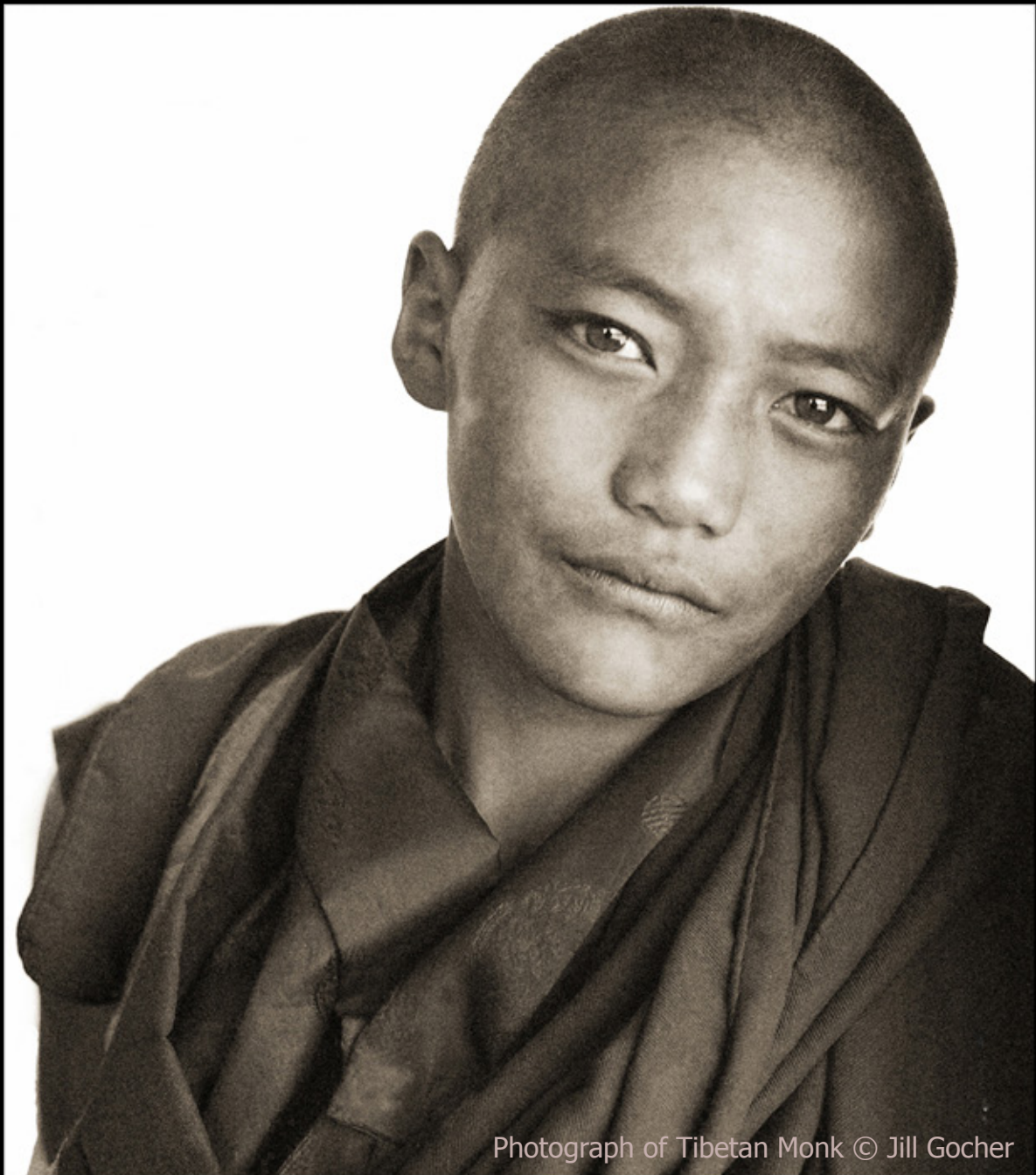


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**Analysing China's Soft Power Strategy
and Comparative Indian Initiatives**
Dr Parama Sinha Palit



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Analysing China's Soft Power Strategy and Comparative Indian Initiatives

Dr Parama Sinha Palit

Parama Sinha Palit, Phd Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a scholar of international relations, specializing in the study of soft power, cultural and public diplomacy and Chinese and Indian foreign policies. Currently based in Singapore, she is a research associate with the China in Comparative Perspective Network (CCPN) Global—a UK-based global academic society. Parama had earlier worked for the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and the United Services Institution (USI), India.



Celebrating The Fifth of May

Dr Howard Richards

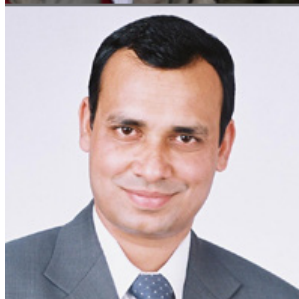
Dr Richards is a philosopher of Social Science who worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He is Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College; PhD in Philosophy, University of California, Santa Barbara; Juris Doctor (J.D.) Stanford Law School: Advanced Certificate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



A Profound Misunderstanding

Tom Kilcourse

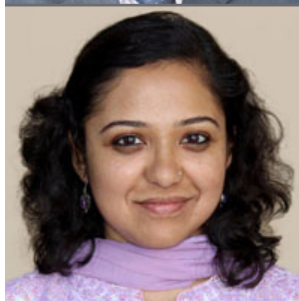
Kilcourse spent his career in management development and was widely published in management and academic journals. He appeared in several educational videos produced for the BBC, and has spoken on management in the USA, Europe and the UK. Tom began working life as a manual worker in his native Manchester, before winning a scholarship to study at Ruskin College, Oxford. He later won a State Scholarship to read economics at Hull University. He is now retired. www.amazon.com



Future trajectory of Left-wing extremism in India

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr. Routray served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Govt of India, Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Research Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia.



The Fantastic as Strategy: India's Game in Kashmir

Dr Madhumita Das

Dr Madhumita Das - Ph.D [International Politics] – JNU, Delhi; M.Phil [International Politics]; M.A [Conflict Analysis]; B.A [Political Science]. Assistant Professor with Doctorate in International Politics from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her thesis deals with India's Foreign Policy towards the liberation movements of Palestine and Tibet. Her M.Phil dissertation dealt with the territorial question in the Naga national movement in Northeast India. www.flame.edu.in/flame-faculty/das-madhumita



Hanuman and the Living World of Hinduism

Professor Vamsee Juluri

Vamsee Juluri is a Professor of Media Studies and Asian Studies at the University of San Francisco and an author, novelist and columnist. His books include: *Saraswati's Intelligence: Part 1 of The Kishkindha Chronicles*, a fictional trilogy set in prehistoric India inspired by the monkey god Hanuman (Westland, 2017). *Rearming Hinduism: Nature, Hinduphobia and the Return of Indian Intelligence* (Westland, 2015). *Bollywood Nation: India through its Cinema* (Penguin India, 2013). *The Mythologist: A Novel* (Penguin India, 2010). *Becoming a Global Audience: Longing and Belonging in Indian Music Television* (Peter Lang, 2003). www.rearminghinduism.com



A Country Between: Making a Home Where Both Sides of Jerusalem Collide

Stephanie Saldaña, in an interview

Stephanie Saldaña has a B. A. from Middlebury College and a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School. She was a Watson and Fulbright scholar and has won several awards for her poetry. She is the author of *The Bread of Angels*, about her time living in Syria, and the recently published *A Country Between*. She is also the founder of Mosaic Stories, a project to tell the stories of endangered cultural heritage in the Middle East.

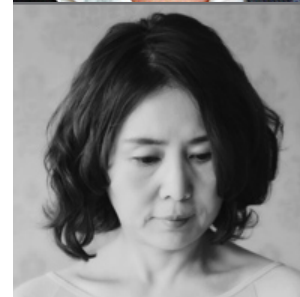
www.mosaicstories.org



A storm we must face

Dr Margi Prideaux

Margi Prideaux is an international wildlife policy writer, negotiator and academic. She has worked within the conservation movement for 27 years. You can follow her on facebook or twitter @WildPolitics. Her books, including *Global Environmental Governance*, *Civil Society and Wildlife* and *Birdsong After the Storm*, can be seen at <http://www.wildpolitics.co/books>



Gyeongju - The Museum Without Walls

Mikyoung Cha

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



Mantra of the Mandala for May

Patricia Fitzgerald

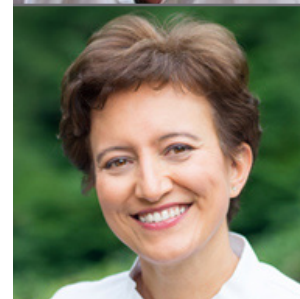
Patricia studied Visual Education and Communication at Dun Laoghaire College of Art & Design (IADT) and also holds a first class honours degree in Philosophy and Sociology from University College, Dublin. Her first book *Healing Creations: Discover your mindful self through mandala colouring and journaling* was published in September 2016



Homage to the Little Folk

Mark Ulyseas

Ulyseas is founder and editor of Live Encounters Magazine and Live Encounters Poetry. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. <http://www.amazon.com/author/markulyseas>



