

Live encounters

June 2014

Free online magazine from village earth



Candess Campbell



Nara Ganbat



Natalie Wood



Sam Trantum



Eduardo Viola



Bahar Dutt



Terry McDongah



Noel Monahan



Colette Nic Aodha

Voices from Village Earth



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was started in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Civil and human rights activists, animal rights activists, poets, writers, journalists, social workers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

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encounters

June 2014



Writing in Irish

Noel Monahan

Monahan has published five collections of poetry. His next collection: *Where The Wind Sleeps*, New & Selected Poems, will be published by Salmon in May 2014. Literary awards include: The SeaCat National Award organised by Poetry Ireland, The Hiberno-English Poetry Award, The Irish Writers' Union Poetry Award, The William Allingham Poetry Award and The Kilkenny Poetry Prize for Poetry. Most recent plays include: *"The Children of Lir"* performed by Livin' Dred Theatre and *"Lovely Husbands"*, a drama based on Henry James' work performed at the inaugural Henry James Literary Festival, 2010. He is co-editor of Windows Publications and he holds an M.A. in Creative Writing.



Writing in Irish

Colette Nic Aodha

Nic Aodha is an award winning poet who resides in Galway in the West of Ireland. She writes in both Irish and English. She has 14 publications which include a volume of short stories, *Ádh Mór*; an academic study of the blind poet *Anthony Raftery*; one volume of English poetry, *Sundial*, published by *Arlen House Press*; two dual language collections of poetry by the same publisher; *Between Curses: Baine GEAR*, and *In Castlewood: An Ghaoth Aduaidh*. Her work is on the syllabus in Primary, Secondary and Third Level colleges. www.irishwriters-online.com



A Couple Returned

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published seven poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection *Ripple Effect* due for publication in May/June 2013, Arlen House; next children's story, *Michel the Merman*, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ) to be published in September 2013. He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. www.terry-mcdonagh.com



An Open Letter to the Prime Minister of India Narender Damodardas Modi

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas has served time in Advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a free lance journalist and photographer. All this took up nearly three decades. End 2009 he created Live Encounters for the free sharing of knowledge hoping that the 'humane' in humanity still remained albeit scattered around the globe. He hasn't been disappointed. Poets, writers, journalists, students, painters, activists, doctors etc. from across continents have continued to contribute to Live Encounters.



Amazonian policy... deforestation, hydropower and biofuels

Eduardo Voila and Larissa Basso - NOREF

The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) is a resource centre integrating knowledge and experience to strengthen peacebuilding policy and practice. Established in 2008, it collaborates and promotes collaboration with a wide network of researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Norway and abroad. www.peacebuilding.no



Powerless – India's Energy Shortage and Its Impact

Sam Tranum

Sam Tranum has been a journalist for about a decade, writing for publications in the USA (the *Charleston Daily Mail*, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, and *Nuclear Intelligence Weekly*) editing for a newspaper in India (the *Statesman*), and teaching journalism in Kyrgyzstan and India. He holds an MA in international relations from the University of Chicago and a BA in social and global studies from Antioch College.

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Green Wars

Bahar Dutt

Bahar Dutt is a conservation biologist and environment journalist. As a television journalist, she has reported on some of the biggest environment stories of our times; from the Arctic, to the rainforests of Indonesia. Her celebrated TV series- *Saving the Ganga* for the news channel CNN-IBN ran in six regional languages including History Tv 18 India and was one of the highest rated TV shows. Winner of the Green Oscar, in 2006 her reportage has helped push environment stories from an obtuse segment on television to primetime news space. www.bahardutt.com



What can human rights treaties do to people?

Nara Ganbat, Centre for International Governance and Justice

Narantuya Ganbat is a lawyer from Mongolia. Currently, she is doing a PhD research at the Australian National University. Her research examines the nature of domestic implementation of international human rights treaties in the case of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Narantuya graduated from the National University of Mongolia and the University of Melbourne. Prior to the commencement of PhD research, Nara has worked for the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia for 8 years. Reprinted by special permission of [Regarding Rights](#)



A Festival of Faith, Luck and Heavenly Food

Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month prior to outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She remained in regional Jewish journalism for over 20 years, leaving full-time writing to help run a family business and then completed a range of general office work. Wood and her husband, Brian Fink emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and live in Karmiel, Galilee where she continues to work, concentrating on creative writing. She features in *Smith Magazine's* new *Six Word Memoirs* *On Jewish Life* and contributes to *Technorati*, *Blogcritics* and *Live Encounters* magazine. Her stories - [Website](#) and journalism - [Website](#)



Sexual Addiction

Dr. Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the #1 Best-selling author of *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. She is in private practice in Washington State (US) as a licensed mental health and chemical dependency counselor. Internationally she is an Intuitive Consultant, Speaker, and Seminar Leader. www.12weekstoselfhealing.com



Writing in Irish

Noel Monahan

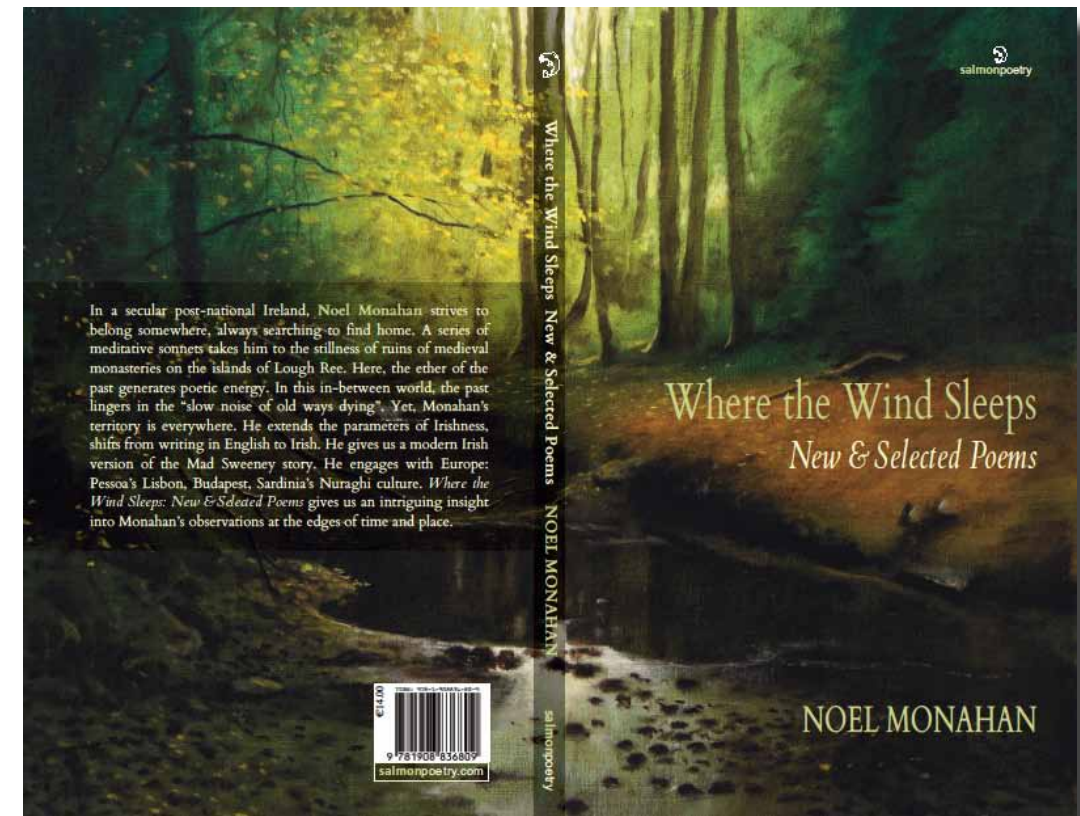
The history of the Irish language has been preoccupied with its decline for centuries. The Anglicization of Ireland was a political matter in the past, a policy of plantation where by land was taken from the Irish speaking natives and given over to the English speaking planters. The Penal Laws of the 18th. century targeted the Irish language and Irish culture in general.

The Great Famine of 19th. century severely challenged the Irish language. During the famine, death and emigration hit hardest in the Gaeltacht areas, the Irish speaking areas of the West, South and North of Ireland. In short, history has been unkind to the survival of the Irish language.

That is as minimalist a history of the Irish language as is necessary here.

I am a bilingual poet writing in English and Irish and living in Cavan, Ireland. I was not born into an Irish speaking family and the Irish I have is: School Irish.

I only started to write in Irish in the last ten years when other Gaelic writers encouraged me to do so. Some of the subject matter of my poetry deals with the Irish language.



Where The Wind Sleeps, New & Selected Poems, published by Salmon Poetry
May 2014

This poem entitled: Boochalawn Buí, is a Hiberno-English name for the plant ragwort. I see the Boochalawn Buí as a living metaphor for the Irish language. Despite all official efforts to eradicate the plant, it continues to flower in remote places.

BOOCHALAWN BUÍ

The wild bee tosses my yellow hair where
I reside along a closed railway line
Since government surveys mapped my decline,
From that day forward pain was always near
Living as I do in mist, fog and fear
Staggerweed, stammerwort, names from outside
With their intended power to deride
Can't rob me of pollen and nectar here.
I love the risk, pleasure of the abyss
I am the shomeer come out of darkness,
Forsaken, I close my daisy yellow eye
On the grey incontinent Irish sky,
Whisper my name whenever you need me
Boochalawn, Boochalawn, Boochalawn Buí.



What I love most about writing poetry in Irish is the fact that the Irish language is much more musical than English. The Irish language is an inflected language and you decline the nouns and you have varying sounds to express the relations of case, number, gender in Irish. It is similar to Latin in that respect. Take for example the simple poem of mine: Bealtine/Spring:

BEALTINE

Is leanbh í an aimsir
 Ag súgradh liom faoin spéir,
 Cam an ime, solas gréine
 An ghaoth ag séideadh
 Gúna buí an aitinn,
 Is caisear bhán mar gealach ar strae
 Is rún na gcloch sa chré.

THE MONTH OF MAY

The month of May is the child in me
 Playing outside.
 Buttercups are full of the sun
 The wind lifts the yellow dress
 Of a whin bush for fun
 And the dandelion is like
 A moon that lost her way
 And the stones have secrets
 Buried in clay.

A journey across the Irish landscape takes us to Irish place-names and the language itself. The whole area of Dinnseanchas (the knowledge about and meaning of place-names) is a study in itself. In the poem **Drumlins** I deal with the celebration of place-names and how rooted they are in Celtic culture and the Irish language. Cavan, where I live, is punctuated with Drumlins. The word Drumlin means a *little ridge* in Irish.

DRUMLINS

When ice moved on at the end of an age,
 Piles of stones stood naked, longing for grass.
 The hills hand down root words, the people say.
 Song of utterance, underworld of names:
 Drumalee, Drumkerry, Drumamuck, Drumbo.
 Ghostly ridges of calves, sheep, pigs and cows,
 Story-book of hills, fields of fairy-tales
 Cling like a last good-bye.

I watch them sleep

Below woollen clouds, rivers flow, lakes rest.
 A beauty all to themselves, no fine curves,
 No straight lines, oblique packages of earth,
 Dropped, abandoned to an outspoken wind.
 Hills too old for our clocks, they stand like
 Unsent parcels waiting for the ice to return.



This is an extract from a long poem of mine that deals with the flight of the imagination. Sweeney has been banished by Saint Ronan. He is a marginalised person. A full performance of this poem took place in The Church of Ireland Cathedral, Kilmore, Cavan in 2012. The music was composed by Paul Flynn and performed by a number of singers and musicians as part of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, (The International Traditional Music Festival).

SUIBHNE FAOI BHODHRÁN GEALAÍ

Cuir Ronan aghaidh fidil ar Suibhne,
Bodhrán gealaí ós a chionn.
Gob éin ag druidim amach óna bhéil
Cleítí in ionad gruaig.
Is bhi Suibhne i mbaol báite
i tobair na bhfocal
In aimsir Coga Moire 637

Ard Fhear é Suibhne
Idir dhá chuid talaimh,
Idir dhá tír, idir dhá aigne,
Ar bhruach locha, ar bhruach abhainn,
Ag Breathnú ar féin sa scathán uisce,
Agus aoibhneas air leis féin.

