward into depression. Therefore, when profits can be made by mining dirty coal, or by making schools even more closed to critical thinking than they already are, or by breaking unions, there are unrelenting temptations to sin. All this is built into the social structure, and will not change until the structure changes. Reich was amazed when he should have been unsurprised.

For Joseph Stiglitz, a central message of his latest book is that “..the level of inequality of America is not inevitable; it is not the result of inexorable laws of economics. It is a matter of policies and politics.”<sup>22</sup> Robert Reich could have written identical words. Reich chronicles an endless parade of foolish policies that according to him (and to Stiglitz) could be reversed by intelligent legislators elected by intelligent voters. One example Reich gives is colloquially called the Mickey Mouse Act of 2003.<sup>23</sup> Mickey Mouse was created in 1928. The U.S. Constitution provided for giving artists exclusive rights to their creations for a “limited time,” originally set by Congress at 14 years.



## FUTURE OF THE USOFA



Image used by many criticizing Disney and the Act [LINK](#)

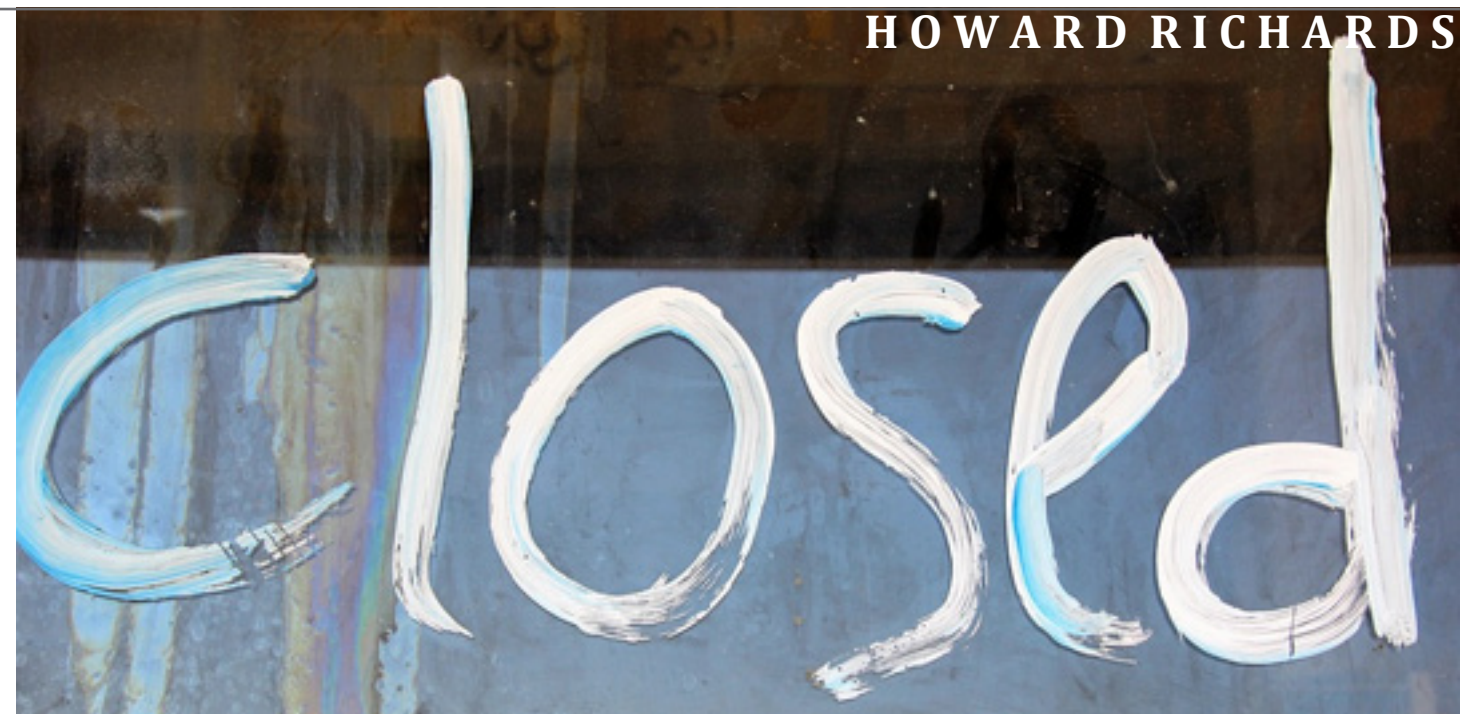
Now corporate owners of intellectual property have exclusive rights for 75 years. After the Mickey Mouse Act the Disney Corporation can exact payment from anyone who uses Mickey's name or image until 2023, for a total of 95 years. Even that deadline is expected to be extended. The parade goes on. Reich's book is packed with examples of foolish laws that sacrifice the public welfare, the environment, social justice and whatever else to one *sine que non*: profit.

I have said perhaps enough about why in the United States (and by implication also in other countries) social chaos and ecological disaster cannot be avoided without the transformation of basic cultural and social structures. I have explained that the physical welfare and the sense of self-worth of the people depend too much on an unreliable economic motor with built-in tendencies toward social chaos and ecological disaster. This excessive dependency is a consequence of a basic social structure that has evolved to become today's global capitalism starting from foundations laid long ago in Roman antiquity and in early modern Europe. Now I need to say something about why social chaos and ecological disaster *can* be avoided *with* the transformation of basic cultural and social structures. When guided by thinking outside the box, humanity can reorganize itself to remove itself from the endangered species list.

Today there are many proposals for "structural" changes of one kind or another. My structural proposal is to reduce human dependence on the capitalist sector (defined as the part of the private sector that invests accumulated capital for the purpose of accumulating more capital) by strengthening *desirable* non-capitalist sectors. It is to cut capitalism down to size by making it a smaller part of the total economy, to make it governable while still enjoying its benefits. (The qualification "desirable" excludes, for example, the criminal sector.) Among the structural change proposals already on the table mine comes closest to Latin American and European *economia solidaria*, which has roots in the social teachings of the Roman Catholic church; and to the proposals of Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum and Jean Dreze. It is not intended as a condemnation of traditional democratic socialism or social democracy but as a way to revive them by making them feasible. Its name is "unbounded organization."

Capital accumulation, and therefore (by definition, or rather by one definition<sup>24</sup>, capitalism) is not in itself a bad thing. It is quite necessary, although it is not necessary that it be concentrated in a few private hands. Without it there is no surplus to redistribute. There is no possibility of financing big projects, including the biggest project of all: retooling humanity with green technologies that do more with less. Way back in 1873, Walter Bagehot, in a book explaining how the high finance of the City of London worked, wrote that from that time forward no worthy project, be it a port or a railway or some other, anywhere in the world, need fail for lack of capital.<sup>25</sup> The banking system was

## HOWARD RICHARDS



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capable of pooling savings and creating credit to raise any required sum. What Bagehot had in mind was a project able to repay a loan at a rate of interest profitable for a bank; but worthy unprofitable projects also require capital accumulation. If Andrew Carnegie had not accumulated capital, there would be no Carnegie libraries and no Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.<sup>26</sup>

The problem is not that capital accumulation happens. The problem is that it tends to control everything else, at the same time that it is unreliable. Its normal tendency is to maximize profits by minimizing costs, and that means minimizing wages, minimizing employment, and minimizing taxes. Capitalist firms *can* provide quality employment, pay good wages and contribute their fair share of taxes. Some do. Creating a society where the only capitalist firms that exist are like today's best firms requires social and cultural transformation.

The kind of transformation of the basic social and cultural structure that is required is a transformation that would make society governable. If and when the required transformation is achieved, fear of capital flight, layoffs, plant closings, disinvestment and so on; will no longer deter people from cooperating intelligently to do what needs to be done to achieve the social integration of released offenders, meaningful livelihoods for everybody with nobody left sleeping on the sidewalk, levels of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere below 350 ppm, and so on. Such a transformation will build an economy that keeps running even when the big investors do not invest. Without the transformation (i.e. now) they put the brakes on the economy whenever they no longer have confidence that investment will be profitable. Or (as happened in Chile in 1973 and is happening in Venezuela now) they may torpedo the economy deliberately to create an economic crisis for the purpose of bringing down the government.<sup>27</sup>

Amartya Sen writes of the "... mean streets and stunted lives that capitalism can generate, unless it is restrained and supplemented by other-- often nonmarket-- institutions."<sup>28</sup> It is necessary to emphasize Sen's word "supplemented." Restraint is not enough. When capital is restrained, for example, by requiring a minimum wage or by forbidding the release of PPCPs into groundwater, capital still has the options of shutting up shop or moving elsewhere. It can still exercise what Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis call "the exit power of capital."<sup>29</sup> The transformation of the social structure that is required is one that neutralizes exit power by making sure other ways to meet human needs can swing into action and fill the breach when one or more of the standard ways fail. That is why "supplemented" should be emphasized along with "restrained." The long list of alternative ways to meet human needs, like the somewhat shorter but still long list of ways to meet human needs in harmony with nature, has no end.





Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among the guests behind him is Martin Luther King, Jr. [LINK](#)

It is a motley list. Some items on it are more independent of capital accumulation than others. It is a list that grows as social innovations come on line. It includes volunteer fire departments and families that function as an economic unit and run motels together, backyard gardens and urban rooftop gardens and community supported agriculture, permaculture, dentists in private practice, longshoremen who load and unload ships as a worker-owned cooperative, mutual insurance companies owned by the insured, municipally owned electric power companies, the State Bank of North Dakota, symphony orchestras funded by music lovers, feminist collectives who share housing and cooking and child care, as well as autonomous public entities like the Port Authority of New York, and as well as churches that derive an income from owning apartment buildings and use the money to serve the poor, and indigenous peoples who still live in tribal communities and still practice their traditional ways of doing things, ... The list has no end. Think unbounded organization.

I mention specially two kinds of non-capitalism that at first glance might be left off the list because they might seem to be capitalism. One is the mile upon mile of little businesses you see driving through a big city. It should not be assumed that just because they are businesses they are accumulating capital; many of their owners earn less than they would earn working for wages. A second non-obvious non-capitalism is found in the behavior of capitalists themselves when they choose not to pursue single-mindedly the goal of enjoying on their deathbeds the satisfaction of having piled up the maximum amount of money they could possibly have piled up.

There is no unbreakable psychological law that compels capitalists to act like capitalists. If Bill and Melinda Gates decide to spend a billion dollars to cure the children of Asia of diseases, instead of investing it at compound interest until it turns into two billion dollars, who is to stop them? If Mark Zuckerberg and his partner Priscilla Chan decide to spend their money while they are alive contributing to building a better world, and not to found a dynasty by leaving fortunes to their children, who is to stop them?

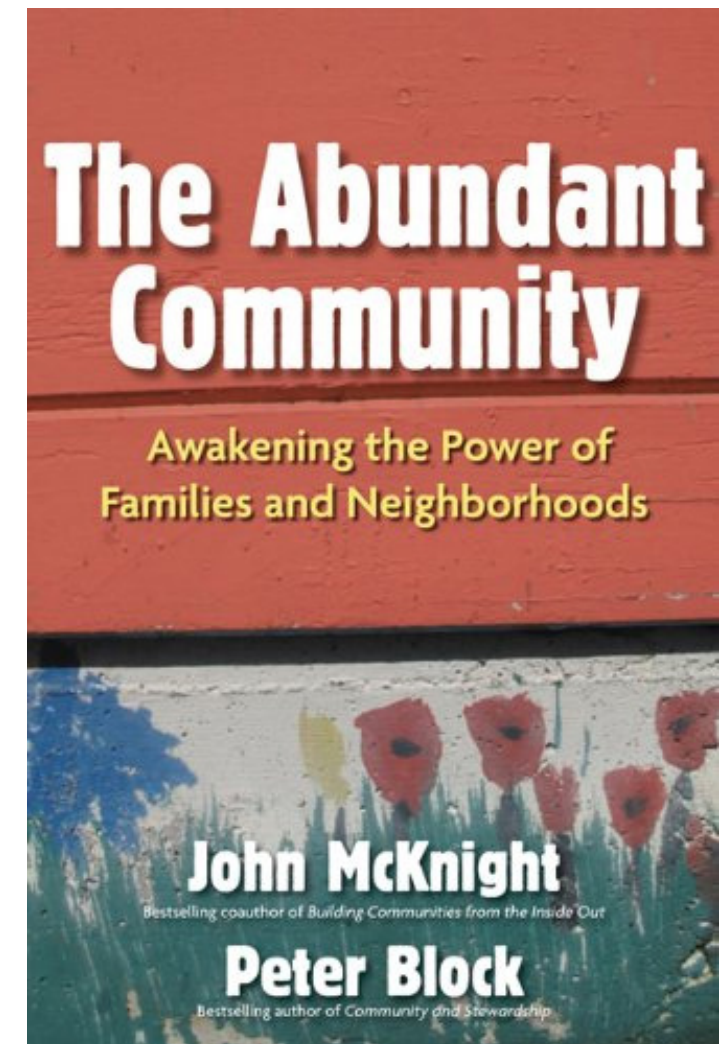
Let us agree with Bernie Sanders that the young people who voted for him represent the future of the Democratic Party and the future of the United States of America. Let us further agree with him that to compete successfully with the Republican Party at all levels, and to renew itself with progressive ideas and progressive leadership, the Democratic Party must become a participatory grassroots organization with numerous active members in every nook and cranny of the nation. It would then remain to ask what the numerous young progressive activists who are breathing new life into the Democratic Party will talk about when they meet from Bangor to San Diego in church basements, in union halls, and in the cafeterias of community colleges. What will they do?