Baba Ghanoush

Ozlem Warren

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

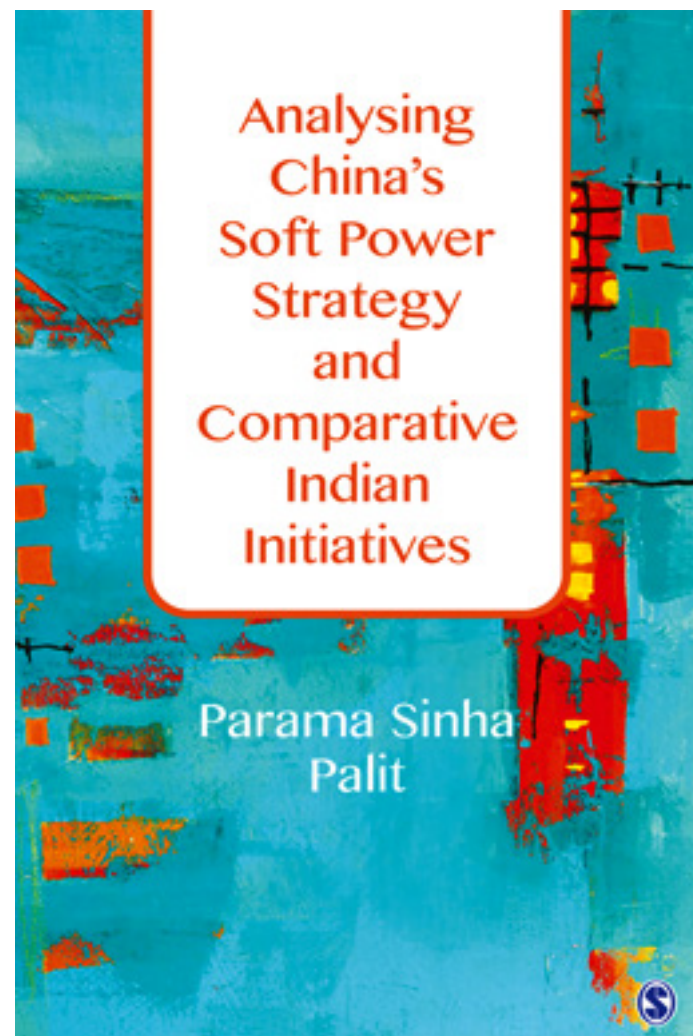
Parama Sinha Palit is a scholar of international relations, specializing in the study of soft power, cultural and public diplomacy and Chinese and Indian foreign policies. Currently based in Singapore, she is a research associate with the China in Comparative Perspective Network (CCPN) Global—a UK-based global academic society. Parama had earlier worked for the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and the United Services Institution (USI), India. She finished her PhD from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India, and is currently engaged in research projects pertaining to national image-building and strategic aspects of national soft power strategies. Her works have been published in several academic journals and leading newspapers; furthermore, she has delivered lectures at various universities in the UK, Australia, China, New Zealand and India.



Dr Parama Sinha Palit, Author - Published by SAGE Publications

ANALYSING CHINA'S SOFT POWER STRATEGY AND COMPARATIVE INDIAN INITIATIVES

While soft power has gained considerable currency in the global discussion on international national and strategic relations, including in India, it continues to be treated somewhat contemptuously, particularly by hardcore realists. Many scholars across the world are not only skeptical about its conceptual application to the wider strategic and foreign policy discourse but raise questions on its efficacy in securing strategic benefits by countries. Further, there is also a very limited literature on soft power from a non-Western and largely Asian perspective in marked contrast to the copious Western academic discourse on the subject. *Analysing China's Soft Power Strategy and Comparative Indian Initiatives* by Dr Parama Sinha Palit is an important effort in addressing this deficiency.



The book, while pursuing a constructivist approach, analyses China's soft power strategy from the vantage point of its vigorous employment by a rising power in modern times. The perspective is contextually extended to a comparative study of similar strategies by India. The conceptual framework employed is the exhaustive construct of soft power, including economic engagement, given the strong resonance of the notion with China's external engagement policies that include cultural diplomacy (CD), public diplomacy (PD), economic aid, education and the use of the media. Beijing's continuous effort to explore new methods for image-building are striking. While these initiatives are part of China's extensive state-led campaign for 'charming hearts and minds', the book discusses ancient Chinese thoughts and philosophies that establish the presence of soft power in China's statecraft from centuries.

The book also investigates the evolving soft power discourse in India, which is becoming increasingly visible. As India matures as a power and deals with new challenges and experiences, new imperatives are beginning to influence its external engagement policy. Greater economic engagement is essential for expanding India's geo-strategic influence and strategic ambitions.

The Sino-Indian relationship is rarely visualized in an objective fashion given the paranoia surrounding China in most segments of the Western and Indian media. Given the paranoia, China would arguably be the last country to embark on a 'charm offensive'. Not only has it done so, as the book points out, soft power and cooperation do play important roles in contemporary China-India relations that while propelled by realpolitik, nonetheless continue to expand.

This requires a supportive external environment, particularly in the neighbourhood, highlighting the importance of pursuing soft power that contributes to benign perceptions. While contemporary dynamics have compelled India to employ soft power tools, its history has also supported the current emphasis on soft power.

Another important aspect the book discusses is the evolving India-China relationship given the predominantly hostile perceptions of China in India's strategic community. The Sino-Indian relationship is rarely visualized in an objective fashion given the paranoia surrounding China in most segments of the Western and Indian media. Given the paranoia, China would arguably be the last country to embark on a 'charm offensive'. Not only has it done so, as the book points out, soft power and co-operation do play important roles in contemporary China-India relations that while propelled by realpolitik, nonetheless continue to expand.

China's deployment of soft power has not been bereft of focus on hard power though. This aspect is time and again contextually highlighted in the book. China's belligerence is becoming more and more noticeable. Its repeated warnings to the US against "challenging international order" and "making trouble in South China Sea", project a "new confident China" following its rise and assumption of greater power in the international order. Even otherwise, China's large use of soft power has been accompanied by significant demonstrations of its military might on several occasions and in presence of major global leaders, such as the celebrations for marking the 70th anniversary of victory over Japan in the Second World War in 2015. The "hard" posture is even being communicated for domestic consumption as was evident during the Chinese New Year celebration in China in 2016 that was notable for conveying distinct political messages. The CCTVs New Year Gala (abbreviated in Chinese as *Chunwan*) was conspicuous for its heavily ideological overtone and glorification of the nation's military might. Such demonstration, along with military preparedness in the South China Sea, underscore a confident China *ready to charm the world, but on its own terms*, without compromising on sovereignty or core national interests that are important for the Chinese people and crucial for the long-term survival and sustenance of the Communist Party of China.

The book is divided into 3 parts and has 11 chapters each discussing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of employment of soft power tools.

The consequences of China's rise in Southeast Asia have been a subject of profuse debate amongst scholars of international and strategic studies. Chapter 4 examines this aspect while discussing Beijing's current engagement of the region, which is predominantly driven by China's desire for new sources of natural resources and markets, along with its aspiration to become a maritime power.

Chapter 1 discusses at length the notion of soft power as expounded by various theorists and scholars. Rooted in neoliberal and constructivist visions of power, soft power, as the Chapter examines, has different facets like culture and PD that have emerged as its major tools. These tools have been increasingly employed by China to communicate with the rest of the world and for consolidating national stability and economic progress.

Chapter 2 discusses the historical context and background of China's soft power and the extension of the relevance in the present context. It charts Beijing's evolution of soft power from the Hundred Schools of Thought to the contemporary emphasis on soft power as a state policy.

Chapter 3 examines Beijing's policy towards South Asia reflecting the priorities of its Western Development Strategy (WDS) as well as the continuation of its 'good neighbourly' policy. Beijing's soft power initiatives in South Asia seek to maintain a stable, peaceful and prosperous neighbourhood, while integrating China more closely with the region. Though CD in South Asia has been low-key compared to other regions, education collaboration and economic engagement are distinctly prominent.

The consequences of China's rise in Southeast Asia have been a subject of profuse debate amongst scholars of international and strategic studies. Chapter 4 examines this aspect while discussing Beijing's current engagement of the region, which is predominantly driven by China's desire for new sources of natural resources and markets, along with its aspiration to become a maritime power. The economic engagement of Southeast Asia has been critical in enhancing its soft power in the recipient country while securing strategic-economic objectives like improving cross-border connectivity and accessing resources.

Chapter 5 discusses China's varied engagement in the Northeast Asia, Oceania and South Pacific region (excluding Southeast Asia). The region is experiencing a blend of various engagement initiatives — cultural, education and economic engagement depending on their country-specific strategic importance. However, the regional dynamics remain complicated influencing China's overall 'soft' image and perceptions of China.

While both countries have been resorting to soft engagement with the rest of the world, such engagement is not exclusive of each other and has been rising in recent years. While Buddhism and economics has connected the two since ancient times, other soft power measures are also becoming visible.

While observing that Beijing and New Delhi's approaches to soft power are distinct from each other, the Chapter identifies some key structural features from both such as scale, pace, state involvement, political systems, institutions and realpolitik that define their communication with the rest of the world and the concomitant effectiveness thereof.

Chapter 6 focuses on China's evolving ties with Africa and Europe. China is steadily increasing its cultural and economic presence in both the regions. While media collaboration, healthcare and economic cooperation are rather distinct in Africa, cultural initiatives, high-level visits and education seem dominant in China-EU relationship. Indeed, both continents are likely to strengthen their long-term associations with China through various spheres of cooperation.

China's great power ambitions make it imperative for it to engage the Americas — the US, Canada and Latin America. Chapter 7 examines China's outreach strategies for the countries in the region. The strategy underscores cooperation driven largely by economic factors. However, Beijing's employment of soft power through cultural exchanges with Latin America for instance has assumed a distinct characteristic. In the meantime high-level visits and education cooperation are gradually picking up with all the three countries. However, as the book points out, the complexity of the US-China relations also impacts the nature of China's soft power strategy.

Chapter 8 covers China's soft power in Central Asia, Russia, Mongolia and the Middle East. It underlines the strategic and economic importance of the region, while noting that Beijing's application of soft power tools like culture, education and economics are determined by countries and circumstances. Thus, while culture and education are essential for Russia and Central Asia, economic engagement is vital for the Middle East.

India's attempt to harness its soft power capital as a foreign policy tool has been discussed in details in Chapter 9. With India's foreign policy becoming increasingly pragmatic, its strategic horizon has expanded, inspiring maturing of a soft engagement strategy, less pronounced than similar Chinese strategies in scale, but more nuanced in specific thrusts. The Chapter examines these soft power tools—both state driven and non-state private initiatives—for aspiring an 'enabling external environment'—an imperative for India as much as it is for China.

Chapter 10 examines the broader vision of neighbourhood engagement pertaining to the mutual interfaces between China and India. While both countries have been resorting to soft engagement with the rest of the world, such engagement is not exclusive of each other and has been rising in recent years. While Buddhism and economics has connected the two since ancient times, other soft power measures are also becoming visible.