Amharc léanmhar, gonta go dona,
Biolar bréige ina ghob,
Lus gan athair gan mháthair mór thimpeall é,
Lus na mban sí á bhuaileadh ina chloigeann,
Lus buí Bealtaine ag lonradh
Faoi scáth na duilleoga,
Cigilt na gréine ar an uisce
Guth caillte san fhásach
i nGleann Bolcain

Sweeney Under A Full Moon is based on the medieval Irish work *Buile Suibhne* (*Mad Sweeney*). The poem, written in modern day Irish, with an English translation, follows the flights of Sweeney. According to the legend, St. Ronan banished Sweeney to the trees to live as a wild bird and he now inhabits the In-Between- Realm of his imagination awaiting redemption. An extract from the long poem published in “Where The Wind Sleeps” follows.

SWEENEY UNDER A FULL MOON.

Ronan put a mask over Sweeney's face
A full moon above him.
A bird's beak breaking out of his mouth
Feathers instead of hair.
And Sweeney was in danger
Of drowning in a well of words.
At the time of the battle of Moire 637.

A great man that, Sweeney,
Between two places,
Between two countries, between two minds,
Looking at himself in a water mirror,
By the lakeside, on the river bank.
And he all delighted with himself.

An educated look, badly bruised,
Fool's watercress in his gob,
Duck weed all around him,
Foxglove ringing in his skull,
Marsh marigold yellowing under
An umbrella of leaves
Play of sunlight on the water
A voice lost in the wilderness
In Glen Bolcain.



I am more optimistic about the survival of the Irish language these days. We have had increased demand for Gaelscoils (schools teaching through the medium of the Irish language) Our television channel TG4 is very popular and has excellent programmes in the Irish language.

CIARÓG DHUBH

Bhí na ballaí ag éisteach linn
Oíche amháin a chasadh orm é,
Blaincéad dhubh ar a dhroim
Ag taisteal faoi scáth na hoíche
San dorchadas chiúin.
Duine den teaghlach
A théann I bhfad siar.

*Dia duit, A Chiaróg
Bhí tú ann romhainn
Gan bheith ró chraiceáilte
Cé go n-itheann tú gach ní,
Taos fiacra, gliú, bun toitíní ...
Is tá sé ráite go maireann tú
Gan do cheann ar feadh seachtaine
'S is féidir leat tú féin a choscaint
Ó radaíocht núicléach.*

In dúirt an chiaróg liom:
*Bí ciúin,
Mairim san spás idir na bhfocal.*

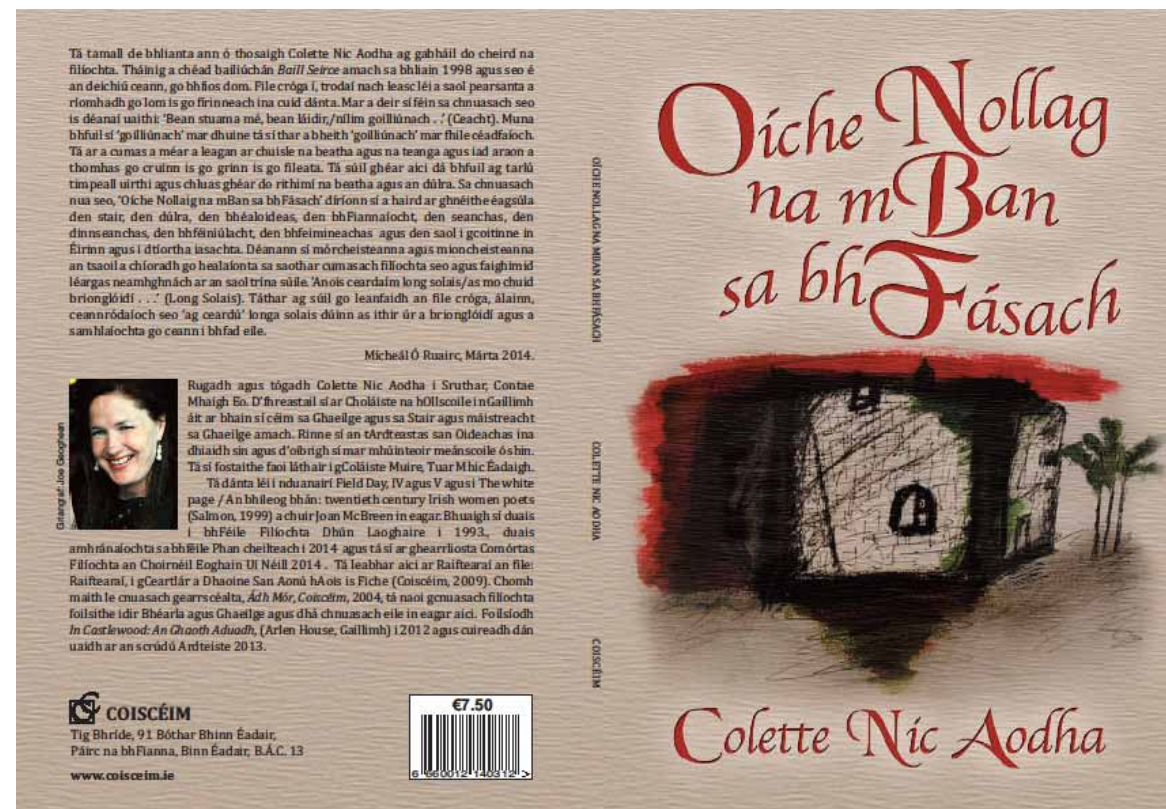
To conclude I see the Irish language with survival instincts as strong as those of a *Ciaróg Dhubh/ A Cockroach*; and capable of surviving nuclear radiation.

COCKROACH

The walls were listening to us
One night I bumped into him
A black blanked over his shoulders
Travelling in the black silence
Of disguise by night
One of the household
That goes a long way back.

*Hello, Cockroach
You were here before us
Although you weren't much crack,
Eating all around you,
Toothpaste, glue, cigarette butts,
And it's said that you can survive
Without your head for a week
And that you can protect yourself
Against nuclear radiation.*

And the cockroach said to me:
*Be quiet,
I live in the space between words.*



Writing in Irish

Colette Nic Aodha

As a writer in the Irish language I feel cherished and part of quite a small, caring family on one hand, and marginalised on the other hand. It is definitely easier to have your work published in Irish as there is only a small pool of artists, and new writing is always in demand. There are also more financial supports available than for those who write exclusively in English. However, writers in Irish do not have the same opportunities as their counterparts in English; their market is limited to the small number of native speakers or those learning the language. There is no international market. There is no international audience. It is lovely when people from outside of Ireland, or those who can't speak Irish, approach you after a reading and tell you how much they liked the sound of the verse although they didn't understand any of it.

I feel a rich history hidden in Gaelic words, one that reaches back to our ancestors and our unique heritage. The dilution of our pagan culture with the arrival of Christianity is a theme that is important to me. I have enormous respect for poetry in any language. To me, it is the medium through which beauty and harsh reality are most vividly expressed, the literary equivalent of 'stopping and staring'. Different languages evoke different feelings and associations but poetry is word-music, it's universal.

(Excerpt from THE LANDSCAPE OF LANGUAGE by Colette Nic Aodha, Poetry Ireland News, [LINK](#))



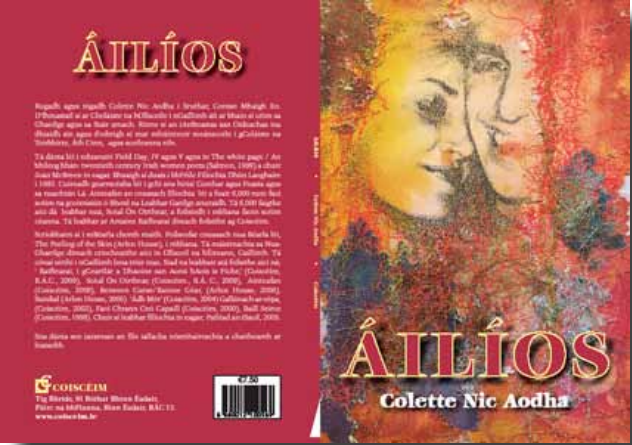
Fothraigh.

Téim siar sa stair
ag lorg eolais faoi chéard a thit amach
i ré éigin eile

am a athchruthú arís i bhfothraigh;
seanphort a chasadh
seanrinne a dhéanamh.

Inné thug mé cuairt ar theach m’athar,
ach fothrach déanta as a chraiceann
is é féin faoin bhfód a bhí ann romham

fothrach eile le ceardú as a chreatlach.



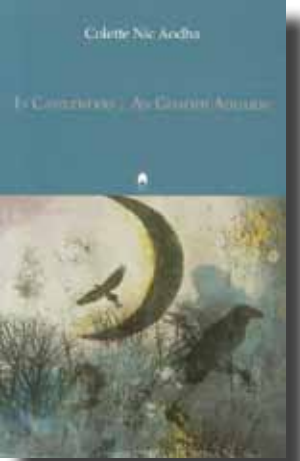
Ruins:

Searching the annals
For events which took place
In a different era,

Recreating time in old ruins
Playing ancient music
Dancing steps of our ancestors

Last night I visited my father’s place
But found a ruin of a house
crafted from skin

As another was shaped
below from his bone.

**Inár Measc**

Scríobhaim idir línte nach ann dóibh
ar imeall leathanach bán
i lár leabhair nár foilsíodh

is airím go bhfuilim i measc cairde
sa tír thaibhsiúil seo ina mhairim
ár laochra neamhbheo inár dtimpeall,

daoine eile ar m'aithne
sna sráidbhailte taobh liom,
ag seinm ceoil gan uirlisí

ag cumadh focal
i dteanga chasta a d'éag

i mílaois éigin eile.

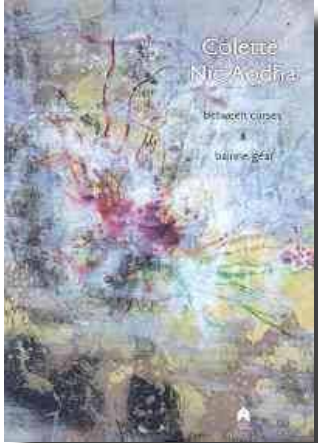
Inár Measc: Amongst Us.

I write between lines that do not exist,
On the margin of blank pages,
In books, as yet unpublished,

And I feel as if amongst friends
In this phantom country in which I live,
forever in the shadow of the dead.

Others of my acquaintance
In the neighbouring villages
Play music but have no instruments,

Compose words
In an ancient language
That lived and declined in another age.



Fionn.

Trí thimpiste a tháinig mé
ar a sheanuaimh, an ghrian

ag lonradh trí scoilt

sa díon, cuma an-éagsúil
ar an áit, an aois mhór a bhí air
greanta ar a aghaidh

ach gan aon mhaolú
ar an bhfáiltiú
a bhí aige dá chomrádaithe,

ba é tús catha, deireadh áir,
a fhios aige go maith cá háit
ba cheart aon líne chatha a tharraingt,

ach anois a chlaíomh ar leataobh,
ní théann sé amach
faoi na cnoic i mbun seilge fiú.

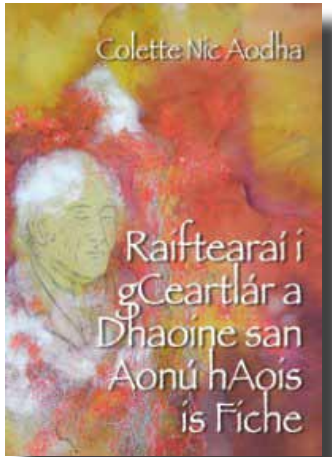
Fionn.

I happened on his cave by accident,
Sun shining through a skylight,
A place apart,

His great age engraved on his face
there was no holding back
In the way he greeted old comrades,

Always first onto the battlefield,
and last to leave, knew where the line
was drawn, now he sits

with his sword at his feet,
he doesn't leave, not even
to go among the hills to hunt.



Ar Iasacht.

Baineadh siar asam nuair a dúirt Deirdre,
bean Naoise, go raibh mo chuid leabhar
amach ar iasacht aici ón leabharlann áitiúil

shíl mé go raibh dóthain trioblóide aici féin
ar deoraíocht lena clann gan a bheith buartha
faoi fhilíocht ar bith, gan trácht ar chéard

a bhí i ndán di. Rud a thuig sí go maith,
nach cuimhin léi an taibhreamh faoi shléacht
a dhéanfaí ar a chéile is a dheartháirecha

gan trácht ar a hainm féin a bheith luaite
i leabhar an bháis. Lean sí uirthi
ag caint ar shraith filíochta a bhí idir lámha aici,

nach raibh mórán eile le déanamh
is í ar deoraíocht in Albain. Mheas mé
go raibh críochnaitheacht an bháis

ag baint leis is dúirt sin léi.
D'fhill mé abhaile le paidir a scríobh.
Maireann scéalta ach iad a aithris.

