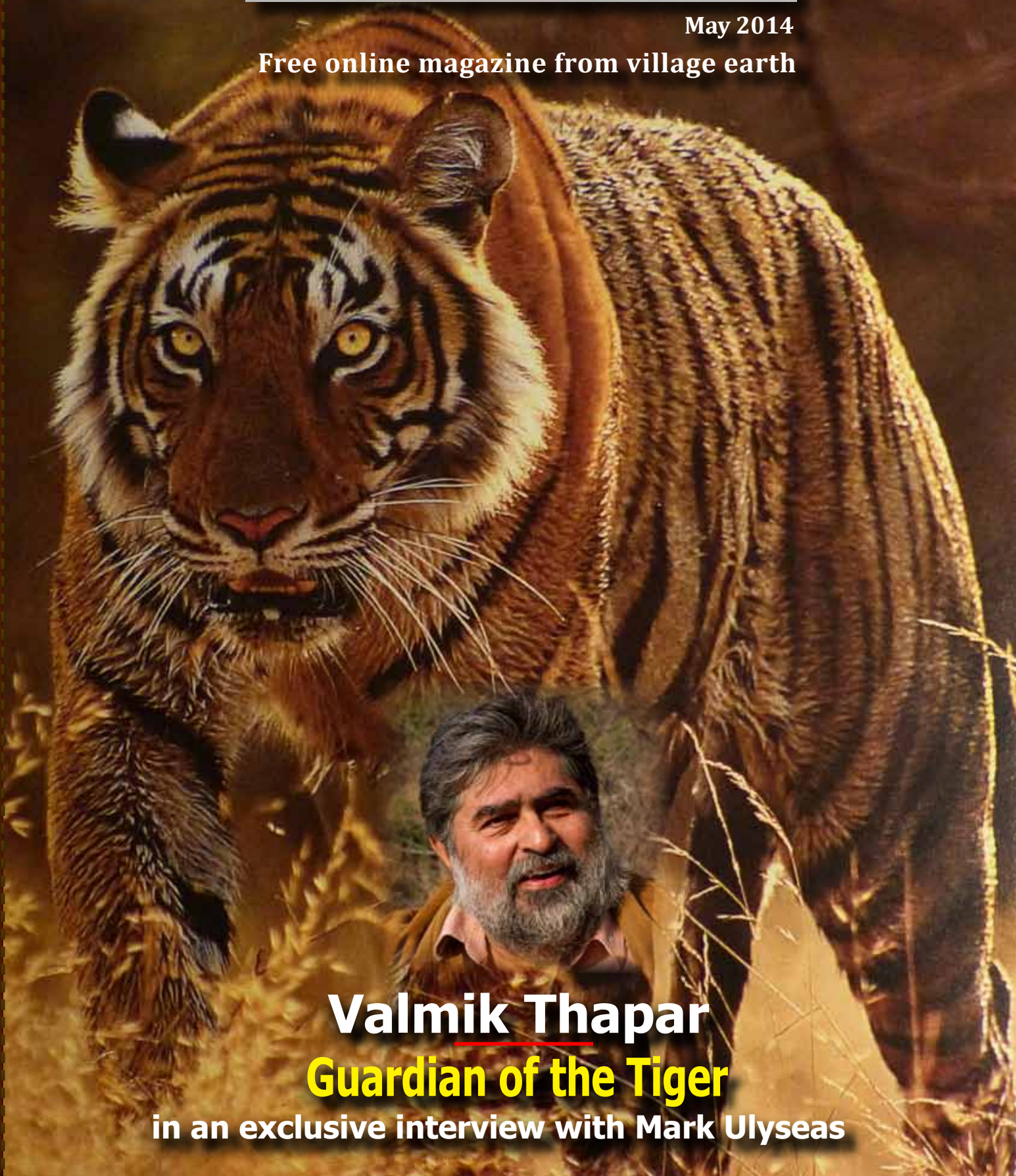


Live encounters

May 2014

Free online magazine from village earth



Valmik Thapar

Guardian of the Tiger

in an exclusive interview with Mark Ulyseas



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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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Cover photograph of tiger @ Valmik Thapar

"The assumption that animals are without rights, and the illusion that our treatment of them has no moral significance, is a positively outrageous example of Western crudity and barbarity. Universal compassion is the only guarantee of morality."

Arthur Schopenhauer, The Basis of Morality
(It is not just western crudity but eastern, too)

How can we talk of human rights when we don't respect the rights of animals?

Mark Ulyseas

How much is enough? When will we stop abusing animals in laboratories around the world? How long will we continue to venture on *canned* hunting trips shooting hand raised animals that have done nothing to harm us? And when will we stop *canned* farming of animals and birds: keeping them in their cages from infancy till they grow so large and fat that they can't stand and then slaughtering them on an industrial scale to feed the burgeoning human population?

Perhaps *Doctor Rat* has a point when he speaks about the role that animals play in a laboratory in the honoured service of humankind...the drugs, the needles, the partial removal of organs when the animal is still alive and watching a dog running itself to death on a treadmill so that a scientist can determine at what stage death comes to the wretched cur so that drugs maybe designed to 'help' humans fight fatigue. ("Doctor Rat is a novel by William Kotzwinkle in the spirit of *Animal Farm*. It is a trip through a laboratory worthy of a Nazi doctor, except this doctor is a wisecracking rodent... echoes of William Blake." [LINK](#)).

Here is some data collated from PETA, Humane Society, ASPCA, Reuters:

- Over 100 million animals are burned, crippled, poisoned and abused in U.S. labs every year.
- 92% of experimental drugs that are safe and effective in animals fail in human clinical trials because they are too dangerous or don't work.
- Labs that use mice, rats, birds, reptiles and amphibians are exempted from the minimal protections under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).
- Up to 90% of animals used in U.S. labs are not counted in the official statistics of animals tested.



Photograph Mark Ulyseas

- It's mandatory for all products to be tested on animals in China. Meanwhile, the European Union issued a ban on the sale of new cosmetics that are tested on animals.
- According to the Humane Society, registration of a single pesticide requires more than 50 experiments and the use of as many as 12,000 animals.
- In tests of potential carcinogens, subjects are given a substance every day for 2 years. Others tests involve killing pregnant animals and testing their fetuses.
- In Canada: 3.38 million animals used in experiments, 145,632 animals subjected to "severe pain near, at, or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanesthetized conscious animals".
- United Kingdom: 4.11 million experiments on animals, 2.95 million without anesthesia.
- **At the end of a test, the animals are killed, normally by asphyxiation, neck-breaking or decapitation.**

These are just three countries. We still have to account for the rest of the world. So how do we stop this genocide?

Maybe Ellen DeGeneres has the solution when she suggests – *"If you want to test cosmetics, why do it on some poor animal who hasn't done anything? They should use prisoners who have been convicted of murder or rape instead. So, rather than seeing if perfume irritates a bunny rabbit's eyes, they should throw it in Charles Manson's eyes and ask him if it hurts."*

There are larger issues here that go beyond the stated objectives of medical researchers who claim that – "Research, including some studies on animals, has greatly contributed to progress in the treatment of infections, helped with immunisation, improved cancer treatment and has had a major impact on managing heart disease, brain disorders, arthritis and transplantation. Research on rats, dogs and pigs has helped to find new treatments, including bypass surgery and treatments for angina. Polio would still claim hundreds of lives annually without the animal research of the Nobel laureate Albert Sabin." - www.animalresearchforlife.eu

What are these issues? Just two: Ethics and Morals.



Photograph Mark Ulyseas

So why don't we conduct tests on humans?

The unsustainable levels of population have put a strain on the natural resources of the earth. The onslaught on Mother Nature's dominion continues with the decimation of her denizens perpetrated by humankind, a species that has over thousands of years fine tuned the art of bludgeoning baby seals to death, skinning animals alive, eating them, imprisoning them for pleasure and finally exterminating millions of creatures.

Some call this progress, others, civilisation.

And while the butchery continues people raise the banner of human rights - Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

How can we talk of human rights when we don't respect the rights of animals?

I shall leave you with this quote that puts the ongoing genocide into perspective.

"One saw a bird dying, shot by a man. It was flying with rhythmic beat and beautifully, with such freedom and lack of fear. And the gun shattered it; it fell to the earth and all the life had gone out of it. A dog fetched it, and the man collected other dead birds. He was chattering with his friend and seemed so utterly indifferent. All that he was concerned with was bringing down so many birds, and it was over as far as he was concerned. They are killing all over the world. Those marvellous, great animals of the sea, the whales, are killed by the million, and the tiger and so many other animals are now becoming endangered species. Man is the only animal that is to be dreaded."

— Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti to Himself: His Last Journal*

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

01 May 2014



Valmik Thapar - Guardian of the Tiger in an exclusive interview

Thapar, Foremost Tiger Conservationist, Naturalist, Film-maker and Founder of Ranthambhore Foundation is author of over 25 books on tigers and conservation. His latest, *Tiger Fire*, is a magnum opus on 500 years of the tiger in India from the 16th century till date. He has also produced many documentaries on India's habitat for the BBC, Animal Planet, Discovery and National Geographic. He is married to the theatre personality *Sanjana Kapoor* and the couple have a son, Hamir.



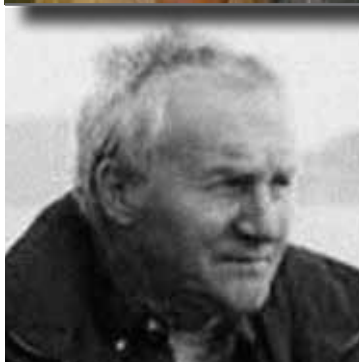
Hanuman and the Living World of Hinduism Professor Vamsee Juluri

Juluri is a Professor of Media Studies at the University of San Francisco where he teaches classes on globalization, Indian Cinema and Mahatma Gandhi among other subjects. His latest book, *Bollywood Nation: India through its Cinema* (Penguin India), tells the story of modern India through its popular movies and makes a case for recognizing the essential contribution of cinema to India's survival as a democracy. His earlier books include *Becoming a Global Audience: Longing and Belonging in Indian Music Television*, and *The Mythologist: A Novel*.



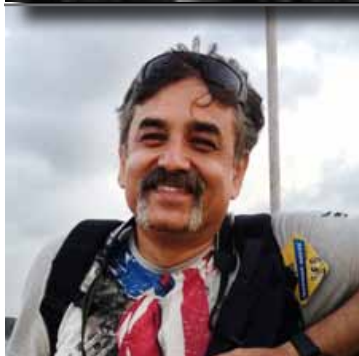
Conservation & Environmental Education 4 Life (CEE4Life) Sybelle Foxcroft

Foxcroft is an Australian conservationist and Director of the non-profit organisation *Cee4life* (Conservation and Environmental Education4 Life) She has served in the Australian Army as a SGT Medic, holds double degree in wildlife conservation biology and environmental management, and has been investigated the wildlife trade and witnessed the brutal treatment of some of the world's most iconic animals. www.cee4life.org



Our Last Horse 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



Seven Shades of Grey Vivek Mehra

Mehra is currently Managing Director and CEO, SAGE publications India. He has an MBA in Marketing from Columbia University, New York and a B.Sc. in Textile Technology from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. He teaches a course on Managing a Publishing Enterprise and Publishing in a Globalised World at the Post Graduate level, at the Ambedkar University, New Delhi. Member of the CII National Committee on IP for 2013-14. In July 2013 he finally self-published his maiden novel *'Seven Shades of Grey'* written in 1999. www.notionpress.com/seven-shades-of-grey



Is Thailand Heading Towards a Failed Nation? Joana Stella Kompa

Kompa was born 1963 in Germany and has lived for the past 24 years in various cultures of Asia. She studied Journalism, New English Literature and Normative Ethics at Tübingen University as well as Philosophy of Mind and Theory of Knowledge at Oxford University. Joana has been working as a Senior Lecturer and Program Director for Media Design at Temasek Polytechnic (Singapore) and Raffles International College (Bangkok). Currently she is finishing her M(Sc) in Applied Psychology at Liverpool University. www.joanakompa.com



Some Experiential and Theoretical Remarks on Human Rights Dr. Angela Condello

Dr Condello's research and teaching focus on legal philosophy. She studied law at the University of Torino and at the University of Roma Tre, where she completed her doctorate with a thesis entitled "Ana-logica". She teaches at Arcadia College of Italian Studies and the University of Roma Tre (both in Rome. Since January 2014, Angela has been a membre associé of the Centre d'études des normes juridiques at the EHESS in Paris, directed by Prof. Dr. Paolo Napoli and a Fellow at the Käte Hamburger Centre for Advanced Study in the Humanities "Law as Culture". First published in [Regarding Rights](#)



True Cost of Food Elizabeth Willmott-Harrop

Elizabeth is a freelance writer, poet and artist specialising in human rights advocacy, with a particular interest in the rights of women and children who has worked for many international organisations including Amnesty International and UNICEF, and has worked in a number of countries, where she has spoken with the victims of human trafficking. The subjects Elizabeth has worked and written on include inter-country adoption; legal reform; maternal and infant health; the sexualisation of children; and war propaganda. www.libertyandhumanity.com



Vegan Food - Quinoa Pulao Perinaz Avari

Perinaz (Peri) Avari is a proud Parsi Zoroastrian, native of cosmopolitan Mumbai in India and hospitality professional who's been on many 'food adventures', especially during her 10 years working for the Taj Group of Hotels in India. Now living in America, Peri shares her hospitality wisdom and passion for Parsi and Indian food by creating simple recipes with a global appeal, through her informative articles and world travel adventures on - www.perisspiceladle.com



Sexual Compromise 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



I believe there are about 1200 to 1500 tigers alive in India. The new government that will come into power in May 2014 will do little as the bureaucracy that governs India is the same and has little knowledge of what wild tigers need.



Valmik Thapar

Foremost Tiger Conservationist and Author

Guardian of the Tiger

in an exclusive interview with Mark Ulyseas

“My message to those who read this interview is that saving wild tigers is like finding a path of peace through a mine-field. It is the greatest challenge to engage in as the tiger is, for me, the most charismatic being on this planet. Therefore, engage in this battle as the future of the tiger rests not on what governments do but how they partner and share decision making with those who serve the tiger without being in official positions. The future is in new partnerships with locals, NGOs, wildlife tourism players, scientists and many more. This interdisciplinary approach in governance will minimise damage to tigers.” - *Thapar*

TIGER VALMIK FIRE THAPAR

Corbett National Park in the last two years has dealt with a high rate of poaching and unnatural deaths of tigers. The government needs additional trained manpower to patrol this habitat that extends to the border of Nepal and this is not easy.