“Community” is a word that puts “freedom” in perspective as one value among others; it is a word that suggests defining freedom as Martin Luther King Jr. defined it (as a call to moral responsibility) and as Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen define it (as capability to do things).

I have a specific suggestion, or, rather, a specific idea about a general area to consider working in. The grassroots Democrats should consider working to improve their local neighborhoods and communities. Make them more self-reliant, more neighborly, more like real communities and not merely locations where separate individuals happen to be spending the same time in the same space. You can read about community-building at [www.abundantcommunity.com](http://www.abundantcommunity.com). That website gives many examples of good things already happening in town after town, city after city. It is as if people all over this land have already sensed by intuition that community is the way to go.

The community approach has several advantages. It gives people a reason to come to the meetings. The meetings are not just about whom to campaign for in the next election. They are about being sure Tillie, the elderly woman who lives alone in the house on the corner, will have someone to drive her to the hospital if she has another attack. The meetings are about people becoming more secure and happier here and now.

Another advantage is that community is a good talking point when running for the School Board against the local Tea Party candidate. “Community” is a word that puts “freedom” in perspective as one value among others; it is a word that suggests defining freedom as Martin Luther King Jr. defined it (as a call to moral responsibility)<sup>30</sup> and as Martha Nussbaum<sup>31</sup> and Amartya Sen define it (as capability to do things).



The consumer society tells us that we are insufficient and that we must purchase what we need from specialists and systems outside the community. We have become consumers and clients, not citizens and neighbors. John McKnight and Peter Block show that we have the capacity to find real and sustainable satisfaction right in our neighborhood and community.



In the second century after Christ the Romans needed a Great Simplification. Like the British in the nineteenth century, the Romans in the second century found that they could not trade or govern in a vast diverse empire without imposing some simplicity on it. Roman Law, and especially the *jus gentium* that applied alike to Roman citizens and to non-citizens, was a Great Simplification, and by the same token it was an eclipse of community. The empire was an overwhelming military force interested in collecting tribute and in protecting merchants, but not interested in how its component ethnic groups gave meaning to their lives and exchanged matter and energy with the physical environment.

Seen in historical perspective, community-building is a way (not the only way) to *transform the basic cultural and social structures*. Building community is part and parcel of people becoming less isolated and therefore less defenseless; and therefore, it is part and parcel of building a social structure that will reliably meet human needs even when the confidence of investors plummets.<sup>32</sup> Let me say a little more about how the social structure that now both blesses and oppresses humanity was built.<sup>33</sup> Already in the second century after Christ the Romans needed a Great Simplification. Like the British in the nineteenth century, the Romans in the second century found that they could not trade or govern in a vast diverse empire without imposing some simplicity on it. Roman Law, and especially the *jus gentium* that applied alike to Roman citizens and to non-citizens, was a Great Simplification, and by the same token it was an eclipse of community. The empire was an overwhelming military force interested in collecting tribute and in protecting merchants, but not interested in how its component ethnic groups gave meaning to their lives and exchanged matter and energy with the physical environment. The law abstracted from the empire's multicultural diversity with its wealth of languages, spiritual and material practices, moral codes, kinship and marriage obligations, patterns of mutual obligations, ceremonies, rituals, and stories.<sup>34</sup> Simplifying for the sake of commerce and for the sake of public administration, it classified certain rules as "natural." The word "natural" meant "the same everywhere." In practice, "everywhere" meant "wherever Rome rules."



<https://pixabay.com/en/>

As of 2017, I think I perceive shining through the storm clouds a growing minority doing a culture shift toward a fundamentally different basic structure: toward sharing more with others and toward falling in love with Mother Earth. Score one for hope. Call it a growth point. But what about the fiscal crisis of the state? And the global race to the bottom? And the warfare state? Are these consequences of the basic social structure not cementing the system into place while we granola types are enjoying life in the counter culture?

Fast forwarding past the Middle Ages, a millennium and a half later, in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the successor states of the Roman Empire were constructing the cultural and social structures of modernity. For their Great Simplification, they "received" the ideal of rule of law that antiquity had bequeathed them, but only to encounter another obstacle to modernization. Living in a Europe (formerly known as "Christendom") dotted with great cathedrals, the modernizers had to achieve a certain distance from God. God had then and still has today the inconvenient trait of telling people what to do. ("Islam" means "submission" or "submission of desires to the will of God.") It was impossible to build a social and cultural structure around market exchange while God was constantly butting in commanding people to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, bury the dead, shelter the traveler, comfort the sick, and ransom the captive.<sup>35</sup> Enlightenment minds like Jean-Jacques Rousseau rose to the occasion by substituting "Nature" for "God."<sup>36</sup> What Nature commanded was first and foremost what Roman Law said was natural, which was in turn first and foremost the constitutive rules of markets. Although the idea that Nature had decreed *laissez faire* economics framed by a social contract guaranteeing pre-existing natural rights, encountered much opposition in France and in England with their long and complex intellectual traditions, it encountered little opposition in the new United States of America. As has been outlined above, once such ideas and their corresponding institutions are in place it becomes inevitable, or nearly so, that the physical welfare of the people will come to depend on an always precarious confidence of investors. It was not the 1% who created the double whammy to serve their own interests, and it was not created during Ronald Reagan's presidency in the 1980s. The double whammy was created by history; its roots go back at least to an eclipse of community in the second century; and it does not serve anybody's interests.

As of 2017, I think I perceive shining through the storm clouds a growing minority doing a culture shift toward a fundamentally different basic structure: toward sharing more with others and toward falling in love with Mother Earth. Score one for hope. Call it a growth point. But what about the fiscal crisis of the state? And the global race to the bottom? And the warfare state? Are these consequences of the basic social structure not cementing the system into place while we granola types are enjoying life in the counter culture? I refrain from suggesting answers to these questions here because this note is already too long. I am aware that to some it might seem too short, to promise more than it delivers, or even to stop where it should begin. I have offered answers to the questions just posed in other writings that are included below in a list of suggested further readings.

Goodbye for now.



Further Readings

01. Howard Richards, “The Impossibility of Politics,” 2016, available on Google. This essay includes a series of “trimtabs” for transforming the basic social and cultural structures of the modern world, including coping with the global race to the bottom and the fiscal crisis of the state.

02. Joseph Stiglitz et al, “Rewriting the Rules of the American Economy.” New York: Roosevelt Institute, 2015, available on Google. In this and other writings Stiglitz makes important distinctions between profits with social functions and rents, paving the way for alleviating the fiscal crisis of the state through the effective capture of rents.

03. Riane Eisler, *The Real Wealth of Nations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler, 2007. Eisler proposes partnership as a basic structural principle and caring as a basic value.

04. Evelin Lindner, *A Dignity Economy*. Lake Oswego OR: Dignity Press, 2013. The author is a leading researcher on the psychology of dignity and humiliation who brings findings from contemporary psychology to bear on social transformation.

05. Michael Porter and Mark Kramer, “Creating Shared Value,” *Harvard Business Review*. 2011. Pp. 499-513. The authors argue that profit per se can no longer be considered the goal of business.

06. Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger, *The Dilemmas of Social Democracies*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006. This book introduces the concept of “cultural resources” defined as existing capacities to cooperate to meet needs in harmony with nature.

07. Gavin Andersson and Howard Richards, *Unbounded Organizing in Community*. Lake Oswego, OR: Dignity Press, 2015. A step by step guide to community building drawing on experience in South Africa, Botswana, and California.

08. Howard Richards, *Understanding the Global Economy*. Santa Barbara CA: Peace Education Books, 2004, available as a Google Book. This book shows how causal explanation in economics draws on the basic cultural structure for its premises. There is an appendix on peacebuilding that considers aspects of the warfare state.

09. Howard Richards, *Letters from Quebec*. San Francisco and London: International Scholars Press, 1995. Chapters 26 through 50 are subtitled “Methods for Transforming the Basic Structures of the Modern World.”

Foot Notes

01. Robert Reich, *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, not the Few*. New York: Knopf, 2015.

02. Joseph Stiglitz, *The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them*. New York: Norton, 2015.

03. W. B. Gallie, “Essentially Contested Concepts,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. New Series, Vol. 56 (1955 - 1956), pp. 167-198.

04. Douglas Porpora, *Reconstructing Sociology: The Critical Realist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

05. Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

06. Douglas Porpora, “Cultural Rules and Material Relations,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. Volume 37 (1993) pp 463-477

07. Jürgen Habermas, *The Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.

08. These four categories roughly track the Latin legal maxims *suum cuique tribuere*, *pacta sunt servanda*, *honeste vivere*, and *alterum non laedere*; and the four volumes of William Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England. Blackstone’s *Commentaries* was the legal text read by the founding fathers who wrote the United States Constitution.

09. Constitutive rules create social reality, as distinct from regulating a pre-existing social reality. For John Searle, all social reality is created by constitutive rules of the form x counts as y in context c. Constitutive rules give brute facts the social status of institutional facts. For example, x, certain bits of paper and certain magnetic traces on the computers of banks, count as y, money, in the context of the modern United States and whoever trades with it. The social status of the brute facts depends on general acceptance, and only lasts as long as the general acceptance lasts. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

10. In standard economics “production” by definition is production for sale. Thus, Adam Smith *Wealth of Nations*. Book Two, chapter three. Thus, John Maynard Keynes: “All production is for the sake of ultimately satisfying a consumer.” *General Theory*, p. 46.

11. Catherine Hoppers and Howard Richards, *Rethinking Thinking*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2012; Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. London: Zed Books, 1986.

12. This sketch of historical tendencies generally follows the logical sequence of forms of value sketched by Marx in the first volume of *Capital*. Fernand Braudel’s careful studies find, however, that the birth of capitalism was more a matter of large-scale financial and commercial transactions of which ordinary people were not aware transforming everyday life, than a matter of everyday life gradually evolving into global capitalism.

13. Michael Hudson, From Marx to Goldman-Sachs. michael-hudson.com/.../from-marx-to-goldman-sachs-the-fictions-of-fictional-capital..

14. Marshall’s original concept was that when a less expensive (and therefore more profitable) method is found, producers will substitute the less expensive method for the more expensive method. On his own account, Marshall refers constantly to this law. *Principles of Economics*. London: Macmillan, first edition 1890, last edition 1920.

15. *Keynes op cit p. 381 and passim*.

16. Fredric Jameson has famously remarked that the sixties ended on September 11, 1973, with the US-engineered coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende and imposed a ruthless dictatorship hell bent on putting neoliberal economic theories into practice.

17. For example, by Milton Friedman in his arguments that low taxes, downwardly flexible wages, and minimal government intervention in the economy, plus a monetary policy putting just enough money into circulation to serve the real economy but no more, would lead to economic stability and steady growth. *A Program for Monetary Stability*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1983. The story of how such bogus pseudo-science came to dominate the world is told by Richard Crockett in *Thinking the Unthinkable*. London: Fontana Press, 1995.

18. Paul Krugman, *The Return of Depression Economics*. New York: Norton, 2009.

19. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. In Chapter One individual freedom is identified as the principle to be applied in the rest of the book.

20. There was a time after World War II when it was widely believed that Swedish Model social democracy was destined to be the future of humanity. That social democracy not only failed but necessarily had to fail because of the basic cultural structure it collided with but was unable to transform is a thesis argued in Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger, *The Dilemmas of Social Democracies*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

21. On CNN in December of 2016. I do not remember the date.

22. Stiglitz, op. cit. Location 185 of the Kindle edition.

23. Reich, op. cit. Location 607 of the Kindle edition.

24. The word “capitalism” was coined by Karl Marx. By identifying capitalism with capital accumulation I am using one of at least three definitions of it that can be found in his works.

25. Walter Bagehot, *Lombard Street: A Description of the Money Market*. London: Henry S. King, 1873. “We have entirely lost the idea that any undertaking likely to pay, and seen to be likely, can perish for want of money.” From Chapter One.

26. Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth*. New York: Century, 1900. Carnegie believed that the inheritance of large fortunes should be heavily taxed. See also Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*. New York: Paulist Press, 2002.

27. Similarly, Jose Luis Coraggio has proposed building the people’s economic self-sufficiency by building popular economic institutions in response to the neoliberal program of the current president of Argentina, Mauricio Macri. <http://repensar.cl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Propuesta-de-Coraggio-14-Nov-2016.pdf>

28. Amartya Sen, “Sraffa, Wittgenstein, and Gramsci,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 41 (2003), pp. 1240-1255, p. 1247.

29. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

30. Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love. New York: Harper and Row, 1963; *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

31. Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2011.

32. José Luis Coraggio has suggested that the solidarity of neighbors helping neighbors and of workers associating to work cooperatively when the Argentine economy collapsed in 2001 can be the germ of a strategy for transforming the economy even when it is not collapsed. *De la Emergencia a la Estrategia*. Buenos Aires: Espacio Editores, 2004.

33. That weakening community was part and parcel of the rise of modernity is a standard thesis of the classics of sociology that is most explicit in Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 (1887). It is also developed one way or another by Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Georg Simmel.

34. Roman Law is discussed in greater detail in Catherine Hoppers and Howard Richards, *Rethinking Thinking*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2012. Chapter Four.

35. These are the traditional Seven Works of Mercy. They roughly follow Matthew 25: 31-46.

36. A comparison of two great books on education, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius and *Emile* by Rousseau will show that wherever Ignatius wrote “God” Rousseau wrote “Nature.”