On Loan. (Ar Iasacht)

I was taken aback when Deirdre,
wife of Naoise told me that she had
my poetry collections out on loan

from the local library. I felt that she
had enough troubles of her own
in exile with her family without being bothered

with poetry. She was well aware of
what was about to befall her, did she not
dream of the slaying of her husband and family

not to mention seeing her own name
inscribed in the book of death.
She continued to talk

about a series of poems she was composing,
there wasn't a lot else to do while on the run
in Scotland. I felt the inevitability of death

in what she said and told her this.
I returned home to pen a prayer.
Storytelling is an intricate business.

**Oíche ar Árann**

An samhradh caite
héis ocht n-oíche ar Árann,
báisteach throm ag titim,

na madraí bána
lasmuigh den chúldoras
mar a bheadh brat sneachta

i lár mí Mheithimh.
Bhí neart sa ghaoth
a d'éirigh ar maidin,

caint ar dhrochbhaill
ar ochtar fear
bhí ag ragairne i rith na hoíche

as deisceart Chonamara.
Chuir siad olc orm féin aréir
is mé amuigh faoi na cnoic

ag long ionsparáide; ag déanamh
macnaimh ar chosúlachtaí:
an dúiche seo is dúiche Mhaigh Eo.

Overnight on Aran. (Oíche ar Árann)

Summer is over
After eight nights on Aran,
A fall of heavy rain

Two white dogs
Outside the back door
Were a sudden snowfall

In the month of June.
Strength in the wind
that prevailed this morning,

talk of the 'cut' of eight Conemara men
who caused commotion
the night before,

they heckled my night walk
as I strolled the roads
in search of inspiration

contemplating comparisons
between this countryside
and my town land in Mayo.



The official emblem of Ireland is the Celtic Harp. Ireland is the only country in the world that has a musical instrument as its emblem. It has been recognized for eight hundred years as the national emblem because of its use in story telling. In the time of the Celtic Chieftains, those who played the harp were held in high esteem.



This poem, *A Couple Returned*, refers to the period of economic boom in Ireland – Celtic Tiger period – in the first ten years of this century. A couple return to their native rural background having become rich by some means or another. They feel superior to others and attempt to show their wealth. Most of the local population see what's happening, treat the couple with respect but leave them to themselves. After some time, the couple, gradually, become part of the community again when they begin to return to the way of life they had grown up with.

A Couple Returned

And they crossed the bridge on a tiger
to show how rich they were, that summer.

The tiger was white, glossy and covered
in multitudes of sweat and hallmarks.

She was layered in the skin of crocodiles
and he in the style of *Him and Gentry*.

The beast had nails of ivory and gold; its
harness dazzled in the spray of the moon.

Some stood in rows cheering, but most
turned to the cliff-top. Fish pulled away.

Autumn looked after itself. The bank manager
shared his special joke with them and they

settled for a big house where the tiger could
show off by the front door. They B&B.

The neighbours left them to themselves until
he began painting an old boat and she read

destiny in cups. She's greying. He's fishing
with his father. The tiger's stuck in a hedge.



An Open Letter to the Prime Minister of India Narendra Damodardas Modi

Namasker Prime Minister

India is more than just a country. It is a civilisation akin to the tree of life, self sustaining and self generating. When a branch is cut off, another grows in its place. Its fruits are carried across its borders to impregnate other cultures. The vibrant ethos shelters all that seek refuge in her embrace.

From a chaiwalla you have worked your way up to become the Prime Minister of India. In the general election you have decimated the clichéd political elite and their parties that are run like 'family businesses'. The electorate has responded by giving you a victory the likes of which has never been witnessed in three decades.

Now comes the part when over a billion people will expect you to wave your magic wand and fix all that ails this country.

So where does one begin?

Here are a few pointers that may interest you:

1. In the last decade it is claimed that over 250,000 farmers have committed suicide. The reasons have been attributed to failure of GM crops and loan sharks preying on the subsistence farmers.
2. It is believed that approximately 400 million people live on or below the poverty line.
3. 700 million people do not have toilets.
4. 70% of Indians live in rural areas. Clean drinking water, free schools that actually function properly, electricity, medical facilities and more are seriously lacking. Education for all is still a dream.

When will the historical rights of the Kashmiri Pandits be addressed? Have they permanently lost their ancestral rights to land and livelihood in Kashmir due to the Muslim terrorists who killed many of them and hounded the rest out of the State? Reports reveal that successive governments ignored their plight and left them to be refugees in their own country. When will they get justice?

5. There are about 15 million men, women and children who are slaves in India (bonded labourers).

6. Millions of illegal immigrants (Nepalese, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi and Burmese) live and work in India. It is claimed that these people have bank accounts, voter cards, ration cards etc. Can India afford to keep these people when it has around 400 million people living on or below the poverty line?

7. The rivers of India and in particular the Ganga are dangerously polluted. What is going to be done about this? Are there stringent laws on pollution - not just for polluting industries but for individuals, too?

8. Environmentalists claim that the forest cover is being destroyed at the rate of 333 acres a day due to large development projects like dams, roads and mining. And this is directly responsible for; the destruction of the habitat of endangered species, including the ever increasing man-animal conflict; and weather patterns. There is a high level of poaching and trade in wildlife. The Legal system is ineffective in combating this illegal activity.

10. The Seven Sisters (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura) are like the proverbial poor cousins. Why have they been grossly overlooked? It is also observed from media reports that students/others from these States face racism in other parts of the country. Assaults are not uncommon.

11. People from northern Indian States face persecution by political zealots in Mumbai. Does not the Constitution of India guarantee one's right to live and work anywhere in India?

12. When will the historical rights of the Kashmiri Pandits be addressed? Have they permanently lost their ancestral rights to land and livelihood in Kashmir due to the Muslim terrorists who killed many of them and hounded the rest out of the State? Reports reveal that successive governments ignored their plight and left them to be refugees in their own country. When will they get justice?

13. The perpetrators of the massacre of innocent Sikhs following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984 have yet to be brought to justice. Some ring leaders have died of old age or sickness!

Environmentalists claim that the forest cover is being destroyed at the rate of 333 acres a day due to large development projects like dams, roads and mining. And this is directly responsible for; the destruction of the habitat of endangered species, including the ever increasing man-animal conflict; and weather patterns. There is a high level of poaching and trade in wildlife. Legal system is ineffective in combating this illegal activity.

14. The red corridor appears to be growing. Maoists continue to slaughter government officials and others. Even Election Commission officials were not spared. When will this anarchy end?

15. The Chief Ministers' of States are as powerful as the PM, if not more, in many cases. This has a detrimental effect on Centre-State relations resulting in delay of projects, schemes etc.

16. The Indian Armed Forces are poorly equipped. Major arms purchases have been kept on hold for lack of political will and funds. A complete overhaul of the process needs to be implemented immediately.

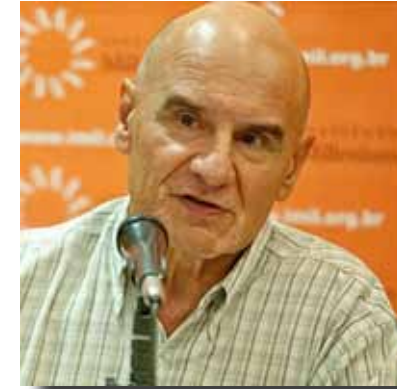
17. Why has Ladakh not been given Statehood?

18. Curbing corruption appears to be the mantra. This cannot be stopped by government alone but by the power of the people. If people stop giving bribes and expose corrupt officials by filming them secretly taking bribes, by putting their names and photographs on the internet...then and only then can corruption be stopped. The government must introduce stringent laws including the prosecution and sacking of government officials. Unfortunately, corruption is endemic even in the private sector. So the people's mindset will have to change.

It is time to define what it means to be Indian.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) is a resource centre integrating knowledge and experience to strengthen peacebuilding policy and practice. Established in 2008, it collaborates and promotes collaboration with a wide network of researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Norway and abroad.



Eduardo Viola



Larissa Basso

Amazonian policy and politics, 2003-13: deforestation, hydropower and biofuels

Eduardo Viola and Larissa Basso



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Executive summary

In the period 2003-13 Brazil experienced important economic and political developments: it became a much more relevant international player; its economy entered the world's top ten; and society became more politically active and expressed its complaints more aggressively. Amazonian policy and the politics of the period developed in this context, and three issues played a central role.

Firstly, a cutback in deforestation led to a decrease in Brazil's carbon emissions by around one-third, which is a unique situation in the world.

Secondly, despite the region's hydropower potential, projects developed slowly due to new environmental requirements and societal opposition.

Thirdly, the production of biofuels was greatly encouraged by the introduction of flexible-fuel vehicles technology, but lost momentum after the discovery of offshore oil reserves; and there was a heated debate about the relationship between the expansion of sugar-cane plantations and deforestation after the decline in deforestation demonstrated that such plantations were not its main cause.

Analysis indicates that there were three trends in Amazonian environmental policy and politics during the decade: continuity of former policies (2003-05), an upward trend towards sustainability (2005-10) and a downward trend (2010-13). The results of the 2014 elections are key to predicting future developments.

The Amazonian policy and politics of the period were characterised by three key issues. Firstly, the cutback in deforestation during the decade led to a decrease in Brazil's carbon emissions by around one-third – a unique situation in the world. Secondly, the region has important hydropower potential, but development was slow because of new environmental requirements. Thirdly, the production of biofuels, especially ethanol, was greatly encouraged after the development of flexible-fuel vehicles technology...

Introduction

Amazonian policy and politics from 2003 to 2013 should be seen in the larger context of Brazil's recent economic and political developments and their consequences for the country's international status.

In this period Brazil became a more relevant international player. Economic growth averaged 3.6% per year, compared to 2.8% during the previous decade,¹ and there was significant redistribution of income.² Economic growth was a product of three factors: significant changes in international commodity prices (commodities are key Brazilian exports); the effects of the pro-market macro-economic reforms introduced in the second half of the 1990s; and high rates of foreign direct investment (FDI). Income redistribution was initiated during the Cardoso administration (1995-2002) and was deepened by the socioeconomic policies of the Lula da Silva administration (2003-10). The virtuous cycle of high economic growth ended in about 2010. The Lula administration did not continue the macroeconomic reforms started in the 1990s and the consequences of the lack of pension, labour, fiscal, tax and political system reforms started to be felt during the Rousseff administration (2011-continuing). Economic growth declined to 2% a year; inflation was always significantly above the target defined by the Central Bank; and the FDI rate declined due to the global economic crisis and the uncertainty caused by federal government intervention in the economy. Tackling inequality became more difficult with lower growth rates and higher inflation.

The effects of a stronger economy were also felt politically. A powerful and competitive media industry and a more engaged society were more aware of corruption – which was actually lower during this decade compared to previous ones, but there was much more information about it. Brazilian courts showed a level of independence rare in non-Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries: key individuals from the first Lula administration (except the former president himself) were convicted of corruption in 2012. In June 2013 massive demonstrations against corruption and the state of transportation, education, and health care surprised political actors and analysts.

The Amazonian policy and politics of the period were characterised by three key issues. Firstly, the cutback in deforestation during the decade led to a decrease in Brazil's carbon emissions by around one-third – a unique situation in the world. Secondly, the region has important hydropower potential, but development was slow because of new environmental requirements. Thirdly, the production of biofuels, especially ethanol, was greatly encouraged after the development of flexible-fuel vehicles

Brazil's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile has been historically different from that of most other countries. Due to its relatively low carbon energy matrix (46% of its total primary energy production and 42.4% of its total primary energy supply³ come from low-carbon sources), land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) have traditionally been the major drivers of Brazil's emissions. Deforestation – clearing native forests in order to sell the wood and raise cattle – is a relevant issue in various parts of Brazil, including the Amazon region.

technology, but lost momentum after the discovery – and overestimation of the potential – of deep sea offshore oil reserves. By analysing the evolution of these three issues, it is possible to conclude that there were three different trends in Amazonian environmental policy and politics during the decade, and that the results of the 2014 elections are key to predicting further developments in this regard.