The roles of the leaderships in both countries have been critical in resurrecting the 'trust deficit' to a large extent.

The final Chapter reviews China's global soft power strategy with its distinct nuances while emphasizing that Beijing has not relied on soft power alone for engaging the world. It has been efficiently using both soft and hard power (smart power) for achieving its objectives. This has, however, had implications for its image. While observing that Beijing and New Delhi's approaches to soft power are distinct from each other, the Chapter identifies some key structural features from both such as scale, pace, state involvement, political systems, institutions and realpolitik that define their communication with the rest of the world and the concomitant effectiveness thereof.





Mexican victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862 [LINK](#)



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

DR HOWARD RICHARDS CELEBRATING THE FIFTH OF MAY

If you have successfully freed your twenty-first century mind from enslavement to the jurisprudence of the eighteenth century, you will have no trouble accepting the cancellation of debts. If you are a realist about the evolution of the human species on the planet earth, you will see necessary or desirable debt cancellation as just another adjustment of culture to its physical functions. It will be obvious to you that the ancient Hebrews were not violating eternal and universal principles when they declared the cancellation of debts every seventh year.¹ On the contrary they were asserting eternal and universal principles more fundamental than those of the civil law. Nor was the legendary Athenian legislator Solon unethical when he relieved the poor from debt bondage.²

You will happily join the Mexicans in celebrating their *cinco de mayo*. It is a holiday that honours the announcement made in 1861 by *El Presidente* Benito Juarez that Mexico had no money and would exercise its right as a sovereign nation to suspend payment on its debts. When Mexico announced default, its creditors summoned to their aid armed forces of the United States, Great Britain, and France who landed in Veracruz in January of 1862. The French marched inland. On May 5, 1862, they were defeated by the Mexican army at Puebla. President Juarez declared May 5 “*el cinco de mayo*” Mexico’s national holiday and it has been celebrated ever since. (A year later the French marched on Mexico City with a larger force and installed Maximilian, an Austrian nobleman, as Emperor of Mexico.)

A realist viewpoint does not imply adopting a generally hostile attitude toward creditors –certainly not when the creditor happens to be a pension fund on which old ladies rely for their monthly sustenance. It does not imply hostility to anybody. It does imply including debt cancellation among the options when looking for justice. “Justice” is a wonderful word. Aristotle declared justice to be more beautiful than the evening or the morning star.

- 1 [Deuteronomy 15](#). See also [Matthew 6:12](#), [Leviticus 25](#). It is sometimes said that debt cancellation was every 49 years in the year of Jubilee announced in Leviticus. Deuteronomy says every seven years.
- 2 Both Aristotle and Plutarch say that Solon cancelled all debts. Other sources suggest that although he relieved the poor from debt-bondage his measures were less sweeping. See A. French, [The Economic Background to Solon's Reforms](#), The Classical Quarterly. Volume 6 (1956) pp. 11-25. (<http://philpapers.org/rec/FRETEB> - accessed March 2015).
- 3 See for example John Loxley, [Structural Adjustment in Africa](#), Review of African Political Economy. Volume 47 (1990) pp. 8-27. (<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03056249008703845#>. VPYSFo1yaP9 - accessed March 2015).
- 4 The famous reforms of 1991 were forced on India because it was in default on international obligations. See the discussion of them in Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger, [Gandhi and the Future of Economics](#). Lake Oswego OR: Dignity Press, 2013. p. 251 et. seq. and in the several works of Sen and Dreze on contemporary India. (http://schelri.vitebooks.eu/?id=gandhi_and_the_future_of_economics_howard_richards_joanna_swanger_ivo_coelho_editor_- - accessed March 2015).
- 5 Some examples of debt that may be unpayable: At the end of 2011 total debt (public and private) in the Eurozone was 23.78 trillion euros, while the total amount of money (euros, M3) was 9.6 trillion. Total promises to pay were about two and a half times the total of money then existing. Total private debt in the USA was nearly 25 trillion dollars and total public debt 12 trillion dollars with a money supply around ten and a half trillion, making total debt three and a half times total money. In South Africa, total debt was about one and a half times total money. In Sweden, it was more than four times. The world's fifty biggest banks had 67.6 trillion in assets (measured in dollars) but only 772 billion in reserves. In other words, the assets of the big banks consist almost entirely in promises. Thorpe cites the websites from which he compiled this information for his blog notably www.accuity.com. (Thorpe, S. 2010, [Global Debt and Money Supply : Twice as much debt as there is Money](#)). (<http://simonthorpesideas.blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/total-global-debt-and-money-supply.html> - accessed March 2015).
- 6 The author of these lines speaks from personal experience, having been a practicing lawyer specializing in bankruptcy and reorganization in California from 1989 to 2004.
- 7 *Le Monde Diplomatique*. Chilean edition for June 2013. Front page.

More recently Carlos Amigo, the Archbishop of Seville, declared that peace is a table with four legs, and its four legs are justice, justice, justice, and justice. It is only by mistake that justice has been confused with inflexible enforcement of debts, indifferent alike to human suffering and to practical realities.

A truly “pragmatic” solution in the *best* sense of the word is a solution that works. It works for everybody. Those who still remember what Plato meant by “justice” two and a half millennia ago, will not be surprised when reasonable compromises when debts become unpayable are identified with justice. They do what is best for the good of the whole. Unbounded organization can be thought of as pragmatic in this sense, being not only a creative approach, but also an approach that builds social cohesion. By definition, it is what works in the short, medium, and long term. It is what works for Mother Earth.

A “pragmatic” solution to a debt crisis in the worst sense of the word is one that surrenders to power. Debts are paid not because human flourishing is enhanced by paying them, and not from respect for norms that have proven on the whole to be life-enhancing. Debts are paid because the creditors are more powerful than the debtors. Africa and Latin America in the 1980s were *compelled* to accept structural adjustment of their economies in order to pay their external debts, sacrificing human welfare as measured by any reasonable measure of human welfare.³ In today's ongoing drama about the unpayable debts of Greece, Greece is sometimes urged to pay its creditors not on any humanitarian ground, but on the “pragmatic” ground that if it does not pay it will be punished. Mexico was punished by military force in 1862 and 1863. In India in 1991⁴ the world's largest democracy was brought to its knees simply by creditors threatening to refuse short term credit needed to finance essential imports.

Seeking to be pragmatic in the best sense of the term while resisting being compelled to be pragmatic in the worst sense of the term, we must strive to be aware that what is at stake. When mountains of debt rise so high that they are unpayable⁵ it is not just the economic stability of debtors that is at stake. What is at stake is also the economic stability of creditors. In the Greek case, the Eurozone and with it Germany might collapse. Greece is far from being the only country in Europe, or the only country in the world, with a debt burden so heavy that it cannot be paid. In Greece Japan sees its future. In Greece, the United States sees its future. The economic collapse that can result from a badly handled debt crisis could happen not only to Greece, but to any country, and it could happen to the world economy as a whole.

There are reasonable and unreasonable ways to make the best of a bad situation when the rightful claims of the creditors exceed by far the value of the assets available to pay them. Some of the most reasonable ways are found in the Bankruptcy Code of the United States. They were even more reasonable than they are now before their 2005 amendments, but even now they are in many ways exemplary. Unfortunately, in this respect the United States has been very little followed by the rest of the world. No comparable system exists at an international level. Every year more than a million Americans write off most of their debts and get a fresh start, comparable to the fresh starts of ancient Hebrew debtors in the years of Jubilee.

Just what is meant by “collapse?” As a first approximation, here the word “collapse” refers to the evaporation of what the great economists John Maynard Keynes and Michael Kalecki called “confidence.” Actors in a system motivated by promises to pay cease to have confidence that they will be paid. They normally advance funds expecting to make a profit when they are repaid. When they lose confidence, they cease to advance funds. We live in a world where people meet their daily needs by buying commodities with money. Since most people get money from employment, and since most employment is generated by firms in business for profit, and since firms first need to spend money in order to make money, the system collapses when investors are afraid to advance funds from fear that they will not be paid.

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Greece and the ongoing conflict of Greece with Germany present the world with a sordid spectacle showing how not to be humane and how not to be reasonable when debts cannot be paid. Similar dramas on a larger scale are likely to occur in the near future. Ironically, at an international level a classic case of pragmatism in the best sense of the word was the cancellation of most of Germany's debt in 1953. On the 27th of February of 1953 Germany's creditors (including Greece) meeting in London “took a haircut” by reducing the amount owed by sixty percent. Germany was granted a five-year moratorium without any payments, and a total of thirty years to pay off the reduced amount. Debt payments in any given year were to be no more than one twentieth of Germany's export earnings.⁷

8 These matters are discussed in the fourth part of Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*. (op. cit.)

9 It would not be logically impossible for the new loan to be used to create so much new productivity that in the end the whole debt would be paid off, but while not logically impossible it is not likely.

10 Thomas Piketty cites cases from Austen's novels to give examples of *rentier* life in the late 18th and early 19th century. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. (op cit).

11 Yanis Varoufakis in his introduction to Yanis Varoufakis, Joseph Halevi, and Nicholas J. Theocarakis, *Modern Political Economics: Making Sense of the post-2008 World*. London: Routledge, 2012. Each of the three authors wrote a separate introduction. (<http://yanisvaroufakis.eu/books/modern-political-economics/> - accessed March 2015).