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# INDIAN LOBBYING AND ITS INFLUENCE IN US DECISION MAKING

## POST-COLD WAR

ASHOK  
SHARMA

## Indian Lobbying and its Influence in US Decision Making: Post-Cold War

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This book *Indian Lobbying and its Influence in US Decision Making: Post-Cold War* emerges from the significance of interest groups' lobbying activities in the US political process. This e-book is a study of the culmination of a long process of the maturing of Indian lobbying and its role in turning the distinctly frosty American attitude towards India, to one that has brought the world's oldest and largest democracies to carve a defining partnership of the 21st century. The book examines the role of various modules of Indian lobbying mainly lobbying by Indian American community and their political organizations, India Caucus in the US Congress, the business organisation such as US-India Business Council and Indo-American Chambers of Commerce, and lobbying firms and lobbyists hired by the Indian government in changing the perception about India in the US Congress and facilitating a robust US-India relationship. The American attitude and policy towards India has been shaped by a variety of complex factors and had often been hostile and critical towards India. But, in the post-Cold War era, there has been a significant shift in the attitude of American policy makers, which has in turn paved the way for a robust US-India relationship. This change has been a slow process. Several factors and actors are responsible. While the end of Cold War leading to the changed international scenario and the convergence between the US and India on geo-strategic and geo-economic issues are important factors, one of the significant contributors to this process is Indian lobbying in the US.

Lobbying is an intrinsic part of the American political process. It is a technique adopted by diverse interest groups, ranging from small domestic focused social, professional, ethnic groups to large foreign companies and nation states, for the purpose of putting pressure on policy makers in Congress to consider their interests favourably in policy decision-making.



The Jewish American Lobbying is one of the most successful examples of ethnic lobbying influencing the US foreign policy for a particular country i.e. Israel. But, in recent years after successful lobbying during the passage of nuclear deal in the US Congress the Indian American lobbying has emerged as one of the most influential ethnic lobbying groups in the US foreign policy making toward India.

As American society has grown more pluralistic, and as the US government has grown larger and more decentralized, lobbying activities in the US have also increased. The US governmental system, with the separation of powers, creates ample space for the lobbying activities of interest groups. The key activities of these groups in pursuit of their interests are to penetrate and influence government agencies, which are directly engaged in policy formulation. While the lobbying activities of domestic interest groups are well documented and researched, the involvement of foreign interests in lobbying activities have been relatively less known. The Jewish American Lobbying is one of the most successful examples of ethnic lobbying influencing the US foreign policy for a particular country i.e. Israel. But, in recent years after successful lobbying during the passage of nuclear deal in the US Congress the Indian American lobbying has emerged as one of the most influential ethnic lobbying groups in the US foreign policy making toward India.

Although Indian Americans constitute a small segment of the total population in the US (around 1%), they have acquired a commendable place for themselves in professional and economic field in the United States. For a long time the Indian American community in the US did not actively participate in the political processes. However, over the past two decade and half, Indian Americans have transcended their professional success in to the political activities in the US to a reasonable extent. The influence of their political activism became significantly noticeable with the formation of the India Caucus in the US Congress in 1993.

The formation of the India Caucus in the House of Representative and then in the Senate is particularly notable indicator of fundamental shift in the Congressional attitude towards India. The successful lobbying by India Caucus has contributed to a much better image of India in the US Congress and deserves greater attention. In addition to reflecting the increasing influence of Indian Americans in US society, the formation of the India Caucus also reflected the increased efforts of the Indian government. The existing uncertainties of the post-Cold War era, the increasing nuclear and defence nexus between China and Pakistan, and the need to engage the lone super power induced the Indian Government to engage in various means and resort to the lobbying for a favorable perception about India in a complex decision making process at Capitol Hill.

The book is divided into six chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is titled *Lobbying, Pressure Groups and Ethnic Lobbying in the U.S. Foreign Policy Making: Theoretical Overview* looks into origin and development of lobbying groups, theories related to group formation, methods, techniques and targets of lobbying, and the factors that have legitimized the interest groups lobbying activities in the U.S. political system.

This book is the first comprehensive book on Indian lobbying in US policymaking. After the lull phase in the US-India relations for a while in the post-nuclear deal phase, the arrival of Modi Government has rejuvenated the India-US strategic partnership. Prime Minister Modi has infused a new confidence among Indian Americans and has re-activated the Indian lobbying which will be significant for the continuity in the momentum of the India-US strategic partnership. The role of lobbying will continue to be inevitable and unavoidable for the future of US-India relations under Trump Presidency too.

The chapter two, *Indian Americans: Immigration and Professional Advancement in the US*, deals with Indian immigration to the United States and makes an assessment of their professional success of Indian Americans.

The chapter three, *Indian Americans and Political Participation: Growing Political Activism and Lobbying*, deals with political activism and lobbying efforts of Indian Americans and study the role of the Indian American political organizations in lobbying for the betterment of US-India relations.

The fourth chapter titled *India Caucus: Lobbying for a Robust US-India Relations, and Indian Lobbying during the Cold War Period* is about the events and factors that resulted into the formation of India Caucus in US Congress. An assessment of lobbying by India Caucus has been made mainly on the issues such as tackling the adversary lobby groups on the issues such as nuclear, terrorism, Kargil, Kashmir, economic aid and for advancing the cause of US-India relations.

The fifth chapter *The American Perception about India, the U.S.-India Relations and Indian Lobbying during the Cold War Period* looks into the negative perception about India that had been dominant among the US Congressmen and executive officials during the Cold War period that created hurdles for developing a positive platform on which both the nations could come together and form a sound bilateral relationship. Finally, this chapter scans the beginning phase of Indian lobbying effort, which began to register itself at Hill during the waning days of the Cold War and early years of the Post- Cold War period, that was aimed at changing perception in the US about India.

Chapter six titled *Achievements and Actions of Indian Lobbying towards a Transformed and Robust US-India Relation* focuses on the lobbying undertaken with the intention of influencing US foreign policy towards India on various issues such as foreign aid, civilian nuclear deal, terrorism, economic issues. It examines the role that Indian lobbying has played in aftermath of India's nuclear defiance in 1998 and Kargil incident, and during the passage of the landmark civilian nuclear deal bill in the House and the Senate, which marked the final arrival Indian lobbying as one of the most powerful ethnic lobbying groups after the Jewish lobby.

This book is the first comprehensive book on Indian lobbying in US policymaking. After the lull phase in the US-India relations for a while in the post-nuclear deal phase, the arrival of Modi Government has rejuvenated the India-US strategic partnership. Prime Minister Modi has infused a new confidence among Indian Americans and has re-activated the Indian lobbying which will be significant for the continuity in the momentum of the India-US strategic partnership. The role of lobbying will continue to be inevitable and unavoidable for the future of US-India relations under Trump Presidency too.





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## THE LIFE OF THE NATION IS A DAILY PLEBISCITE



A compelling premise inherent in Ernest Renan's exposition from the 1800s is that, in its perpetuity, the nation accords the society it is moored in, the task of continuous vigilance. The resultant political participation is the fulcrum of the democratic principle. The tradition of political participation --- active or passive --- has been an integral component of the political culture that defines liberal democracies around the world.

Contemporaneous events in the two largest representations of this form of political system, namely, India and the United States, over the past two years especially, indicates that the nature of this *daily plebiscite* has undergone a change.

The following commentary pertains to the altered nature of political participation.



The internet and its reach has transformed the politics of access, and here in this world of veneer, participative democracy and the imagined high ground of political activism has degenerated to according normalcy to aggressiveness, intolerance, vilification and most importantly, a refusal to grant any courtesy to the most rudimentary principle of democracy, viz., by virtue of not being universally agreed upon, an idea or opinion in no way loses its legitimacy. It is, unfortunately, a feature that marks the public discourse of both the countries today negating the essential catholicity of political participation in a democracy. This has, by no means, been a one-way street.

A mix of disgruntlement and awareness supported by access to avenues of effective expression, has brought to fore an electorate that insists on being heard on the everyday decisions of 'public decision making'. This new political entity, as the individual and the collective, appears to have decided that more is needed from the promise of representative democracy. The increased access to information, coupled with the phenomenal success of the social media revolution in providing multiple avenues of expression to the hitherto passive participants of representative democracy, has succeeded in engineering a paradigmatic shift in society's social and political ethos. It has managed to generate a curious binary of vociferousness on the one hand, while according the convenience of anonymity on the other. The unfortunate casualty of this dynamic has been the high principle of responsibility and of respect.

The United States has all too recently emerged from an election cycle that will be remembered in large part for the vitriol it made acceptable in public discourse; and this has not been the exclusive preserve of either those seeking the positions of power, nor of those entrusted with the task of choosing their representatives for those offices. It is a phenomena that has pervaded all levels of political participation. It is also a phenomena that marked India's last outing with the gargantuan exercise of general elections in the world's largest democracy. This writing is a subjective exercise in discerning trends/patterns in the most recent elections held in India and the US. For the purpose of this commentary, I identify four trends that appear as common features in both these elections. There are, but naturally, several more concomitant elements to be considered in these elections - far more positive than the negative co-relations that this commentary has connected the dots with; yet, it is these worrying features that resonate most with a study into the changing narrative of political participation. The four features that appear conspicuous in this regard are -

- a credence to outrage
- equating self-interest with the vilification of the other
- a political lexicon that builds on aggressiveness and fear, and
- an underlying dissonance within similar spatial and temporal contexts

These last two elections, and the aftermath of both has exhibited in varying degrees and through various combinations all of the aforesaid four features. The much vilified 'Liberals' were the favorite villains in the aftermath of both the electoral results in India and the United States. This band of unfortunate believers appeared, for their part, to be caught completely unawares by the fear of the other which catapulted the political fortunes of the two mega-personalities that invoked it in these two countries. Deliberate or chosen ignorance is not a virtue in public life and intellectual rigor so this

In an ode to the categorization of James Kalb's *The Tyranny of Liberalism*, there have been attempts by the 'other side' to try and indulge in attempts at 'administering freedom, inquisitorial tolerance and equality by command.'

is not a charge that could be levelled against the public intellectuals in either of the cases, but it is necessary to take due cognizance of the fact that they were unable to accurately gauge the undercurrent of simmering dissatisfaction in their societies - whether just or aggrandized. The resultant backlash against them has been vicious.

Significant to the central concern of this discussion, has been the quarters wherefrom this backlash emerged. The battleground of this new war has been the domain of virtual reality - the internet, that dichotomous space which affords, at once, the comfort and the impunity of anonymity.

The internet and its reach has transformed the politics of access, and here in this world of veneer, participative democracy and the imagined high ground of political activism has degenerated to according normalcy to aggressiveness, intolerance, vilification and most importantly, a refusal to grant any courtesy to the most rudimentary principle of democracy, viz., by virtue of not being universally agreed upon, an idea or opinion in no way loses its legitimacy. It is, unfortunately, a feature that marks the public discourse of both the countries today negating the essential catholicity of political participation in a democracy. This has, by no means, been a one-way street.

In an ode to the categorization of James Kalb's *The Tyranny of Liberalism*, there have been attempts by the 'other side' to try and indulge in attempts at 'administering freedom, inquisitorial tolerance and equality by command.'





The discussions over Narendra Modi and that of Donald J. Trump in the US - their individual pasts and their possible future inflections inferred from their campaign rhetoric, overwhelmed what should have been a public discourse on policy matters of development, social upliftment and security. It is natural to ascribe blame to the governing elite in both the countries for allowing the narrative to degenerate thus.

The motivations of such advocacy, cannot of course be faulted. It behoves us, however, to consider the possibility that so subjective do these issues become that it is well-nigh impossible to compel another to abide by it, should their strongest instinct be to reject it. The changed nature of political participation and expression, of late, however, has accentuated the conflicts between the different sides and denigrated the absolute requirement of democracies which asks that there always be a readiness to be proven wrong by more compelling rationales, having first presented one's own case.

These movements and endeavours are usually characterized by more flexible structures and limitations, a more motley collective of intentions and aspirations that coalesce to rally against something than for a particular something, decentralized organizational structures, and the most pertinent feature of the last elections in India and the US - personality politics.

The discussions over Narendra Modi and that of Donald J. Trump in the US - their individual pasts and their possible future inflections inferred from their campaign rhetoric, overwhelmed what should have been a public discourse on policy matters of development, social upliftment and security. It is natural to ascribe blame to the governing elite in both the countries for allowing the narrative to degenerate thus.

However, it is necessary to also account for the changing nature of political participation itself, which rebels against anything that goes against the grain of their first natural impulse on any issue. Ideas of being congenial to the lowest common denominator or being amenable to the least-objectionable-to-the -most principle appears to be compromised in the polarized atmosphere of contemporary political participation.

The voice of the individual has begun to overwhelm the quiet acquiescence of the collective, and this can, ironically, be both, a good and a bad thing. It celebrates the essence of the democratic principle by recognizing and animating dissent, while at the same time tugging at the binds of social cohesion.

What used to be understood as the *tyranny of the majority* has now come to acquire further aggravating dimensions with the fragmentation of the social units themselves. The increasing polarization in society has resulted in a brand of political activism which is intolerant at its very core, and undemocratic in its expression. This is not an exercise to draw parallels in the policy frameworks of PM Modi and President Trump. Under a purview so restricted as a brief comment, such an exercise would result in an errant oversimplification and generalization.

Jeremy Bentham had famously suggested that "every law is the infraction of liberty." The dilemma of contemporary political activism is that it could use an argument like Bentham's to defend individual liberty on the one hand, while at the same time being employed to rally against a socio-political economic order that is perceived as not paying perpetual dividends to one or more parts - an impossible aspiration at best and a foolhardy expectation at worst.