Reduction of deforestation: the recent driver of Amazonian politics in Brazil

Brazil's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile has been historically different from that of most other countries. Due to its relatively low carbon energy matrix (46% of its total primary energy production and 42.4% of its total primary energy supply³ come from low-carbon sources), land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) have traditionally been the major drivers of Brazil's emissions. Deforestation – clearing native forests in order to sell the wood and raise cattle – is a relevant issue in various parts of Brazil, including the Amazon region.

Deforestation has driven the colonisation around the Amazon forest, but its intensity is changing. Until the middle of the 20th century, when settlements were mostly spontaneous or a strategy to defend the country's borders from foreign invasion, deforestation was not a concern. The situation changed in the 1970s when the military governments, besides promoting the occupation of the region in order to keep the territory securely under national sovereignty, encouraged both migration to the area, so to avoid land reform in other highly populated parts of the country, and also the use of the land to produce commodities, in order to improve the balance of payments. Official policy included the construction of highways, fiscal and financial incentives to clear the forest for crops and livestock, and other subsidies (Carvalho, 2012). In the second half of the 1980s, when debates on sustainable development came onto the international agenda and Amazon deforestation was under the spotlight, the first national measures to tackle it were introduced.

It was not until the second half of the 2000s that deforestation was reduced. During the period in which Marina Silva (2003-08) and Carlos Minc (2008-10) were ministers of the environment, deforestation decreased from 27,000 km² in 2004 to 7,500 km² in 2009.⁴ The cutback was due to legal and institutional changes:⁵ political priority was given to the issue; law enforcement and institutional capacity was enhanced; coalitions by multi-stakeholders against the consumption of soy beans and beef produced in deforested areas were formed; the influence of NGOs and the scientific community on the media increased; new and extensive national parks and conservation units were created; and cooperation between state and national governments was boosted (Viola, 2013; Viola & Franchini, 2013).

2009 brought other changes. Following the greater attention given to climate change by the media and the public due to expectations of good results at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP 15), the federal government was pressured by the Amazon-region state governments to change its international position regarding forests: they demanded that the country accept the inclusion of REDD+ into the Clean Development Mechanism or any other market mechanism.

Reduction of deforestation: the recent driver of Amazonian politics in Brazil

Contd...

The year 2009 can be considered the high point of the reduction of deforestation because outcomes from specific policies were coupled with the effects of the financial crisis, which decreased agribusiness commodities prices, reducing the incentives to deforest.

2009 brought other changes. Following the greater attention given to climate change by the media and the public due to expectations of good results at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP 15), the federal government was pressured by the Amazon-region state governments to change its international position regarding forests: they demanded that the country accept the inclusion of REDD+⁶ into the Clean Development Mechanism or any other market mechanism. This and other requests from corporate coalitions – accepting market mechanisms for negotiating avoided deforestation, decelerating emissions and committing to emissions reduction until 2020 – helped in shaping the Brazilian pledge made in Copenhagen, i.e. a voluntary commitment to reduce the expected 2020 (according to a business-as-usual scenario) GHG emissions by 36-39%. The pledge was a substantial change from the previous unwillingness of the Brazilian government to accept emissions targets. It was incorporated into the National Climate Change Policy, the first issued by a non-OECD country, in which measures for the Amazon region – the Plan of Action to Prevent and Control Deforestation of the Legal Amazon – deepened earlier policies. Despite some remaining enforcement issues its results have been significant, especially when compared to the measures envisaged for other sectors/regions, which have been much less successfully implemented.

In 2010 LULUCF was no longer the main source of Brazilian GHG emissions. The year marks a new upward trend in national emissions, which was induced by the effects of enhanced economic development. Whereas LULUCF was responsible for approximately 57% of total emissions in 2005, its share was approximately 23% in 2010, while emissions from other sectors – energy, agribusiness, industry, transportation and waste treatment – had increased (Brazil, 2010; 2013). The current Brazilian GHG emissions profile shares more features with those of industrialised countries; climate change mitigation, once a by-product of deforestation policies, now requires action in other sectors for it to be achieved (Viola & Franchini, 2013).

From 2010 to 2012 deforestation continued to be reduced (reaching its greatest extent in 2012), but more slowly. In 2013 there was a 25% increase in deforestation. The reasons for the deceleration were mainly political: in 2010 the special commission on the reform of the Forest Code had several

From 2007 to 2013 two hydropower plants were built on the Madeira River (a major tributary of the Amazon): Jirau and Santo Antonio. Both employ run-of-the-river technology, which allows for smaller dams to be created. This technology is considered to diminish the impacts of hydropower on the environment – especially on biodiversity – but the results obtained are thus far unclear.

important meetings and presented a preliminary version of the new code that would alter the nature of the law. In fact, the new Forest Code, enacted in 2012, is a step backward in tackling deforestation: by granting amnesty to deforestation, instead of pushing for the restoration and use of degraded areas in agribusiness, it responds to short-term private interests to enlarge the size of grazing and cropping areas, deepening the problem.

A new hydropower model for the Amazon region?

Hydropower is the main source of Brazil's electricity. In 2012, 70.1% of Brazil's electricity production and 76.9% of its electricity supply⁷ came from hydropower. Relying on hydropower for electricity generation was a decision taken by the Brazilian government in the 1970s, boosted by energy security concerns in the context of world oil crises. The country has one of the world's greatest hydropower potentials, but most of its southern river basins have already been explored: 70% of its remaining potential is located in the Amazon basin.⁸

Most of Brazil's hydropower plants were built during the 1970s and 1980s, when lower environmental standards were in force. The law has changed substantially: during the 1990s-2000s it became much more difficult to obtain a licence to build a new hydropower plant and many of the projected ones had their construction postponed or disrupted due to further environmental demands. It was mainly after the 2001 blackouts⁹ that the federal government resumed efforts to build new plants, some of them in the Amazon region – but not without controversy, however.

From 2007 to 2013 two hydropower plants were built on the Madeira River (a major tributary of the Amazon): Jirau and Santo Antonio. Both employ run-of-the-river technology, which allows for smaller dams to be created. This technology is considered to diminish the impacts of hydropower on the environment¹⁰ – especially on biodiversity – but the results obtained are thus far unclear.

In fact, run-of-the-river technology is a product of negotiations between environmentalists and defenders of development at all costs. For hydropower to be efficient, the amount of water that passes through the turbines must remain constant over time. River flows change over the year, so either dams or back-up systems must be built to maintain stable electricity production. The Amazonian rivers experience great hydrological variation over the seasons; by applying run-of-the-river technology in the basin, the choice of back-up systems becomes ever more relevant – and, sadly, in recent years this role has been played by fossil fuel thermal power plants. Therefore, when the aggregate impacts – impacts from the plant plus the back-up system – are taken into account,

The Belo Monte hydropower plant, under construction on the Xingu River (another major tributary of the Amazon), is a controversial project. First attempts at implementation – in which the building of a large dam was included – date from the second half of the 1980s, but failed due to both strong opposition from environmentalists and indigenous people and the fiscal collapse of the Brazilian state. In the second half of the 2000s the project was redesigned to apply run-of-the-river technology.

A new hydropower model for the Amazon region? Contd...

it is not straightforward that a run-of-the-river hydropower plant in the Amazon region would cause less environmental impact than a hydropower plant with a large reservoir built in the same or another region of the country. By understanding the externalities of producing electricity production from a variety of sources, Brazilian society is engaging in a deep debate that, it is hoped, will truly balance economic efficiency and environmental protection.

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In 2010 the construction contract was signed and in 2011 the environmental licence was issued. Construction is progressing; it has, however, faced several legal battles, including disputes between the Brazilian federal state and the Inter-American Court of Justice (IACJ).¹¹ Public opinion is mostly against the project, not only due to its environmental impacts, but also because of its effects on indigenous populations. The hydropower projects on the Tapajós River (another tributary of the Amazon) face the same controversy: they could potentially increase hydropower production, but at the cost of serious impacts on biodiversity and the local population.

Recently the federal government has changed some environmental laws in order to allow the construction of new hydropower plants in the Amazon region. In 2011 the borders of several national parks and national forests were modified – e.g. Amazônia, Campos Amazônicos, Mapinguari, Itaibuba I and II, Crepori, and Tapajós – and areas that might be flooded by hydropower projects no longer had to be preserved (Brazil, 2012).

The government is also postponing demarcation of indigenous lands – a potential reaction against native populations’ demands to be consulted about hydropower projects if they are to be built on land these populations historically occupied. On several occasions in 2013 the native population from the Tapajós River area demanded prompt action from government officials regarding this matter.

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Among the alternatives to avoid the stricter Brazilian environmental requirements for hydropower projects, new hydropower plants are being constructed in Peru to export electricity to Brazil. In 2010 Brazil and Peru signed the Energy Agreement (Brazil & Peru, 2010), which planned the construction of six hydropower plants in the Peruvian Amazon.

The plants will be built with Brazilian capital (both private and public); the electricity produced will supply the Peruvian market, but the surplus will be exported to Brazil; and after thirty years the ownership of the plants will revert to Peru. This initiative is also highly controversial: many Peruvians argue that the country has become prey to Brazilian imperialism, since there is a mis-balance between the significant social and environmental impacts of the hydropower plants on local communities and their small benefit for the Peruvian population, whose energy demand is low and could be met without the new projects. Peruvian indigenous populations are challenging the agreement by arguing they should have been consulted before its signing, since their interests are at stake. The treaty is not yet in force and its ratification has been delayed, although some of the projects are in advanced stages of planning.

Table 1: Annual deforestation in Brazil’s Legal Amazon (km2)

State	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Variation in 2013	Variation in 2004-13
Acre	728	592	398	184	254	167	259	280	305	199	-35%	-73%
Amazonas	1,232	755	788	610	604	405	595	502	523	562	7%	-54%
Ampá	46	33	30	39	100	70	53	66	27	11	-59%	-76%
Maranhã	755	922	674	631	1,271	828	712	396	269	382	42%	-49%
Mato Grosso	11,814	7,145	4,333	2,678	3,258	1,049	871	1,120	757	1,149	52%	-90%
Pará	8,870	5,899	5,659	5,526	5,607	4,281	3,770	3,008	1,741	2,379	37%	-73%
Rondônia	3,858	3,244	2,049	1,611	1,136	482	435	865	773	933	21%	-76%
Roraima	311	133	231	309	574	121	256	141	124	185	49%	-41%
Tocantins	158	271	124	63	107	61	49	40	52	43	-17%	-73%
Amazônia Legal	27,772	19,014	14,286	11,651	12,911	7,464	7,000	6,418	4,571	5,843	28%	-79%

Source: INPE, PRODES Project, <<http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes/index.php>>

From 2005 to 2007 ethanol played an important role in Brazilian diplomacy. Brazil advocated the creation of a global biofuels market and tried to make an international commodity out of ethanol, exporting technology and establishing partnerships to develop ethanol markets in several countries. This platform, which suited Brazilian national interest, but differed from the positions of China, India and Indonesia – Brazil's allies in climate change negotiations – did not last: by the time the deep sea offshore oil was discovered, ethanol as an issue vanished from official Brazilian speeches.

The development of biofuels

Brazil is traditionally a producer of ethanol from sugarcane. The high prices of oil during the 1970s crises and energy security factors played an important role in encouraging ethanol's use as fuel – back then, sustainability issues were absent. Due to Brazilian government incentives and subsidies, large sugar-cane plantations were established, mainly in São Paulo and Pernambuco states. In the 1990s, due to a severe supply crisis, ethanol's role as a biofuel faded; it came back into the spotlight in 2003 after the development of flexible-fuel vehicles technology. Brazilian ethanol from sugar cane is the world's most efficient biofuel employed on a large scale: it is two to three times more efficient than ethanol from corn (Goldemberg, 2008). Brazil has industrialised the production and distribution of ethanol and has exported its know-how to several countries, such as Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina and some African countries.

It is important to note that Brazilian sugar-cane production is currently concentrated in São Paulo state and surrounding areas, and there is no plan to expand it to the Amazon region (Goldemberg, 2008). However, the expansion of sugar-cane production in these areas, especially between 2000 and 2005, has pushed north to the centre-west of the country and to the Amazon region in the form of cattle grazing and soybean plantations. Therefore, even if sugar-cane plantations cannot be directly blamed for the increase in deforestation in the tropical forest, they could be partly and indirectly blamed for it – although it would be an exaggeration to say that they were its main driver. The freight sector in Brazil employs mostly diesel, with 5% biodiesel content (there is no pure biodiesel in Brazil). In recent years the production of biodiesel has contributed to deforestation in the Amazon, especially because soybeans are still the main source of Brazilian biodiesel. Nevertheless, the share of soybeans employed in biodiesel production is almost insignificant when compared with the amount exported for human and animal consumption, so biodiesel cannot be blamed for the recent wave of deforestation. The situation could change if the federal government's predicted incentives and subsidies to biodiesel production materialise.