12 See his blog [Yanis Varoufakis](http://yanisvaroufakis.eu) ([www.yanisvaroufakis.eu](http://yanisvaroufakis.eu)).

Unpayable debts have historically been cancelled by inflation, by repudiation, by taxation of the creditors offsetting the debts owed them, by voluntary forgiveness, and/or by printing new money, sometimes retiring the old currency altogether and issuing new money. The unpayable debt run up by the U.S. government fighting World War II was mostly cancelled by several decades of inflation.⁸ Debt restructuring can be regarded as a particular application of the more general idea of inventing and re-inventing institutions to improve their performance. It is the general idea that Karl Popper called the “open society,” John Dewey called the “experimental society,” that Bronislaw Malinowski called “functionalism” and that Pope Francis never ceases to remind us of when repeats over and over that economies are supposed to serve persons and not the other way about. It is a general idea that is constantly in conflict on two levels. On the level of ideology, it is constantly in conflict with the rigidity of partisans of 18th century liberalism who live and die proclaiming that the true meaning of freedom is that property rights must never be modified and that all contracts must be enforced. On a practical level, flexible compromises are constantly in conflict with the necessity to do whatever it takes to please investors, because as the world is now organized life physically depends on their decisions to invest or divest.

Let us look in a little more detail at the opening scenes of the ongoing drama of Greece, back in the times when the voters of Greece had just elected a government pledged to defend Greece's economic sovereignty. At that time the new finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, represented Greece in a series of negotiations in Brussels. The overall objective was to compromise with creditors to reach a workable solution. The immediate issue was the terms of a new emergency loan to make it possible for Greece to keep making payments on its old loans.

Varoufakis truly asserted what everybody knew. Greece's debt –like many other debts—was unpayable. That it would never be paid was a fact nobody could change. A high rate of inflation might make it possible to pay its nominal amount, but that would not be the same as really paying it. In this context, it was misleading to speak of taking out a new loan. Normally a new loan on top of old loans is thought of as increasing the total amount owed. That was in a sense true here; Greece would indeed owe more after the new loan. But it is misleading to treat this case as a normal case. When Greece took out more loans it would in all probability⁹ not pay the new larger amount, given that it certainly would not pay the smaller but still unpayable amount it already owed. It might go through the motions of signing the papers, but the number defining the new larger total debt will not have the meaning it would have in the case of a solvent debtor who could be expected to repay the sums borrowed.



Further, when Greece takes out a new loan –which in the end it did—Greece does not get money. Most of the money returns to the banks (mostly the same banks) that make the new loan. The purpose of the new loan is to make payments on old loans. Money moves from one account to another in Berlin, but little or none of it moves to Athens. It does not follow, nevertheless, that its creditors do not want to lend Greece more money. On the contrary, they wanted to compel Greece to take out new loans, and not only because that would be the only way for Greece to make the payments due on the old loans. There are more reasons why creditors wanted to increase Greece's total debt, in full knowledge that it would never be paid. There are in today's world, as there were in Jane Austen's world,¹⁰ people who live by clipping the coupons of government bonds. As public debt rises a larger portion of the taxpayers' money goes to pay interest on public debt. By the same token a larger portion of society's wealth flows into the coffers of the people who receive interest. Collecting interest on government bonds is especially prized by investors because it is usually tax free income –which means a lot to people in high tax brackets. Even when everybody knows the debt will never be paid, the same rate of interest on a larger principal yields larger incomes to creditors. But even But even this is not all. It must also be considered that when Greece is in the position of a defaulting debtor while the banks it owes are in the position of foreclosing creditors, Greece loses its sovereignty. The banks exercise the creditors' remedies specified in the fine print of the loan documents.



Yanis Varoufakis, an economics professor who became a cabinet minister, once wrote, “In economics error is not what one can expect until one gets it right. It is *all* one can expect.”¹¹ Such remarks lead me to think he might sympathize with proposals like mine and my co-authors. We believe that at this point in history it is time for humanity to step outside standard economics altogether. Standard economic thinking leads to standard economic results, and those results do not favour the ordinary hard-working people Varoufakis sometimes calls “the ants.”



The creditors call the shots, not the voters. In today’s world, the fine print –and sometimes the large print in italics—requires shrinking the public sector. It means the creditors can foreclose on the airports and the turnpikes. In today’s world, technical neo-liberal economics speciously “proves” that public spending is not as efficient as private spending. Such pseudo-science can be used to rationalize imposing austerity, privatization, and other neoliberal policies as a condition of the new loans. Neoliberalism is bad science, but as things stand today in the world, for a nation in default neoliberalism is the law.

Yanis Varoufakis’ proposals in Brussels were more than reasonable: (1) Restructure an unpayable debt to make it payable, (2) Expand the Greek economy to maximize its ability to pay. But in the end, as the world now knows, the creditors preferred a shrinking Greece firmly under their control to an expanding Greece under Greek control. As the world now knows, the solution they imposed was no solution. From then until now, the Greek people have suffered from what is euphemistically called austerity, while finding a workable solution has only been postponed. Morals can be drawn for other countries in similar situations, including those countries that are not in similar situations yet but soon will be.

A basic moral is that the ancient wisdom of Deuteronomy and Solon, and the ancient wisdom of non-western cultures studied by anthropologists like Malinowski, is not to be despised.



The Roman Catholic church, like many another church, may be old, but she is not stupid. More recently, in the 19th century, Benito Juárez was not mistaken to declare a national holiday to be celebrated forever after to commemorate the day when Mexico (temporarily) succeeded in defending its sovereign right to suspend payments on its unpayable debt.

Yanis Varoufakis, an economics professor who became a cabinet minister, once wrote, “In economics error is not what one can expect until one gets it right. It is *all* one can expect.”¹¹ Such remarks lead me to think he might sympathize with proposals like mine and my co-authors. We believe that at this point in history it is time for humanity to step outside standard economics altogether. Standard economic thinking leads to standard economic results, and those results do not favour the ordinary hard-working people Varoufakis sometimes calls “the ants.”¹² To rescue Greece, or Europe, or the world from a morass of dysfunctional economies, it is necessary to move beyond a bogus science that presupposes that nothing, or not much, moves without capital accumulation.

Coming from a different direction, this time considering the problems posed by unpayable debts, I end with the same conclusions I have reached in other commentaries on current events: a plural and caring economy would be more governable; it would be more resilient; more self-sufficient; more inclusive; and more democratic. It would be more mission-driven and less profit-driven. People would be motivated more by vocation and less by money. Goods and services would be produced more because they are good and more because they serve, and less because they are an unwanted detour on the road that leads from money to more money. Stronger communities and stronger households would make it easier to meet human needs in harmony with nature; and harder for cold-blooded creditors to impose austerity. More intelligent and more open-minded heterodox forms of economic science would make the production of the necessities and comforts of life more compatible with ethics.

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Tom Kilcourse

A PROFOUND MISUNDERSTANDING

For three decades or more our politicians' focus has been on what they call 'the economy'. It became an obsession in the early eighties and has dominated our thinking ever since. Mistakenly, the term 'economy' has been seen as synonymous with 'commercial' and at times 'financial'. Furthermore, this poorly understood concept has come to dominate our lives while other elements of our being have been subordinated and seen as relatively unimportant. It is not by accident that the globalisation of our economic activity has coincided with widespread derogation of national identity. We are 'citizens of the world', with all cultures being equally valid. The answer is now blowing in the wind. Economics is merely one of three elements controlling our quality of life, the other two being politics and society. Change in any one element has implications in the other two, as is evident in the social and political changes that have followed from the globalisation of commerce. Attempts by some to emphasise their national identity has been widely derided, and even associated with fascism, while internationalism is seen as 'liberal'. The flaw in this kind of thinking is the lack of any effective democratic government at the international level. Politics, despite all efforts to convince us otherwise, is national in nature. We in Britain elect a government for Britain, not for Bangladesh or Vietnam. While we can acknowledge that our national government can have compassionate concern for events elsewhere, it is elected by Britons to look after British interests and society. Politicians in the West became convinced that the globalisation of commerce served the interests of western nations and anyone who thought otherwise lacked an understanding of economics. Slowly, and often surreptitiously, politics became subordinated to commerce to the point that democracy and national interest were significantly undermined. Politicians who attempted to promote social and domestic interests were identified as 'socialists', irrespective of their political party affiliation. Indeed, the concept of society was downgraded by many who preferred the notion of individualism, whereby the legitimacy of government was confined to defence, and possibly law and order. In every other sphere responsibility rested with the individual. Philosophically, this notion is a non-starter. Mankind, a physically weak species, came to dominate the animal kingdom everywhere on the planet by collective effort. In short, we are social creatures.

Over the decades, political and commercial interests merged, with the latter being invariably referred to as 'economic'. Politicians were invited to the party, serving as non-executive directors, or attaching themselves to commercial organisations by other means, as 'advisors' perhaps. Senior politicians came to look forward to comfortable existence in a commercial setting should their political career be ended.

Meanwhile, the social element of our being was continuously downgraded, and whole societies were either destroyed or significantly weakened. Protest was pointless, labelled as socialism or an ignorance of 'economics', that natural force reminiscent of the weather. Political complacency set in.

Ironically, those who accuse others of economic ignorance often reveal their own confusion of economics with accountancy. This emerges particularly in discussions on the infra-structure when it is suggested that every element must pay for itself. While accountants can legitimately argue such a case, it does not always make sense for an economist to do so. To the latter, it can make sense to run one part of the infrastructure, such as transport, at a loss if that leads to other benefits to the economy. So, a perfectly good economic case can be made for subsidising transport or housing because the economic benefits are positive elsewhere. That is not 'socialism', merely sensible economics.

I have expressed my disapproval of commercial globalisation many times, and have been reminded often of the numbers it has lifted out of poverty. However, the process has brought that about in the East while impoverishing many in the West. It should not come as a surprise to our politicians to hear that the European or American citizen who becomes unemployed in the process is not placated by knowledge that someone on the other side of the planet benefits financially from his or her dismissal. That is especially so when the westerner lives in an area where there is little chance of alternative employment, and knows that his or her job has been exported so that the poverty of the eastern replacement can be exploited. For many years, since I was a student in the sixties, it has been evident to me that our well-being is governed by *three equally important* elements, Economics-Politics-Society. These are interconnected and equally important to us. Oddly, while our politicians have frequently justified their social or political activity, or lack of it, by reference to economic consequences, they have rarely shown awareness of the connection in reverse. Consequently, while I have believed for years that their economic process will eventually end in violence, they have completely failed to see that their neglect of social consequences would lead to political rebellion.