The purpose of this commentary is, instead, to draw parallels in the explicit nature of the political activism which is being fought hyper-valiantly over the internet and finds reflection in aggressive identity politics. The mechanism may be new, the essence of such political activism is, however, not novel. Variations of such activism have existed since the very beginning of evolution of man's discovery of the political. What is characteristic of these two elections and their aftermath is the overt aggressiveness that has become the new normal in this exercise.

Jeremy Bentham had famously suggested that "every law is the infraction of liberty." The dilemma of contemporary political activism is that it could use an argument like Bentham's to defend individual liberty on the one hand, while at the same time being employed to rally against a socio-political economic order that is perceived as not paying perpetual dividends to one or more parts - an impossible aspiration at best and a foolhardy expectation at worst. The politics of silence does a huge disservice to the essence of a democracy. Many a people, many a groups and many a causes have been sacrificed at the altar of it. Yet, it is equally true that the politics of loud and intolerant expression does an equal amount of harm, if not more, to the body politic, as to the society wherefrom it emanates.

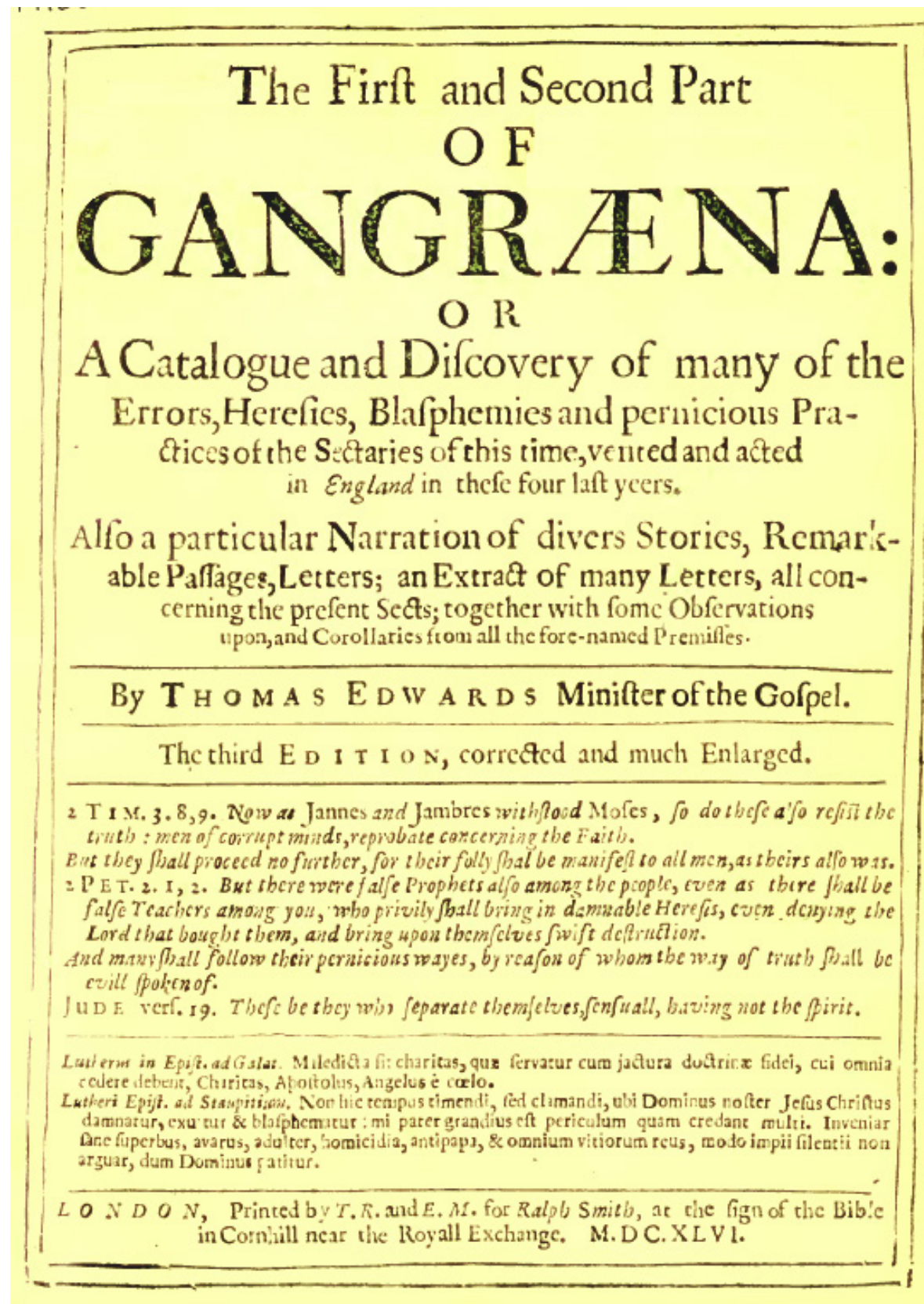
The new cult of political activism without accepting the responsibility of political expression nor abiding by the virtues of tolerant disagreement, corrodes the very essence of the democratic ethos.







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## DAVID MORGAN

# A WORLD OF STRANGE ERRORS

The title of this article, a world of strange errors, derives from a 17th century work of English pre-Civil War political controversy named "Gangraena" written by a conservative Presbyterian cleric, Thomas Edwards. Published in 1646 when England was on the verge of the revolt which was to lead to the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of a Republic under Oliver Cromwell, "Gangraena" was a ferocious attack on the independent religious sects collectively termed "puritans". As a catalogue of alleged heresies, the notorious book claimed to have discovered hundreds of "strange errors" among the numerous sects who flourished at the time, such as the Quakers, who date their origins to this period. Edwards, who was vehemently opposed to all of them, invented the most lurid beliefs and practises to evoke fear and hatred among the unsuspecting wider public and to justify measures of state repression against them. The independent sects were a canker infecting the body politic or quite simply gangrene that had to be rooted out, Edwards argued.

In the years immediately prior to the English revolution of 1649, censorship broke down and there was effectively a free press. What Edwards had denounced as a "world of strange errors" were in reality the early stirrings of a democratic culture with fierce debates and participatory politics driven by courageous minorities such as the Levellers and Diggers who were developing profoundly radical ideas of free elections, equitable distribution of resources and new forms of social organisation and relationships. This was an age when leading poets like John Milton and Andrew Marvell still offered their services to the public and worked in government.

By means of journalistic polemic, the equivalent of today's tabloid smears, the 17th century establishment sought to denigrate and delegitimise the beliefs of these independent sects which drew their support base from the "lower orders" or "middling sort", as the emerging middle class was described. These groups were deemed to be out of control and becoming a disruptive social force at a time when the state itself was losing its legitimacy.

"Gangraena" written by a conservative Presbyterian cleric, Thomas Edwards. Published in 1646 when England was on the verge of the revolt which was to lead to the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of a Republic under Oliver Cromwell.



The mass political struggles of the 21st century flourishing in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, demonstrate quite clearly that the people consistently yearn for change and are prepared to fight for it. Lamentably, however, there has been a marked absence of political co-ordination and an utter inability to translate social protest into lasting policy.

It is not surprising that many new religious ideas did emerge at what was a time of tremendous social dislocation and transformation; many of their ideas may have appeared distinctly odd and, according to their critics, some were extreme, such as free love and holding property in common, but most of the believers such as George Fox, John Bunyan, John Lilburne and Gerrard Winstanley, were sincere people seeking to interpret biblical teachings and understand the world around them. Poorer people were beginning to read and study in wide numbers for the first time in history after the printing press had brought cheap pamphlets within reach of the masses and copies of the Bible in English were no longer suppressed as Tyndale's had been only a century earlier.

It was an age of political earthquakes and social disorientation. Old certainties were coming under assault and new ideas emerging. Widening social divisions and growing discontent were to result in social break down and revolution. But from the flux of the 17th century the seeds of modern democracy were planted. There would be decades of distress and great suffering before a relatively stable modern society was re-established and the state reasserted its authority.

In the 21st century we are living through another period of tremendous change and historic transformation. This crisis is experienced across the entire globe because of the economics of globalisation and factors such as the development of communications technologies. We now take for granted the possibility of instant communication through social media and information at our finger tips via the internet. Younger people living today cannot imagine a world without their smart phone, iPad, tablet and laptop constantly beside them, but it is only a generation or two ago that people had to write letters and wait for days, sometimes weeks, to receive a reply. The impact of the communications revolution on the individual human psychology and social behaviour has yet to be seriously assessed and understood, but whether the internet has really brought people closer together is a debatable point. The great irony of the modern era is that divisions between people seem to be greater than ever and constantly growing. We discover signs every day in the news headlines of the social, ideological, ethnic and generational divisions that prevail. Within politics and how we run our societies, there is a growing divide between the people and the politicians.

### No More Heroes

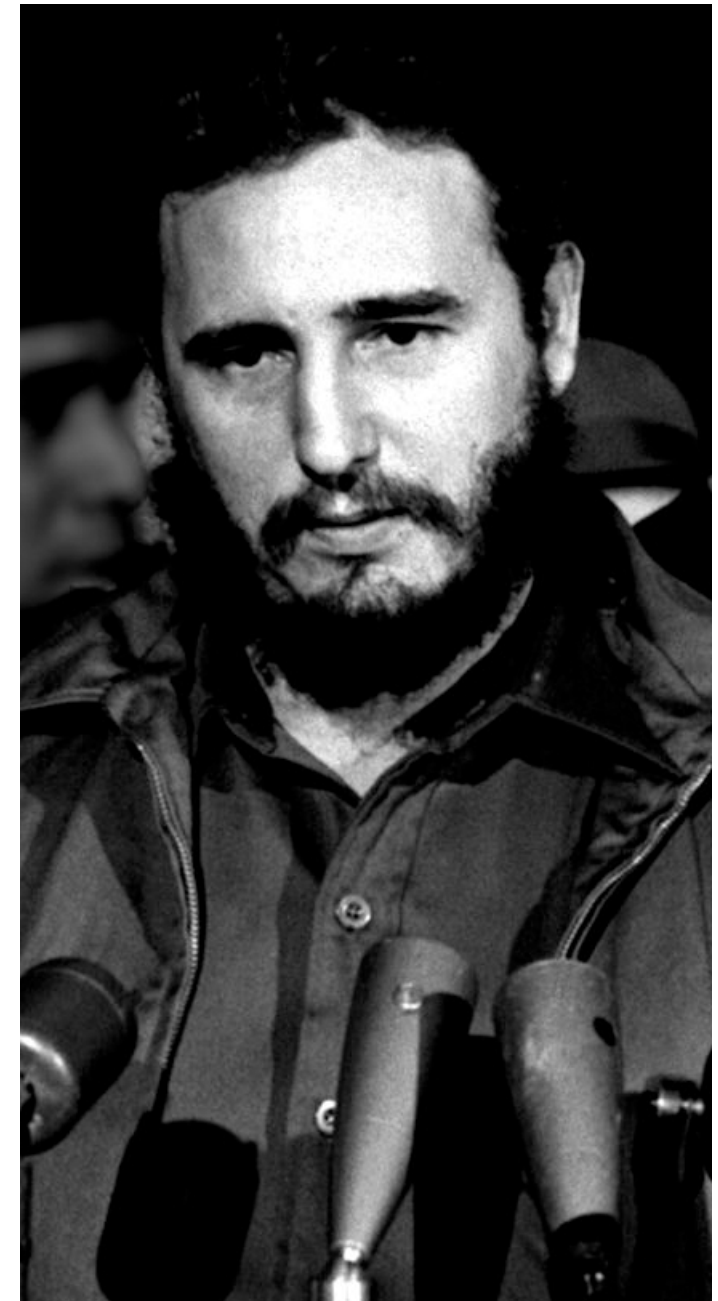
This lack of connection between the people and political elite is palpable. There are no more heroes anymore, as the song goes; a fact that became literally true on the death Fidel Castro, the last remaining people's hero of the 20th century, who achieved heroic stature among oppressed people worldwide not because of his remarkable command of words or because he was a beautiful dreamer,

This is really a failure of leadership and vision resulting from the dissolution of the parties of the left. As a consequence, people simply become more demoralised and social movements easily dissipate. This has opened up a huge vacuum in the political sphere which has been filled by various cynical operators representing the political elite, false prophets, modern witch doctors and populist demagogues who are free to hoodwink the people and masquerade as their friends.

but because he was able to turn his dream into reality; especially as it was a dream shared by the mass of the people. Today, ever since the demise of Communism or "actually existing socialism", as it preferred to be called, and the collapse of social democracy, no credible alternative to the existing order has been developed that can provide hope of a better future and a remedy for eradicating social injustice. Both Communism and social democracy ultimately proved to be deeply flawed projects and woefully inadequate to the mammoth task of social transformation, but at least they offered the possibility of achieving change through human activity.

The mass political struggles of the 21st century flourishing in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, demonstrate quite clearly that the people consistently yearn for change and are prepared to fight for it. Lamentably, however, there has been a marked absence of political co-ordination and an utter inability to translate social protest into lasting policy.

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The radical movements that coalesced around presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in the United States were defeated by a combination of big money and Democratic Party machine politics which ensured that the tainted Hillary Clinton won the presidential nomination. In the UK, the mass activism inspired by Jeremy Corbyn's bid to lead the opposition Labour Party has so far failed to evolve into mass political activity despite a historic growth in party membership to more than 500,000.