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After the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 large tax exemptions for the automobile industry led to a dramatic increase in demand for fuel, while ethanol prices were still not competitive. The heterodox policy might have benefitted the Brazilian economy in some ways, but it penalised both Petrobras (the semi-public Brazilian energy company) – which experienced several important losses – and the ethanol production chain. After the shale gas revolution in the U.S., enthusiasm for offshore oil reached its lowest point and there were some small changes in the relative prices of gasoline and ethanol, but not enough to change the current situation, however.

offshore reserves the illusion that Brazil would rapidly become a great producer and exporter of oil misled the federal government into using the domestic prices of oil and derivatives as heterodox economic tools. In 2007, following the increase of international prices, the Brazilian government decided to subsidise fossil fuels to maintain high economic growth rates, a strategy that changed the relative prices of gasoline and ethanol and undermined the competitiveness of the latter. After the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008 large tax exemptions for the automobile industry led to a dramatic increase in demand for fuel, while ethanol prices were still not competitive. The heterodox policy might have benefitted the Brazilian economy in some ways, but it penalised both Petrobras (the semi-public Brazilian energy company) – which experienced several important losses – and the ethanol production chain. After the shale gas revolution in the U.S., enthusiasm for offshore oil reached its lowest point and there were some small changes in the relative prices of gasoline and ethanol, but not enough to change the current situation, however.

Conclusion

From 2003 to 2013 three different trends can be identified in Amazonian policy and politics that reflect the importance given to the environmental agenda in Brazil. In the first two years of the Lula administration there were no changes in practices from the Cardoso era. Efforts to fight Amazon deforestation were sluggish; no hydropower plants were built, while fossil fuel thermal power plant electricity production increased; and flexible-fuel vehicles were not yet popular, limiting the use of ethanol as a fuel. From 2005 to 2010 change took place: during the tenures of Marina Silva and Carlos Minc at the Ministry of the Environment, deforestation was fought much more energetically – a true rupture from earlier policy and politics. New hydropower plants started to be built in the Amazon region, after agreement to apply run-of-the-river technology had been achieved and Brazil's fiscal situation had improved. Ethanol was extensively included in Brazilian foreign policy during President Lula's mandate. It is correct to say that during this period compromise was reached between environmentalists and defenders of development at all costs. At the end of Lula's mandate and during President Rousseff's ongoing administration, a new trend could be observed regarding deforestation and biofuels: there was clearly more direct confrontation with environmentalists, reversing some long-term achievements, e.g. the terms of the new Forest Code, the continuation and deepening of subsidies to fossil fuels (reducing the incentives to use ethanol), and disillusion with offshore oil reserves. Regarding hydropower, however, the government was less able to accelerate the construction of new plants in the Amazon region: societal opposition to these projects is spreading and remains very strong. It is difficult to predict how Amazonian policy and politics will develop from 2014 onwards.

At the end of Lula’s mandate and during President Rousseff’s ongoing administration, a new trend could be observed regarding deforestation and biofuels: there was clearly more direct confrontation with environmentalists, reversing some long-term achievements, e.g. the terms of the new Forest Code, the continuation and deepening of subsidies to fossil fuels (reducing the incentives to use ethanol), and disillusion with offshore oil reserves.

On the one hand, foreign and national economic agents are almost as concerned about Brazil’s current economy situation as they were before 2003. It is clear that without consistent tax, pension, labour, fiscal and political system reforms no new system of governance will emerge and it will be difficult for Brazil’s economy to match its potential. On the other hand, it is difficult to predict whether the public political demonstrations of 2013 will translate into real changes in the composition of the federal government after the 2014 elections. If the present coalition wins the elections, the status quo will likely be maintained and reforms will likely be further postponed, worsening Brazil’s economic situation. If the opposition wins the elections, it will face major challenges if it attempts to change the present scenario.

- Notes
- 1

Gross domestic product growth, data from World Bank, 1993-2002 and 2003-12, <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?page=4>>.
- 2

Brazil’s Gini coefficient shifted from 58.78 in 2003 to 54.7 in 2009. Data from World Bank, <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>>.
- 3

Excluding and including energy imports, respectively. 2012 data from EPE (2013: 21-22).
- 4

Annual averages. Data from the National Institute of Spatial Research (INPE), <<http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes/index.php>>. In the first two years of Da Silva’s tenure (2003-04) there was a dramatic increase in deforestation.
- 5

In 1996 the old Forest Code (enacted in 1965) was changed to make compulsory the preservation of 80% of the vegetation in the Amazon region; in 2006 the Act on the Management of Public Forests created the Brazilian Forest Service in order to manage the forests.
- 6

The full title of REDD is the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries.
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- 7

Excluding and including electricity imports, respectively (EPE, 2013: 16).
- 8

According to official data, the rivers of the Amazon basin have 34,000 MW of unexplored hydropower potential (Eletrobras, 2012).
- 9

In 2001 Brazil experienced a series of blackouts after droughts reduced the level of key dams; the government was forced to ration electricity.
- 10

From the many works on environmental impacts of dams, three international guidelines are especially recommended: WCD (2000); IHA (2004); IEA (2004/2010).
- 11

In 2011, following a claim by NGOs that the Belo Monte project potentially had several social and environmental impacts not covered by the environmental licensing in process, the IACJ requested Brazil to suspend the licensing process. The request came after the Brazilian government had responded to several interventions of the court on the same issue, and was not welcomed. Relations between the country and the IACJ deteriorated and on occasions Brazil supported the Venezuelan, Ecuadorian and Bolivian pledge to limit the court’s powers regarding interventions on human rights issues.

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Sam Trantum

Author of

Powerless - India's Energy Shortage and Its Impact
in an interview with Mark Ulyseas

"I think my book is particularly relevant with Narendra Modi and the BJP poised to take over control of the central government. Modi has built a reputation for getting things done and, as prime minister, has pledged to clear bureaucratic hurdles and push development projects forward. Many of the things he sees as obstacles, though, are actually useful checks on environmental destruction or abuse of people whose homes and farms stand in the way of the construction of coal mines, power plants, or other development projects.

I hope that this book serves to remind supporters of this approach to take a long view, balance the needs of large-scale development against the rights of small-scale communities, and move forward with restraint and compassion." - **Sam**

Published by Sage Publications

POWERLESS

India's Energy Shortage
and Its Impact

Sam Trantum





Why did you write this book and what do you hope to achieve by its publication?

When I moved to Kolkata in 2011, I was covering the energy business as a journalist. I looked around for a book that would introduce me to the major issues of the Indian energy scenario and couldn't find one. So my wife suggested that I write one, which seemed like a good idea. So I decided to go ahead with it. I had two goals: to learn about India's energy scenario and to help others do the same. The issues involved are so critical to India's economy, foreign policy and environment, as well as to the health and well-being of its citizens, that it seems important that as many people as possible understand what's at stake and what can be done better – so they can pressure their leaders to do the right things.

As I say in the introduction to the book: "This book aims to provide a clear picture of India's energy needs and resources, explaining where the supply-demand gaps are, and a few of the impacts of those gaps. Hopefully, this will help to inform debate about the difficult choices India is going to have to make about its energy economy. And make no mistake, they are difficult choices. For example, moving forward aggressively on land acquisition for new coal mines, dams, and power plants can mean wrenching change, impoverishment, and destitution for the inhabitants of that land. Breaking anti-nuclear movements can mean sedition charges and jail time for often well-meaning, patriotic protesters. Not doing these things, though, can mean a growing shortage of power that will empty corporates' pockets, ruin entrepreneurs' businesses, prompt more farmer suicides, and cause shortages of goods and higher prices."

Could you give us an overall view of the power generation in the country in terms of percentage generated using coal, gas, uranium (nuclear) and hydro power?

In 2010-11 India's electrical generating capacity consisted of: 56% coal-fired power plants; 22% large and small hydro projects; 10% natural gas-fired power plants; 8% wind turbines; 3% nuclear reactors; 1% biomass projects; and 0.1% solar projects.

Actual generation, though, is always different from generating capacity, because power plants do not generate power all the time and do not always work at full capacity. Actual generation is usually higher for coal, gas and nuclear, and lower for renewables that depend on weather and seasons. In India, gas-fired plants also have been performing poorly in recent years, due to shortages of fuel.

This book aims to provide a clear picture of India's energy needs and resources, explaining where the supply-demand gaps are, and a few of the impacts of those gaps. Hopefully, this will help to inform debate about the difficult choices India is going to have to make about its energy economy. And make no mistake, they are difficult choices. For example, moving forward aggressively on land acquisition for new coal mines, dams, and power plants can mean wrenching change, impoverishment, and destitution for the inhabitants of that land.

In 2010-11, the electricity actually generated was: 68% from coal-fired plants; 15% from large and small hydro projects; 12% from natural gas-fired plants; 2% from wind turbines; 3% from nuclear; 1% from biomass projects; and less than 0.1% from solar projects.

It is claimed that India possesses enough coal, oil and gas to meet the country's energy needs and that shortages occur due to mismanagement, theft and corruption. Please comment.

Yes, there is theft and corruption and mismanagement. These things will always be challenges. Still, though, the known conventional reserves of oil and gas in India are not enough to meet its current or future needs – no matter how well they are managed. The same goes for India's uranium reserves. It is possible, but unlikely, that huge new conventional reserves of oil and/or gas could be found in India. It is possible that India will be able to define and exploit unconventional oil and gas resources it is thought to have: large amounts of shale gas on shore and methane hydrate offshore. For now, though, the oil, gas and uranium resources that India knows it has, and is able to access, are not enough to meet its needs. Coal is a slightly different story. India has very large reserves of coal. Corruption and theft and coal mafias are definitely issues in its exploitation, but I'd say there are bigger issues: particularly land acquisition. The coal is underground and, in many cases, people live above it.

After writing *Powerless*, I worked with a small team of journalists put together a book called *Lat Does Not Exist: Oral Histories of Development-Induced Displacement in India*, which is going to be published next month by Earthcare Books in Kolkata. It offers a portrait – in interview transcripts and photographs – of one of the many villages being torn down to make way for one of the many coal mines that India is digging to fuel its economy. Resistance from people who don't want to be displaced has certainly slowed down coal production and distribution. This is sometimes closely linked to 'law-and-order' problems – sometimes Naxal-related – that can shut down coal production at some mines. Aside from the displacement issue, other factors that slow the production and distribution of coal are: efforts to balance environmental and health issues against the need for energy (environment and forest clearances); and the inability of the country's overloaded transport network (particularly the railways), to carry coal quickly and efficiently from pit-heads to power-plants.

It's not just about corruption and mismanagement.

India could fuel vehicles with electricity rather than liquid fuels like diesel, petrol, ethanol or biodiesel. Most of India's oil goes to transport, so moving away from vehicles powered by diesel, petrol and LPG could help reduce demand. Electric vehicles could be a replacement, but then there would be the problem of generating enough electricity to charge them.

India has a mammoth oil import bill. How can she reduce this burden? Does the country have enough natural oil reserves? Or will India have to depend on imports?

India has about 17 per cent of the world's population, but only about 0.3 per cent of the world's proved reserves of oil. Not surprisingly then, India imports upwards of 75% of the oil it uses in any given year. There are two aspects to India's oil imports: the amount it keeps and uses at home; the amount it refines and then exports as petroleum products (diesel, petrol) to other countries.

Overall, India's crude oil imports, paid for in foreign exchange, put pressure on the country's current account. As oil (and gas, coal and uranium) cannot, for the most part, be paid for in rupees, it is paid for in foreign exchange (mostly US dollars). Since India is sending more money abroad – prominently to buy energy and gold – than it is bringing in through revenue from exports, remittances, foreign investment and other sources, it is running a current account deficit (CAD).

In 2012, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council explained why this is a concern: "The unprecedented enlargement of the CAD in the past few years ... is casting a shadow on the strength of the macro-economic fundamentals of the economy. It is combining with other negative elements to make investors hesitate to take more exposure to India and has caused weakness in the currency, which while on the one hand reflects the higher rate of domestic inflation, on the other, is also feeding into the inflationary process. The weakness in the currency also impacts corporate balance sheets adversely to the extent that they have foreign currency liabilities."