Tell us about your relationship with Macchli and how it impacted your life?

My relationship with ***Machli*** was because of my relationship with her grandmother ***Noon*** who I knew very well in the mid 1980's. In fact she was my most favourite tigress who derived her name from her intense activities in the middle of the day. Some of my rarest encounters of predatory behaviour came by following her. By the mid 1990's her daughter called ***Lady of the Lakes*** ruled and by 1997 ***Machli*** was born to command the area of Ranthambhore's lakes. These three generations of tigers impacted my life filling it with more knowledge about tigers and their behaviour.

Reports emanating from Jim Corbett National Park reveal that poaching is rampant. Is this true and if so, why has the government been unable to stop it? Has the legal system also failed in prosecuting captured poachers? And could corruption in the system be one of the reasons?

Corbett National Park in the last two years has dealt with a high rate of poaching and unnatural deaths of tigers. Poaching is not rampant. The government needs additional trained manpower to patrol this habitat that extends to the border of Nepal and this is not easy. The legal system in India is complicated and time consuming and tiger poaching is not a priority as the major crimes take precedence so convictions suffer. This will only change when special green courts are created only to deal with forest and wildlife crimes. Corruption is rampant in India and affects all patterns of governance so is a vital contributing reason to the tiger's plight.



From 2006-2007 till today there has been a sharp increase in human interference with wild tigers especially by forest managers. At the same time there has been a link with a corresponding increase in man tiger conflict, attacks on man and livestock, man-eating and tigers both old and young leaving the precincts of forests in search of food.

What have been the shortcomings in Project Tiger and the Tiger Task Force? And has it really protected the Tiger and its habitat? Or, has it been criminally mis-managed? Please comment.

In 2004 Project Tiger was in a severe crisis and the first information regarding the extinction of tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan hit the headlines and was soon followed by the absence of nearly half of Ranthambhore's tigers for similar reasons. Panna Tiger Reserve in central India was also losing tigers and in the years that followed lost all its tigers to poachers.

By 2005 and on my suggestion the Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh created a tiger task force. Sadly my suggestions of who should be inducted into it were ignored and of the five people in it only two had some knowledge of tigers. Instead of dealing with the needs of the tiger this task force started to get entangled in the problems of forest people and therefore failed in its mission to either create innovative reform in the governance of our tiger landscapes or in keeping tiger habitats inviolate.

I fought hard to correct this report in the interest of the tiger but the majority were against me and I ended up giving my note of dissent. Therefore the result of this task force was disastrous and never able to solve the tiger's problems.

From 2006-2007 till today there has been a sharp increase in human interference with wild tigers especially by forest managers. At the same time there has been a link with a corresponding increase in man tiger conflict, attacks on man and livestock, man-eating and tigers both old and young leaving the precincts of forests in search of food. We need to carefully examine what is happening to cause trauma and stress in wild tigers.

Let us look at some indicators in the last 7 years or so.

- Forest officers have indulged in excessive artificial baiting of wild tigers either to increase their longevity, for watching and photographing them, to aid their natural food supply in case of freshly introduced tigers as in Sariska, Panna and Nagzira etc, artificial feeding of orphaned cubs till adulthood, providing food to injured and slightly injured tigers to aid recovery, and millions of rupees have been spent on live and dead bait and it is difficult to know under which head of expenditure this has been done—science and research perhaps even though no scientific reasoning is followed.

The Ultimate Guide

VALMIK THAPAR

Draw a graph over the last 8 years between the levels of manhandling, collaring, tranquilizing and feeding of tigers and the levels of man attacks and you will find a close connection. I grew up to believe that nature must take its course and we cannot interfere in the life of wild tigers. We must stick to this principle otherwise unknowingly we are creating the most serious problem for tigers. Handling wild tigers needs to be banned unless there is an emergency or a scientific mission.

What have been the shortcomings in Project Tiger...? Contd...

- In this period of time the tranquilizer gun seems to have become a fashion and the safe medicine has meant that excessive use has been made of this methodology to sedate slightly injured or sick tigers and treat them with antibiotics before releasing them. Many other tigers have been tranquilized and relocated to new areas like was done in *Ranthambhore, Panna, Sariska, Kanha, Pench, Bandhavgarh, Nagzira*, and several other locations. This handling has increased hugely and none of it for science or knowledge but more for political and bureaucratic ends.

- The impact of all of this on the natural society of tigers in my opinion have been severe as dominant males and breeding females have suddenly been lifted out and this has resulted in possible conflict between tigers, male tigers and cubs and even between tigresses. Sadly the negative impacts have not been addressed by serious scientific study.

- The scars of this kind of severe interference are not only felt at the source level but also in the new home. Relocated tigers are followed, chased, as manmade attempts are made to confine them to specific forest areas and prevent them from going where they want. In this exercise hundreds of people are employed to force freshly released tigers to change direction by using firecrackers, lighting fires, sounding drums, shouting and behaving in much the same way as the hunters of the past did in our recent sordid tiger history. Forest managers have gone to the extent of using water tankers to pour water to what they considered were thirsty tigers! In my opinion the damage and disturbance done to the tiger's world in the last 8 years is shocking; and all this with no base in science. In fact it is a huge missed opportunity where instead of better technology being used for understanding tigers through reliable scientific research it is being used for sharply intrusive impacts in the tiger's natural world.

- I am convinced that what we are following is the wrong approach and dangerous to the future of wild tigers. You cannot tranquilize wild tigers at everyone's whim and fancy as seems to have become the fashion. You cannot feed orphaned cubs and expect that they will not turn on man as prey in the future. We cannot play god to wild tigers otherwise we are directly going to be responsible for both the trauma tigers suffer and their consequences.

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this principle otherwise unknowingly we are creating the most serious problem for tigers. We must minimize the impacts of our forest managers and their decisions. Handling wild tigers needs to be banned unless there is an emergency or a scientific mission. If not the man tiger conflict will grow as traumatized tigers roam both in forests where their kin have been plucked and in new forests that they know nothing of and where they have been placed. Impacts on these tigers and their brethren can be far reaching in terms of their response to man.

What is the difference between a Reserve, Park and Sanctuary and how many are there that shelter the remaining tigers? And are the tigers protected in these areas or are they at the mercy of poachers?

The word reserve has no legal meaning and denotes a tiger reserve which normally includes a national park, a sanctuary and a new legal category of land called critical tiger habitat. Both national park and critical tiger habitat are supposed to be inviolate landscapes where no human disturbance is permitted but this is seldom true of the 70 odd national parks that exist. Sanctuary is a legal category of land that allows for some use be it firewood collection or livestock grazing. The nearly 600 sanctuaries in India are over exploited and abused. Tigers are protected legally but where protection is weak they are at the mercy of poachers. Most of the forest staff in India is demoralised and unfit for active anti poaching duty and require not just fresh recruitment but rigorous training. A tiger protection force announced by the last government nearly 7 years ago is still awaited in several vital tiger landscapes. Our levels of implementing approved government policy are abysmal and shocking. There are 18 local governments who administer tigers and their habitat and our federal government only provides advice and financial resources. It is an administrative nightmare for tigers.

Of what use is a dead tiger and to whom? And are the Chinese the main culprits who pay top dollar for tiger parts that are used in aphrodisiacs?

A dead tiger from skin to whisker to claw to bone has a price across India's borders especially in places like China. For reasons to do with cures and as aphrodisiacs, this demand from China raises the price for the poacher who is further fuelled on his mission. But this is not the only reason why tigers die. They are poisoned off when they kill livestock that come into the forest to graze. These revenge killings take a toll on wild tigers. Poison is mixed into the dead cow or buffalo after a kill and when the tiger returns to feed in the night it dies and sometimes with all the cubs. These are not the poachers' handiwork but of angry locals.




Wild tigers are symbolic of the amazing forests of India that occupy 20% of India's land mass. By keeping them alive you keep all the natural treasures alive so essential for any quality of human life, be it the air we breathe or the water we drink.

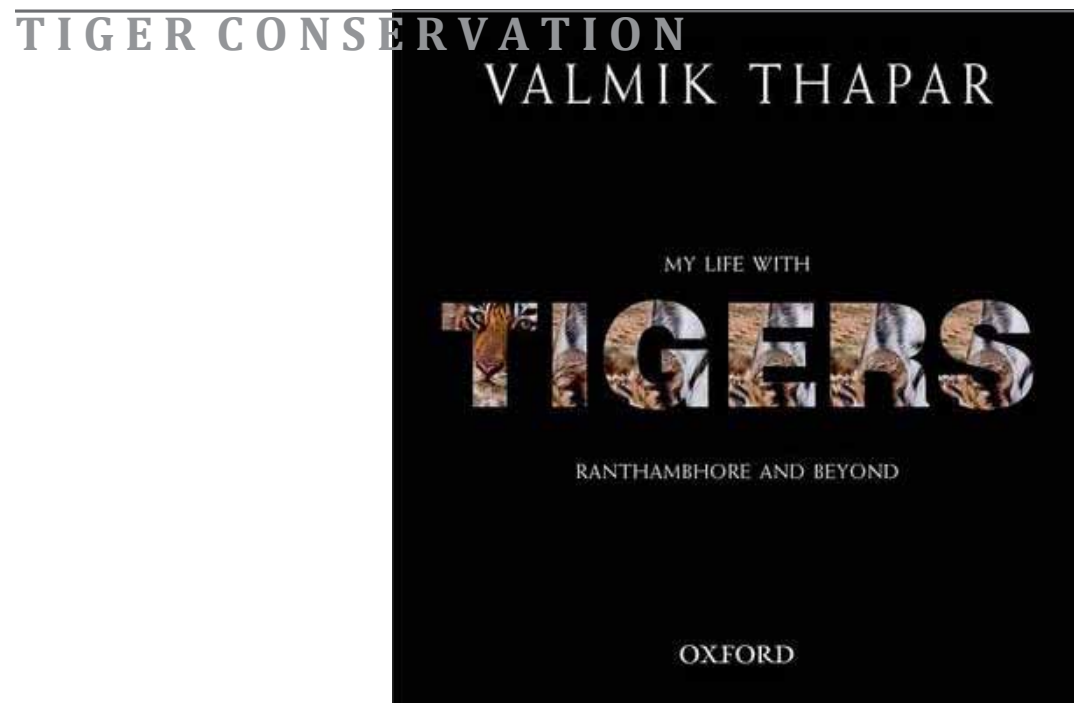
There have been conflicting reports about the Tiger Census. What is inherently wrong with the process and how can this be rectified? How many tigers are there left in the wild in India? What measures need to be taken to protect the tiger by the new Central Government coming to power in May 2014 ?

There has already been a rectification of the census and the inaccurate method of counting tigers through their paw marks has been replaced by a process of statistical samples through camera trap estimations in some site specific areas. Pug marks are not indicative of individual animals but body stripes are. Sadly the new methodology requires a greater training module for all the untrained forest staff and this process has suffered creating some error in the sampling of both predator and prey. I believe there are about 1200 to 1500 tigers alive in India. The new government that will come into power in May will do little as the bureaucracy that governs India is the same and has little knowledge of what wild tigers need.

We are in such a mess in this country that to create a path to secure the future of wild tigers will be an enormous undertaking. This country is so deeply fractured, divided and unstable that good governance is turning into an impossible dream. We seem to have sunk into a quagmire of chaos and corruption and little appears on the horizon to pull us out of it. In this political and bureaucratic nightmare very few care about wild tigers. I do, since I have spent 38 years of my life serving them. Wild tigers are symbolic of the amazing forests of India that occupy 20% of India's land mass. By keeping them alive you keep all the natural treasures alive so essential for any quality of human life, be it the air we breathe or the water we drink.



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My Life with Tigers - Ranthambhore and Beyond. [LINK](#)

There have been conflicting reports about the Tiger Census...? Contd...

The following blueprint is necessary to save wild tigers. There are no short cuts.

The Laws

We have a plethora of confusing laws that are now not just fighting each other but the makers and enforcers of these laws appear to also be the first to abuse them. Illegal mining of natural resource has scarred our landscapes forever. We inherited from the British at independence *The Indian Forest Act* which was created in the 19th century to exploit and plunder the natural resources of India and it fed the British with vast supplies of timber and natural wealth and continued to feed the new Republic of India exploiting both wood and wildlife. To control this rampant exploitation Indira Gandhi created *The Wildlife Protection Act* in the early 1970's and *The Forest Conservation Act* in the mid 1980's. This was soon followed by *The Environment Protection Act* and for the first time based on Indira Gandhi's vision India countered the exploitative nature of the British laws that we had ignorantly followed.

We stumbled into the 21st century carrying this package of laws and as 2007 dawned we created yet another act—The Forest Rights Act and this in essence was to serve the people who lived in and around the forests of India. Badly drafted it fractured groups of people, dividing them against each other and has in the end served no one. This Act fights all what Indira Gandhi created and we now have a *Khidchri* of laws from the 19th, 20th and 21st century all working against each other and creating a legal logjam. We need to sit together and draft one law which protects forests and wildlife and serves people. This needs to be drafted by thinking people in and out of government. Wild tigers must have their inviolate space and forest people must also benefit. This one law has to be piloted through Parliament and all the laws that clutter our statute books today need to be repealed.

Management

Forests and tigers are managed by another British creation—The Indian Forest Service [IFS]. In the late 1970's Indira Gandhi came very close to bifurcating this service and creating an Indian Wildlife Service but sadly the bureaucrats who rule the roost had their way and she was stopped. Today the IFS has run out of ideas and needs serious reform both in the mechanisms of recruitment, and the process of training and specialization. The IFS needs to be bifurcated and disbanded before it takes a



Photograph Valmik Thapar.

toll on our forests. We need new and fresh IFS for the 21st century and with a complimentary Wild-life Service. We desperately need to engage nongovernmental experts especially wildlife scientists to work alongside wildlife managers and share in the process of decision making. They must be empowered to be part of the team like in other services like The Indian Administrative Service where many secretaries to the Government of India have been appointed from outside or The Indian Foreign Service where endless ambassadors have been appointed who were not government servants. In the 45 tiger reserves we need to engage at least 1000 outside experts on short and long term contracts. Tigers need this fresh input now and from those who understand their needs.