### No More Heroes *contd...*

Attempts to reassemble the left have proved to be elusive. The victories for progressive parties across Latin America inspired by the rise of the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela are now largely in disarray and once again reaction takes the offensive. The Arab Spring has long, long ago been blighted and achieved few positive results; in its aftermath, people are more demoralised because they saw the results of their courageous struggles bring so little real change. The radical movements that coalesced around presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in the United States were defeated by a combination of big money and Democratic Party machine politics which ensured that the tainted Hillary Clinton won the presidential nomination. In the UK, the mass activism inspired by Jeremy Corbyn's bid to lead the opposition Labour Party has so far failed to evolve into mass political activity despite a historic growth in party membership to more than 500,000. Across Europe the left has been eclipsed by a resurgent right and the rapid growth of new populist anti-party groups such as the Alliance for Germany (AfD) and the Five Star Movement in Italy, a country which once boasted the largest Communist party in Western Europe. In France, according to successive opinion polls, the Front Nationale is on the cusp of taking the presidency. Most of these movements have succeeded in winning over communities such as the urban working class who traditionally formed the bed-rock of the left, voting in election after election for socialist and Communist parties; such parties have now virtually disappeared from the political landscape at least in the post-industrial societies of the European Union. In this respect, it is intriguing that Bernie Sanders described himself as a "Democratic Socialist" and still managed to achieve such a groundswell of popular support in a country that is about the most market orientated in the world.

The left has fragmented into protests organised around single issues such as peace, anti-deportation campaigns and the environment. The left's political stance has become mainly reactive: opposing government policies or the latest outrage committed by the big corporations. This fragmented politics tends to impede the development of a new coherent programme of action for change capable of commanding mass support among the people. Most campaigns are difficult to connect with the immediate daily concerns of the mass of the people who are struggling to cope with the vicissitudes of modern life, earning a living or paying the household bills. Traditional parties such as Britain's Labour Party have so far been unable to construct an alternative as a result of internal dissent and ideological confusions.

The rise of identity politics has tended to divert the energies and aspirations of many of those who are politically engaged and exacerbated divisions among different social groups, such as the young



and the old. Identity politics, such as support for transgender rights and campaigning for illegal migrants or refugees, are no substitute for developing a broad programme of social reform and constructing a credible vision of a better future. This would entail addressing such issues as the gross economic injustices in modern societies, ameliorating the wealth gap, how to deliver free education, comprehensive healthcare and a plan for housing. It would mean no less than reinventing the idea of a welfare state, as the philosopher and social activist Slavoj Zizek has argued.

### New Thinking

The left needs urgently to start thinking again and begin a serious analysis of the world. It must take the blinkers off and repudiate its reliance on old slogans and moral certainties. The social and political priorities of liberalism cannot simply be adopted uncritically by the left. The liberal populism espoused by the collection of Hollywood stars and privileged personalities from pop music who rallied around Hillary Clinton is no solution. In fact, the spectacle of privileged celebrities claiming to give voice to the people and the "marginalised", as the likes of Madonna did during the women's march on Washington in protest at Donald Trump's inauguration as US president, is particularly nauseating. Celebrities are not opinion formers and certainly do not have the status of the philosophers or intellectuals who were the opinion formers in earlier societies. Nor are celebrities an adequate substitute for the genuine political leaders of old such as Martin Luther King, no matter how often they seek to invoke his rhetoric. It is facile to believe that social justice can be won by the likes of Lady Gaga, Scarlett Johansson, Madonna or any of the organisations funded by the largesse of billionaires such as George Soros. The great irony is that the populist Donald Trump and his liberal populist opponents from the media and entertainment industry have an awful lot in common. They are all consummate performers as media personalities; they are all very privileged members of the elite who claim to represent the "people" and the workers.

The liberal populists who embrace identity politics invoke the rhetoric of revolution while Trump and his allies denounce the "elite" and the establishment at every turn. Politics and entertainment have merged seamlessly into one hybrid beast.

The most dreadful development of all is to witness the left wrapping itself in the same liberal causes and driving itself into the dead end of identity politics. This pantomime is a poor substitute for a radical strategy that is required to address the real problems faced by people in the modern world, such as personal debt, job insecurity, lack of education and homelessness.



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English Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge envisaged writers, poets and intellectuals playing a vital social role as a kind of secular priesthood which he named the “clerisy”. They would offer guidance on important dilemmas confronting government and the people and by so doing they would be able to shape public opinion through their writings and arguments. Coleridge’s proposals influenced future generations of intellectual thinkers such as the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold and Cambridge don F R Leavis; even leftists such as Raymond Williams were not immune to these ideas.



### **New Thinking** *contd...*

A workable alternative to all the fake solutions of the shallow liberal populists urgently needs to be constructed from out of the debris of the collapsed left and its mixed legacy. Against the instant reactions and lazy slogans, deep thinking, contemplation and philosophical speculation need to be revived. Public opinion must be shaped and fashioned anew by great thinkers who can act as popular role models and influences for good in the public domain. The public space has been so totally degraded by the mass media and by the relentless process of dumbing down that today’s role models and opinion formers are a motley collection of super rich celebrities, sports stars, fashion models, talentless musicians, illiterate authors of pulp fiction and soft porn. Vulgarly and ignorance obstruct serious thought and this creates a dominant ideology where it is virtually impossible to articulate feelings of compassion, generosity, disinterestedness and creativity.

### **The need for a new clerisy**

The English Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge envisaged writers, poets and intellectuals playing a vital social role as a kind of secular priesthood which he named the “clerisy”. They would offer guidance on important dilemmas confronting government and the people and by so doing they would be able to shape public opinion through their writings and arguments. Coleridge’s proposals influenced future generations of intellectual thinkers such as the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold and Cambridge don F R Leavis; even leftists such as Raymond Williams were not immune to these ideas. Admittedly any suggestion from someone writing in the early 19th century must sound pitifully naïve from the perspective of people in the modern world, but the core issues that Coleridge raised remain quite timely; these are about how popular opinions are formed and how social attitudes are developed. The poet was speaking to a small social elite and did not envisage a mass democracy. Times have certainly changed for the better in that we are no longer seeking to address a minority. An informed population is more essential today so as to ensure that modern mass democracy remains properly functioning and fully participatory. So, it can safely be argued that opinion formers are needed now more than ever.

However, the visibility of intellectuals in the public sphere in most contemporary societies has been reduced to an absolute minimum. The type of personality who passes for an intellectual is someone adept at showmanship and bent on self-promotion. To achieve success they are required to be media savvy and photogenic, youthful and even glamorous.



Screenshot from Clevver News on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)





If they are elderly they are perhaps permitted to appear before the cameras only if they adopt an endearing eccentricity such as a speech impediment or strike outrageous mannerisms; the British historian and expert on the Tudor dynasty, Dr David Starkey, is very definitely a public performer within the entertainment industry rather than an intellectual. The same could be said of Slavoj Žižek, who is frequently described as “the Elvis of philosophy” or the architectural writer Jonathan Meades. Informed and erudite they undoubtedly are, but they are a far cry from traditional understanding of an intellectual and their public role is much removed from how it was conceived by Coleridge, who defined the typical intellectual as one who would wisely guide the public in right thinking.

### Anti-Intellectualism

A very anti-intellectual culture is prevalent today where even to dare utter the word “intellectual” provokes scornful laughter. One cannot just attribute blame for this regression solely to the portrayal of intellectuals in the media, which demands stereotypes such as the absent-minded professor, the crazy boffin or hapless teenage snob such as the character created by novelist Sue Townsend, Adrian Mole, who in the 1980s achieved a similar popularity as Harry Potter does today.

Just a few decades ago the public intellectual still enjoyed an important social status and was taken extremely seriously as a respected thinker. Intellectuals were courted by quality newspapers to offer commentaries on current affairs and in those bygone Reithian days they were often signed up by television producers to front programmes. Jacob Bronowski, Kenneth Clark, AJP Taylor, Jonathan Miller and John Berger all produced widely admired popular television series in the decades from the Sixties right up until the Nineties of the last century. But in the last two decades there has been a massive sea-change as programme planners sought to fight the ratings war and opted for documentaries fronted by celebrities or academics who imitate celebrities. Expertise gave way to reality TV and amateurism as the mission to inform was replaced by entertainment whose success depended on escapism and sensationalism. The publishing industry reflected the same trend. The prime reason for publishing a book is to become a bestseller rather than create a work of genuine quality that is valid in its own right and will stand the test of time. Intellectuals and their traditional outpourings have been largely discarded. To achieve a degree of success in this climate an intellectual must become a celebrity or adopt the pose of a contrarian ready to voice outrageous opinions, such as the biologist Richard Dawkins. The process is one where populism has become deeply pervasive in the media dominated culture.

Pope Francis has warned of the dangers of a new fascism emerging amid the crisis of authority and the rise of populism. The pontiff, it can be recalled, took his name from St Francis of Assisi, a remarkable figure in Christian history whose example of renunciation of worldly luxuries and devotion to a life of poverty became an inspiration for the entire nation in 13th century Italy. His example remains an inspiration for succeeding generations and he continues to offer lessons for people today and how they choose to live their lives.

Another recent trend stifles freedom of speech by defining controversial opinions as “hate crime” and has threatened to put an end to the careers of the contrarians. No matter how well intentioned, this political correctness poses a direct threat to cherished principles of free expression which enlightened democratic governments have for centuries claimed to honour and uphold. Bending to populism is thus putting basic liberties in jeopardy.

### St Francis

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Francis, the son of a merchant, began his mission by giving away his clothes to the poor and he embraced the lepers who were regarded as social outcasts. Whether this is church propaganda or true to the facts, such charitable work is very far removed from status of modern charities which have become branches of the public relations and advertising industries. There is an inevitable cynicism in the way modern celebrities lend their names to charities and make use of good causes as promotional tools for their own brand. In marked contrast, St Francis, inspired by Jesus’s command to his disciples to have no property, adopted an austere lifestyle and the record of his example, which the current incumbent in the papacy invoked, exposes the total obsession with possessions and luxury that casts a shadow over contemporary society. The lesson in his example of selflessness is not simply one for the super-rich, but for all who aspire to join the super-rich and seek to imitate their luxurious lifestyle.

Rather than imitating those who constitute the public face of today’s ruling elite, it is necessary to begin a process of renewal and this starts with how we look at the world and the priorities we adopt. Only then will all the media manufactured populisms begin to lose their grip on our thinking and integrity as human beings. Once that is done we will finally have escaped from the strange errors of the contemporary world.



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\* This post first appeared on [The Duck of Minerva](#). Live Encounters Magazine is grateful to [Dr Cynthia Banham](#) and [Regarding Rights](#) for permission to re-post.



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## Civil Society Resistance in Liberal Democracies in a Time of Rising Non-Accountability



Political accountability, we are taught to believe, is a defining feature of liberal democracies. A basic relationship of accountability lies at the heart of democratic government: citizens elect their political representatives, and these representatives become accountable to voters. Yet political accountability, as we have traditionally understood it to exist in liberal democracy, is under stress.

Since September 11, 2001, liberal democracies have seen an escalation in attempts to decrease government transparency and limit civil society's ability to check arbitrary power. One only has to think of the USA PATRIOT Act or the US detention regime at Guantánamo Bay. We see a pattern emerging across liberal democracies of the erosion of accountability in important policy areas. The [re-emergence of torture](#) as a potential state national security tool in the United States under a Trump Administration is a reminder of what is at stake when political accountability is avoided for past government wrongs.

Australia is not immune from this trend and I want to focus here on one particular policy area where there has been a deliberate and drastic reduction of accountability on the part of government: asylum seekers and refugees. In 2015, the Australian government placed a [gag order](#) on doctors working in the country's offshore immigration detention centres to prevent them from speaking out about what they witnessed there. Conditions in the camps, located on small islands in the Pacific, are kept deliberately harsh to deter asylum seekers from coming to Australia by boat. Doctors who violated the gag order faced two years in jail.

This audacious example of executive-overreach is typical of increasing attempts by governments across liberal democracies to reduce accountability for their policies. Rising populist and nationalist pressures threaten our notions and practices of democratic accountability. Anxious citizens wonder just how far governments will go in order to prevent scrutiny of their actions and how civil society can effectively resist anti-democratic government policies. The case of the Australian doctors highlights these dangers but also contains another lesson. Civil society may successfully resist autocratic moves by liberal democratic governments to avoid political accountability.



With asylum seekers so well hidden from view of the Australian public in these remote detention centres, accountability of government policy was already seriously compromised. But last year the Australian government pushed the boundaries even further in its efforts to prevent any information at all from seeping out of the camps about the suffering and desperation of detainees inside. In silencing health professionals who treated asylum seekers, the Australian government tested the levels of state secrecy that citizens were willing to accept as never before. This was about prohibiting medical professionals from raising concerns about matters as abhorrent as the sexual abuse of young children, in conditions of arbitrary detention.

In September 2016, eleven months after the Australian government passed the draconian *Australian Border Force Act* 2015, it quietly lifted the gag order, allowing doctors to speak again without risk of prosecution. This is a story about alarming anti-democratic suppression of an entire professional community involved in caring for the well-being of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia's off-shore detention camps – and how it successfully pushed back, and recovered some government accountability in this contentious domain. The events depicted here suggest citizens are going to have to be watchful and creative in mobilising to take back their power and be an effective check on government.