If India continues to have too big a current account deficit for too long, it could fall into another balance of payments crisis like the one it faced in 1991 – nearly running out of foreign exchange, which it needs to pay for imports and for its debts to international lenders.

The current account deficit and the balance of payments issue are for the oil imports overall. For the oil that India refines and then uses domestically, there's also the issue of subsidies. Subsidising diesel, petrol and other petroleum products is a huge strain on finances of the central government, as well as the oil marketing companies and the oil exploration and production companies. I think this aspect is well-known.

There isn't much India can do to reduce its imports. It could make better use of its current oil reserves,



which would help a little. Once the companies squeeze this oil out of the ground, people could use it more efficiently, getting more from less. Beyond that, there are two other options:

- India could replace oil with biofuels – ethanol (made from sugarcane) and biodiesel (made from jatropha); it has programmes to do this but, even in a best-case scenario, they'd only make a relatively small impact and they're not going well, so this is not a best-case scenario.
- India could fuel vehicles with electricity rather than liquid fuels like diesel, petrol, ethanol or biodiesel. Most of India's oil goes to transport, so moving away from vehicles powered by diesel, petrol and LPG could help reduce demand. Electric vehicles could be a replacement, but then there would be the problem of generating enough electricity to charge them. Conceivably this could be done with domestic coal and renewables, though, reducing energy imports. It could also be done with nuclear power. For now, though, electric vehicles from companies like Hero, YoBykes, and Mahindra are only a tiny part of the Indian market.

Does India have enough uranium to power its present nuclear plants including those that are yet to be constructed? And if not, then from which countries does she import uranium and under what terms and conditions? And does this in anyway impact her international relations?

No, I estimated in *Powerless* that India in 2011-12 was producing about 373 tU of uranium to meet demand of about 849 tU (a 56% gap). I forecast 2016-17 production of about 575 tU, to meet demand of about 1,415 tU (a 59% gap). Top officials from the Uranium Corporation of India have written publicly that India does not have very large amounts of uranium and that what it has is relatively low-grade and therefore relatively difficult and costly to dig out of the ground and refine.

India mostly imports uranium from Russia and Kazakhstan. In 2011-12, India imported 296 tons of uranium from Russia's TVEL, and 350 tons from Kazakhstan's Kazatomprom. These imports were based on agreements India had signed with those two countries in 2009, after the grand Indo-US nuclear bargain was struck. The deal with Russian company TVEL was for 2,000 tons of natural uranium oxide pellets, for delivery over five to six years beginning in 2009, probably in batches of 300 to 400 tons annually. The deal with Kazakhstan was for 2,100 tons of natural uranium ore concentrate, spread over six years starting in 2009, with 300 to 400 tons delivered annually.

Next month, Earthcare Books in Kolkata is due to publish *Lat Does Not Exist: Oral Histories of Development-Induced Displacement in India*, which I helped to produce. It deals with this issue of displacement. It's a portrait – in oral histories and photographs – of Lat, in Chhattisgarh, one of the many villages torn down to make way for one of the many coal mines being dug to fuel India's economy. To put this book together I went to live in Lat with a small team of journalists to try to understand the impacts – good, bad and ugly – of this kind of displacement. It was eye-opening.



The remains of a village at the edge of a Chhattisgarh coal pit. Most of the village had already been torn down to make way for the pit. Photograph courtesy Sam Trnum.

India doesn't import uranium from the US, despite the Indo-US nuclear deal, because the US barely produces any uranium (its needs are vastly larger than its production). The biggest producers of uranium in recent years have been Kazakhstan, Canada, Australia, Niger, Namibia and Russia. When I wrote *Powerless*, India was unable, for legal reasons, to import from Australia, Niger and Namibia. The legal hurdles for imports from Canada had seemingly been cleared, but there was no commercial deal yet with a Canadian company for NPCIL to buy Canadian uranium.

Does India have enough uranium to power its present nuclear plants including those that are yet to be constructed? Contd...

In 2010-11, India spent \$126 million on importing uranium.

It's important to keep in mind that India cannot use imported uranium in half of its reactors. It can only use imported uranium in reactors that are under IAEA safeguards, and only half of its reactors are under such safeguards. Still, importing uranium to use in these reactors frees up the domestic uranium for use in the other half of the reactors.

India doesn't import uranium from the US, despite the Indo-US nuclear deal, because the US barely produces any uranium (its needs are vastly larger than its production). The biggest producers of uranium in recent years have been Kazakhstan, Canada, Australia, Niger, Namibia and Russia. When I wrote *Powerless*, India was unable, for legal reasons, to import from Australia, Niger and Namibia. The legal hurdles for imports from Canada had seemingly been cleared, but there was no commercial deal yet with a Canadian company for NPCIL to buy Canadian uranium.

There continues to be a battle between environmentalists, the power industry and the government on issues such as the construction of dams, location of nuclear plants and the impact on the environment/health hazards, including displacement of people. Will there ever be a way out of this quagmire? And is this the reason why it is difficult for India to attract foreign investment in the power sector?

There is no way out of this. It's a natural tension that needs to be negotiated. I worry that Modi and his new government, seeking to do a better job of 'clearing bureaucratic hurdles' and implementing major development projects, will try to bypass or eliminate environmental and health checks, and more brutally displace people. Yes environmental clearances and land acquisition slows development and energy projects, but there's a reason for this.

In *Powerless*, I wrote that "At the moment, India's relationship with those who must be pushed out of the way to make room for the country's development seems disturbingly similar to the relationship diners have with the chickens killed for their meals. In both cases, the beneficiaries try not to think too much about the costs involved in what they are enjoying.



There continues to be a battle between environmentalists, the power industry...Contd...

The difference, of course, is that in the latter case, the creature being abused is just a chicken (sorry Maneka Gandhi) and in the former, they are human citizens of India with the same rights under the law as the energy consumers who benefit from their displacement. There are laws to protect the displaced ... However, these apparently good intentions do not seem to have translated into real protections yet – at least not the kinds you and I would want for our families. Even if they did, though, however nice the government is to the people who are ‘in the way’ as it is displacing them, it would not change the fact that they are being displaced. Despite compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation, even in the best of cases this will mean emotional, cultural and social dislocation.”

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To put this book together I went to live in Lat with a small team of journalists to try to understand the impacts – good, bad and ugly – of this kind of displacement. It was eye-opening. I think we've put together a great book that will help people who don't have the time to go do the same thing understand the complexity of the issue. And this book is different because it's not us (the journalists) telling the story – it's the people affected, the residents of the village, who are telling it, in their own way, in their own words, at length; the book consists almost entirely of interview transcripts.

In a country where there is enough sunshine why has solar energy not become popular?

I think solar energy is popular. I've seen distributed solar energy put to good use in many rural areas that don't have good grid access. I'd say it's not more popular for two reasons: 1) the large up-front cost of installing it; 2) the storage problem (generating power is only half the problem with solar – it also has to be stored for use during the hours when the sun's not out, and storage technologies are pricey and inefficient at the moment). It's important to remember, though, that solar and other renewables are not a panacea for India's energy problems.

Current renewable technologies and resources cannot bridge this gap: To meet its electricity needs, India plans to add about 208 GW generating capacity in the next 10 years, according to the Central Electricity Authority.

But it has “only” about 347 GW of renewable potential, including: 149 GW of large hydro, 100 GW of solar, 49 GW of wind, 17 GW of biomass, 15 GW of small hydro, 8 GW of tidal, 5 GW of bagasse, 4 GW of waste-to-energy. Of this 347 GW, India is already using 62 GW. A thought experiment on how far the remaining renewable potential could go to meet India's thirst for electricity: If the country stopped building coal-fired, gas-fired, and nuclear power plants and built only renewables it would end up using 73 per cent of its renewable potential in about 10 years. And then what?

Perhaps technology will advance, and these estimates of India's renewable potential will increase dramatically, but I don't think we can count on that.

Could you give us a glimpse of your life and works?

I'm from the United States, originally -- from a small town in the state of Massachusetts called North Falmouth, not too far from Boston. I have a BA in social and global studies from Antioch College and an MA in international relations from the University of Chicago. I served in the US Peace Corps in Turkmenistan.

I am a journalist, writer, and editor. I worked as a reporter for daily newspapers in the United States for about six years, as reporter in India for a year, as an editor at *The Statesman* in Kolkata for a year, and as a journalism professor at the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan for two years. I'm now an editor at a publishing house in Dublin, Ireland, where I live with my wife.

For two of those years as a journalist in the United States, I wrote for Energy Intelligence, a global energy business news agency. I covered uranium markets, nuclear energy and proliferation issues around the world from Washington DC. I then moved to Kolkata and covered a broader spectrum of energy issues in India and Pakistan for Energy Intelligence newsletters *Nuclear Intelligence*, *World Gas Intelligence*, and *Energy Compass*, and for NewsBase newsletters *Asia Electric*, *Unconventional Oil & Gas Monitor*, as well as for World Politics Review and the Russian International Affairs Council.



GREEN WARS

DISPATCHES FROM A VANISHING WORLD

BAHAR DUTT



Bahar Dutt

Author of

Green Wars - Dispatches from a vanishing world
in an interview with Mark Ulyseas

Wildlife biologist and journalist Bahar Dutt travels to the far ends of the planet to report on some of the biggest environment stories of our time from climate change to illegal mining to big dams being constructed in rich tropical rainforests. As India makes its way to a super economy, the impact on its wildlife remains largely unreported. Dutt draws on her experience as a conservationist to look at how this tension between a modernizing economy and saving the planet can be resolved.

Sharp, incisive and in-depth, this book goes beyond the rhetoric of television debates to look at some of the leading issues facing our forests and wilderness areas. Dutt relives exhilarating moments of coming face to face with gharials and the grand old orang-utan, and many creatures facing an uneasy future, in search of an answer to the question: how can we save all that is precious in a 'development without brakes' model of economy?

Published by HarperCollins

Main stream media focuses on issues of wildlife conservation only when a tiger or elephant has been poached, but what's happening to their habitats? How do politicians in India treat environment issues? Do we ask our politicians why an airport has to be constructed on the habitat of the Sarus crane? Is anyone questioning why mining happens on forest land despite the fact that the Supreme Court has said a firm NO?

"I spent eight years of my life working in villages across Northern India with a community of snake charmers. We travelled to far flung places and developed livelihood options with them. I was so engrossed in my project that I had missed, in those years, the tremendous churning going on in India, as it started opening up its economy. That's why I decided to turn to environment journalism. And that's why I wrote this book.

The book *Green Wars* is a story of my transition from a conservation biologist thrown into the rough and tumble world of television media; trekking high up to the mountains, or diving deep into the sea, or trudging into the jungles to find out why we are losing our most precious wilderness areas.

Today India loses 333 acres of forests EVERYDAY to large development projects like dams, roads and mining. Behind India's quest for double digit growth is the untold story of destruction of some of her most precious wilderness areas, and that's the story I thought needed to be told.

Main stream media focuses on issues of wildlife conservation only when a tiger or elephant has been poached, but what's happening to their habitats? How do politicians in India treat environment issues? Do we ask our politicians why an airport has to be constructed on the habitat of the Sarus crane? Is anyone questioning why mining happens on forest land despite the fact that the Supreme Court has said a firm NO? Or what about the highest office in the country, the Prime Minister's office? One of the chapters in this book looks at how the Prime Minister rushes to lay the foundation stone for a hydel project when its environment clearance process is not even through! How can we protect our rivers, seas and jungles, in this quest for growth? That's what this book explores.

The book is focused not just on India; it travels to other parts of the world, from the Arctic to the rainforests of Indonesia. I would like to emphasise this is not a gloom and doom book, I hope to seat the reader at the centre of such impacts and create hope that through our choices and outlook we can create a life that's gentler on the planet.

The book therefore creates hope that the power to protect lies with us. " - **Bahar Dutt**

India, with almost 17 percent of the global population, accounts for less than 5 percent of emissions. And the reason for this is that a large part of India's population doesn't have access to energy sources. On the other hand while the United States has less than 5 percent of the world population, it accounted for 19 percent of the global emissions, which was in 2005.

You have written about Mother Nature's dominion and the poaching of her denizens and resources by humanity but how can this mindless destruction cease when human population is growing at an alarming rate?