So, when we hear cries of dismay at the election of President Trump, or the rise of Marine Le Pen and her equivalent in other western countries, it is worth remembering that they have emerged because of neglect by conventional politicians. We may be witnessing the last attempt to replace the conventional lot by peaceful means.

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FUTURE TRAJECTORY OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISM IN INDIA



Injured CRPF personnel being evacuated after an attack by the CPI-Maoist in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district in March 2017

Abstract

Declining ability among the left-wing extremists (LWE) to orchestrate attacks and the state's purported capacity to find support among the traditional recruitment base of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) are the primary reasons for the official optimism regarding the LWE situation in the country. And yet, the extremists do manage to carry out intermittent major as well as small scale attacks. Sizeable territory in the country remains under the control of the extremists. A solution to the problem that began 13 years ago with the formation of the CPI-Maoist does not look imminent.

Sense of Optimism

On 17 March 2017, India's Home Minister Rajnath Singh [told the parliament](#) that the number of left-wing extremism affected districts in India has declined from 106 to 68. Of these 35 districts are in the 'most affected' category, meaning that bulk of the extremist violence is concentrated in these districts. In a [neatly planned attack](#), the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) killed 12 members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on 11 March, six days before Mr. Singh's statement. The reality of shrinking extremist footprints, thus, must include capacity of the extremists to carry out sporadic as well as small scale violence in areas under their control and their ability to implement their diktats affecting the lives of the common civilians. In spite of repeated official statements of optimism that LWE would be over soon, this is how the extremist situation is likely to evolve in the coming months.

Under the BJP government, the counter-Maoist operations have continued with less-than-usual focus on human rights violations. Overzealous police officials, especially in Chhattisgarh, in a bid to secure popular support, have used vigilante groups to persecute the activists, lawyers, media personnel in the affected areas. However, such actions have increasingly come under intense scrutiny at the national level requiring judicial intervention.

The Crouching State

Official counter-LWE policy remains multifarious approach consisting of use of force, initiation and implementation of development schemes, perception management, and political activity in the regions liberated from the extremist control. Under the present Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, however, use of force has gained pre-eminence. The approach is based on the premise that neutralising the top leadership of the CPI-Maoist would not only weaken the movement but may lead to its complete disintegration. Since May 2014, the year the BJP came to power, security forces have killed at least 464 extremists in various affected states. Precedents in Andhra Pradesh (where success was derived by the neutralisation of several top leaders) and West Bengal (where the killing of the senior leader Kishenji led to a total collapse of the movement) form the foundation of such a policy that include: an increase in the deployment of central armed police forces (CAPFs), and effecting a paradigm shift that designates LWE as terrorism. An alternative to a predominantly force centric policy is unlikely to be explored.

Beginning with the Salwa Judum experiment where the Chhattisgarh police supported a vigilante movement until it was dissolved by an order of the Supreme Court, various states have attempted to supplement police operations against the extremists by seeking support of the local people, dependence on the vigilante as well as irregular forces is likely to continue. In Chhattisgarh, the Salwa Judum has been regularised in the name of District Reserve Guards (DRG), who in the recent past have been credited with leading a large number of successful operations against the Maoists. Such reliance on the irregular forces and vigilante groups, in the absence of police capacities, remains a critical necessity and hence, would continue, even amid the allegations of human rights violations.

Under the BJP government, the counter-Maoist operations have continued with less-than-usual focus on human rights violations. Overzealous police officials, especially in Chhattisgarh, in a bid to secure popular support, have used vigilante groups to persecute the activists, lawyers, media personnel in the affected areas. However, such actions have increasingly come under intense scrutiny at the national level requiring judicial intervention. As a result, accused police officials had to be transferred and stripped off their role in such operations. The state's continuing inclination to silence voices that highlight the plight of the tribals caught between the irresponsible and poorly led security forces on the one hand and the Maoists on the other will remain subject to pressures from intense activism. This may lead to some level of moderation in the force-centric counter-insurgency (COIN) approach, albeit at a superficial level.

One group led by Kanu Sanyal suggested a gradual process of revolution with popular participation and the other led by Charu Mazumdar opted for an instant revolution using armed cadres. Although the CPI-Maoist led by its general secretary Ganapathy more or less settled for the latter, the contestation between its political wing and its military wing over the momentum of its war, trajectory of its violence, and the targets chosen continued.

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In spite of the drawbacks in training, command and control loopholes and problems of intelligence gathering, significant achievements have been secured by the security forces vis-a-vis the Maoists. Vast stretches of areas have been cleared and several infrastructural projects continue to be implemented due to the dedicated presence of the security forces. Development initiatives of the state in areas freed from LWE control remain key to the future success of the state. And yet, the abysmal quality of governance, lack of a committed bureaucracy and continuing schism between the local population and the bureaucracy will make centralised developmental initiatives attempts subject to tough challenges in 2017. Measures such as filling up posts of doctors and nurses in hospitals in the affected areas, filling up the vacant position in schools, providing road networks would just not be delayed by the threat of the extremists, but also by the lethargy and corrupt practices of the state bureaucracy.

Extremist Strategy

The CPI-Maoist leadership admits its loss of influence due to a series of tactical failures. This makes two key objectives- (i) maintenance of its relevance and (ii) preserving and expanding its cadre strength- central to its near and long term strategy. The outfit would attempt to mix defensive as well as offensive manoeuvres to preserve its cadres and inflict casualties on its adversary. The CPI-Maoist partially succeeded in its objective on 2016 by killing more number of civilians and security forces than the previous year. Casualties among civilians and security forces rose from 230 in 2015 to 278 in 2016. 20 arms training camps were organised in 2016 compared to 18 in the previous year. The 'police sympathisers' are likely to become a key target of the outfit in its bid to regain control over the lost territories. In 2016, the outfit killed 123 such state-sympathisers, most of them belonging to the tribal population. In 2015, such killings were 23 percent less. History of LWE in general and that of the CPI-Maoist in particular has been marked by an ideological tussle between leaders. One group led by Kanu Sanyal suggested a gradual process of revolution with popular participation and the other led by Charu Mazumdar opted for an instant revolution using armed cadres. Although the CPI-Maoist led by its general secretary Ganapathy more or less settled for the latter, the contestation between its political wing and its military wing over the momentum of its war, trajectory of its violence, and the targets chosen continued.

Like any guerrilla organisation, the CPI-Maoist has sought to utilise the terrain, the commitment of its cadres and its intelligence network to battle a superior enemy. It has used innovation to add quality to its attacks. Planting explosives inside the bodies of killed security forces and on trees, and planting remote controlled IEDs underneath tarred roads to inflict casualties on the forces are instances of such innovations.

Extremist Strategy *contd...*

In its weakened state the CPI-Maoist is likely to override any such distinction and opt for a strategy that seeks to make a violent war its only path for redemption.

Like any guerrilla organisation, the CPI-Maoist has sought to utilise the terrain, the commitment of its cadres and its intelligence network to battle a superior enemy. It has used innovation to add quality to its attacks. Planting explosives inside the bodies of killed security forces and on trees, and planting remote controlled IEDs underneath tarred roads to inflict casualties on the forces are instances of such innovations. Huge amount of explosives in single attacks have been used to overcome the resistance offered by mine proof vehicles. In recent times such as the one that took place in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, explosives mounted on arrows were used. The CPI-Maoist has also used the L and S-shaped hilly areas to carry out attacks in the past. The same technique is now being used to its advantage in flat terrains as well.

Programmes for consolidating support among its traditional base, i.e. the tribal population would remain a critical pillar for the CPI-Maoist's attempts of maintaining its relevance. The outfit uses a carefully constructed strategy of communication, assisted largely by voluntary efforts, to deride the state and promote itself as the liberator of the marginalised class. Using the contemporary political developments in the country, especially the pro-market economic policies of successive governments as well as the surge in right wing politics as ideological underpinnings, it constantly calls for unity of purpose among the tribals, working class, trade unions and even sympathetic urban intelligentsia. Such efforts would continue and may even assume the form of greater emphasis on communication through electronic and international media.

Expanding the area under its influence, especially to overcome the challenges of shrinking dominance, would be a strategic objective for the CPI-Maoist. Narratives in the past have pointed at Maoist activities in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. Much of such efforts, in the short term, would be based on strategic requirements of finding hiding space as well as dividing the attention of the security forces. How do the states unfamiliar with the Maoist expansion techniques respond to such slow and essentially violence free attempts of finding influence would define the state's success against the extremists.

Without an effective strategy to implement development schemes and avoidance of mistakes that worsen the agony and alienation among the tribals, such areas will remain fertile grounds for extremism to return.

Forecast

The state will retain military advantage over the extremists. However, that alone would not be sufficient to decimate the CPI-Maoist. Retreating extremists as a result of a force centric approach will lead to the creation of areas where the state exercises its control only through its security arm. It will, however, be a temporary phase where the balance will be tilted in favour of the state. Without an effective strategy to implement development schemes and avoidance of mistakes that worsen the agony and alienation among the tribals, such areas will remain fertile grounds for extremism to return.

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THE FANTASTIC AS STRATEGY: INDIA'S GAME IN KASHMIR



Scene of a street protest in Srinagar in February 2017

Abstract

There has always been a gulf between Kashmiri aspirations, the compulsions of India, and to a lesser extent, Pakistan. The ongoing revisionism in India's body politic, led from the highest echelons of State power, however, does not seek to bridge this gulf, but rather exacerbate it. Isolating and defeating Kashmiri, as dissident Muslims, while hardening its territorial claim is an essential element of the new nation-building project. It is line with the majoritarian agenda afoot in the Indian mainland itself. Given the nature of the Kashmiri Gordian knot, the strategic advantage is reaped by Pakistan.

"I say, let them conduct another re-poll. They might then understand the Triple Talaq!"

This Facebook update was one of the hundreds circulating in Kashmiri circles on 13 April 2017, when the re-polling for the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections for the Srinagar-Budgam constituency returned a mere two percent participation, down even from a meagre 7.13 percent on 9 April. 20 of the 38 polling stations in the re-poll saw no participation whatsoever.[i] Thus then, the 'summer of unrest'[ii] in Kashmir, snowballing with the death of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016, has come full circle. And it shows no indication of abating. There is much that is iterated in the developments of past year. However, several novel dynamics have come into play as well. First, the following iterations.