The harsh treatment of asylum seekers arriving by sea is popular policy in Australia, where political leaders have mercilessly exploited the issue since 2001. Why 2001? In August that year, a couple of weeks out from the awful events of September 11, a dramatic stand-off occurred between a Norwegian freighter carrying hundreds of rescued (mostly Afghan) asylum seekers bound for Australia and the Australian government. The government refused to let the freighter enter Australian waters with its human cargo, and the result was the establishment of the 'Pacific Solution'. Under its most recent incarnation, which dates to 2013, asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat are detained on Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, with no access to Australian courts, human rights non-governmental organisations, lawyers or journalists. The [vast majority](#) of these asylum seekers have been found to be refugees; among them are many Iranians, as well as Afghans, Iraqis, Sri Lankans and others. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, has [noted](#) that Australia's indefinite detention of asylum seekers and refugees, including children, in offshore camps where conditions are inadequate and there is escalating violence and tension, breaches its international legal obligations under the Convention Against Torture.

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A Brisbane hospital engaged in a public stand-off with the government, refusing to discharge a one-year-old baby who would have been transferred back to the detention centre on Nauru, on the basis it was not safe for the child. The group, Doctors for Refugees, filed a constitutional challenge in the High Court of Australia against the Act, warning of the chilling effect the legislation was having. The nature of doctors' protests varied: some were organised, some were more spontaneous, some sought to activate traditional accountability mechanisms (the courts) and some went outside those institutions.

What light does this Australian example shed on shifting conceptions of political accountability? I consider some understandings of both government and civil society, before starting to theorise the changes I am drawing attention to.

First, in seeking to avoid public scrutiny of the human cost of its asylum seeker policies and thus ensure continuing domestic support, the Australian government has adopted increasingly radical, illiberal means of quashing dissent, shutting down traditional sites of accountability. It has, in other words, created deliberate sites of non-accountability. Its means of achieving this include the *Australian Border Force Act*, in addition to longer-standing practices of alienating detainees, physically separating them from civil society and constructing them ideologically as potentially dangerous outsiders.[1] The Australian government has, in addition, hired out contractors to run the detention centres, and has located them on the territories of foreign sovereign states. These practices intentionally abdicate public accountability.

Second, despite the government's best efforts to prevent it, citizens still demand accountability and have adopted innovative strategies designed to influence the political environment. The government, in lifting the gag order on doctors, responded to widespread, multi-faceted protests by medical professionals across Australia. The Australian Medical Association and the World Medical Association [condemned](#) the silencing of doctors, saying it contravened basic principles of medical ethics. Senior mental health professionals openly challenged the government to prosecute them for speaking out about the '[torture-like conditions](#)' in offshore detention centres. A Brisbane hospital engaged in a public stand-off with the government, [refusing to discharge](#) a one-year-old baby who would have been transferred back to the detention centre on Nauru, on the basis it was not safe for the child. The group, Doctors for Refugees, filed a [constitutional challenge](#) in the High Court of Australia against the Act, warning of the chilling effect the legislation was having. The nature of doctors' protests varied: some were organised, some were more spontaneous, some sought to activate traditional accountability mechanisms (the courts) and some went outside those institutions.

The events in Australia invite closer examination of shifting notions of political accountability in present-day liberal democracies. Accountability, we are often reminded, is a concept that is ill-defined and not well understood. [2] Traditional notions of accountability are based on hierarchical structures, while in practice networked governance has become more important.[3]



We live in a world where politics is deeply unpredictable, where aspiring political leaders and incumbents can succeed by promising to take away certain human rights. Often those whose rights are in question are non-citizens, or minorities or Muslims. Such policy promises are justified on the basis of popular appeals to sovereignty and national interest and they are, in practice, most easily achieved by minimising or avoiding traditional forms of accountability. In this context, the sense of obligation to give account and to hold to account is being undermined on both sides of the accountability relationship.

Faith in the idea of accountability as a virtue cannot be taken for granted. Changing political environments encourage governments to test the limits of what is permissible in terms of decreasing democratic transparency, in order to give voters the outcomes they demand. It is well to remember also that civil society's role in terms of demanding accountable government is complex and not pre-determined. Individuals and groups can resist and oppose the democratic state with more authoritarian proclivities, but they can also normalise and complement it too.[5]

Certainly the Australian case demonstrates the importance of networked governance, and how actors from disparate groups with relatively little power can, when they organise, have an unexpected impact on hierarchically-imposed government policy and influence public policy outcomes.

One can think of the accountability relationship between states and citizens as one based on power. Allen Buchanan and Robert Keohane, writing about the Obama Administration's lethal drone program, note that accountability is essentially a power term, that: 'Those who can hold policymakers accountable exercise power over them. That is, they have the capacity to impose costs on the policymakers and thereby to increase the likelihood that the latter will respond to their demands.' [4] Accountability, they note, depends on context and needs to be dynamic. Similarly, Peter Katzenstein, discussing his current work at a [research seminar](#) at the University of Queensland earlier this year, spoke about a decentralised form of 'protean power' that relies on the agility and creativity of actors, and can bring about transformative change in situations characterised by great uncertainty. The example of Australian doctors demonstrates how protean power works in practice. Disparate members of this community of medical professionals worked, sometimes in collaboration with legal advocacy groups and community legal services, in different parts of the country and in diverse forums to resist a deeply anti-democratic government order, to surprising effect.

We live in a world where politics is deeply unpredictable, where aspiring political leaders and incumbents can succeed by promising to take away certain human rights. Often those whose rights are in question are non-citizens, or minorities or Muslims. Such policy promises are justified on the basis of popular appeals to sovereignty and national interest and they are, in practice, most easily achieved by minimising or avoiding traditional forms of accountability. In this context, the sense of obligation to give account and to hold to account is being undermined on both sides of the accountability relationship. Faith in the idea of accountability as a virtue cannot be taken for granted. Changing political environments encourage governments to test the limits of what is permissible in terms of decreasing democratic transparency, in order to give voters the outcomes they demand. It is well to remember also that civil society's role in terms of demanding accountable government is complex and not pre-determined. Individuals and groups can resist and oppose the democratic state with more authoritarian proclivities, but they can also normalise and complement it too.[5]

At a time when politics across diverse liberal democracies are unfolding in ways previously considered unthinkable or unlikely, it helps to recognise the dynamism and unpredictability of power, and its centrality to accountability. Those who would resist attempts by states to avoid accountability require persistence and imagination when developing strategies to affect the political environment in unexpected ways, in ways governments cannot control, in order to achieve a more just outcome.

[1] Michael Grewcock, 'The great escape: refugees, detention and resistance' in *State Crime and Resistance*, ed Elizabeth Stanley and Jude McCulloch (New York: Routledge, 2012) 56.

[2] Kaifeng Yang, 'Qualitative analysis' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*, ed Mark Bovens, Robert E Goodin and Thomas Schillemans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 160-161.

[3] John Braithwaite, Hilary Charlesworth and Aderito Soares, *Networked Governance of Freedom and Tyranny* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2012).

[4] Allen Buchanan and Robert O Keohane, 'Toward a drone accountability regime', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 29(1) (2015), 15-37, 24.

[5] Penny Green and Tony Ward, 'Civil society, resistance and state crime' in *State Crime and Resistance*, ed Elizabeth Stanley and Jude McCulloch, 29.





Dr. Namrata Goswami is one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building. Dr. Goswami is currently an Independent Senior Analyst. She was formerly Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi where she specialized on ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution. She has been a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the Congressionally Funded United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington DC, where she explored long-term India-China-US scenarios in order to craft sustainable security frameworks to enable unimpeded human development and security. She was co-lead and editor of two IDSA sponsored works on long-term trends, *Imagining Asia in 2030*, and *Asia 2030 The Unfolding Future*. Her latest book published by Pentagon Press, New Delhi is on *India's Approach to Asia, Strategy, Geopolitics and Responsibility*, 2016.

This article first appeared in the Huffington Post at <http://www.huffingtonpost.in/namrata-goswami/china-is-gearing-up-to-conquer-its-final-frontier-outer-space/>

## DR NAMRATA GOSWAMI

Independent Senior Analyst, Author and one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building.

# CHINA IS GEARING UP TO CONQUER ITS FINAL FRONTIER: OUTER SPACE



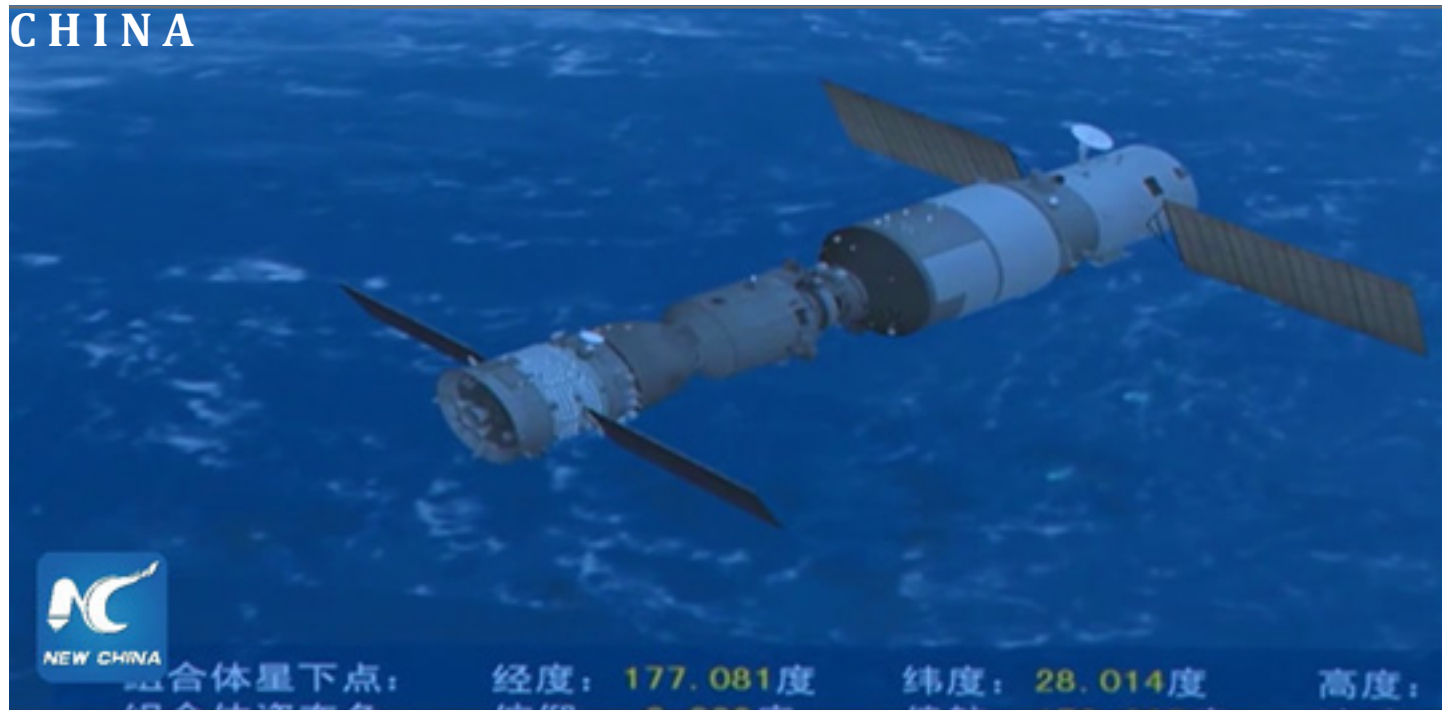
China's space lab Tiangong-2 roars into the air on the back of a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, Sept. 15, 2016. (Xinhua/Zeng Tao) [LINK](#)

CHINA ASPIRES TO USE ITS ADVANCED SPACE TECHNOLOGY FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND TO REAP ECONOMIC DIVIDENDS.

China has emerged as one of the major "space-faring" nations in the 21st century. Today, from merely seeking to enhance their reputation and prestige from outer-space explorations, China aims to harvest space-based resources—such as Space-Based Solar Power (SBSP), asteroid mining and lunar exploration—and establish a permanent presence via its space station.

China's space solar ambitions were outlined in a report by its leading space agency, China Academy of Space Technology (CAST), which stated that by 2050, "the first commercial level SPS system will be [in operation at GEO](#)." Significantly, there are divergent perspectives amongst Chinese experts who specialise in security studies, and those who are space scientists and policymakers, as to whether exploration of space-based resources is indeed feasible for China. In general, Chinese experts on China's missile defence, nuclear, and regional security studies are "pessimists" in regard to China's capability to achieve long-term space goals such SBSP or asteroid mining. They believe that most of these goals articulated by Chinese space policymakers or scientists are aimed at getting state funding for their projects. On the other hand, experts from the [China Reform Forum](#), situated close to the Central Party School in Beijing, believes that long-term space investment is of the highest priority for China's leadership. This is historically vindicated by the fact that in 1999, Chinese Premier Jiang Zemin personally named China's first unmanned spacecraft, *Shenzhou* (Our Divine Land), and wrote the calligraphy that was imprinted on the side of the spacecraft, thereby setting to rest Mao's assertion that China can stand up to nothing since it cannot even put a [potato in outer space](#).





Still from a Live Telecast when China's Shenzhou-11 spacecraft docked with space lab Tiangong-2 [LINK](#)

China aspires to use its advanced [space technology](#) for its development needs and to reap economic dividends. According to Wu Ji, director general of China's National Space Science Centre, President Xi Jinping hopes space investments will lead to innovation in robotics, artificial intelligence and rejuvenate the economy. Wu and other fellow researchers have requested President Xi to increase China's space budget especially in space science from Yuan 4.7 billion (\$ 695 million) in 2015-2016 to Yuan 15.6 billion ([\\$ 5.6 billion](#)) by 2026-30. This kind of space research, Wu states, will move away from purely short-term projects such as building rockets, military satellites and manned spacecraft, to long-term development of cutting-edge space technology with benefits for the economy. The push behind space research is to encourage private companies, besides the state-owned enterprises, to enter the space exploration domain. [Liu Ruopeng](#), founder of Hong Kong-based [Kuang-Chi Science Ltd](#), stated that commercial activity and invention will grow exponentially in outer space in [China in the next 10 years](#).