I honestly don't perceive human populations growing as the problem; the problem is what kind of growth. To give you an example, India, with almost 17 percent of the global population, accounts for less than 5 percent of emissions. And the reason for this is that a large part of India's population doesn't have access to energy sources. On the other hand while the United States has less than 5 percent of the world population, it accounted for 19 percent of the global emissions, which was in 2005. Of course all this is changing; as Indians get rich their lifestyles are getting more and more carbon intensive. So the challenge of our times is, how do we move away from an energy intensive economy? How do we the people, consumers of natural resources see our role in protecting the environment? I don't see a growing human population a problem (it is a problem in terms of access to education, health facilities, etc.) but how it chooses to grow. *Green Wars* also raises the issue of *Whose Development is it anyways?* I give examples of the river Ganga where 300 dams are being constructed, but that the electricity and water is used for people sitting far away in cities like Delhi. What is the benefit to people who live close to those resources?

India has built a number of dams across the country. Many more have been planned. What is the impact of these dams on the environment?

Great question. This book in facts looks at the impacts of large dams in two regions, Uttarakhand and the north east part of the country which is slated to be the power house of the country and is incidentally also a biodiversity hotspot. We all know the story about the Narmada Dam. But what about 600 dams that are being built across the Himalayas? Swathes of forest submerged, debris dumped in the river and massive landslides, that's what is happening in Uttarakhand. . In fact, when we were in Uttarakhand in 2012, I had said in my report that people predict large scale devastation because of the bumper to bumper dams being built here. And in 2013, sadly, we were proven right. Due to the hydel projects, large tracts of forests had been chopped, silt had been dumped in the river and labour colonies built right next to the river bed. What happened in Uttarakhand was nothing less than a 'Himalayan Tsunami'. Of course there was heavy rainfall, but the Himalayan tragedy was exacerbated due to the impact of the mega projects. One of the chapters in my book deals extensively with what happened in Uttarakhand and why it happened.

As for the Chief Minister of Goa, yes indeed it is sad how he has done a u-turn. He was the person who exposed how illegal mining was ruining Goa and changed his mind as soon as he came to power. But that's why I don't trust politicians; I have more faith on our judiciary.

How were you involved in the prevention of illegal mining in Goa? And are you aware that recently the Chief Minister of Goa announced that the ban on mining in the Western Ghats would be 'reviewed if a BJP government comes to power at the Centre'. Please comment.

I can't say I was involved in the prevention of illegal mining in Goa. But in one of the chapters I have written about the incident where we were physically assaulted by the mining mafia, they tried to snatch our camera. They were operating illegally on forest land. I have done many environment investigations but to be honest that one time I was genuinely scared. I wasn't sure how we would get out as they had surrounded us and blocked our way. Even when we called the police they supported the mining guys, not us. But I have a lot of faith in institutions. I came back to Delhi and filed a petition before the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court. Based on our visual evidence, that mine had to shut shop eventually! As for the Chief Minister of Goa, yes indeed it is sad how he has done a u-turn. He was the person who exposed how illegal mining was ruining Goa and changed his mind as soon as he came to power. But that's why I don't trust politicians; I have more faith on our judiciary.

What has the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, done or not done in the 21st century? Could you share with us some critical environmental issues that need the government's urgent attention?

The MOEF is an extremely important institution provided it is allowed to do its job. We have the best environment laws in the world and many robust systems in place. I just hope with the new government the MOEF will be allowed to function according to their mandate. I think the most critical issue that needs attention is the state of our rivers. Look at what we are doing to our national river, the Ganga? Imagine the plight of our other rivers.

Could you list some of the critically endangered species in India and what in your opinion needs to be done to protect them?

If you will notice my book focuses on many of the lesser known species and moves away from the obsession with charismatic mega fauna. I have focussed on species like Hoolock gibbons and the

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Hog deer. I would like more scientific research and protection for the lesser known species. We also need to mainstream or generate interests in tiny creatures like frogs and insects. I think we will also need a policy on how to protect species that live outside protected areas. Too much conservation work is focussed on species inside sanctuaries, but what about those that live outside?

The continuing man-animal conflict keeps appearing in the national news on a daily basis. Tigers, leopards and elephants are often at the receiving end because humans encroach upon their habitat. What is the solution?

I think scientists have provided solutions. I think there is now evidence that translocating or shifting the problem elsewhere will not help. For instance in Karnataka, the plan is to translocate 25 elephants out from one district where conflict has increased. Yet in neighbouring Tamil Nadu one NGO, Nature Conservation Foundation has found ways to minimise or reduce this conflict and teach people to live with the elephants through innovative interventions like a mobile alert that sends out an SMS to where the elephant herds are on that day. So solutions are there, but they require us to accept that wild animals do live in our backyards. I don't think translocation can work always. It should be our last option

What are you working on now?

I have spent 8 years working on conservation and another 8 years in environment journalism. I am taking a break, spending time reading up more on my subject, travelling round the country promoting my book and looking at ways to get back to more hands on work in conservation... As that is where my heart lies... In conservation first...Journalism or writing later. Let's see where the future takes me. I also want to focus more on solutions. I have spent too many years talking about the problems, I want to now write and highlight people who are working on solutions to environment problems.



What can human rights treaties do to people? The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Mongolia - Nara Ganbat

Centre for International Governance and Justice

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Wheelchair Fashion Show in Mongolia. Photograph courtesy Nara Ganbat

On a very cold evening on 13 December 2006, I was on my way back home from a women's prison located just outside of Ulaanbaatar, where two of us from the Mongolian Human Rights Commission had spent a whole day conducting an inquiry. Suddenly my mobile phone rang and I heard a very excited voice saying 'Congratulations! Our Convention has just been adopted by the United Nations!' Along with excitement, I was also able to hear expectations – an expectation, first of all, that the newly adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) will bring change to the thousands of people with disabilities in Mongolia¹, who are amongst most vulnerable in our society.² The joy of a leading civil society activist, whom I had worked with for the last few months on various projects preceding the birth of the new Convention, warmed up my frosty feeling on a rough working day and an icy winter evening. At the same time, it reinforced my long-held interest in understanding what international human rights treaties can actually do to people.

There was in fact a good reason for my activist colleague to get excited about the CRPD. Under the Constitution of Mongolia, international treaties become a part of domestic legislation once ratified.³ Given that Mongolia supports the international human rights regime and becomes a party to most human rights treaties, there was another good reason for him to hope that the CRPD would be ratified soon. As expected, Mongolia acceded to the Convention and its Optional Protocol on 13 May 2009. Unfortunately, as is the case for other human rights treaties, the potential of the CRPD as domestic law is damaged due to a major problem in the Mongolian human rights protection system, what I would call a 'remedy gap' that is a combination of legal and practical problems.⁴

In the Mongolian legal system, treaty rights can only be enforced by courts to the extent that domestic legislation provides remedies for the rights protected.⁵ However, these remedies are largely inadequate and ineffective. Many important rights provisions are not remediable, and the issue of fines to alleged perpetrators is the most common type of remedy.

I can say that disability is one policy area in Mongolia where dramatic changes are happening. Since 2008, almost every session of the Parliament has amended various pieces of legislation on disability issues, such as strengthening accessibility requirements, increasing welfare measures, ceasing taxes, revising various concepts and definitions related to disability, or establishing new mechanisms for intervention and diagnosis.

The practical problem is that no sustained practice or culture exists among legal professionals for applying international treaties in social justice cases, even where there are remedies in the legislations. Therefore, regardless of their significant potentials in the law, international human rights treaties are, in practice, weak instruments for Mongolia.

Almost 7 years since we had that emotional telephone conversation, in June 2013, I interviewed the colleague for my PhD research He said:

My expectation from the Convention was high. I hoped that the lives of people with disabilities would be better off significantly, once Mongolia ratified the Convention. Nothing has changed in the past 5 years. We were deeply disappointed, and the excitement we had has faded away. But we have realised that one who should bring changes into our lives is us, not the Government. In this struggle, the CRPD provides important avenues to realise our dreams.

Nothing has changed at all? Clearly, that is not the case. I can say that disability is one policy area in Mongolia where dramatic changes are happening. Since 2008, almost every session of the Parliament has amended various pieces of legislation on disability issues, such as strengthening accessibility requirements, increasing welfare measures, ceasing taxes, revising various concepts and definitions related to disability, or establishing new mechanisms for intervention and diagnosis.

According to a key drafter, the Law on Social Protection of Citizens with Disabilities (2005), Mongolia's core legislation directed to people with disabilities, is now being revised to reflect the CRPD. There are also important policy developments. For the first time in the country a designated division responsible for disability issues was established, in October 2012, within the structure of the Government.⁶

In August 2013, the Government approved an interdepartmental plan to implement the CRPD in 2013-2016. Although it may be ineffective and fragmented, funding for disability support and services is increasing each year. Evidence shows that disabled peoples organisations (DPOs) are becoming more capable and articulate. In the Mongolian capital the number of accessible buildings, at least those with ramps, is growing. The frequency of public campaigns and events that focus on the capabilities of people with disabilities is increasing. It is clear that the disability sector became very active in the last 5-6 years.

My interviews with key people in the disability sector show that recognition of the vulnerability and social injustice experienced by people with disabilities underlie the increased attention to disability issues in recent years. The fundamental idea of the CRPD, which is recognition of human rights and inherent dignity of people with disabilities as equal to other members of society, seems largely irrelevant to these changes.

Before celebrating these achievements, however, three points must be made.

First, improved laws and policies will not necessarily all be perfectly implemented. Similarly, although there are some promising signs of change, these are not at all widespread and systematic.

Second, even if there are some changes, it is difficult to prove that these changes can be attributed to the CRPD.

Third, and very interestingly, even if we naively assume that these changes have happened because Mongolia takes its international obligation under the CRPD seriously, it is doubtful that the underlying values and ideas of the Convention have been understood and appreciated, and so might be said to have caused these changes.

My interviews with key people in the disability sector show that recognition of the vulnerability and social injustice experienced by people with disabilities underlie the increased attention to disability issues in recent years. The fundamental idea of the CRPD, which is recognition of human rights and inherent dignity of people with disabilities as equal to other members of society, seems largely irrelevant to these changes.

What is the point of having the CRPD, then? There is no question that the CRPD has had important impacts in Mongolia. I would like to give two examples here. First, the CRPD created energy among domestic stakeholders to act on disability issues. Interestingly, this effect was produced even before the CRPD was adopted by the UN General Assembly. Even more interesting is that this effect has produced, although Mongolia remained in the periphery of the global activism created around the CRPD. Government participation in the negotiations were minimal,⁷ and civil society remained largely unaware of the negotiations until very end phase.⁸

In this context, local offices of the UN, international NGOs, and the National Human Rights Commission became sources for information and networking. In particular, in triggering an impetus within the Government to act in the area of disability, the bridging role of the National Human Rights Commission proved to be important. I have also learned from my fieldwork that, for Mongolia, the energy created around the CRPD was reinforced by milestone events related to the treaty's acceptance and implementation, such as its adoption and ratification, or country reporting to the UN Committee.

Many well-known studies have quantitatively measured the effects of human rights treaties on the basis of related country practices, such as the number of torture incidents, a ratio of men and women in parliament, or a percentage of children in the workforce, while considering several conditions that may have contributed to these outcomes. I doubt if the findings of these studies could accurately describe the effects of human rights treaties on the ground.

Second, once the CRPD was ratified it provided a framework for the actions of both government and civil society. Public officials, although maybe lacking in the technical expertise to fully understand the CRPD's values and norms and translate them into local circumstances, regard the Convention as a fundamental instrument in their work. In addition to its important symbolic role, the CRPD has also had a significant practical role as it provides a handy template in designing policies and projects for public officials. Meantime, the CRPD also provides a reference for civil society mobilisation. As an expert from a think-tank organisation said to me:

"The nature of civil society mobilisation has changed. Few years ago, what DPOs had claimed from the Government was simply funding. Now, they are advocating for broader social issues. As an articulation of human rights in the area of disability, the CRPD helped DPOs to see their problems in a systematic manner".

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A close examination of how the CRPD works in Mongolia tells us that human rights treaty implementation is not a straight-forward process, and quite unlike an arithmetical equation of 2+2=4. International human rights treaties, which are designed to regulate domestic practices, produce outcomes through a complex interaction with domestic laws, politics and social constituencies.

Even if we see country practices that are in line with particular human rights treaty provisions and that those changes occurred after the country ratified that treaty, what actually caused the changes may not in fact be the spirit of the treaty. In order to better understand what human rights treaties can do to people, therefore, we may need to focus on the process, rather than the facts on the ground.¹⁰

Even if we see country practices that are in line with particular human rights treaty provisions and that those changes occurred after the country ratified that treaty, what actually caused the changes may not in fact be the spirit of the treaty. In order to better understand what human rights treaties can do to people, therefore, we may need to focus on the process, rather than the facts on the ground.