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The Kashmiri Gordian Knot and the absence of Kashmir

For the Kashmiri, the demand for the right to complete self-determination (‘Hum Kya Chahte?’ loosely translating into ‘what do we aspire for’), notwithstanding several constituencies who advocate autonomy within either Pakistan or India, has been a constant fixture, in intent, if not intensity, for at least close to three decades now.[iii] However, since Kashmiri subjectivity does not feature in the agenda of both India and Pakistan, except tangentially, in order to bolster their own stakes, the Kashmiri perspective, the elephant in the room, will be shelved for the meanwhile, and retrieved later.

For India, most explicitly since 1994, the territory of the princely kingdom of Kashmir, is an integral part, while the territory under its control- Jammu and Kashmir (hereafter J&K), is an internal matter. [iv] Pakistan’s Kashmir agenda has always been revisionist-historic, and the fulcrum of its national identity, both externally and internally. It is the touchstone upon which the Army justifies its role as the State personified; Kashmir is also what helps political parties win elections.[v] The portion of the militancy in the Kashmir valley, in J&K that is abetted by Pakistan is part of its strategy of asymmetric and sub-conventional warfare, bolstered only by a nuclear second-strike stalemate.[vi] India’s stock response has been to equate such militancy with terrorism (riding the global wave of the now disreputable ‘War on Terror’), to shame Pakistan on international platforms, and a refusal to engage bilaterally with it, on all matters, and most certainly on Kashmir- on the plank of the sponsorship and abetment of terror. On ground, India’s prerogative has been to cement the Line of Control (LoC), and contain cross-LoC infiltration.

The closest meeting point between India and Pakistan was reached in the now almost mythic ‘four-Point Formula’[vii] negotiated between General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, that advocated first making the LoC an international border, (negating the stances maintained by both States), and then making the resultant border ‘irrelevant’ to the Kashmiri. Merely a decade later, both India and Pakistan are back to feeding off the other’s alleged lack of a locus standi on Kashmir. For India, everything that goes ‘right’- electoral numbers, lower levels of infiltration and active militancy in the valley, tourism, is the success of India’s nation-building (counter-insurgency to be precise) project; everything that goes ‘wrong’- ‘unrest’, ‘stone-pelting’, ‘separatist elements’ consolidating the ‘local population’, the rise of the ‘home-grown militant’ and even the occasional waving of the flag of the Islamic State is Pakistan’s doing. Except that, by such standards, the

[viii] Babar Khan Bozdar, “Commemorating Kashmir Day in Solidarity with Kashmiri People”, Foreign Policy News, 6 February 2016, <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/02/06/commemorating-kashmir-day-solidarity-kashmiri-people/>.

[ix] Most Kashmiri narratives will dispute such a reading, insisting that for India, Kashmir has never been merely a matter of security and strategy, but also the thorn in the side of its inherent majoritarian character. The NDA regime for them represents the perpetual Indian intention in Kashmir, this time with its mask off.

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[xii] Ellen Barry, “An Epidemic of ‘Dead Eyes’ in Kashmir as India uses Pellet Guns on Protestors”, New York Times, 28 August 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/world/asia/pellet-guns-used-in-kashmir-protests-cause-dead-eyes-epidemic.html>

[xiii] Mirza Waheed, “India’s Crackdown in Kashmir: Is this the World’s first mass blinding?”, The Guardian, 8 November 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/08/india-crackdown-in-kashmir-is-this-worlds-first-mass-blinding>

the ‘situation’ in Kashmir is now advantage Pakistan, the fall-outs of which Pakistan does not hesitate to usurp and use.[viii] Implicating Pakistan, ironically, further reduces the space for India to acknowl- edge and engage with Kashmir, and ends up reducing India’s legitimacy in the valley, dramatically, and drastically, day upon day. Thus far, different regimes in New Delhi had brought with them differences in the degree of (non)engagement with Kashmir, while their substance remained almost the same.

A revisionist India and the re-en‘visioning’ of Kashmir

With the increasing evidence of a revisionist idea of India underfoot the current regime, encouraging of and propelled by a muscular majoritarian communalism, India’s relationship with Kashmir too seems to change.[ix] The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government did go the distance of appointing a three-member panel to engage (not necessarily involve) some voices from among the Kashmiri. Of course, it ended up neither acknowledging the findings of the subsequent report, neither the ubiquitous rejoinder- ‘Azadi’.[x] The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government, in its current avatar, has instead committed to transforming, “Kashmir in a year, no matter how the change takes place.”[xi] It is no surprise that the churning in India’s body politic is taking place at the same time as the intensification of its occupation of Kashmir. Occupation here refers not to the registers that the Kashmiri, or Pakistan, or sections of the international community use to describe India’s role in J&K. It refers to the current phase in India’s long and varied record of counter-insurgency (COIN).

While extra-judicial torture, killings, and disappearances, have been the norm since 1989, firing protestors and stone-pelters to death began in 2008, with 70 Kashmiri’s felled during the Amarnath Land Row protests. In 2010, the death toll scaled up to 120. In the past year, however, the mass protests mourning the militants’ ‘encounters’ and observing the Hurriyat’s Shutdown Calendars, saw not just the widespread and indiscriminate use, but also the escalation of the pellet gun tactic. Often described as targeted directly at the eyes and faces of both protestors, and non-protesting civilians, it has forced the international community to sit and take notice of the ‘epidemic of dead eyes’,[xii] and to ask if this is not the ‘first mass blinding in history’.[xiii] The casualty of India’s new COIN in Kashmir has ironically been the Indian electoral ritual, and those political parties who were deemed as necessary to justify India’s presence in Kashmir. The numbers of the dead meanwhile, continue to swell and escape the laboratory jars of analyses. The statistics of loss however, has significantly shifted in meaning, for both India and Kashmir.

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A revisionist India and the re-en‘visioning’ of Kashmir contd...

At present, the dead and maimed serve only to get Kashmiri out to the streets in unprecedented numbers, women and men, old and young. Near continuous funeral processions have engendered the culture of pelting in the country-side, and in North Kashmir too, areas traditionally considered a ‘success’ from India’s COIN point of view. Moreover, the ‘civilian’ population is no longer just a tacit supporter of the overwhelmingly home grown militancy- they have begun to actively dissuade the operations of the Indian Armed forces, at the cost of their own lives. On the Indian side, this has led to abandoning, even in lip-service, the tactic of ‘winning hearts and minds (WHAM)’, previously held integral to its COIN doctrine.[xiv] Certain sections of India’s liberal class disbelieved, condemned, or sought to explain away Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat’s unambiguous assertion that hereafter, those obstructing ‘counter-terrorism’ operations shall not be distinguished from ‘terrorists’ themselves (note the smooth slip from militancy to terrorism, with its intended international implications).[xv] Current developments though- most obviously the escalations of civilian killings at ‘encounter’ sites, only underscore that the General’s statement was intentional, carefully calibrated, and in keeping with the current National Security Adviser (NSA)- Ajit Doval’s overall approach towards Kashmir.

The Fantastic as Strategy

Though the NSA has not himself spoken, the impunity with which the approach is implemented confirms the convergence of the current political dispensation with the ideas held by Doval, a Doval Doctrine as at least one observer puts it.[xvi] New Delhi, it appears, is ready to brace the complete rupture between Kashmiri society, intelligentsia, and its politician class, be they within the framework of the Indian Constitution or outside of it. Significantly, the new strategy dictates an abetment and exacerbation of the gulf itself. This trend gets played out most incisively on the latest frontier for the monopoly of narrative and power- social media. While Kashmiri have been making extensive use of mobile sharing platforms, oftentimes in the absence of internet, to reinforce knowledge of the violence being meted out to them, and to organize protests, the Indian side too, has taken to the circulation of videos.[xvii] Ironically, the content of the videos shared by both parties are not significantly different- they are overwhelmingly of Kashmiri being beaten, tortured, humiliated, and rarely, of Indian armed forces roughed up and humiliated. The reception of the same videos though,



People carry the dead body of HM cadre Shahbaz Ahmad Wani alias Rayees Kachru during his funeral ceremony in Pulwama on 27 March 2017. Photo Courtesy: Faisal Khan

by Kashmiri, and by the non-Kashmiri in India, speaks to the absoluteness of the separation. The condemnation of the acts and the will to resolve for further resistance on part of the Kashmiri is only matched on the Indian side with praises of the atrocities being meted as ‘just punishment’ to renegade Kashmiris, with an impatient call for actions even more brutal and swift.

This then, is not information warfare- no side seeks to counter the other’s narrative, but to consolidate and expand their own constituencies. In the Kashmiri psyche, Azadi is a state of mind, and sovereignty has already been claimed; its concrete exercise remains now at the mercy of the international developments impacting the established status quo in South Asia. In the Indian psyche, especially among the burgeoning masses who clamour for a majoritarian re-visioning of India, the disengagement of the territory of Kashmir from the people of Kashmir is now complete. The fact that the Kashmiri resistance is strongly coloured by the Islamic culture of the valley, only bolsters the sense-of-purpose among them. It is a straight line from disciplining Muslim subjects inside the mainland, who by their very existence ‘might potentially harm’ India’s (revisionist) ideational sovereignty, to eliminating dissident (Kashmiri) Muslims who directly challenge India’s territorial sovereignty as well.

This is understood only too well by the Kashmiri, now more than ever, and it cheerfully and sarcastically animates their popular culture, as evidenced in the Facebook status update reproduced at the beginning of the article. The element of the fantastic on the Kashmiri side is not surprising. Historically, resistance movements are overwhelmingly nourished by and thrive on little more than hope and resolve (and some third party assistance), till the wheels of geopolitics turn- sometimes accidentally, sometimes deliberately, in their favour. The element of the fantastic on the Indian end, typified in its confidence to get rid of Kashmiris and retain Kashmir, is far more fascinating to observe. The ranks of those who caution the disastrous nature of the tactics and strategies pursued in Kashmir, and grand strategy pursued vis-à-vis the South Asian region[xviii] are overtaken by the establishment’s confidence that deepening ties with the United States and its allies will pull through a new India into a new international order.[xix]

The revisionists in India have the entire gamut of the means of domination and destruction at their disposal, means that could well turn inward. Meanwhile, Pakistan and its allies, while working on their own strengths, patiently watch the show unfold.