Local People

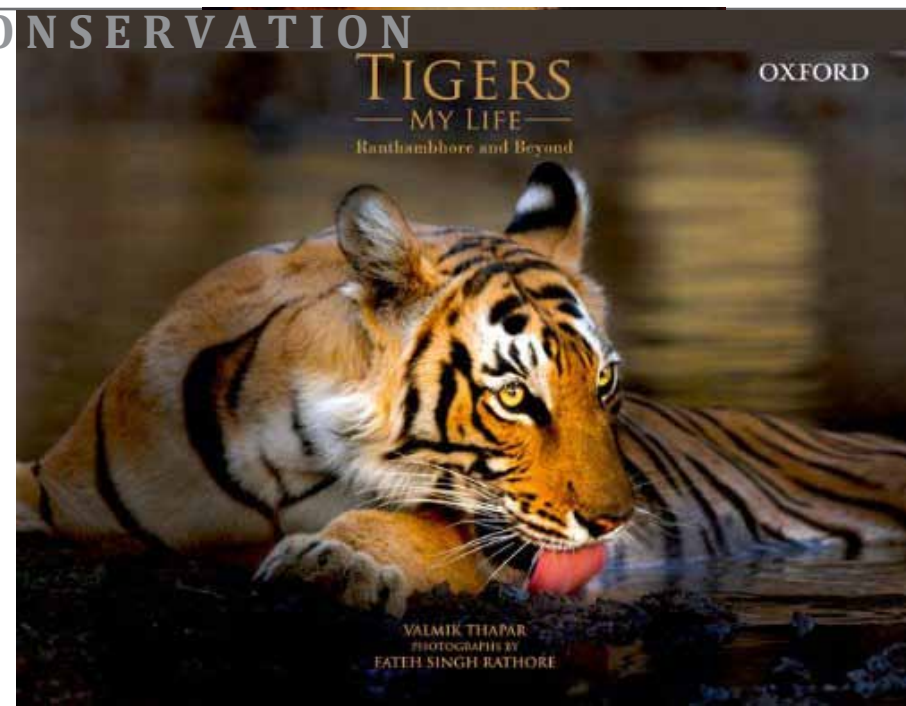
We need to encourage innovative wildlife tourism models. We need to learn from the plethora of models in play in Africa. We have no models in India and wildlife tourism managed by the government is a nightmare and needs to be outsourced and forest managers need to stick to their job of protection and enforcement. They are not trained to assess the harmful impacts of tourism on wildlife. Create genuine partners with the local communities and tourism experts. Create new partnerships so that the millions of rupees that pour in from tourism reach locals and they feel the tangible benefits of sensible tourism. Creating and managing a good tourism plan for each site specific area is not rocket science.

We have enough talent in this country to do this without any government department being involved. Innovative policies will help tigers by converting degraded farmlands on the edges of forests into wildlife havens with locals[and wildlife] benefitting like never before.

Conclusion

We need one Act or Law that is easy to understand, implement and enforce and not six. We need new forest and wildlife services to manage the wilderness and in tandem with their nongovernmental partners, and we need an innovative policy to attract visitors and use the revenue generated to benefit locals. Today one of the critical reasons for the mess in this country is the endless baggage of both laws [nearly 1000 of them] and civil services [dozens of them] that we inherited from the British and never reformed or repealed.

The future of wild tigers depends on us. Let's change course before it is too late. If we do not, little will be left for future generations.



Tigers My Life - Ranthambhore and Beyond. Photos Fateh Singh Rathore
[LINK](#)

Why are tigers straying into inhabited areas? Is this because of dwindling forest cover? Illegal encroachment of humans in the forested areas? And can tigers co-exist with humans or is it vital that reserved areas for tigers be sanitised of humans and their dwellings?

Tigers stray into human dominated landscapes because of the four legged creatures that humans keep which are easy prey. Man tiger conflicts take place over livestock that either enter forests illegally to graze or which get attacked by tigers in forest villages. It is vital that human dwellings and nomadic graziers are kept out of tiger landscapes as co existence is only possible where the density of humans is low. In India it is very high and complimented by livestock which add to a growing problem.

What have you done for the Ranthambhore Foundation? And are you still actively involved?

I founded the [Ranthambhore Foundation](#) in 1988 and ran it for 12 years till 2000 as its executive director. I left it in 2000 as I did not believe that local governments could partner such efforts in credible ways and NGOs suffer at their hands since both forest officials and local government do not like anyone that watches, criticizes or works on what they consider is their turf.

The mindset and attitude of the government has to change and only when they are able to work with outside talent and share decision making can ideas like Ranthambhore Foundation be effective and viable. In 2014 I am associated with the Foundation by virtue of being its Founder but we still have not created a way to jointly work with a 'possessive' government in the interest of tigers

Who has influenced you in your work with tigers and why?

My 38 years of working with wild tigers has been totally influenced by the former director of Ranthambhore National Park the late [Fateh Singh Rathore](#) who taught me my field craft and was like my tiger guru. At age 23 he welcomed me into the folds of Ranthambhore and we worked together with tigers throughout our lives. There are very few government officers who would do the same today. The younger generation today is kept out.

I was also influenced by *George Schaller's* book *The deer and the Tiger* and with his work in central India in the mid 1960's.

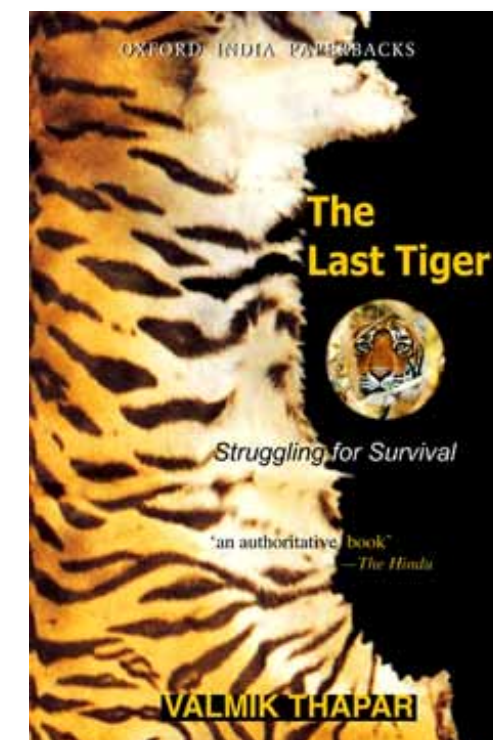


Late Fateh Singh Rathore. Pic Divya Khandal. [LINK](#)

Could you give us a glimpse of your life and works, including the books you have written?

In 38 years I have written 25 books on tigers their forests and wildlife in general, I have presented more than a dozen films for the BBC and other networks, I have campaigned for the interest of wild tigers, founded one of the first wildlife NGOs in the late 1980's to integrate locals with the mission of tiger conservation. I have since 1990 served nearly 200 policy making committees of the federal and local governments including the central empowered committee of the supreme court of India.

My latest book *Tiger Fire* is my magnum opus about the tiger in India since the early 16th century. I am working on two more books for publication in 2015. I have failed with different governments to achieve what I wanted to in the interest of wild tigers. Maybe some of us over these decades have minimised damage to wild tigers and our successes if any have come from like minded people in and out of government who acted in time.





Professor Vamsee Juluri

Novelist, author and professor of media studies at the University of San Francisco.

Hanuman and the Living World of Hinduism

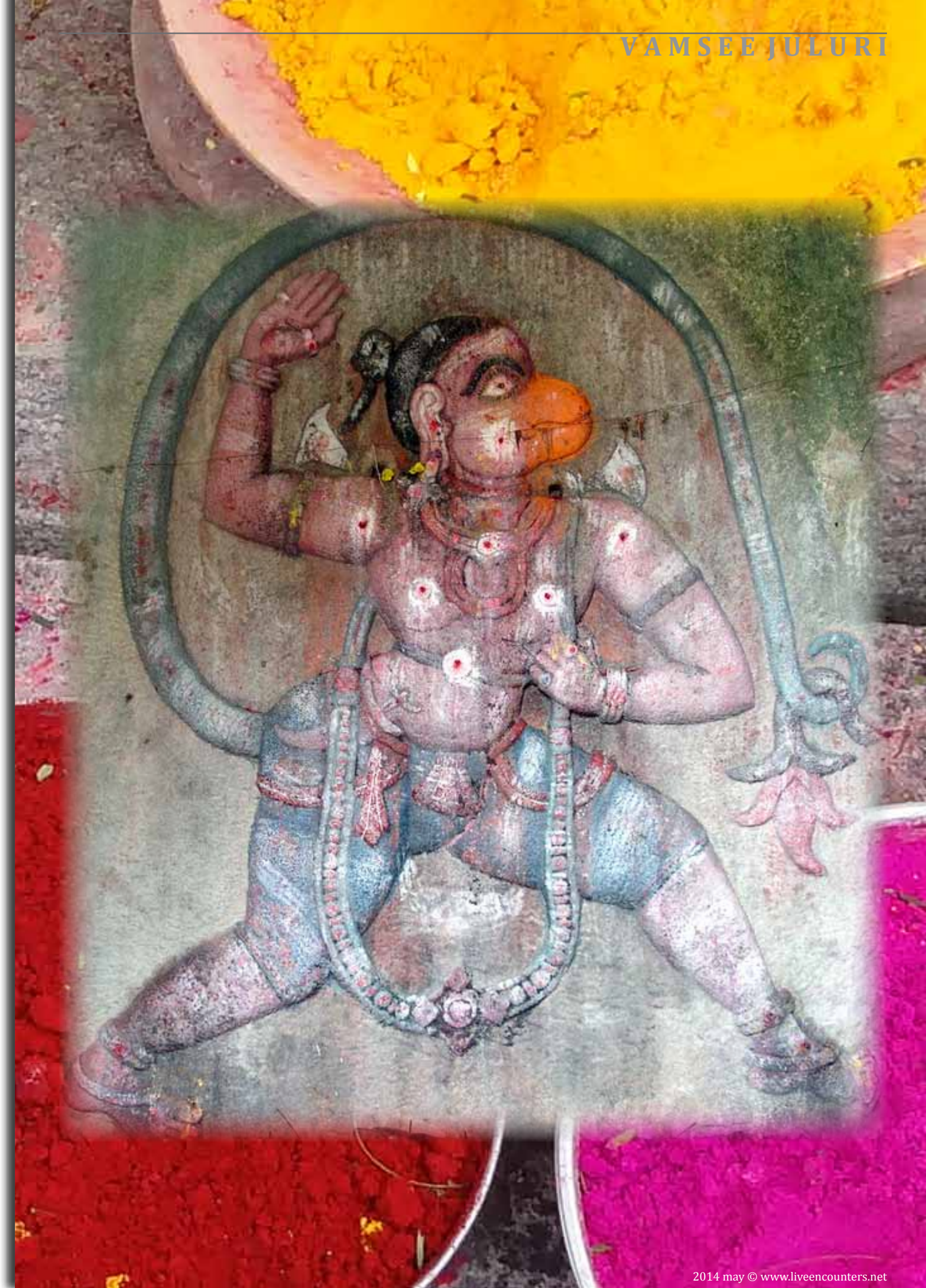
Hanuman is the heart of Hinduism. He is the missing link, so to speak, not just between the world of gods and humans (or “animals,” as one might say), but really between history and mythology, between reality as we think it is, and just reality.

Hanuman’s love, after all, is something we know easily to be true. In our hearts, what we find in Hanuman’s story is not just a god’s love but God’s Love. There is something inimitable about the adoration we find ourselves with before Hanuman, that does not quite seem like the devotion we feel before any other deity. But that is subjective; to each his or her own sense of devotion.

There is, however, a more objective, academic exercise that Hanuman requires from us now. That is simply the question of who is Hanuman, or as the narrator asks in the beautiful, poetic William Buck *Ramayana*, “who is this monkey, Hanuman?”

He is Rama’s, and Rama is his.

Rarely in culture has a servant been the subject of even greater glory than the master.





Hanuman is wind; not just speed, or force, the terms on which a modern mind accords respect; like the powers of a superhero. Hanuman is wind, like air, like life itself. He is something; or as we say these days, he is something else!

It is a fine Hindu sentiment, though not often seen in practice. In theory though, in our culture of myth, legend, art, and worship, it is embodied deeply. It is the idea that the divine, God with a Capital G, the formless One, the One, exists not only independently of everything but also in all of us, in all things, and in all living things, in particular. In theory, everyone is an avatar, so to speak; but since most everyone hardly lives up to the ethical expectations of a deity, only some of us get that exalted status of being called avatars or mahatmas.

But Hanuman, somehow, is different. We revere the devotees of the gods as saints, but Hanuman is no mere devotee. It is as if God is playing the role of one, just to show us how its done; just to show us how a life-form that is often an object of ridicule, a term of contempt, can be so self-mastered as to humble us before His Love. Hanuman overwhelms his devotees with something; we can call it strength, wisdom, courage, selflessness, austerity, brotherhood, or trust. We can elevate his birth-story with avatar interpretations, as many recent animated tales are doing, that he was no mere monkey, but an incarnation of the mighty God Shiva himself.

But all stories are just stories we propose before the impossibility of the yearnings that inspire them. Hanuman is wind; not just speed, or force, the terms on which a modern mind accords respect; like the powers of a superhero. Hanuman is wind, like air, like life itself. He is something; or as we say these days, he is something else!

What we feel will always be more than what we presume to theorize, when it comes to matters of spirit, and none more so than the case of the worship that attends Hanuman.

Yet, in an age of discourse and debate, in a time when the world has shifted from silence and contemplation to media-noise and argument, theory is a useful pursuit too. The problem, of course, is that theories about religion and the academic discourse have become the new Religion with an imperial capital "R." Though academia likes to think it is the cutting-edge of free-inquiry, the bastion of noble thoughts and modern ideals like freedom and democracy, some of its less free quarters have proved undemocratic and intolerant in the extreme.

Hinduism studies, in particular, have, in the hands of some over-privileged scholars, turned into an abomination not just against Hinduism, but against the whole spirit of scholarship too. By ignoring Hindus, and most importantly, what Hinduism means to Hindus, hiding behind high ideals like fighting caste and hierarchy, a small but over-glorified group of writers have gone on a crazy mission to the end, where it seems only sanity or their arguments will be left standing (for more on this, please visit my article [Hinduism and its Culture Wars in an earlier issue of Live Encounters LINK](#)).