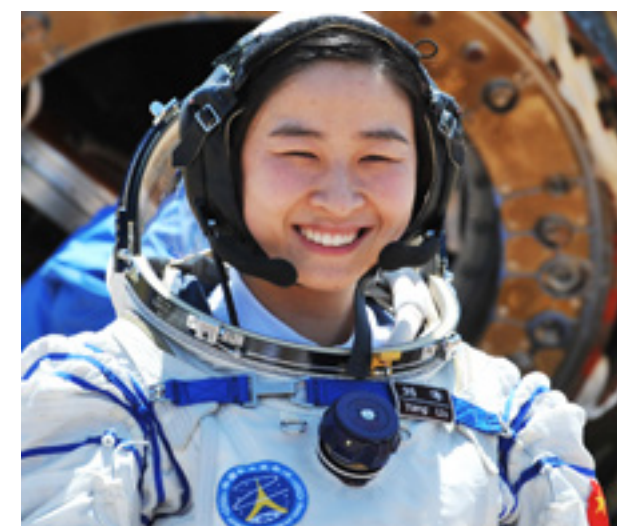
China's next big space ambition is to exploit resources like titanium, helium 3 and water from the far side of the moon. Its Chang'e lunar exploration program, launched on Long March rockets, is an ongoing robotic mission to the moon led by the China National Space Administration (CNSA). Besides discovering titanium and helium 3, discovering water on the moon's surface is going to be vital for any ambitions for a lunar human settlement. Wu Weirin, the head designer of China's lunar missions, in an interview to the BBC, revealed that China aims for long-term exploration and a [research base on the lunar surface](#). With regard to asteroid mining, [Ye Peijian, from CAST](#) stated that China is investing in research on both Mars and asteroid exploration. Hexi Baoyin, Yang Chen and Junfeng Li at Tsinghua University in Beijing have published findings on how to nudge an [asteroid into earth's orbit](#). The idea is to capture a Near Earth Object (NEO) or asteroid with a low-energy orbit and place it on Earth's orbit temporarily. This could enable them to develop the capacity and technology to extract resources from NEOs. On 13 December 2012, China's Chang'e 2 flew as close [as 3.2 km past asteroid Toutatis](#), which is about 7 million kilometres away from Earth. It managed to capture close pictures of the asteroid, making China the fourth country (after the US, EU and Japan), to examine an asteroid from an unmanned spacecraft.



Still from CNN's - An inside look at China's Space City [LINK](#)

China has also invested heavily in developing its own space station by 2020. Named Tiangong (Heavenly Palace), it launched Tiangong 1 in 2011. Tiangong 2 in September this year and the Tiangong 3 is expected to be established by 2020. The Tiangong orbital space station will support three astronauts for long-term stay, and will consist of a 20-tonne core module, as well as two research modules. Given the International Space Station (ISS) is scheduled to retire by 2025, Tiangong may be the only human space station we are left with.

The emergent influence of China's actions in space have the direct capability to determine whether the environment in space is rule-based or a source of conflict. Moreover, the means nations pursue to access energy and material resources in space make possible entirely new avenues of power projection. In the 19th century, it would have seemed preposterous if someone had told a farmer in Yunnan that he could connect with a farmer in California or Punjab to discuss crop yield within seconds via the internet. Exponential technology waits for no one. The day is not far when intensified economic activity in space will not seem extraordinary or preposterous.



Liu Yang, China's first female astronaut



Emma Barone is a contemporary visual artist. She makes still life and landscape paintings in acrylic on canvas. She studied animation and has an eclectic design background that ranges from interior design to architectural ceramics, and from stained glass to jewellery design. Barone's work has been featured in various publications including The Irish Arts Review, Senior Times, House and Home, and the Sunday Independent. With 19 solo exhibitions under her belt, her work is in private and public collections throughout the world. [www.emmabarone.com](http://www.emmabarone.com)

## UNDERWATER DREAM

PAINTINGS BY  
EMMA BARONE

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Underwater Dream is a series of paintings based on the idea of how being underwater can distort, enhance and ultimately change one's perspective. The physical action of being underwater transports me to a different dimension where the internal sensation and field of vision can only be expressed through the process of art. I can then capture these sensations through my work. Emotions such as happiness, exhilaration, breathlessness, fear, floating, flying is evident throughout. Some of my work already has underwater characteristics. I'm finding a mirror image between sea and sky, bed-rock and seabed. I have explored and developed this aquatic landscape in terms of origin, process and objective.

I see this physical manifestation of 'shape' as having spiritual, psychological, elemental and socio-historical dimensions. This latter manifestation is rooted in how fear of water has become a darker frill around the ebb and flow, the asking, receiving nature of our relationship with the life giving features of seascape.

Under water our vision is distorted by the element of water, its ability to challenge space itself, through displacement and motion. This distortion is called refraction. I feel refraction plays a vital part in the underlying theme of this collection. This conjures images of light, darkness, colours, shapes, magic, luminescence and an unexplained energy which is the pull and push of experience itself. This body of work provokes and challenges while at the same time, providing spiritual comfort.

My job as an artist is to process these elements through the practice of art.



THE ARTIST



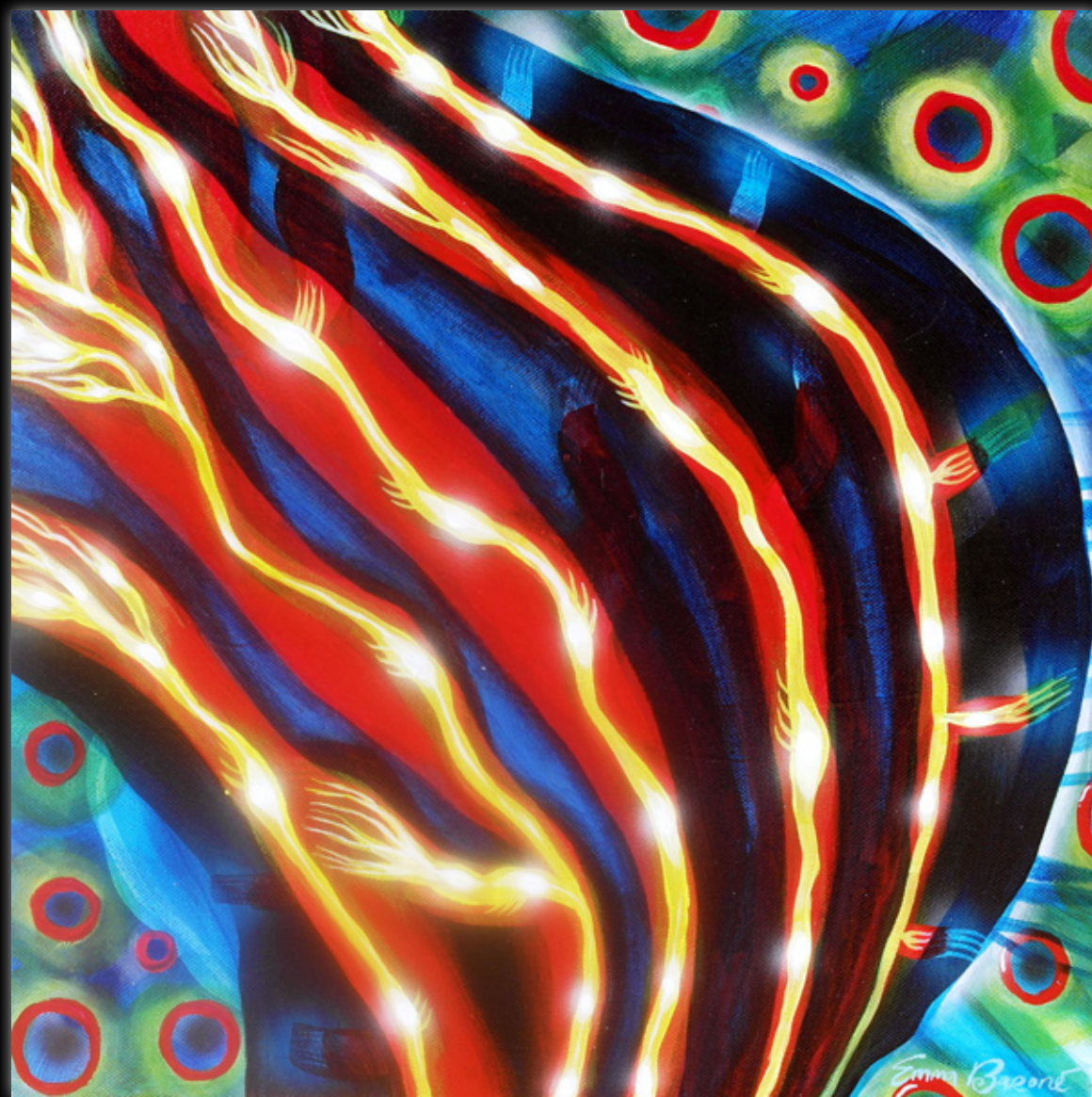


SUBTERRANEAN TWIST



AQUATIC TURBULENCE



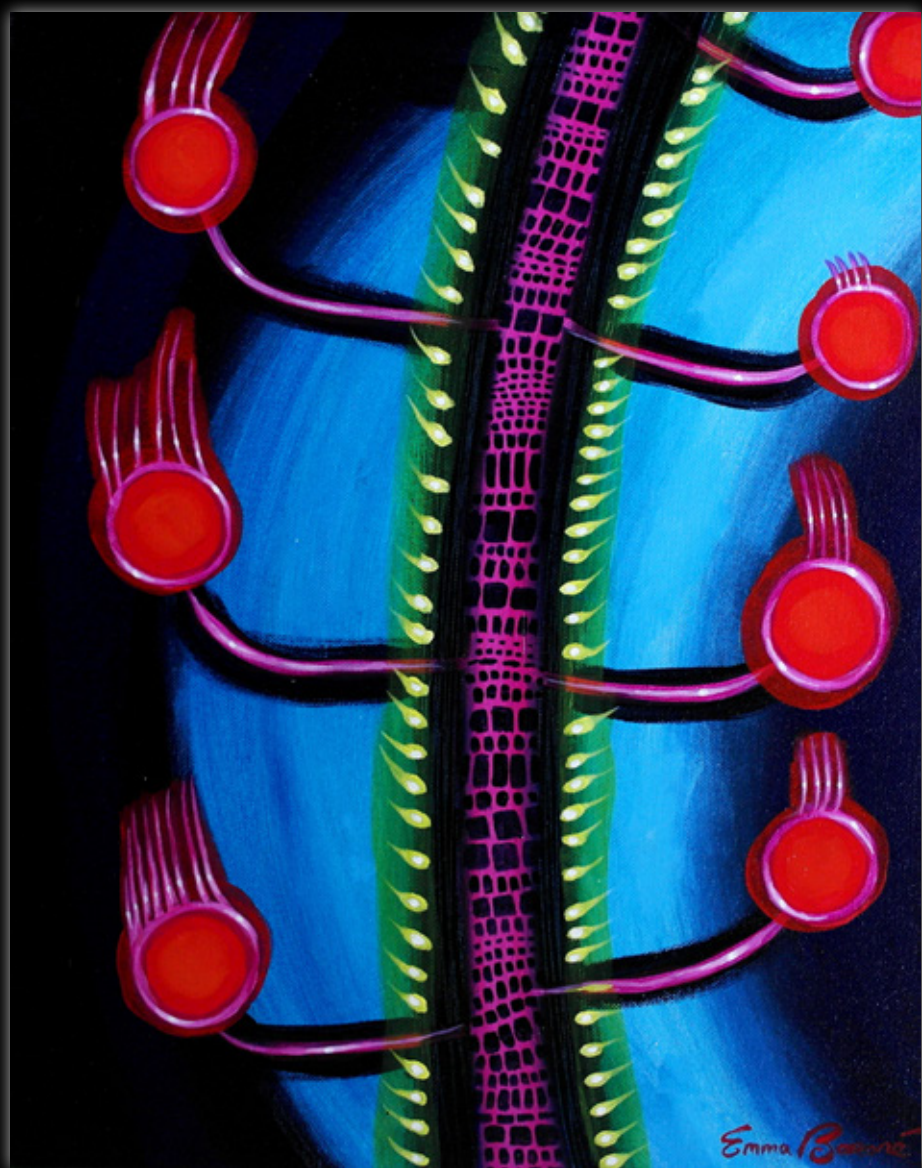


PHYTOPLANKTON DRIFT



GLISTENING WATER REALM





SONAR SPHERES



DEEP WATER EFFERVESCENCE



Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to Live Encounters Magazine.



## SEA FEVER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
MIKYOUNG CHA

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I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

- Excerpt from *Sea Fever* by **John Masefield**, (1 June 1878 – 12 May 1967)

These are glimpses of Guryeong-po, which is not far from Pohang, South Korea. It is famous for its beach as well as seaport. Gureong-po means nine dragons. According to legend a massive thunderstorm brought the nine dragons from heaven to reside here. This, it is said, occurred during the reign of King Jinheung who was one of the greatest rulers of *Silla* (one of the three kingdoms of Korea).



Day break over Donghae on the Sea of Korea.





Breakfast time for early birds.