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Professor Vamsee Juluri

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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.





Bedugul, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph © Mark Ulyseas

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.

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Some Reading Suggestions:

The life and legends of Hanuman are beautifully captured in Vanamali's *Hanuman*. Philip Lutgendorf'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.

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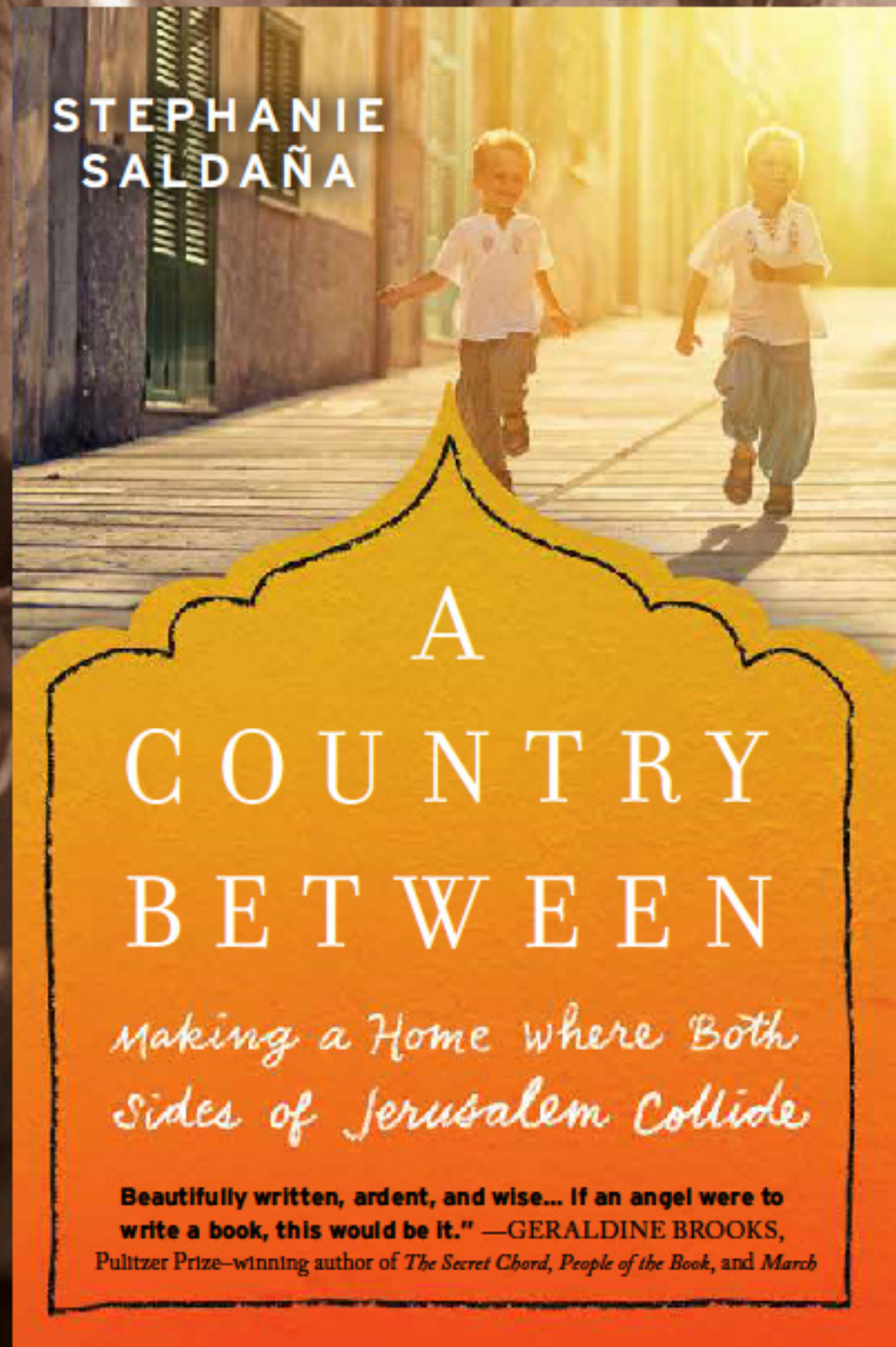


Monkey Forest, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph © Mark Ulyseas

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Stephanie Saldaña grew up in Texas and received a B. A. from Middlebury College and a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School. She was a Watson and Fulbright scholar and has won several awards for her poetry. She is the author of *The Bread of Angels*, about her time living in Syria, and the recently published *A Country Between*. She is also the founder of Mosaic Stories, a project to tell the stories of endangered cultural heritage in the Middle East (www.mosaicstories.org). She lives in Jerusalem with her husband and three children. www.amazon.com



Stephanie Saldaña, author
A Country Between:
Making a Home Where Both Sides of Jerusalem Collide
 in a candid interview with Mark Ulyseas

Why did you write this book and what do you hope to achieve with it?

I wrote this book when I became pregnant with my first son, Joseph. My husband and I were living in Jerusalem during a very tense time, and I somehow felt guilty about our decision to stay in the Middle East. And yet at the same time I knew that it was the right decision, and that there was love and beauty bound up in all of the difficulty of the region. I wrote the book to my son in order to show him all of the beauty of where we live. It became a meditation on the power of beauty during difficult times.

Is this book a sequel to *Bread of Angels*?

The book is a sequel to the *Bread of Angels* in that it begins exactly where *The Bread of Angels* stopped. But the writing is very different—it is much more meditative and also somehow more universal. It takes place in the Middle East but is really about the challenges all young families face.



What, in your opinion, brings people of different faiths together, to live in peace?

It sounds very silly, but it is simply love. I have loved so many Muslims and Jews and members of other faiths in my lifetime—not because of their religion but because of who they are as people. We need to be able to see the essential humanity in each and every person. And this can only come through meeting—in school, in the streets, in the market. Peace can only come if we meet one another—and those who want war will always find ways to keep people who are different from having a genuine encounter with one another. I have found that it is very important, for example, to share meals with people of other faiths. It is so basic, but it is profound when people come together and break bread.

And what, in your opinion, divides people of different faiths, to want to hurt each other?

Sectarianism is a great cancer on society. This comes when it is more important to us what group someone belongs to than who he or she is as a human being. Those who want to create hatred will always divide people into categories and demonize them. This can be very effective particularly during times of war, when people are afraid and so retreat into their own groups. Hatred has at its origins a great fear of the other—it can only be defeated by love and the courage to meet those who might be strangers to us.

Is there a difference between religion and faith?

There is an immense difference—I have met countless people in my life who have no strict religion but have profound faith, just as I have met those with a strong religious identity but with little faith. Unfortunately in the Middle East, religious identity has become in many places more important than faith. For me, faith is the deep belief that God is with us at every moment, even our darkest moments, and that our lives lived in him have meaning. Somehow, I believe that people from different religious traditions can share a common faith.



Is the Holy Land just another place on earth? And if not, then what does it have to offer strangers willing to live within its confines?

The Holy Land is holy because Christ walked here, because Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Sarah walked here, because Mary gave birth to Jesus here, because angels and prophets have been here. It is a profoundly holy place for Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike. And yet for me what matters is the millions of people who have journeyed here over centuries, saying prayers, touching stones. They have blessed the land with their fidelity and humility. When I visit a holy place here, I always try to keep in mind that I am following in the footsteps of these pilgrims, who have blessed the stones with their prayers.

What is your message to the readers of Live Encounters Magazine?

My message is simply to have hope. In this moment, when so many are suffering due to war and displacement, when so many people feel hopeless, every amount of hope that is put into the world helps to tip the balance back towards good.



Margi Prideaux is an international wildlife policy writer, negotiator and academic. She has worked within the conservation movement for 27 years. You can follow her on facebook or twitter @WildPolitics. Her books, including *Global Environmental Governance*, *Civil Society and Wildlife* and *Birdsong After the Storm*, can be seen at www.wildpolitics.co/books

A STORM WE MUST FACE

Dr Margi Prideaux

International wildlife policy writer, negotiator and academic.

A massive storm is coming; a converging crisis unlike anything we've experienced before. The combined forces of climate change and political upheaval will be a tempest of our own making, at a time in human history when knowledge will not permit us to pretend we didn't see it coming.

Global warming is not hypothetical. It is happening now. Wave after wave of data confirms it. Each of the past several decades has been significantly warmer than the previous ones. NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts all report that, like the four years before it, 2016 was the hottest on record. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme events like heat waves, droughts and heavy rainfall around the world. It has already impacted all continents and all oceans.

Global average sea level has risen by about 17 cm between 1900 and 2005 at a much faster rate than in the previous 3,000 years. Arctic sea ice is retreating at a visible pace. After lifetimes in harmony with the ocean, people of the Pacific and the Indian Oceans are looking across the waves to a bleak future. The homes of their ancestors will soon disappear: the sea engulfing their history. Europe's glaciers are retreating. The United Kingdom is flooding. The Sahara Desert is encroaching on farmland across the African continent, forests are disappearing from the Congo to Madagascar and rising sea levels are swallowing homes in West African river deltas. North America is facing severe heat, heavy rain and declining snowpack. In 2015 the World Meteorological Organization Hurricane Committee reported that the Eastern North Pacific experienced nine major hurricanes above Category 3 levels—the most since reliable records began in 1971. In 2015, India and Pakistan suffered the traumatic and devastating effects of heat waves. Thousands of lives were lost. Record rainfall led to flooding that impacted tens of thousands of people across South America, West Africa and Europe. At the same time, unseasonal dry conditions in southern Africa and Brazil exacerbated multi-year droughts. Thirty per cent of the fertile land in the world has vanished in the past 30 years.