Hinduism survived colonialism, a force that effectively destroyed the native faiths and cultures of almost every land on earth, through a very Hindu approach of adjustment. In its every day form, it meant getting on with life and worship, and agreeing with whatever the colonizers wanted or wanted to say. In its most sophisticated form, it was Gandhi's Satyagraha; the translation of the Hindu belief in the oneness of divinity into a political movement that as Cesar Chavez would later say, stop the victim from being a victim, and the executioner from being an executioner too.

Perhaps the only thing they will have to say about Hanuman is that he represents the oppression of native Indians by invading Aryans.

Or, in time, they may even say that Hanuman's legend implies that ancient Hindus ate monkey-brains.

The opposition to such furious and absurd mendacity has been growing. In recent years, Hindu Americans, and younger, educated Hindus in India, and their friends and supporters from around the world, have stopped and wondered if the absurdities of certain Hinduism "experts" are really a response to the rise of identity-politics in India as they claim, or just a continuation of old prejudices under new labels. The anger against this brazen disdain for their subject of study, for the fact that some scholars literally feed off the carcasses they have made of our living culture and art, has grown. Some Hindus, lash out in the language of our times, and get labeled as "fundamentalist," maybe even going so far as to throw an egg at a Hinduism scholar they don't like. Others though, are taking a longer view, holding on to their values, in equal measure Hindu and secular, tolerant and assertive, and one might say, devotional, and academic.

It is in that new space, of those who wish to understand Hinduism historically and academically, but also in a way that is true to their cultural roots, that Hanuman now rests, like on the flagpole of Krishna's chariot.

Much of the debate about Hinduism today, and much of the acrimony that has come, has to do with history. Until very recently, till the 1980s or so, most Hindus did not pay attention to how their history was being written or taught in schools, in India, or in the United States. This reticence was not indifference or cowardice, or some noble Nehruvian secularism either, but just a continuation of a colonial-era strategy of silence.

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However, in that long period between Gandhi and the present, when India's independence did not turn out to mark any major social investment in the study, promotion, or modernization of the

Hanuman has to be understood- in the academic context that is- more accurately as a part of Hinduism's long-standing pact with nature. For that, we must first learn to critique just how much our present worldview is steeped in not just Eurocentrism or Orientalism, as we know these days, but frankly, in speciesism and anthropocentrism as well. This tendency is a fairly recent one in human history. It was elevated into science (or pseudo-science) and some religion in recent times, but somehow, in Hinduism, it did not fully replace an earlier sensibility that may have been specific not just to India, but perhaps far more universal as well.

interpretation of its enormous intellectual history and culture (save for the Amar Chitra Katha comics and the mythological movies of NT Rama Rao), Hinduism remained in limbo, so to speak. We lived it, as our parents did, and we also accepted its changes, positively, especially, on issues like democratization and caste. But for a younger generation, educated, confident, more globally exposed, working and interacting with peers from all around the world, a better story about Hinduism became essential. For them, Hinduism became a civilizational story. They noticed what the history books were saying about their religion, and they began to speak up.

This is where we must turn to Hanuman.

The present effort to better understand the history of Hinduism cannot go very far if we keep looking at history as the account of wars, conquests, or even cities, roads, buildings, seals, wheels, spears and other inventions. We need to look at the living world, the world of animals, birds, fish, plants, and even the invisible life-forms such as viruses and bacteria which in the days before microscopes we knew anthropomorphically as forms of the "goddess" when we got cholera or small-pox. We need to recognize that Hinduism, perhaps more than any other culture, has for the most part refused to participate in a very recent, very specific, assertion in human history of man's voice over that of all of nature's.

We need to respectfully understand therefore that Hanuman does not represent the conquest of native Indians (or "Dravidians") by some fair-skinned invading "Aryans." That, as another cool figure from more recent mythology might say, just an opinion.

Hanuman has to be understood- in the academic context that is- more accurately as a part of Hinduism's long-standing pact with nature. For that, we must first learn to critique just how much our present worldview is steeped in not just Eurocentrism or Orientalism, as we know these days, but frankly, in speciesism and anthropocentrism as well. This tendency is a fairly recent one in human history. It was elevated into science (or pseudo-science) and some religion in recent times, but somehow, in Hinduism, it did not fully replace an earlier sensibility that may have been specific not just to India, but perhaps far more universal as well. It is for historians to debate just how much and how widespread it once might have been.

But for now, we need to recognize at least one thing: there is a problem today with not just Hindu history, but really with history more broadly too. We need to go back and unpack exactly when, where and how, the voice of man rose to silence the voice of non-human life all together.

And maybe, among all the chatter, when we look only into their eyes, into their souls, and when we overcome our doubts whether we are perhaps only anthropomorphizing them, imputing our thoughts to their dumb faces, we will realize the one question they are asking us: You, Hanuman's people, you whom we have watched rise from the dawn of time to an upright, biped walking position; why do you do this now to us?

This does not mean that we have to accept that the Ramayana's talking monkeys and vultures and bears are literal truths (nor should we have anything but reciprocal laughter for uninformed skeptics who try to assert that talking animals are common to the Ramayana and to Disney cartoons so they're both the same). What it does mean though, is that we need to go beyond human history, in every sense of the word, from now on. We need to go beyond wondering whether Hanuman was from a tribe whose totem was the monkey, or whether animals represented subaltern voices in the hegemonic texts. We need to look at Hinduism in the face, as it stares at us to this day, in the form of Hanuman, more than anyone else, and listen, once again, to the world of life that he represents; and to the fact that no matter how much noise, how much harm, we humans make, all of life is still bigger than us, in some ways better than us, and is looking at us now, impatiently, and in the form of Hanuman, perhaps, still kindly.

We need, most of all, to get over what our culture has taught us for several centuries about animals and humans, and very simply, listen to what they are saying again.

And maybe, among all the chatter, when we look only into their eyes, into their souls, and when we overcome our doubts whether we are perhaps only anthropomorphizing them, imputing our thoughts to their dumb faces, we will realize the one question they are asking us: You, Hanuman's people, you whom we have watched rise from the dawn of time to an upright, biped walking position; why do you do this now to us?

Some Reading Suggestions:

The life and legends of Hanuman are beautifully captured in Vanamali's *Hanuman*. Philip Lutgen-dorf's *Hanuman's Tale* is a densely researched historical account of Hanuman in Indian scripture and literature. Devdutt Pattnaik's *Hanuman* combines some of both approaches and is richly illustrated by the author. For a critique of speciesism in our thought and culture today, see Jonathan Safran Foer's brilliant *Eating Animals*, and also Peter Singer's classic *Animal Liberation*. For an account of the "silencing" of animals, so to speak, parts of Tristram Stuart's *The Bloodless Revolution* are very useful. Nanditha Krishnan's *Sacred Animals of India* is a wonderful compendium of the many names and meanings of animals in Indian religious cultures.





Critically ill Melani, the Sumatran Tigress, rescued from Surabaya Zoo on arrival at the veterinary care centre at Taman Safari, Bogor, Indonesia. Photo/Sybelles Foxcroft

Sybelles Foxcroft

Director of Conservation & Environmental Education 4 Life (CEE4Life)
in an interview with Mark Ulyseas

What is the story of Melanie, the tigress rescued from Surabaya Zoo? And what is her present state of health? Will she survive?

Melani was born at Surabaya Zoo and her mother disowned her. She was then hand raised but fed human milk formulas instead of tiger milk formulas. This caused her body and bones not to develop the way it should have, she became a small framed Sumatran tiger. Additionally she was not given any enrichment items for climbing (to build her muscles) scratching posts, water pools for swimming; in fact she wasn't given anything that a tiger in captivity should have. Her cage was small and she was taken out once a day and walked around the zoo in public when she was younger. Due to her being hand raised and her smaller fragile state she was reasonably tame. As the internal management conflict in the zoo became worse and funds were redirected into wage rises, the zoo bought cheaper meat in order to feed the animals.

Around 5 years ago, the zoo sourced formaldehyde tainted meat and fed it to four of the tigers, one being Melani. The formaldehyde is deadly poisonous and basically froze the internal organs of the tigers. All the tigers began to suffer immensely, one dropping dead within a couple of months of eating it, and two over the next 2 years. For some reason, Melani kept fighting off death. As with all the tigers that ate this poisonous meat, Melani's internal organs stopped working properly, mainly her absorption process's virtually ceased, but she kept struggling along.

In 2013, due to Melani's horrific appearance, she was taken off display and placed into a dungeon. The zoo vet had no idea how to treat this condition. However, a Government appointed team of specialists



Melani better after four months of veterinary care at Taman Safari, Bogor, Indonesia. Photo/Sybelles Foxcroft



Getting the orangutans out of their cages in Surabaya Zoo. This was one of the only times that they have been out. We are trying to get them to build a proper enclosure for them instead of these terrible cages. Photo/Sybelles Foxcroft

What is the story of Melanie, the tigress rescued from Surabaya Zoo? And what is her present state of health? Will she survive? Contd...

had been in the zoo since 2010 and were endeavouring to rebuild wonderful enclosures, they also provided education to the staff and the staff loved that education. But when advice for the animals was given from the Government appointed team, it was met with negativity from the veterinary staff in Surabaya Zoo. So basically all advice was ignored. Melani continued to decline. I knew about Melani's case and had been trying to encourage the Mayor of Surabaya to allow aid for the animals for about one year at that time (I had been trying this since early 2012).

By, March 2013, it was clear that if something was not done immediately then Melani (a critically endangered Sumatran tiger) was going to die. Cee4life started a campaign to allow the rehome of Melani and through various contacts we were able to get communications through to the Minister of Forests. In June 2013, Melani was now nearly beyond critical, and she was finally ordered out of the zoo and into the highly ethical and state of the art veterinary care of Taman Safari in Bogor, Indonesia. Here the long road to recovery began for Melani. On arrival Melani was nearly dead, she was 47kg, which is frighteningly low weight for a Sumatran tiger, which usually weighs between 80 – 110kg.

Melani had multiple intravenous drips attached to her; she underwent an onslaught of injections, and was watched 24hrs per day, 7 days a week in the initial 2 months. I sat with her as much as humanly possible and one thing I noticed is that she calmed a lot when she had human company and would lie beside me and go to sleep. She is a dear girl.

Over the following months it was 10 steps forward 9 steps back regarding her health. It went up and down constantly. But once she reached the 6 month mark, her body functions began to improve and her appetite increased rapidly. All the love and care was working, but I know in my heart that ultimately it was Melani's will to survive that kept her alive. By all rights she should have died, but she didn't! Now she is really good, she will never be a big muscly tiger, she will always be little because her absorption process simply does not work properly. Although she eats and has the appetite of a fully grown tiger, her body cannot process and absorb all of the food.

She has put on weight, her demeanour is now extremely positive, she is very loving and she talks all the time. However, as the formaldehyde froze her vocal cords, she does not roar or sound like a normal tiger, she sounds like a whale singing!



Hidden wildlife trade cub - Providing care for a cub that came in on a late night tiger trade. An adult tiger named Farung was taken and swapped with this one. Photo/Sybelles Foxcroft

There is much controversy about the municipal Zoo at Surabaya, Indonesia. The *New York Times* carried a report by Keith Bradsher on March 4, 2014, detailing the conditions and the persons involved. Without naming names or going into to the shenanigans of those involved, what in your professional opinion needs to be done to save the animals from certain death due to malnutrition, disease and unsanitary conditions?

The decline of Surabaya Zoo and its animals began about 8 years ago when there was a management change which caused massive internal conflict. There have been years of infighting, funding being directed into wage rises and not towards the animals. Additionally it has become very obvious that there is little knowledge of animal welfare, correct diets, enrichment and enclosures.

Then there is the political nature of Surabaya Zoo which has delayed or stopped improvements within the zoo.

So in order for the zoo to improve there needs to be a management reorganisation, a lot of training and education in regard to the correct care of animals in captivity, funding improvements, and a desire by the staff and politicians involved to want to fix it. It is a human based problem which can be improved greatly. We are trying to encourage working together and helping with the training and education of staff, along with bringing in aid for the animals. But ultimately it needs a concerted effort by Surabaya Zoo and the political elements to improve it.

Is there any truth in news reports that certain people at the Tiger Temple in Thailand are drugging the tigers and that tourists are permitted to tease the drugged tigers for a fee?

I was the undercover investigator that gathered most of the evidence against the abuse of the tigers and wildlife trade at the tiger temple. While I witnessed obvious symptoms of drugging, I was never able to catch them in the act of drugging. I always thought it was put in their food prior to going into the public for photos etc. But the staff did not allow me or foreign volunteers to see the preparation of the food at their pre public lunchtime appearances. I observed and photographed the main public tigers prior to their lunchtime feed and then after. The difference was astonishing. A once bright tiger was suddenly unable to focus and was so lethargic that it could hardly walk. Last year, another investigator reported that they had identified what the handlers at the temple had put in the tigers' food. It was hash oil (marijuana oil).



The mother of this baby elephant was rescued from horror abuse in Thailand. When the free roaming baby elephant saw Sybelle in the river she left her mother to join Sybelle for a swim. Photo/Sybelle Foxcroft

What was the result of your investigations at Wat Pa Luangtabua Yannasampanno, Thailand?

The result was that the Tiger Temple was 100% involved in the wildlife trade of their tigers, sending the older 'no use' tigers to a tiger farm in Laos. Female tigers were made to repeatedly breed in quick succession; they would have a litter of cubs and when the cubs were 7 – 12 days old, the cubs were taken from their mothers and hand raised (with incorrect formula, usually dog milk formulas). The tigers were abused beyond belief. They were hit, punched, kicked, items (like chairs) thrown at them, whipped with chains, physically mutilated and starved. The tigers are bred for the public, for tourism and for money only. After the initial investigation results were released, little was done. So *Cee4life* persisted in addressing the wildlife trade and abuse issues in a very public way. Since that point, none of the tigers that I personally worked with were lost to the wildlife trade, most are still there now as I check on them all the time. However, there is still mass breeding of cubs for tourists, horrendously over crowded enclosures though there are new *correct* enclosures that have been built (after years of pleading and providing them with the dimensions of correct enclosures). There will always remain a very dark cloud and big question mark over the Tiger Temple as the number of births and amount of tigers in the temple, does not add up.