Flock in flight.





Tetrapods overlooking ancient rocks by the sea.



Sandling searching for food.



Chaitanya Guttikar became devoted to creating hand-crafted photographs while pursuing his doctorate in mathematics at Princeton. He first encountered alternative photographic processes in 2007 during a gallery visit in New York and fell in love. In May 2010, he left his professorial job at the University of Miami to return to India. He is now the director of the Goa Center for Alternative Photography (Goa-CAP).



## THE SALT PRINTS - II

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
CHAITANYA GUTTIKAR

In July 2011, I along with three friends (E. Dias, P. Madhavan and V. Nathan) retraced the steps that Mahatma Gandhi took in 1930, walking from the Sabar-mati ashram to the village of Dandi on the western shore of Gujarat. The journey consisted of about 450 km and 25 days of walking through fields, highways, riverbeds and swamps. We stopped at the same villages as the first march, always attempting to stick to the Mahatma's original route and places of stay.

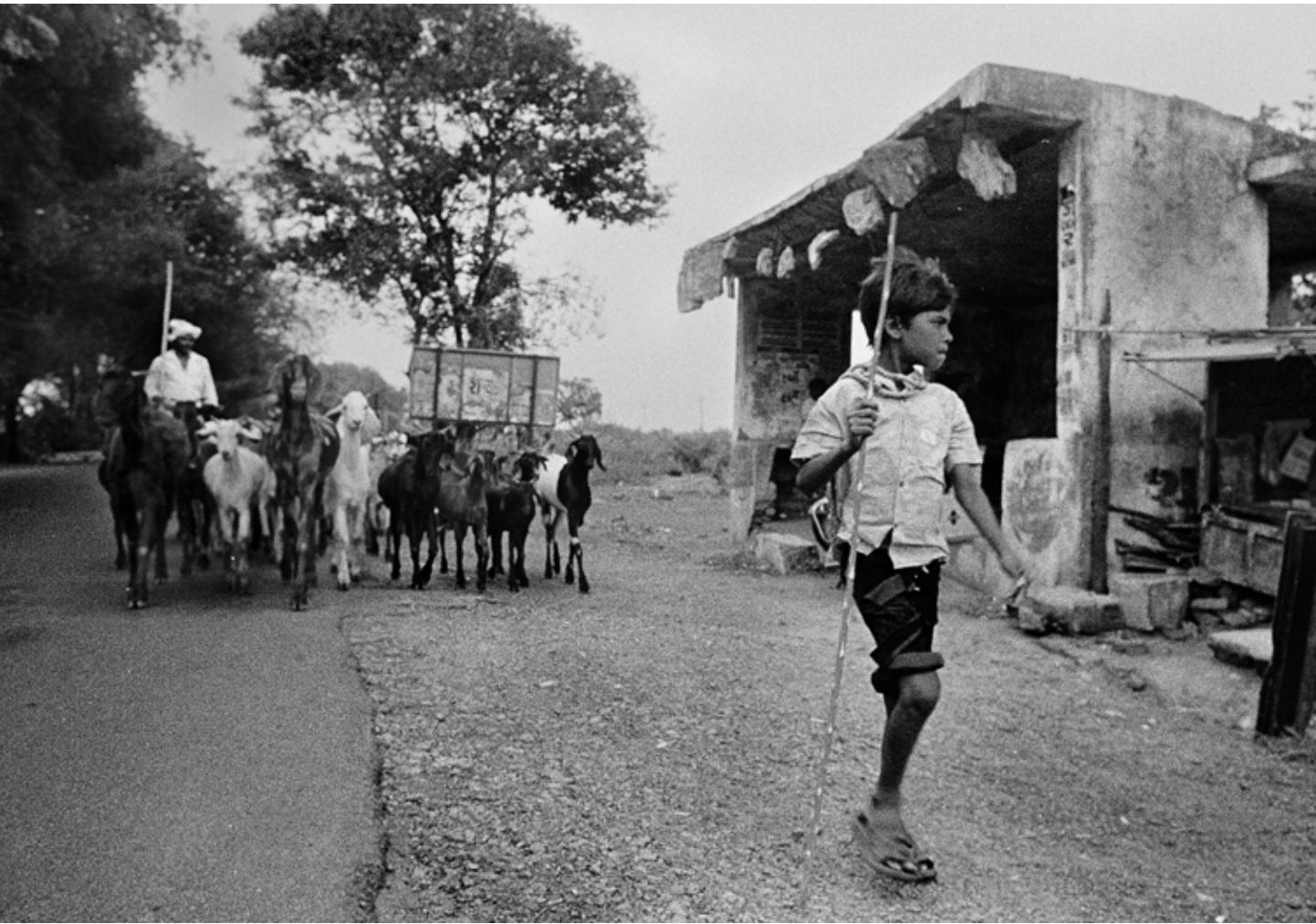
Two things made the strongest impression on me. First that even though very little remains of Gandhi's thought and influence on the surface, his strategies and some of the practices he implemented still endure, not only because they played a big role in shaping India, but because they have existed in other forms long before he came along and appropriated them for the freedom struggle. Secondly, in rural India photographs are a means of acknowledging the dignity of the subject and paying respect – a reason for joy and celebration, a reason to feel dignified and important, a means to become eternal.

These photographs are thus my way of paying respect to the people who shared their stories with me.

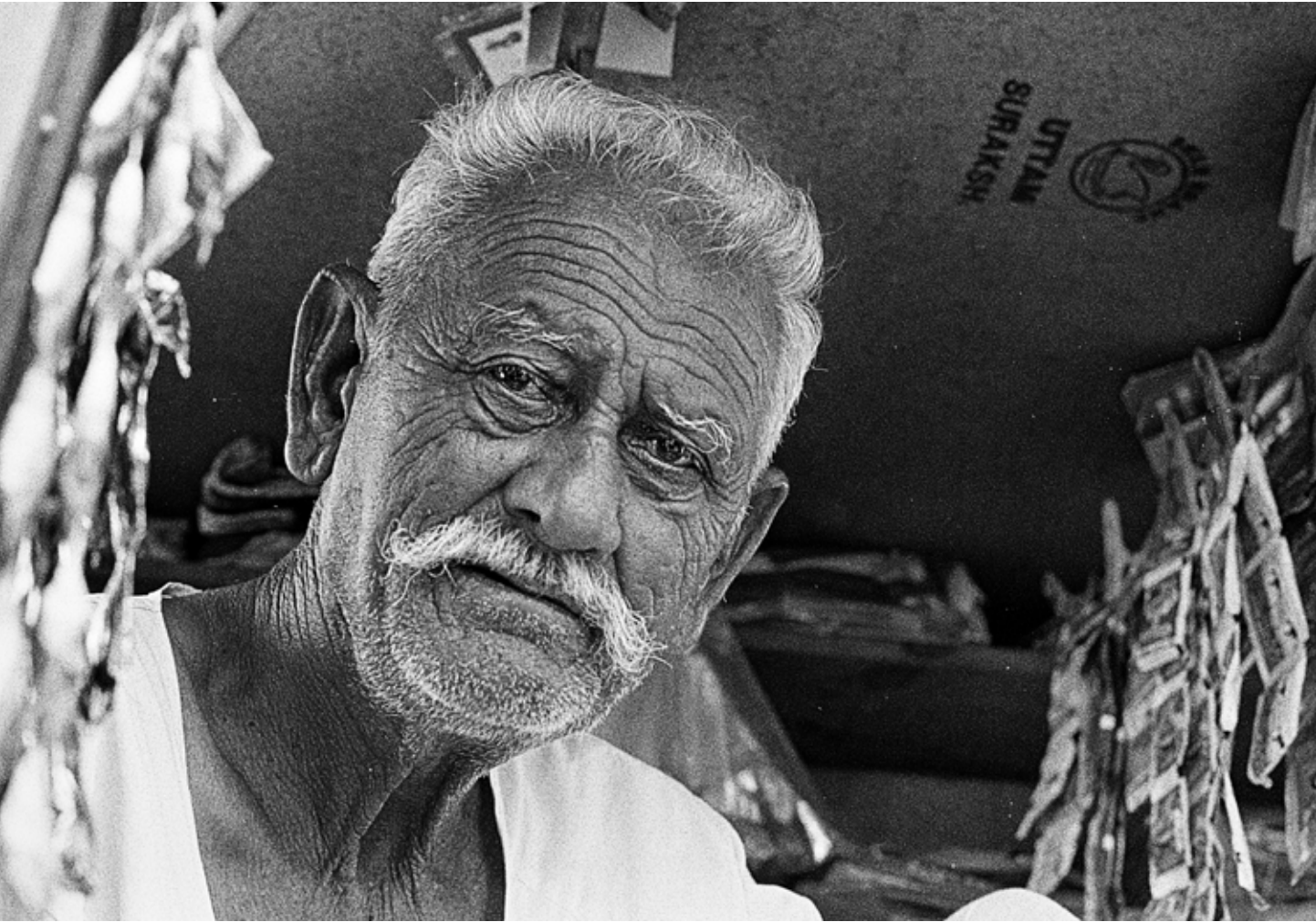
[www.guttikar.com](http://www.guttikar.com)

















Aka Joachim Peter is a Visual artist and writer based in Southwest Germany, presently working on documentary & travel photography in Asia right. He loves to explore and combine all arts in his work. Joo has studied Arts; painting and graphics, worked for theatre ( designing stage, costume and light) , did some work for television and film, went into teaching. He writes essays and a blog in his native tongue, German, for he feels his language combines philosophy and humour.



## MYANMAR

### A COSMOS TO DISCOVER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

## JOO PETER

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In no other country in South East Asia is Buddhism worshipped with such passion. As part of Myanmar identity, the country pictures itself as the centre of a Buddhist world. Buddhism came from India in the West and spread North, East and South of Myanmar. As in many Asian countries, Buddhism blends with local beliefs, here it is the animistic belief of Nat spirits.

Myanmar is a microcosm of our world. For centuries Myanmar has been struggling to create a homogeneous social frame-work with its divergent ethnic groups, which are 135 distinct ethnics, including 108 different ethno linguistic groups. Buddhist culture in the fertile plains of Irrawaddy valley tends to be more homogenic, but remote mountain areas are not. Hopefully, Myanmar will realise its immense possibilities: the ethnic variety is a national treasure, part of the beauty and potential of the country.

[www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com](http://www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com)



Typical Nat shrine in Mandalay, Myanmar, 2011. Worshipping of Nat spirits, an old animistic belief, is common in Myanmar and co-exists with Buddhism.





Celebration inside Mahamuni Pagoda, Mandalay, Myanmar, 2011



Statue of Buddha, Ananda temple, Bagan, Myanmar, built by King Kyanzittha in 1091 A.D.





Statue of a Nat spirit in Sula Paya pagoda complex, center of Yangon, Myanmar, 2011



Interior of Maha Wizaya pagoda with wall painting of night sky with mythical creatures of the zodiac, Yangon, Myanmar, 2011



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## CHOCOLATE CAKE WITH A TICKLE OF RED PEPPER FLAKES SOME LIKE IT (A LITTLE) HOT!

We Turks notoriously add red pepper flakes to almost all savory dishes, but experimenting with chillies in cakes and desserts was a first for me, so I must say, I was cautious. The original recipe asks for 2 tsp dried chilli flakes – I used just a shy of 1 1/2 tsp Turkish red pepper flakes, as they have a strong, smoky flavor. The result was a delicious but not overpowering touch of spice that gets you after a while, and brings you warmth. Here is what my 8 year old son thought of the cake; “You get the yummy chocolate taste first, then in a while you feel a tickle of spice, I liked it”. We enjoyed this spicy twist to the chocolate cake and I liked the surprise element to it and seeing the smiles on friends who tried!

I hope you enjoy my chocolate cake, Afiyet Olsun,

*Ozlem*





Stir in the ground almonds and the flour to the chocolate mixture with red pepper flakes; the ground almonds are not only healthy but also keep the cake deliciously moist. © Ozlem Warren

This recipe is slightly adapted from [Stevie Parle](#)'s original recipe, which also calls for 2 tbsp tequila – a delicious addition. You can decorate your cake with pomegranates seeds for a festive look and taste.

**Serves: 10**

**Preparation time: 15 minutes**

**Cooking time: 20 minutes**

### Ingredients

200gr/7oz dark chocolate with 70% cocoa solids

200gr/7oz unsalted butter

1 ½ tsp Turkish red pepper flakes or chilli flakes

4 eggs

150gr/ 5 ¼ oz golden caster sugar

45gr/3 tbsp ground almonds

15ml/ 1 tbsp plain flour –(for gluten-free version, please use gluten and wheat free plain white flour blend)

A pinch of sea salt flakes



The chocolate cake with red pepper flakes has a nice crust but it is deliciously moist inside. © Ozlem Warren

### Instructions

Preheat the oven to 180C/Gas Mark 4/350F

Line a 23cm round cake tin with grease proof paper and grease with butter.

Melt the chocolate, butter and red pepper flakes in a glass or metal bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, taking care not to burn the chocolate. The bowl must not touch the water as this will split the mixture. Remove from the heat, stir and leave for a few minutes to cool.

Stir in the eggs, one by one, and then the sugar, followed by the almonds, flour and a pinch of salt. Pour the batter into the cake tin and sprinkle with the salt flakes. Bake for 20 minutes.

Leave to cool, then cut into slices. It is a rich, moist cake, so you don't need thick slices.

The cake looks lovely and festive when decorated with pomegranate seeds. The tangy taste of the pomegranates also complement the rich chocolate cake well.



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