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<https://pixabay.com/en/elephants-family-group-river-1900332/>

While society tends to focus on the human impacts, the natural world is also lurching. The current rates of species extinction are already one thousand times the pace that would be expected if humans were not a factor. At the global meeting of governments to discuss the state of the world's biodiversity in late 2016, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature reported that, of the 85,604 species that have been assessed on their 'Red List', 24,307 species are threatened with extinction. In the near future, rapid shifts, caused by climate change, will exceed the ability of many species to migrate or adjust.

If we continue as we now are, the dawn of the next century will grieve the loss of icons—gorillas, polar bears, lions, tuna, warblers and orangutans, and with them the silent demise of thousands of species hardly known.

We stand at a point in history where kakapo, hairy-nosed otters and red wolves exist with a shadow of their former numbers. Polar bears, forest owlets and Philippine eagles face uncertain futures. Lesser known, but just as important species like the brown spider monkey live on the thin margin of survival. Yellowfin tuna may not survive ocean acidification. And, with each of these species are the communities of humans that share the landscape and seascape with them.

When I wake in the morning the sound I hear is a magpie warble. These birds, and their unique and haunting song, as well as the kangaroos that stand on the ridge at dusk, are a part of the culture I live within—the community to which I belong. People in Argentina, Japan, Cameroon or Norway will wake to different sounds and have different wildlife as part of their communities. We all know our non-human kin, the animals we live amidst. We know the seasons we share, what grows when and where. We know the ebb and flow of life in our shared place. For some, our vistas are forests. Others look out to the sea and some on endless frozen horizons. These are not empty places. They are filled with wildlife, with which we commune.

For hundreds of generations, we have managed our relationship with this wild part of our community. Some human communities have done better than others. Some, especially in the developed world, have done poorly with many local species and ecosystems already footnotes of history. But, the political shift towards globally centralised decisions is taking any choice about that association away from all of us. Decisions are now made elsewhere—in an international political space. We have become, in many respects, as helpless as the wild community we live among.



<https://pixabay.com/en/tiger-india-wildlife-bengal-wild-1634324/>

This converging crisis is hampered by our commitment to a system of independent governments programmed to protect their national interest and their market driven agenda—an agenda that believes the market is the mechanisms that should government the world. This is why governments are gambling with climate change. But the stakes are very high. Left on our current path, we will fail to protect what we need and what we cherish. And so, the desperate grip on the current world order will become the lifting force that feeds the thunderhead. We will have a perfect storm.

The more I look, the deeper I delve, the less I believe that the market is the answer. What happens if a corporation thinks the minerals under the mountain are more important than the mountain ecosystem and watershed? What happens if a species is too elusive or maybe not interesting enough for international tourists? What happens if a region is unsuitable for moving people in and out on a mass scale? What happens if a community wants to be left alone? What happens if the global economy takes a nose-dive or the price of travel climbs? What happens if a donor decides to change their focus and moves money elsewhere?

I believe that ultimately, progress in conservation effectiveness needs to be defined in terms of equity and the cooperative engagement of local custodians rather than a percentage of territories set aside as protected areas or new major international tourism ventures.

The physical presence of communities, who depend on healthy ecosystems for their lives and livelihoods, can make them effective stewards. This ethic is more than hiring local people as park rangers or ecotour guides or systematically enabling them to monitor and blow the whistle on illegal hunting. Driving traditional communities away creates large vacuums where commercial operators find it easy to operate. Truly acknowledging their connection to the place and wildlife—recognising these forests, grassy plains, arctic tundra or wetlands are their home—can build powerful local conservation initiatives, that don't need big powerful conservation organisations to swoop in and save them or multinational corporations to determine they have a value.

The tempest is coming. That cannot be changed now. How we prepare and what we do during the period to come will dictate what survives the storm. We can choose to save birdsong, but the choice must be a conscious one.

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



GYEONGJU

THE MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

PART - 1

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKYOUNG CHA

Gyeongju was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla (57 BC – 935 AD) which ruled about two-thirds of the Korean Peninsula between the 7th and 9th centuries. Later Silla was a prosperous and wealthy country, and its metropolitan capital of Gyeongju was the fourth largest city in the world. A vast number of archaeological sites and cultural properties from this period remain in the city. Gyeongju is often referred to as “the museum without walls”. Among such historical treasures, Seokguram grotto, Bulguksa temple, Gyeongju Historic Areas and Yangdong Folk Village are designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. The many major historical sites have helped Gyeongju become one of the most popular tourist destinations in South Korea.*

*<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyeongju#History>



Pine Grove, Samreung.



Royal Tomb of King Michu, Deareungwon.



Deareungwon



Bulguksa Temple, Geukrakjeon.



Detail of roof, Bulguksa Temple, Geukrakjeon.



SeoBong Tomb

MANTRA OF THE MANDALA

Patricia studied Visual Education and Communication at Dun Laoghaire College of Art & Design (IADT) and also holds a first class honours degree in Philosophy and Sociology from University College, Dublin. Her first book *Healing Creations: Discover your mindful self through mandala colouring and journaling* was published in September 2016 by The Collins Press. She hosts workshops on the art of mandala and meditation both in Ireland and abroad. You can see more about her work at www.healingcreations.ie



MANTRA OF THE MANDALA FOR MAY ASCENSION OF THE LOTUS BY PATRICIA FITZGERALD

The central piece of the mandala is reminiscent of a Lotus flower blooming. One of the most interesting symbolic aspects of this plant is how it comes to life. Typically the lotus (often known as the water lily) is born from deep murk and mire. From the darkest mucky muddy waters, this brilliant blossom emerges. It is the metaphor for life as we know it.

Things happen in all of our lives, both good and bad. Most of us at some stage get thrown a curve ball. It is what we make of that situation that counts. We have two choices. We can crawl under our misery, never lifting our heads to the light that beckons us. That is option one. Or there is option two; we can be like the lotus. We can make the best of a bad situation and work through it and rise above it. Lotus flower meanings are all about aspiring to express, to live, to share beauty. To move through the darkness and murk and out into the light. We can use this lesson in both the bigger and the smaller areas of our lives.

www.healingcreations.ie
www.facebook.com/healingcreationsbymandalaflame

PATRICIA FITZGERALD



Ascension of the Lotus

Ulyseas is founder and editor of Live Encounters Magazine and Live Encounters Poetry & Writing. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. www.amazon.com



HOMAGE TO THE LITTLE FOLK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARK ULYSEAS

The innocence of children is contaminated with our hate.
We use bigotry as a chisel to sculpture young minds into lean,
mean hating machines that become fountains of violence.
And we wonder why the world is spiraling into political and
environmental chaos.

Every country has its own Children's Day. What is the point...
when we never listen to what these little folk have to say?

The following photographs are of children participating in
the fabulous religious and cultural pageant in celebration
of *Pi Mai*, the Lao New Year, in Luang Prabang - a Buddhist
World Heritage Town.

Their demeanor is individuality personified.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om











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BABA GHANOUSH OR ABAGANNUC BURNT EGGPLANT SALAD WITH LEMON, OLIVE OIL

This delicious salad or dip, Abagannuc or Baba ghanoush, is very popular in Antakya and Southern Turkish cuisine and one of our family favorites. It has many variations throughout the Middle East, where tahini maybe added or plain yoghurt and what to include or not include may invite heated debates! No matter how the finishing touch will be, the essence of this salad remains the same; the aubergines are traditionally cooked over open fire or over the burner to get the smoky flavor. The skin of aubergines and peppers burn and their flesh becomes soft, sweet and tender.

Abagannuc or baba ghanoush goes very well as part of a mezze spread or with any grills. I also love this dip on crackers or toasted bread with a nice sharp cheese or feta cheese aside.

I hope you enjoy our version of Abagannuc or baba ghannoush, packed with flavor.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem



Kozmatik from home; a steel base with holes on it, a genius idea to cook/char grill the vegetables without much of a mess! Leave the peeled eggplant flesh in the colander to drain its bitter juices. Pics © Ozlem Warren

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

2 medium aubergines / eggplants
 1 pointy red pepper or bell pepper
 3 small, ripe tomatoes
 1 clove of garlic, crushed with salt and finely chopped
 Juice of ½ lemon
 30ml/2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
 A drizzle (about 10ml/2 tsp) pomegranate molasses to decorate (optional)
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper to serve

Instructions

1. Line the base of your burners with a foil to protect, keeping only the burners exposed.
2. Place the eggplants or aubergines and pepper directly over the burner on medium heat and roast for about 15 - 20 minutes, turning occasionally. (You can roast the tomatoes on a barbeque or on the oven at 200 C for about 20-25 minutes, as it can get quite messy over the burner.)
3. If you prefer not to have the smoky flavor, you can also score the aubergines with a knife in few places and bake on a baking tray for 50 – 60 minutes. In this case, turn them around every 20 minutes or so that they would cook evenly. Pepper would need about 35-40 minutes to cook in the oven and chargrill.



Abagannuc or baba ghannoush. Pic © Ozlem Warren

4. If you are cooking over the burner, use metal tongs to turn the aubergines and pepper around so that all sides would cook evenly and the skin is nicely chargrilled. Cook until the skin is burnt and the flesh is soft.
5. Remove the cooked aubergines, tomatoes and the pepper to a colander to allow them to cool. Once cool, peel and discard their burnt skin and leave them in the colander to drain aubergine's bitter juices. I like to gently squeeze the aubergine flesh to drain as much water as possible.
6. Chop the flesh of the aubergine, pepper and tomatoes coarsely and mash them with a fork.
7. Place the flesh in a bowl and stir in the chopped garlic, lemon juice and the extra virgin olive oil, combine well. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
8. When serving, drizzle with pomegranate molasses over (if you prefer to) and give a gentle mix; its tangy flavor works really well with the smoked aubergine and peppers.

Live Encounters celebrates 7 years 2010-2016

Live encounters

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MAY 2017



Photograph of Tibetan Monk © Jill Gocher