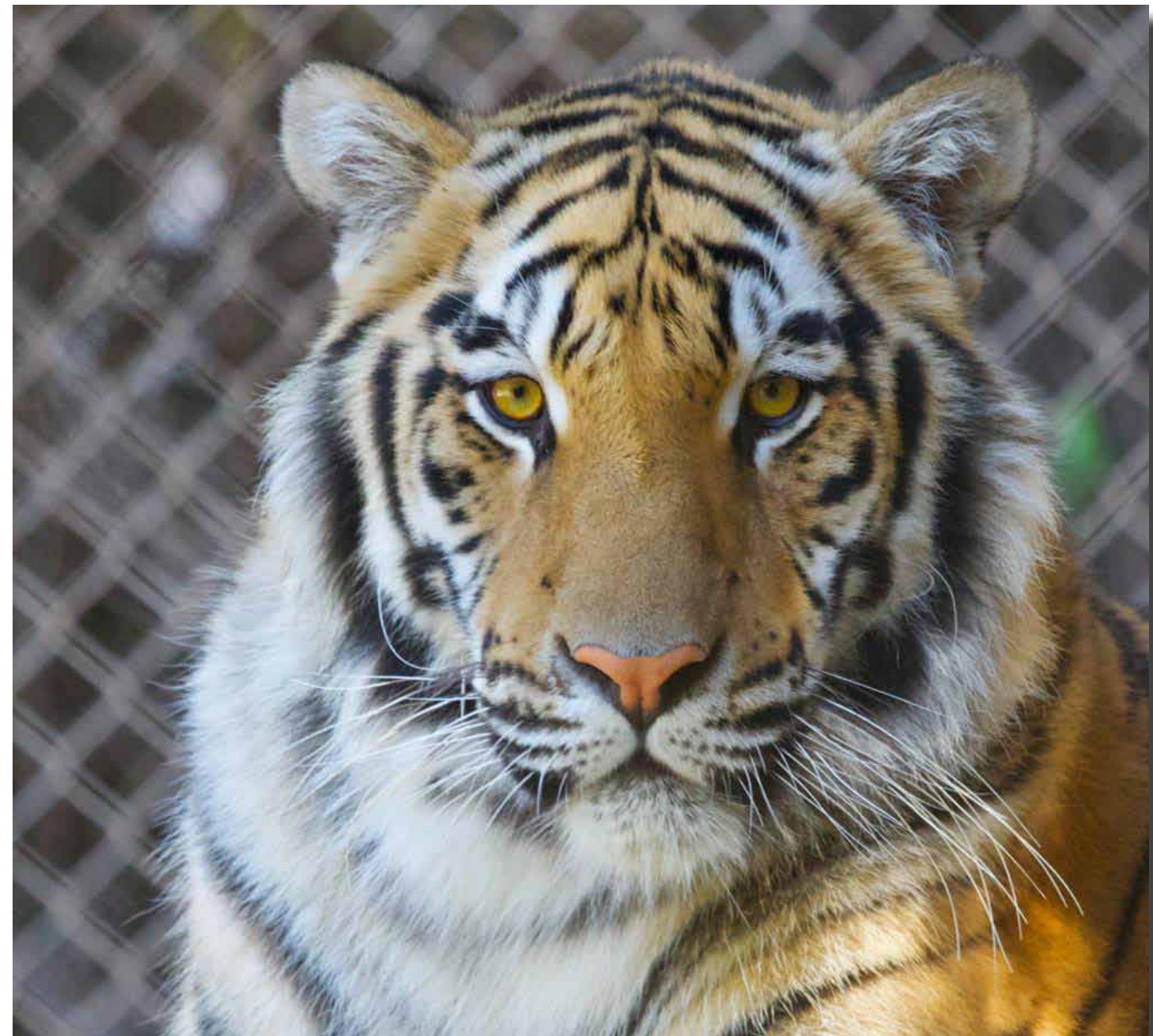
What has been CEE4Life's involvement in the case of Orion the Bengal tiger in Arizona, USA? What is the latest news on the fate of this tiger?

Orion was a lovely young Bengal cub who was used as a display cub and was seen with many famous people on US Television. One day he simply disappeared. A friend of mine, Karrie Kearns, from *One World Conservation*, contacted me and asked if I could help track Orion as I specialise in tiger stripe ID (as accurate as DNA). Karrie had inside contacts that were able to find out a possible transfer path of Orion. We followed the leads and came across a number of tigers; however none matched with Orion's tiger stripe ID. Finally we found him at a place called *Claws n Paws* in Poconos, Pennsylvania. He was in a filthy chicken coop; I confirmed it was Orion 100% via stripe ID. Together, *One World Conservation* and *Cee4life* then addressed this issue on *Fox news*, and finally the pressure became so heavy on *Claws n Paws* that they released Orion and sent him back to Wildlife World Zoo. He is now doing well; he is beautiful and turns 3 this month. Orion was a case of yet another tiger cub being exploited as a cuddle toy and then being discarded when he became too big to cuddle.

The stripe ID, or animal marking ID can be used on virtually every animal to identify them. I've used it for leopards, cheetahs, bears, giraffes, dolphins etc. It gets difficult when I run into birds.



Top: Orion when he disappeared. Below: Orion rescued and now healthy, happy and handsome. Photo/ Karrie Kearns - One World Conservation.



BEHIND THE CLOAK OF BUDDHA



Sybelles Grace Foxcroft

Behind the Cloak of Buddha is the true story about a group of captive tigers subjected to a lifetime of abuse and wildlife trade, and of a woman's fight to bring justice and peace to their lives. Set in the seemingly idyllic surrounds of a Thai Buddhist Temple, this landmark book lifts the lid on the hidden atrocities that species are subjected to for greed and confirms the enduring spirit of both human and animal.

How does unethical wildlife tourism affect the natural habitat of wild animals and what can be done to put an end to this despicable business?

Unethical wildlife tourism is basically the mismanagement of tourism in wild animals' habitat. In the case of the wild Bengal tigers of India, the tourism is appalling. There is a negative chain reaction of events which occurs because of unethical tourism. India virtually does not have any set rules of how to act inside a national park or tiger reserve. People are totally out of control and scream and yell at a tiger sleeping under a tree. When the tiger moves off, there is a vulgar rush by 30 or more four wheel drive vehicles packed with tourists that race after the tiger, and on some occasions have in fact hit the tiger. The effects of this unabated shocking tourism are that the tigers become very used to noise and people. They do not fear either of these and this is deadly for villagers in the area. The national parks in India are impacted severely by human overpopulation where tigers actually live in what I refer to as "island national parks" meaning their habitat is surrounded by millions of people, and many of those people use the tiger habitat for hunting and gathering. Tigers (and many other animals) would usually stay far away from humans, they do not like humans up close, but here, the tigers are not scared of humans at all, and noise that would usually scare an animal away has no effect on the tigers as they are hounded by human tourism on a daily basis.

The only way that unethical tourism like this can be stopped in the animal's natural environment is for the government and National Park bodies running these operations to actually stop it. Many of these bodies do not even think that far as financial benefits takes priority. But, they are adding to the demise of the animals. Allowing this sort of tourism to go on only causes negative impacts to all the animals which are subjected to this unethical tourism. The same scenario applies to wildlife tourism hot spots in both land national parks and marine parks. Someday soon, the priority of earning money in this way must stop, or there will be few animals left for tourists to view at all.

The media continues to spew out reports on 'canned hunting' in parts of Africa? Claims are often made that this is a form of culling wild animals whose numbers have increased manifold causing a strain on the environment. Please comment.

Canned hunting is a disgusting sport created by only those who love to kill. It is well known in the conservation world that lions are under heavy threat from habitat loss, lack of prey species and disease, along with poaching. Venues that conduct canned hunting are usually procuring their animals off tourism venues which breed cubs for cuddle pictures for tourists. Again, once these creatures grow too big many are shifted to canned hunting venues to be killed for game hunters. It's always about money.

Interview © Sybelle Foxcroft/Mark Ulyseas
2014 may © www.liveencounters.net



Wildlife tourism in India. Photo/Sybelles Foxcroft

The media continues to spew out reports on 'canned hunting' in parts of Africa? Claims are often made that this is a form of culling wild animals whose numbers have increased manifold causing a strain on the environment. Please comment. *contd...*

Tourism money for cuddling cubs, and sport killer money for killing a majestic creature. The 'reports' that are saying that numbers have increased are false. What they should be saying is that the numbers of wild animals is decreasing, while the number of tourist venues providing captive bred animals for cuddle pictures then being sent off to canned hunting venues has increased. Canned hunting has nothing to do with conservation in any way, shape or form. It is an evil business created by those that love to kill. These people that pretend to be big game hunters and go and shoot a captive raised, placid, fenced in animal are quite sickening. Canned hunting is simply a venue for people with a psychological need to kill. It is very disturbing when you understand that most psychological profiles of serial killers, murderers etc., all have a background in killing animals in one way or another.

The reports are confusing or deliberately manipulated. The fact is that animals are being pushed out of their once larger habitats due to human overpopulation and habitat loss from infrastructure etc., and are being bunched together in smaller habitats, giving the illusion there are higher numbers. And of course there is the deliberate misleading census counts by various authorities which claim ridiculously low mortality figures, while conservationists can prove factually that there is 10 or 20 times higher mortality figures.

Could you share with us a success story or two where CEE4Life has brought about a change and helped rehabilitate abused animals?

Melani is a fine example of a rescue and rehab success story. The temple tigers which I worked with were doomed for death in the wildlife trade, however their lives were spared due to persistence and not giving up.

There is a case with a wild tiger from in India where this tiger had wandered out of its territory and into a highly populated area during the night. He decided to settle in the forested area behind a university, however villagers were terrified of him. The Indian Government sent trackers and darting specialists to sedate and remove the tiger, but no one reacted. At the two month mark it became a situation of life and death for this tiger because the villagers had now developed myths about the tiger, and said it was sent by a god to kill them all. I urged the authorities in India to act and save this tiger, but still no one did anything. So at the three month mark I contacted a colleague in Saudi Arabia who was a brilliant



Tourists pay dollars to tease the tigers at a temple in Thailand. Sybelle Foxcroft believes these tigers are drugged so that they don't respond violently. Photo [LINK](#)

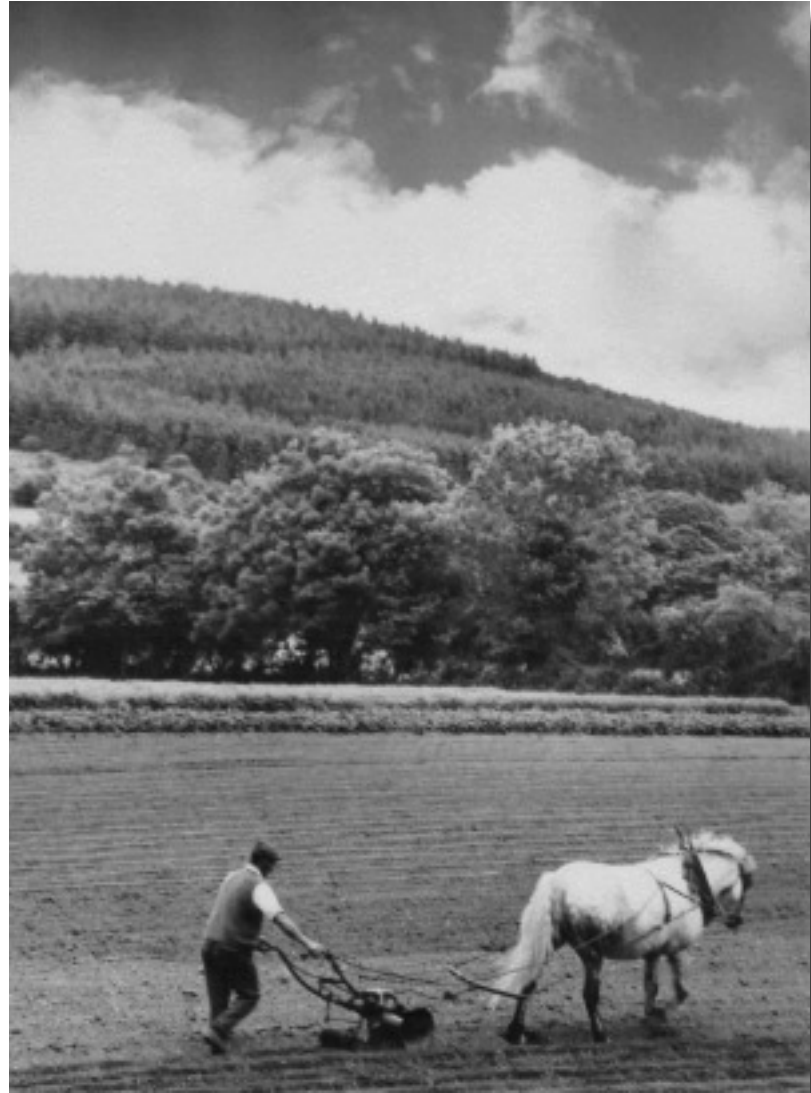
tracker and darter. He flew over the next day, went into the field and sedated the tiger and rehomed him.

But we have been involved in numerous successful rescue, rehabs and releases of many native Australian creatures over the years including birds and marsupials. I think one of the more lovely stories is of a young green turtle that was facing certain death on Lady Musgrave Island in the Great Barrier Reef while I worked there. He had got stuck on a shallow reef, the tide had gone down and he was frying in the sun. Numerous sea birds were circling him waiting to take him. As much as we are taught to leave nature to nature's ways, I am also very aware of the massive decline in the turtles, particularly the green turtles. So I went and rescued him and took him back to rehydrate him over the next week. He got his strength back and was such a little fighter! I took him out through the reef and into the water and set him free. Turtles come back to the beach they were born on, so I have looked for him over the years. He had two very dark, nearly black pieces of his carapace. I looked for him whenever I was on the island. Two years after his rescue I identified him again. He was safe. That was a very good moment, successful in the way that he was a precious green turtle and a small act of kindness saved him.

Please give us a glimpse of your life and works prior to CEE4Life.

I was raised by a mum who loved animals and a dad who loved the outdoor mountains, seas and environment in general. Mum was always rescuing injured animals and it wasn't unusual to have a number of injured dogs, cats, lizards, birds, possums etc., in the house at any time. I grew up wanting to be a park ranger and at 15 was volunteering in national park rehab centres for koalas, and working as a volunteer in various sanctuaries. By the time I wanted to apply to be a ranger the laws had changed in Australia and you needed university qualifications. So, I enrolled in university and began my studies, focusing on wildlife biology, while I joined and worked with the Australian Army. The Army was perfect as they allowed me time off to do my university while I was still able to earn a wage. I transferred into Army reserve part time, and began working as a education officer at the National Zoo and Aquarium here in Australia, part time as a night guide for the Botanical Gardens, and an Air Sea Rescue Officer on weekends. For my last subject of university I was to do a thesis like report, my subject was a comparison of zoos here in Australia and those overseas in less fortunate countries, and to develop a program to aid these zoos in education for care of animals. I chose to go to the Tiger Temple, and that is where all the undercover investigation began. I formed *cee4life* in 2009 as my own business, but it quickly developed for there was a real demand for aid to both wild animals and captive animals. So then it became obvious to form Cee4life as a non-profit, and so here we are.