¹ The 2010 Population and Housing Census, the latest available official statistics on the population of Mongolia, estimated that there are 108 071 people with disabilities, which is 4.1 per cent of total population of the country. But one should keep in mind that disability statistics are vague and inconsistent across sectors in Mongolia, just as it is a problem for many other countries. This estimate of the 2010 Census would increase significantly if a broader definition of disability was used. The Census had only two questions with regard to disability, and these were based solely on impairments as opposed to a social understanding of disabilities which is the founding principle of the CRPD. In particular, the Census questionnaire asked "do you have any disability? If yes, please specify whether it is congenital or acquired," and "if you have disability please specify the type." Options to the second question include visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive, speaking and other. See National Statistics Office, '2010 Population and Housing Census' (2011);

² As provided by its founding legislation, the Mongolian Human Rights Commission reports annually to the Parliament on situations of human rights in the country. The 2006 report of the Commission, which examined the experiences of people with disabilities, showed evidences of profound breaches of human rights. (http://www.mn-nhrc.org/files/iltgel_2007.pdf)

³ Constitution of Mongolia 1992, art 10(3). As a general rule, international treaty provisions prevail over contradicting domestic laws. More than 150 (out of 580) pieces of legislation adopted by the Parliament provide for the supremacy of international treaty norms over contradictory domestic provisions. However, the Constitution also provides that international treaty norms are void when they are found to be incompatible with the provisions of the Constitution.

⁴ 'Legislation' in this piece stands for legislative acts adopted by the Parliament.

⁵ Mongolia has a comprehensive system for the legal protection of human rights. The Constitution protects civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a party to around 35 international treaties relating to human rights, including 8 out of 9 core human rights treaties adopted by the UN. The Parliament adopted dozens of pieces of legislation regulating procedures to implement human rights, including provisions of remedies. Violations of human rights guaranteed by the Constitution or international treaties can only be remedied to the extent of these pieces of legislation. The remedies that are available are inadequate and procedurally problematic. Although Mongolia has a Constitutional court, it does not hear factual breaches of Constitutional rights. With regards to a mechanical separation between the jurisdictions of the Constitutional Court and the courts of ordinary jurisdiction that severely hinders the human rights protection system of Mongolia, please see Tom Ginsburg, *Judicial review in new democracies: Constitutional courts in Asian cases* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶ The Division for Development of People with Disabilities was established within the Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection, the core social policy ministry under the current Government (2012 - 2016).

⁷ According to travauxpréparatoires of the CRPD, the delegations from the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, who held an independent view from the Government, had took part in the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee held in New York in 29 July to 9 August 2002. No other records on Mongolia's participation in the CRPD negotiation were documented.

⁸ While 8th Ad Hoc Committee Meeting (which finalised the draft text of the CRPD) was going-on at the UN level in August 2006, a local office of an international nongovernmental organisation (Amici de Raoul Folleariu - AIFO) organised a week-long training for Mongolian DPOs, introducing the draft text of the treaty. It was the first occasion for the most of the DPOs to learn about the Convention.

⁹ For example, see Oona A Hathaway, 'Do human rights treaties make a difference?' (2002) 111 Yale Law Journal, 1935; Beth A Simmons, *Mobilizing for human rights: international law in domestic politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2009);

¹⁰ I am grateful to Dr Benjamin Authers for his comments and thorough editing of this piece.



A Festival of Faith, Luck and Heavenly Food

Last month's Passover celebrations in Israel were marked by unusually hot weather and record crowds at national parks throughout the country. Indeed, some resorts became so overcrowded that would-be holiday-makers were turned away! Premier Binyamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara, who visited Tiberias and its famed Sea of Galilee for a meet'n'greet photo opportunity, could also have motored a little further south, where the ruin of Beit Shean boasts a vast array of ancient remains that bear associations with many recorded historical periods, most especially those from the Roman conquest. There they would have been welcomed cordially by actors dressed as Roman soldiers and gladiators, one of whom was wearing a kippa (skull cap) beneath his helmet!

The day after the holiday ended, the couple attended a traditional Moroccan feast celebrating Mimouna. This 24-hour-long festival meaning 'faith' (in Hebrew), 'luck' (in Arabic) or possibly named after the great medieval scholar, Maimonides is one of five holidays established after Israel was founded. It celebrates the return to eating leaven foods after a week of their being totally proscribed. Yet Mimouna is not simply a chance for the stomachs of the pious to be reunited with their favourite dishes but for Jews and their Arab neighbours to form strong bonds across the ethnic divide.

Anat Hoffman of IRAC (the [Israel Religious Action Centre](#)) reminded supporters: [Mimouna](#) was a holiday that marked the good relations between the Jews and their Muslim neighbours in Morocco. At the end of the Passover holiday, Jews would welcome all visitors back into their homes and their Muslim neighbours would bring presents and flour to prepare moflettas - traditional sweet pancakes made from water, flour and oil. Hoffman explained that IRAC aimed to revitalise the original spirit of the festival to help create good relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs. The project was led by fieldworker, Tal Abitbol, who hoped to reclaim the holiday that her grandparents once celebrated in Morocco. IRAC activities in Jerusalem and Jaffa included eating moflettas, bands playing Eastern and Arabic music, activities for children and storytellers recalling the friendly relations once enjoyed by Arabs and Jews in North Africa.



Mimouna is celebrated throughout Israel and I visited the outdoor event held on the square outside the town hall in Karmiel. I sign off here with a recipe for [moflettas](#):

Ingredients:

3 3/4 cups flour
1 1/2 cups warm (not boiling) water
Pinch of salt
Vegetable (not olive) oil, as needed

Method:

Place flour and salt in bowl.
Scoop out a "well" in the middle and add water there.
Mix, adding a little extra water if dough seems too dry.
Mix together until a light and elastic dough is formed.
Divide dough into 15 to 20 small balls.
Cover with dish towel and let stand 30 minutes on a flat, well-oiled surface.
Oil hands and on oiled surface, roll dough into thin circles.
Spread small amount of oil in frying pan and cook mofletta over medium heat.
Cook both sides.
Pan does not need to be re-greased before cooking the rest of the moflettas.
Place on a plate and cover with dish towel to keep them warm.
Serve warm with butter and honey.
These may be frozen and re-heated in microwave.
Makes 15 - 20 moflettas.



Sexual Addiction

Sexual addiction! What is it? With the accessibility of stimulation through the Internet and mobile phones, sexual addiction has come to the forefront. In my private practice as a mental health and addictions counselor, more and more clients are showing up who need help from this addiction. Whether it be prostitution, pornography or chronic masturbation, it can wreak havoc in their lives and the lives of those they love. In response to this, the treatment community has begun to use sexual addiction assessments along with alcohol and drug assessments.

Working as a chemical dependency counselor at a Federal prison camp in the mid-1990s, during the “war on drugs,” we began assessing for childhood sexual abuse and past sexual abuse. Nearly all of the female clients had been sexually abused. Some of the men said yes, but I suspect even with the promise of confidentiality, they did not admit to this. Many who have been abused don’t remember, but issues show up later in their lives in relationship.

Most of my clients who were diagnosed as sex addicts had been women and men who had a history of past sexual abuse and at some level attempted to find balance and healing, but instead found themselves in relationships where they became sexually addicted and often exploited. Some went on to be sex offenders. One example is a past client I counseled. He had been abused by his older brother and then went on to sexually abuse his nephew.

A leader in the field of Sexual Addition treatment is Douglas Weiss, PhD. This article summarizes the 6 Types of Sexual Addicts, a model he developed, which became the standard used to certify Sexual Recovery Therapists by the American Association for Sex Addiction Therapy.

Six Types of Sexual Addicts

1. Biological Sexual Addict

Weiss states this is the most common sex addict. Basically the behavior is “ring the bell, feed the dog, ring the bell, feed the dog” like Pavlov’s conditioning. What happens is during orgasm; the endorphins that are released create an attachment to what is happening at the time. So whether this is a real or imaged person, the chemical release in the brain creates a bond. These endorphins, “almost four times as strong as morphine,” are the highest chemical reward the brain can come by, legally. Therefore, “your brain literally glues to, hungers for, craves, and wants to repeat that activity again.”

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Weiss states that the Biological Sex Addict probably represents less than 15% of all sexual addicts, and is the baseline of all the sexual addictions. Most also have components of the other five types. In my own counseling practice, many of my female clients who have a history of sexual abuse fall for his type of addict. They become the sexual object for them.

2. Psychological Sexual Addict

This person is often the one who has experienced emotional or physical abuse in his life. Due to the lack of love, touch, or security, as a child he sets up a fantasy life. This sense of neglect can carry on into adulthood and when his needs are not met at home, he creates a fantasy world where he feels adored, worshipped, and desired. This is the man who fantasizes he is the best, the biggest, the greatest, etc. If he has been dominated in his life he may fantasize as being the one who is dominating. In his psychological fantasy, he feels sexually powerful, loved and wanted. In his imagination, he doesn't have to deal with real women who may say no, ask him for commitment, ask for help with the housework or ask for emotional intimacy. Once this fantasy is paired with the powerful chemical endorphins, he is hooked.

3. Spiritual Based Sexual Addict

Similar to the psychological sexual addict, this addict is looking for a connection. There is a strong desire for a spiritual connection. They look to find it within their sexual addiction. In this case, once they have a spiritual experience through a religious encounter, an experience with Jesus or another guide or Guru, the sexual addiction stops. "Their sexual addiction just plain stops, because that's where the origin of the ache or the need was for the individual." These people rarely get help within the clinical community.

4. Trauma Based Sexual Addict

The trauma based sexual addict is the client I have most experience with. In this case, he or she has experienced sexual trauma, most likely as a child or adolescent. These clients go on to mirror their trauma in their relationships. For example a young girl who was sexually abused by an older uncle may end up in relationship after relationship with older men. She may despise herself for this, but continue the behavior and recreate the shame. A woman who has been physically abused in conjunction with a sexual trauma may act out being abused in the sexual act in order to be satisfied and make attempt after attempt to find the right partner, shaming herself all the way. She becomes a sexual addict that is also the sexual object of another addict.

The Six Types of Sexual Addicts information came from a written interview of Dr. Weiss by Barbara Alexander and my email communication with him. Douglas Weiss, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center and the author of *The Final Freedom: Pioneering Sexual Addiction Recovery* (Discovery Press, 2008).

5. Intimacy Anorexic

Although a separate issue from sexual addiction, Weiss states intimacy anorexia affects around 29% of sex addicts. Generally, the anorexic behavior is related to "sex addiction, sexual trauma, neglect in the family and cross gender attachment disorder." There also may be related to other co-occurring disorders. Weiss describes intimacy anorexia as when a "spouse intentionally withholds emotional, spiritual and sexual intimacy." They may control through silence, anger, or withholding money. They blame their spouse, withhold love, tend to be critical, and are unwilling to talk about their feelings. This is a difficult situation for the addict because as they are working on their own recovery, whether it be abstaining from prostitutes, masturbation, or pornography, they also need to learn to move toward their spouse or partner and re-create a healthy relationship. They have to learn to feel and communicate their feelings.

6. Mood Disorder

Sexual addicts who also have a mood disorder are another type of sex addict. Weiss shared about clients who were bipolar or had cyclothymic disorder and were medicating the imbalance neurologically through the ejaculation response. Until the medication was adjusted properly, they continued to relapse.

When you hear the term sexual addict, it may conjure up an image of someone being sexual, playful and having fun. The truth is the very opposite. Although the sexual thoughts and behavior may start that way, as in any addiction, the person loses control and their life spirals downward. Sexual addicts generally have low self-esteem and believe no one will love them as they are. They lack emotional intimacy and are continually pre-occupied with sex and sexual fantasies. They feel out of control and experience mood swings. They are filled with feelings of guilt and shame.

You may wonder, how sexual addiction is different from normal sexual behavior. Weiss explains, "in a normal situation, a person is having sex inside a relationship context. He/she is gluing to the person, the eyes, and the soul of the person he/she is being sexual with." This is different than having the object of sexual fulfillment being images that do not respond. Addiction creates lack of control, shame, and self-loathing and destroys relationships.

As with all addictions, recovery is a one-day at a time process. Interventions and treatment planning is different for each specific person. Most often when one is treated for sexual addition, the chances of recovery are better when their spouse or partner is involved.

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