I grew up on a small farm in the west of Ireland. It was hard work for everybody, but it was a time of transition: change from horses to tractors, which was a lot easier and more efficient but, somehow, the romance and legend went out of life on a small farm with the demise of the horse. Perhaps this has more to do with nostalgia than reality, but there is nothing wrong with a good bout of nostalgia. In truth we worked as hard as the horses.



1960's farmer ploughing a field in County Meath Ireland with horse plough, forests & mountain in background. Photo by Brendan Doyle.
www.zazzle.com

Our last Horse

When our last horse died
in the arms of the family
without leaving a foal,
we hung her things
on metal pegs in the shed,
legged it down the road
to buy our first tractor
and only looked back to
see if the drills were straight.

In July 2013 Mehra self-published his maiden novel *'Seven Shades of Grey'* written in 1999, which no publisher (at that time) wanted to publish. He is presently the Managing Director and CEO, SAGE Publications India, a leading international academic publisher.



Vivek Mehra
 Author of *Seven Shades of Grey*
 in an exclusive interview with Mark Ulyseas

"The basis of the book is around failure and the route the protagonist takes to ride the tide. The Internet was still emerging in the late 90s. This was the era of Chat Rooms long before social media came along. The protagonist ventures into these chat rooms and befriends people. He interacts with a few women at a level he isn't ready for. Some affect him more than others. He hallucinates or has visions; he can't tell very well. His spiritual side shows him worlds he hasn't seen before. His relationship with his wife deepens but he has torn between the love for her and the attachment he has for these women. There is a particular one who seems to read him like a book. He becomes emotionally attached to her and his dependence on her deepens. Then as suddenly as she appears in his life, she disappears. He wants to know who she was and why she came into his life. The last chapter reveals the true identity of this mysterious lady." - **Mehra**

Vivek Mehra

Seven Shades of Grey



"is an excellent book and a must read for those who are searching for an unconventional gripping story"
 Dr Sunny Gupta, Fortis India

Seven Shades of Grey

Vivek Mehra

I called myself a failed author because the work didn't meet the acceptable standards of "published author". The rejection slips are a reminder of an era when publishers held sway. Today, for better or for worse, my book is published. It isn't my ticket to money and glory but it's the satisfaction of seeing my work disseminated that makes it worth the while. I am also using this route to develop a firsthand understanding of this (new) mechanism of publishing. It is fascinating and exciting.

There is a Latin saying – "Poeta nascitur, non fit" which means "A poet is born, not made." Do you agree with this statement? Does one need to possess the gift to be a writer?

I am not sure how good a poet one can be trained to become. The variables are too many. I am sure there could be aspects of poetry that are "teachable" or "learnable". With creative writing I can state with all honesty, it can be taught and it can be learnt. I don't know if the training will produce brilliant writers I do believe it will surely be a step in the right direction.

Why did you want to be a writer? And are you still a writer?

I wanted to be a writer for the right reasons; I love to write. I wrote the book for the wrong reasons; I wanted it to be my ticket to glory and money. I continue to write but haven't sought a commercial publisher. I write a blog (www.vivekmehra.in), I post my presentations (www.slideshare.net/vivekmehra03). I write today because I want to disseminate information and learn from the world that reads.

Why do you define yourself as a failed writer? Rejection slips from publishers don't necessarily reflect the quality of one's work. Or does it?

I called myself a failed author because the work didn't meet the acceptable standards of "published author". The rejection slips are a reminder of an era when publishers held sway. Today, for better or for worse, my book is published. It isn't my ticket to money and glory but it's the satisfaction of seeing my work disseminated that makes it worth the while. I am also using this route to develop a firsthand understanding of this (new) mechanism of publishing. It is fascinating and exciting.

Is *Seven Shades of Grey* autobiographical? Or is it faction – fact + fiction?

Any good writing has realism in it. *Seven Shades of Grey* has many shades of my own life. The failed son surely resonates with me. The facts in the book have some basis in my own experiences but most of it is just a plain story. The psychological aspect of my story is the one that resonates with a lot of readers. I have received letters from strangers saying that they could relate to characters in the book. That to me is a good story, fact or fiction.

I am currently working on a series of occult fiction where the protagonist is a practitioner of the Dark Arts but uses them for the good of humanity. It spans many generations and is set in modern day Mumbai. I hope to make this into a series.

Why did you go digital instead of publishing a hard copy?

I decided to publish the book digitally as this was the easiest way to publish it. Platforms such as *Amazon* provide simple tools to publish a manuscript. I also searched for a *Print On Demand* platform to get the hard copy version out. For India I am happy to have chosen *Notion Press* to help me with this. Readers can now buy either the digital or the hard copy version of the book.

What do you hope to achieve with this book?

As I mentioned earlier, I want to learn the process of self publishing first hand. This is my primary objective. Another more personal one is to see my book published. I received a lot of brickbats when I wrote this. I spent a lot of money sending manuscripts to publishers and literary agents. To see the work published is kind of vindicating the writing of the book.

What are you working on now?

I am currently working on a series of occult fiction where the protagonist is a practitioner of the Dark Arts but uses them for the good of humanity. It spans many generations and is set in modern day Mumbai. I hope to make this into a series.

Kindly give us a glimpse of your life and works.

My life has been a series of roller coaster rides. I was lucky to reach the USA for my studies but I hit a wall when I couldn't fund my studies. There was a time when I didn't have enough to eat. My teacher found me a job that helped me pay for my tuition. I had to work a second job in a bar to survive. My day job landed me a few modelling assignments. I came back to India because of Rajiv Gandhi's speech at the UN (shortly after Indira Gandhi's assassination) and because my family wanted me to return. For 13 years after returning I struggled to find a stable career. I tried my hand at food processing, ink manufacturing, technical writing, training and finally in publishing. I won accolades but never really succeeded in any single venture other than publishing. I cherish my success because I have never forgotten of my failures. My greatest driver is to see the smile on the faces of people I work with. I still love to write and my job gets me to exotic places. There is a writer in me that is waiting to take centre stage. Perhaps I will allow him to take baby steps in the real world.



Is Thailand Heading Towards a Failed Nation?

About the permeation of violence into Thai society

Joana Stella Kompa

Program Director for Multimedia Design and Visual Communication
at Raffles International College, Bangkok, Thailand.

“Red-shirts have de facto been given an implicit license to kill by their government. As has been shown the red-shirt movement is divided on the use of violence. Earlier this year red-shirt hardliner Suporn Attawong suggested setting up a militia of 600,000 young men to fight for the UDD and, if necessary, even give their lives to fight the PDRC. Several hundred fighters are currently reported to be trained in the North of Thailand, Udon Thani by red-shirt ‘*Rambo of the North*’ Kwanchai Pripana. The question of the emergence of a criminal, government-sanctioned society seems warranted.

Once aggression is institutionalized it leaves little options to develop a Civil Society. To be fair it needs to be mentioned that the leader of the PDRC, Suthep Thaugsuban is not capable of specifying concrete goals either and that his ambiguous talk of returning Thailand to the ‘sovereignty of the people’ does sound like an self-entitlement of overthrowing a corrupt, but still legitimately elected government.”

When I met famous Thai photographer and social activist Mani Sriwanicpoom during a workshop he showed the participants some rare historical photographs of the event. The picture I could never forget was one of several killed students, their bodies lined up on the ground while a soldier was smashing wooden ploughs into their faces so that they could later not be identified. Mani mentioned that even today most families who had lost their children do not talk about these horrific incidents.

Foreword

The following reflections attempt to explain the permeation of violence into Thai civil society, one of the world's most friendly and cheerful cultures. Since the investigated processes appear to have similarities to recent turmoil in other cultures such as e.g., Egypt or Turkey, understanding the underlying processes for developing potential interventions are crucial. This essay does not elaborate on the pathological violence in the South of Thailand which would be deserving of a separate investigation.

1. The Historical Lack of Democratic Experience

I am a social psychologist and educator and have been living in Thailand for the past nine years. I remember when I had to vacate my apartment in Soi Nai Lert (2010), with grenades and bombs going off in the streets nearby and fully armed soldiers setting up sandbag-barricades right in my lane. My home was located in the 'nowhere land' between the red-shirt fortress in Rachaprasong, set up by the protesters defying the overthrow of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra, and the military forces who staged the coup. Not a particularly good place to be at the time. Bangkok subsequently descended into chaos, riots broke out in many parts of the inner city and buildings were set on fire while redshirt street-fighters challenged the military until they eventually had to surrender. This was in May 2010 and Thailand has since never been the same again. What happened to the '*Land of Smiles*'?

Thai political history has never been peaceful and hardly gave grounds for smiles despite Thailand being declared a constitutional democratic monarchy in 1932. Violent, oppressive and aggressive behavior emerged in regular cycles from dictatorial leaders and military coups, from self-entitled elites who aimed for absolute power and control. In the 1960s Thai politics were dominated by the authoritarian rule of field marshal Sarit Thanarat who abrogated the constitution and dissolved parliament to set up a one-party dictatorship under his '*Revolutionary Party*'. He orchestrated violent crackdowns on perceived enemies of the state. His successor, Thanom Kittikachorn (1963-1973), a military leader who ruled Thailand between with an iron fist, was responsible for the student massacre at Thammasat University on the 6th of October 1976.

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It is safe to conclude that for valid historical reasons Thai people have little or no collective trust in any government, no matter which political color. Thais, like many other non-Western cultures, never had a chance to develop a collective learning experience with an evolving, functioning and reliable democracy. Instead, the frustrating experience of exclusion from power and marginalization by powerful families and the military is deeply ingrained in collective memory.

Most authoritarian Prime Ministers of recent Thai history such as Thanin Kraivichien (1976-1977) or Chatichai Choonhavan (1988-1991) were eventually overthrown by the military on accusations of dividing the country, suspending or abusing democracy, massive corruption and abuse of power. Arguably the only exception in this traumatizing series of rulers was Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1988) who supported education, aimed for the eradication of poverty and who advocated national unity. He was still a royal reformer rather than a progressive democrat. Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006), his successor, was overthrown in a military coup d'état and was convicted of massive corruption, abuse of power, selling off national assets to Singapore, money laundering and tax evasion and lives in exile ever since. From the outside it appears that the same sad song repeats itself over and over again. On a more detailed note most self-serving leaders acted on behalf of their families and cronies. Harvard-educated Thailand expert Jeffrey Race mentions that during the 60s and 70s the '*United Thai People's Party*' served e.g., the domination of the Kittichakorn and Charusathien families while the '*Chat Thai Party*' served the Choonhavan and Adireksarn families.

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2. What Creates Societal Divide?

Explanations of aggressive group behavior are commonly based on biology, frustration (leading to anger and hostility) and social learning, meaning that by observing others obtaining their goals via aggressive behavior we collectively learn that aggression pays. In addition, group dynamics in the cultural context of a non-individualistic, socio-centered society appear to add to the amplification of aggression, cognitively cemented by the loss of shared societal values and beliefs.

2.1 Biology and Culture: Nurture informing Nature

Thais are by nature a friendly, kind and polite people. We won't find aggressive Western institutions and habits of public aggression in Thailand such as vandalizing football hooligans torching stadiums or teenagers entering late night trains with beer bottles harassing fellow passengers. Thais enjoy, compared to Westerners, a very feminine biology which expresses itself in the more fragile body build of men and women alike. An anthropologist friend of mine joked that Westerners appear like 'Frankensteins' next to average Thais.

Unlike most previous military rulers, Thaksin Shinawatra was a business tycoon who declared himself as a representative of the rural poor. In proposing a break from the hierarchical structure of Thai society by handing power to the people (his party was called *'Thai Rak Thai', 'Thais love Thais'*) he set a historical precedence. Thaksin cleverly instrumentalized the deep-rooted frustrations of many farmers in the North and North-East of Thailand through populist politics and gave them a voice.

2.1 Biology and Culture: Nurture informing Nature *contd...*

Thai music, TV-shows, politeness particles at the end of sentences (*'kah'* for female and *'kap/ kapom'* for males) and never-ending smiles during conversations are good examples for the soft, consensual and non-aggressive nature of Thais. Theravada Buddhism finally serves as the framework for non-violent daily practice, not just belief. Thais do not enjoy fighting with Thais, this is why aggressive political disagreements may flare up such as in 2010, but also might be short lived and disappear like a spook. Biology and culture do not inform much about the current aggression we witness in the political sphere.

2.2 Frustration: Status Disparities in a Hierarchical Society

Unlike most previous military rulers, Thaksin Shinawatra was a business tycoon who declared himself as a representative of the rural poor. In proposing a break from the hierarchical structure of Thai society by handing power to the people (his party was called *'Thai Rak Thai', 'Thais love Thais'*) he set a historical precedence. Thaksin cleverly instrumentalized the deep-rooted frustrations of many farmers in the North and North-East of Thailand through populist politics and gave them a voice. The previously powerless farmers learned fast to exercise their democratic rights through the ballot box. This otherwise commendable development lead paradoxically to one of the deepest divides in Thai society. The reasons are manifold.

To start with, the rural poor felt empowered to rule without submitting to compromise, defining their version of democracy as undisputable majoritism. They felt entitled to status and to benefit from the offered populist policies by Thaksin that, from an economic perspective, were in fact loss-making and financially unsustainable schemata. The Thaksin-loyal 'red-shirts', as they are commonly known, have organized themselves under the umbrella of the *'United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship'* (UDD). Secondly, it became obvious to the urban and educated middle-classes that Thaksin used his popularity for advancing massive corruption while undermining democratic institutions and muzzling any opposition.

It didn't take long until yellow-shirt royalists and members of the Bangkok middle class formed their own alliance known as the PDRC (*'People's Democratic Reform Committee'*) and voiced out their unwillingness to finance a corrupt regime involved in loss-making populist policies. To speak with the 'Theory of Justice' of John Rawls both parties do not regard the existing social contract as just and fair for either. Thai society lost its consensus while participants do not perceive themselves any more as a single Thai people (behind Rawls' *'veil of ignorance'*, the assumption of basic equality),



Workplace burned down. Photograph © Joana Stella Kompa, May 2010

Solomon Ash's experiments on social compliance provide strong arguments within the Thai context: Most red- and yellow shirt members are convinced that their group is factually right, stating their *informational conformity*. Disagreeing and suffering the discomfort of cognitive dissonance with one's group is not a natural option in a socio-centered culture. Even if one would dare to think any differently, the fear of punishment, given the outright aggressive nature of one's group, forces members into *normative conformity*.

but as irreconcilable enemies instead. Small separatist red-shirt groups even called for an independent 'Lanna' State in the North of Thailand. The argument of status and status disparity is a relevant research topic and does express deep-rooted frustrations. However, the mere existence of opposing political interests may not sufficiently explain why the political divide is expressed by massively aggressive mutual disrespect and even public displays of hatred. Social psychology can yield deeper insights.

2.3 Group Polarization within a Socio-centered Society: A Working Hypothesis why Groups Self-isolate

The well-researched effect of group polarization states that groups tend to make more extreme decisions than individual members by themselves. Since, in a socio-centered culture such as Thailand, almost all decision-making and reasoning processes are facilitated within groups, the cultural disposition in situ appears to function as a catalyst for group-polarization processes. Groups form furthermore identification models, means of self-categorization, prompting their members into role compliance.

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The informational and normative conformity of conflicting parties appears to be amplified by the absence of independent individual accounts. Unlike media programs in Western countries that invite divergent parties to their programs to debate their views critically in public, Thai TV media are owned by their respective groups. 'Red-shirt' members watch for example propaganda on 'Asia Update' while 'Yellow-shirt' members watch propaganda on 'Bluesky TV'-channel. It is needless to say that these extreme polarizations are cementing the nation's democratic stasis by institutionalizing each group's informational conformity.

The current caretaker PM, Ms Yingluck Shinawatra, younger sister of Thaksin Shinawatra, uses her 'Facebook' site to voice out her sentiments rather than to address the nation in a professional manner to all Thai people. Social media serve as a retrospective individual confirmation of having made the right decision while publishing public displays of group-loyalty. This leaves little space left for potential change, open democratic intervention and reconciliation.

"I have good news to tell my red-shirt brothers and sisters from all provinces. The PDRC members of Suthep (Thaungsuban) at the protest stage in Khao Saming (Trat province) were deservedly given a reception by the locals. Five PDRC people were killed and over 30 injured!" Many people in the red-shirt crowd cheered, raised their fists and applauded in jubilation over the death and injuries of innocent and peaceful protesters (Bangkok Post, 24th February 2014 article: "Sickening, disgusting celebration of violence").

2.4 Learning Aggressive Behavior from the Government

On the 23rd of February 2014, Dab Daeng, a red-shirt leader from Chon Buri took to the stage during a red-shirt meeting in Nakhon Ratchasima. He announced to the audience that he had 'good news' to tell and addressed the audience with the following words:

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Dab Daeng was eventually guided off stage by former Pheu Thai MP Worachai Hema while she expressed her disagreement with him, stating that red-shirts do not endorse violence. The example demonstrates that the group's intrinsic and spontaneous motivation clearly does encompass violence. It also demonstrates on the other hand that a single courageous individual and role-model can puncture a group's assumed power. These observations correspond with the second versions of Solomon Ash's experiments that accommodate means of disagreement and the effect of individual disagreement on group conformity. We can confirm that theories of social learning do well apply in practice. Albert Bandura's famous 'Bobo Doll Experiment' renders additional insights in learned aggression. In the original experiment children copy the violent behavior of a teacher who is abusing a 'Bobo the Clown'- doll after the teacher has left the classroom. Members who follow their leaders copy their modes of engagement even in their absence. Violent role-models instigate violent followers while non-violent leaders promote non-violent modes of engagement.

The second case cites caretaker foreign minister Surapong Tovichakchaikul threatening the Constitutional Court that a verdict against Yingluck Shinawatra could lead to violence that that *"chaos will almost surely follow (...) I am not threatening the court, I am just speaking the truth."* The Constitutional Court and the National Anti Corruption Commission (NACC) are currently accused by UDD leaders to stage a 'judicial coup'. In a similar third case caretaker Labour Minister Chalerm warned anti-government protesters that more grenade and bomb-attacks *'may be possible'*. His warning came in the wake of a deadly sniper-attack on protesters days before in Nontaburi. Both statements were made between the 2nd and 3rd of April 2014 (Bangkok Post).



Red shirt fortress in Rachaprasong before military crackdown. Photograph © Joana Stella Kompa, May 2010

The examples demonstrate that government representatives remain ambiguous and outright cynical on the use of violence. Caretaker PM Yingluck Shinawatra has never paid more than lip service. In fact, up to this date, not a single arrest on the numerous grenade and bomb-attacks or shootings at peaceful PDRC protesters has been made by government-loyal police. The fact that the government does not regard itself answerable to the law is troubling.

Government representatives indirectly endorse violence and intimidation against the courts and anti-government protesters. Their messages signal to their followers that violence against anybody opposing the government is tolerated (as in positively understood) by representatives of the state.

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Red-shirts have de facto been given an implicit license to kill by their government. As has been shown the red-shirt movement is divided on the use of violence. Earlier this year red-shirt hardliner Suporn Attawong suggested setting up a militia of 600,000 young men to fight for the UDD and, if necessary, even give their lives to fight the PDRC. Several hundred fighters are currently reported to be trained in the North of Thailand, Udon Thani by red-shirt *'Rambo of the North'* Kwanchai Pripana. The question of the emergence of a criminal, government-sanctioned society seems warranted. Once aggression is institutionalized it leaves little options to develop a Civil Society. To be fair it needs to be mentioned that the leader of the PDRC, Suthep Thaugsuban is not capable of specifying concrete goals either and that his ambiguous talk of returning Thailand to the 'sovereignty of the people' does sound like an self-entitlement of overthrowing a corrupt, but still legitimately elected government.

3. Between Civil War and Failed Nation

Recent polls indicate that about 60 percent of Thais see a real possibility of a Civil War should red-shirt militia and PDRC-followers clash in Bangkok. My personal take is that this may take the form of continuing social unrest, guerilla-warfare, rather than an all-out civil war, given the generally still peaceful nature of the Thai culture. Many farmers have been disillusioned by the government's failing populist policies. The handouts to the poor have dried up and so has the loyalty of a significant part of the rural population. Most middle-class white-collar PDRC followers do not see themselves as potential street-fighters either, leaving a diminished playing field for potential trouble-seekers.

The paralyzing focus on the group conflict at hand has clouded bringing Thailand's structural problems to discussion. Thailand, according to the GINI index, is the Asian country with the highest inequality. The unfairness of wealth distribution is curiously enough not an established topic in Thailand's media since wealthy elites finance both the UDD and the PDRC. Thailand's education system ranks

A 'failed nation' may not necessarily be synonymous with a war-torn country, burnt streets and unforeseen casualties, but with a nation where dysfunctional systems have taken over public life beyond rational improvement and repair. Neither the UDD nor the PDRC have formulated tangible development goals and policy proposals for Thailand. This deficit may also be seen as an opportunity for intellectuals to fill the informational gap and to replace propaganda with discussing a national development plan, specific goals and budgets.

3. Between Civil War and Failed Nation *contd...*

in the global lower third according to the latest PISA study. In recent 'O-Net' (upper secondary) national study results, Thai students failed 6 out of 7 subjects below 50 except for Thai language with 54 out of 100 points. Broken families, the high rate of adolescent and single mothers, domestic violence, rampant corruption on all levels of life and high health risk behavior levels across the population are some of the pressing issues of Thailand.

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4. Potential Interventions in Aggressive Groups Conflict

Groups can exhaust themselves in mere domination attempts without contributing to improve the conditions under which their original conflict has emerged. Socio-centered cultures that cannot fall back on a tradition of intellectual debate and argument are more vulnerable to paralyzing group-conflicts than individualistic cultures. The following interventions conclude reasonable as feasible strategies:

- Disagreement by few self-confident individuals can puncture group consensus significantly, although disagreement may be experienced uncomfortable and challenging at first
- Establishing media channels that facilitate mutual and critical debate can break the spell of group-owned media that continuously repeat their meaningless mantras. Ethical education of journalists may make it harder for groups to recruit media professionals for propaganda
- Non-violent role models need to challenge aggressive representatives, even from their own group, and promote clear meta-contextual codes of non-violent and non-aggressive engagement inclusive of verbal aggression
- Institutionalizing a variety of parties, not just two head-on competing rivals, can shift the public focus to a greater diversity of perspectives



- Education plays a central role in preventing aggressive behavior from developing. Early development of social, cognitive and meta-cognitive skills is imperative to develop group competence in addressing problems rationally. Developmental psychology, parenting, upbringing and peer-relations set up the matrix upon which future group profiles consolidate
- Issues of status need to be taken seriously since frustration is a major source of aggression. The focus of political debate needs to be shifted towards the fairness of the social contract to everybody, not only self-appointed elites. Those who cement inequality need to be reminded of the inevitable consequences for society at large.
- Promoting cultural values of love, compassion, empathy and understanding the other supersede the seeding of hatred, disrespect and social divide. Communicative and collaborative social skills are a prerequisite for human development in global context.

Seini O'Connor and Ronald Fischer (2012) note in their study on corruption that cultures promoting social values such as individual autonomy, social diversity and more egalitarian structures are less likely to be corrupt, regardless of economic conditions. The authors' findings, based on the analysis of 59 countries from 1980 to 2008, gives rise to the argument that traditional values such as social conformity, conservative social behavior and preference for hierarchical beliefs contribute to perpetuating poverty and social divide. As argued, group behavior and group identity definitions reside at the heart of inward-looking public attitudes and beliefs.

Authoritarian leaders and bullies are powerless without their followers. To shift the research focus from pathological leaders to the motivations of group-dynamics might hold the key to the long-term development of social justice and stability. It is our greatest hope that violence does not erupt after court judgments have been passed. If it does, Thailand loses a big part of her soul.



Some Experiential and Theoretical Remarks on Human Rights

Dr. Angela Condello

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A crucifix erected in Sicily in recognition of migrants lost at sea.
Photograph courtesy Dr. Angela Condello

Are human rights natural, or are they conventional? This preliminary and (way) too broad question leads us to reflect on the philosophical legitimation of human rights and, all the while, on the inter-sections and interactions between law and language. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle claimed that: “there are two forms of justice, the natural and the conventional. It is natural when it has the same validity everywhere and is unaffected by any view we may take of the justice of it. It is conventional when there is no original reason why it should take one form rather than another and the rule it imposes is reached by agreement, after which it holds good. It is not obvious what rules of justice are natural and what are legal and conventional, in cases where variation is possible. Yet it remains true that there is such a thing as natural, as well as conventional, justice” (Book V, Chapter II).

Aristotle’s claim is still relevant. Furthermore, not only is the relationship between nature and convention complex if observed from the perspective of justice in general, but it is - *a fortiori* - even more so if considered from the perspective of human rights as a political and juridical discourse. The natural origin of human rights is evident in their conventional foundation. They are logically and phenomenologically different from the right of property, for example, in that in these formulations they don’t originate in a written contract, but rather in the fact of being human. Yet, as they codify moral behaviour, with this codification being the result of a human *artificium* (literally, “what is made according to a technique”), human rights are also the result of political agreement and convention.

Intuitively, I assume that the conditions of existence of human rights are thus influenced by both natural and conventional circumstances. But this argument needs to be explained.

First, I want to say something about the reason why I started reflecting on this, and how a concrete experience influenced me. It was indeed a concrete and real experience that led me to start thinking through the legitimation of human rights from the perspective of philosophy of language. In 2013, I worked with the President of the Human Rights Committee of the Italian Senate of the Republic, Professor Luigi Manconi. As a legal philosopher, I was used to reading and reflecting on the interaction between law, language, aesthetics, metaphors, bodies, interpretations, and - even more - on the interconnections among these and other wonderful (but almost only) conceptual issues. While working in the Committee, for the first time in my professional life my senses were directly involved in my intellectual activity. As Walter Benjamin would have said, I could see law and philosophy acting together “in the flesh”. I heard voices crying for help, voices of people in need and of human rights activists; I met and discussed with the brave mayor of Lampedusa, Giusi Nicolini. I saw victims of injustices caused by the police, I met and hugged mothers and sisters and lovers of men who died in jail because they were beaten by the guards. Before, I was already aware of the existence of injustices and of the permanent violations of human rights in Italy. Theoretically. But in these moments I literally sensed (THAT was aesthetic!) the precise point where pain meets justice and law - and *vice versa*. As a consequence, I can no longer understand the connection between nature and convention as static. Rather, it is dynamic and it adapts to the historical and social processes of which human rights are also part.

I started wondering why, in a particular period of time and in a determined social and historical context, precise needs of protection emerge. In some ways, human rights standards and conceptual contents “evolve” with the evolution of their economic, social and political frame of reference. For instance, a critical reading of the “phenomenology” of human rights discourses and policies in the last two years in Italy reveals that the debate (and the work of the Committee as well) has focused on current emergencies, each of which is the product of an “acceleration” caused by peculiar social, geopolitical and economic conditions. The main issues raised last year concerned immigration law and the conditions of refugees. With their emergence, new needs for the protection and promotion of human rights standards often arise: the International Conventions are indeed general and abstract, but they cannot anticipate every single risk or contingent situation. For example, the inhuman conditions in migrant and refugee detention centers in Italy (C.I.E. and C.A.R.A.) are a comparatively recent issue, a consequence of the migration fluxes that started in 2011 after the so-called “Arab Spring”. In the words of a *New York Times* article, “these centers should not be prisons, and they are not prisons, but the difference seems only a matter of semantics” (June 2013). The comparison of the centers with prisons (i.e. with a known model) proves that the political discourse is not ready to describe them properly.

According to one of these theories, human rights are the product of natural law stemming from religion (Grotius, Locke, naturalism). Other theories hold that they are the result of political agreement and convention, even if this agreement is on the fact that they are based on natural properties (conventionalism, like, for instance, Searle's account of status functions). This distinction hints at a parallel between law and language, since the nature/convention dichotomy has also been a core issue in philosophy of language.

At the juridical level, moreover, the discipline regulating these centers is still dishomogeneous and rather obscure, an example of a contingent situation not anticipated by the Italian Government nor by the European Union. Will the protection of human rights of the inmates of these centers, when properly provided, have a natural or a conditional foundation? The answer is both one and the other; it will be the product of the social structure, from which the phenomenon and the emergency emerged, and it will be realized conventionally, but reinforced and sustained by naturalistic arguments.

How does language and law adapt to historical and semantic changes and to these shifts of paradigm? Going backwards in Italian republican history, the same question might be applied to women's political and social rights or to workers' rights. Moreover, nobody was discussing the right of homosexual couples to get married or to adopt children thirty years ago - now it seems to be (rightly so) a focal issue. The problem concerns more broadly the mechanisms of adaptation of legal semantics to mutations in social reality: an impossible, paradoxical and necessary process of redefinition of legal concepts and a complex process of adaptation involving various mechanisms and dynamics. It is a process that relates both to nature and convention; for human rights the case is particularly intricate, since they are rights we are entitled of just by virtue of being human.

As mentioned before, the question of whether human rights are the product of nature or of convention dates back to political, legal, and philosophical theories rooted in classical thought. According to one of these theories, human rights are the product of natural law stemming from religion (Grotius, Locke, naturalism). Other theories hold that they are the result of political agreement and convention, even if this agreement is on the fact that they are based on natural properties (conventionalism, like, for instance, Searle's account of status functions). This distinction hints at a parallel between law and language, since the nature/convention dichotomy has also been a core issue in philosophy of language. In the Platonic *Cratylus*, the extreme linguistic conventionalist, Hermogenes, holds that *nothing* but local or national convention determines which words are used to designate which objects: the same names could have been attached to quite different objects, and the same objects given quite different names, so long as the users of the language were party to the convention. Cratylus, the naturalist, holds instead that names cannot be arbitrarily chosen in the way that conventionalism advocates, since names belong *naturally* to their specific objects. For Plato, both positions are too extreme: instead, he argues that knowledge and language are interconnected and their relationship is dynamic and not just natural, nor merely conventional. Language is instead conceived as functional, oriented towards the outcome.

In a very similar way, the peculiarity of human rights is that they do have a clear conventional foundation; nevertheless, the convention is the consequence of a status (being human) that is more "originary" and natural than others.[1] Thus, human rights also have a natural foundation. Nature and convention move dynamically in the semantic frame of human rights: this theory has been argued recently by the

From the perspective of philosophy of language, human rights are therefore mostly conventional, but nature can be used as an argument on which to base that convention: nature can "reinforce" convention. For instance, the universal right to free speech might have existed before the European Enlightenment, or it might not have – in both cases it comes into existence in that particular context and is recognized at the time of Enlightenment. Once we get clear about their ontological status, the existence of rights becomes no more mysterious than the existence of money, property, and so on.

American philosopher John Searle who, in *Making the Social World*, applied his intentionalistic theory to human rights. In his account, rights are generally defined as "status functions," deontic powers *deriving* from collectively recognized statuses (being a citizen, a husband or a wife, or a post-doc fellow). Rights are produced by collective intentionality, they are not discovered in nature. But if rights are "status functions," and status functions derive from institutional facts (which derive from linguistic conventions), then it should be a logical anomaly to pretend that rights and obligations can also derive from natural grounds (i.e. the characteristic of being human). Searle's explanation is that functions are performatively imposed upon the objects of reality: we make something the case by explicitly saying that it is the case (e.g. when we make a promise). Law is intrinsically performative: it makes it the case (it creates a new dimension in reality) just by saying that it is the case (through a declaration, a sentence in a normative text).

From the perspective of philosophy of language, human rights are therefore mostly conventional, but nature can be used as an argument on which to base that convention: nature can "reinforce" convention. For instance, the universal right to free speech might have existed before the European Enlightenment, or it might not have – in both cases it comes into existence in that particular context and is recognized at the time of Enlightenment. Once we get clear about their ontological status, the existence of rights becomes no more mysterious than the existence of money, property, and so on.

I hope these remarks offer a clarification of what I am terming the processes of coming into being ("emergence") and evolution of human rights, processes that helped me understand what I observed during my experience at the Human Rights Committee in Italy. By observing human rights and their evolution, I reflected on the thread linking language, politics, law, and power: that human rights are defined, created, and changed by human language and inside different discourses. Whether rights are the consequence of conventional or naturalistic instances can't be stated with certainty; where juridical instances meet political discourse, nature and convention interact very dynamically and extremely quickly because they have to respond to the need for definite standards (static) that originate in society (dynamic).

To conclude, human rights are created by human beings, and they can only be violated by human beings: they show all the complexity and reflexivity of both law and language. Human rights are the consequence (and not the product) of both nature and convention(s): they are, just like all legal concepts, purposeful, related to intentionality and adapted to the dynamic processes of communication in which law, politics, and language intersect.

[1] John R Searle, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).



Someone, something, somewhere pays

A broiler chicken bustles about his overcrowded shed
 Amonia fills the air from droppings that are never cleared
 His eyes sting and fail
 His legs and feet are burned by the caustic floor
 Legs deform and buckle under the weight of his overfed, exercise-less body
 Confined for life, unable to forage, dust-bathe and perch
 Eyes blank, as his life force dies behind them
 A sorry damp spark, that never enflames

Part of this tortured zombie
 Becomes a supermarket chicken fillet
 Factory farmed for £1.50
 A translucent pink solution to the consumer's tight budget
 And the corporate need for large profits

But what about the true cost for all the earth lost?

Antibiotics pumped into healthy farm animals
 Create a human health crisis of superbugs
 Nitrate fertilisers and pesticides poison the land
 To protect the grain that the tortured birds eat
 Polluting fuels transport products across continents

The cost of cheap food is not just borne by us
 But by future generations
 By different parts of the earth decaying under the glare of
 Homogenised cuisine, monoculture
 And the vulture of vested interests

The flesh lacks the nutrition of their organic free-range friends
 Compounds the ills of human health
 The suffering of imprisoned animals
 Their life force sapped
 Their instincts cauterised
 Before we consume the corrupted carcass

And what about the true cost for all that I lost?

The violation of our right to health
 The right to cultural identity which biodiversity
 And traditional farming practices embody
 The right to work which small famers have foregone
 Human trafficking for forced labour in food processing plants

If we want these rights and a sustainable planet
 We are expected to pay for them
 For the investment in organic farms, the freedom-food life
 Rotated crops, recycled nutrients, soil fertility
 A rich wildlife inviting a myriad of dancing birds
 Local markets, local jobs, fewer sales

But why are consumers paying
 Animals paying
 Small organic farmers paying
 For companies which harm to make profits?

And what about the true solution for all this pollution?

We can make consumer choices
 Ask that the polluter pays at source
 Demand policies which support best practise
 Instead of governments equating profitable success with violating rights :
 The hampered, tampered-with rights of humans, animals and the ecosystem
 Most of all we can recognise
 There is no such thing as cheap food

Someone, something, somewhere pays.



Quinoa Pulao with Caramelized Onion and Walnuts



A delicious Indian-style creation using quinoa with caramelized onion, walnuts and cranberries, infused with whole spices and topped with cilantro and lemon. Photograph Perinaz Avari [LINK](#)

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 cup quinoa, washed and drained
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoons cracked black pepper

For the Pulao

1 tablespoon olive oil + 2 tablespoons for drizzling
 3 whole cloves
 1 cinnamon stick, 2 inches long
 2 whole cardamom, cracked open
 1 cup sliced red onion
 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 ½ teaspoon ground cumin
 ¼ teaspoon ground coriander
 ¼ teaspoon salt (to taste)
 ½ cup chopped walnuts (peanuts or almond also work)
 ¼ cup cranberries or raisins
 2 tablespoon chopped cilantro
 3 tablespoons lemon juice

Directions

Cook the quinoa as per package directions with two exceptions: First, season the boiling water with salt and cracked black pepper. Secondly, reduce cook time by 2-3 minutes, steaming the quinoa covered, off-the-flame for 10 minutes post-cooking, before fluffing it with a fork. Leave aside till required.

In a pan, heat a tablespoon of olive oil and add the whole cloves, cinnamon and cardamom. Once the aromas of the spices are released, add onion and garlic. Cook till the onions have caramelized (they should have a brownish red color.)

Sprinkle salt, ground cumin and coriander over onions. Roast the spices for a minute and add cooked quinoa, chopped walnuts and cranberries/raisins to the onions. Drizzle remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil over the quinoa pulao and cook together for a couple of minutes for all the flavors to blend.

Top quinoa pulao with chopped cilantro and lemon juice, and taste for salt, adding more if required.

Serve the warm Quinoa Pulao with Caramelized Onion and Walnuts.

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Sexual Compromise

Communication between couples has evolved over the last decade. Often they actually negotiate their sexual desires with each other. Whether or not they come to a mutual conclusion is another story. Even television commercials poke fun at the difference in men and women's libido and their desire for sex. Of course this is a general perspective and definitely there are women who are poking at their men too. The scope of this article relates to committed relationships. Casual sexual relationships have a whole different dynamic that won't be explored here. So let's take an example.

It was an incredible night. Brandon and Emma celebrated their seven-year anniversary at Alinea, a modern Chicago restaurant with excellent reviews. Having had a busy week, they planned a quiet evening together. As a law professor at Loyola, Emma worked long hours and at varied times during the week. Brandon traveled as an international broker and this left them juggling for relaxed time together.

After a delicious meal of king crab and scallops, with fine white wine, they walked along the lakefront in Lincoln Park, reflecting back on when they met. The first time in many years, they reminisced about their combined dreams. The night was perfect. The streets were unusually quiet as they visited a couple galleries and enjoyed the city lights. In the cab ride home they sat quietly enjoying the smell and the warmth of each other's bodies. Emma felt content as she noticed they were breathing together as one. Once home, already having had a couple drinks, they moved directly into the bedroom. Intimacy had given way to work for the last few months, and they were finally at ease. They crawled into bed and she looked at him adoringly as she kissed him. She thanked him profusely for the wonderful evening. He began to kiss her passionately and his hands began to explore her curves. His expectation and hers collided.

She – had a wonderful night, hadn't been intimate with him for a long time, has been stressed and busy at work, wants to close her eyes and experience the sensations of being in love and cuddle.

He – finally had time with his wife. Has not had sex with her for weeks. Planned this evening so they could finally be sexual again. Did all the right moves as far as planning goes and is ready to "finish the deal."



Right or wrong, I believe every sexual relationship has compromise. The hope would be that each person takes his or her share of compromise, but more often it is one person who gives in. What is the cost? Resentment, lack of true intimacy, aggression, depression, marital prostitution; I could go on. Most likely the couples separate at least emotionally, if not physically. Whether an affair ensues or not, there is an unspoken agreement, and they live as roommates, or what I call, married singles.

Sound familiar? We could change the names, city, careers, circumstances just like a fill in the blanks puzzle, but overall, internationally, the results are the same. So, who compromises in the sexual arena and at what cost? Her need and desire is for closeness, commitment, security and love. He desire is for a woman, Emma, who will be there for him, being sexual when he wants her to be, to share activities and the convenience of love.

She responds to romance and sexuality when there is ambiance, connection, closeness and communication. Brandon focuses on his virility and what I refer to as his “puffing peacock” stance. History between Brandon and Emma around negotiating intercourse has shown him this is a precarious time, so he is aware of not triggering any reactions from her.

Nevertheless, whether or not the evening ends with the couple joyfully entangled or not – who’s to know? Maybe you can relate.

Who is responsible for ones sexual expression, sexual desire, and sexual pleasure? This case was not so extreme, but what would you do if you were in a committed relationship or marriage and your partner/spouse continually said no? Is it your moral and religious obligation to stay; to stay faithful and live the rest of your life without being sexual with your wife or husband?

If you are a woman who is sexually unresponsive or non-orgasmic, either due to lack of physical desire (possibly hormonal,) illness, or having a husband who goes straight to the sexual act with no ability or understanding how to engage you and fire your desire; what do you do?

At what point do women add having sex to their list along with doing the laundry, picking up groceries and attending their daughter’s dance recital? When I was in India recently, I sat at the breakfast table before my friend completed his yogic breathing. I had tea and checked my email. Every morning I heard what sounded like a woman having an orgasm. I was with my friend’s family and I didn’t speak Bengali and they didn’t speak English. They didn’t seem to notice, but, nevertheless, I felt embarrassed. I shared this with my friend when he joined me and he said, oh, no, Indian women don’t make noise. Really I asked. He assured me this was true and said she must be praying.

Well, I didn’t buy it! Later we continued our conversation, which lead to American woman being



passionate and vocally expressive. I explained this was also a validation to their lover. This discussion of course was destined to end up talking about “faking it.” He had not even conceived of any such behavior by women and ultimately in my need to be right, I searched youtube on my Mac Air and found the famous scene from [When Harry Met Sally](#). My friend was astonished and definitely humored by this funny scene. Then, the sound I had been hearing every morning began and I begged, “listen, listen there it is.” He looked at me with surprise and said, “she is praying.” Okay, he was right.

Right or wrong, I believe every sexual relationship has compromise. The hope would be that each person takes his or her share of compromise, but more often it is one person who gives in. What is the cost? Resentment, lack of true intimacy, aggression, depression, marital prostitution; I could go on. Most likely the couples separate at least emotionally, if not physically. Whether an affair ensues or not, there is an unspoken agreement, and they live as roommates, or what I call, married singles.

Delving so deeply into this topic, I yearn for a solution; so here it is. To men I ask that you understand that foreplay is not rubbing up against a woman, telling her about how great you are, or beginning to kiss and fondle her with the expectation of sex. If you don’t have a satisfying pattern of sexuality, or if your intimacy is routine and stagnant, please understand. For most women, foreplay begins at least anywhere from 12 – 72 hours prior to intercourse. Women are sensual and emotional beings. Engage their senses. Get to know your woman. Does she like her back rubbed with scented oil, to have you whisper in her ear or kiss the back of her neck? Is she responsive to the vibe of a candle or burning fire, to jewelry or flowers? Does she become stimulated by a romantic and succulent meal or a night on the town? These behaviors begin long before the sexual encounter.

To women who love men whose sexual desire overrides yours, please speak up. Men in general are not nearly as complicated as you might think. Communication is absolute, and generally women must take the lead in this area. Communicate, even when it is difficult and you keep hitting road-blocks. When you are together and sexuality is not the immediate issue, take some time to share what you like. Share whether it is better for you when you advance toward him with intimacy, or when he moves toward you with desire. Let him know what is stimulating for you and what sets the mood.

Men in general love to please women! Give him the roadmap so both of you can enjoy the journey.

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