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June 2012

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Special Feature on Segregation in Israel by

Civil & Human Rights Activist

Anat Hoffman

Executive Director of IRAC

Unforgettable weddings in paradise!



June 2012

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Dear Readers,

The **Special Feature, Segregation in Israel by Anat Hoffman**, is a stunning indictment of what ails Israeli society. It also showcases the ground breaking work that is being done by Anat's organization, **Irac**, which is at the forefront of the movement for progressive Judaism that seeks religious pluralism, sexual equality, civil and human rights for all citizens of Israel including Israeli Arabs!

This is followed by:

- An **indepth interview with Philip Casey**, well known **Irish Poet, Writer, Editor and member of Aosdána**, which honours artists whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the Arts in Ireland.
- Terry McDonagh's, **Autumn**, is a beautiful and haunting poem set in Melbourne.
- On display in the Photo Gallery, **Paradox in Paradise**, is a reminder of what we are doing to the other inhabitants of Mother Earth.
- **Pleiad** is an enchanting poem by Welsh poet and writer Jemima Fincken.
- In Tribal India Randhir Khare presents a look beyond fences - **The Nari Kuravar Gypsies** in a time of change along with a poem titled **Card Players**.
- Carol Buckley, **Founder of Elephant Aid International**, pens a third person account of her organization's work with elephants.
- **I'm Damned**, yet another disturbing poem by Arjun Bagga.
- Candess M Campbell's **Meditation** is an important guide to oneself.
- And John Chester Lewis is back with a collection of **three poems**.

We request you to kindly pass this free magazine on to everyone you know.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor

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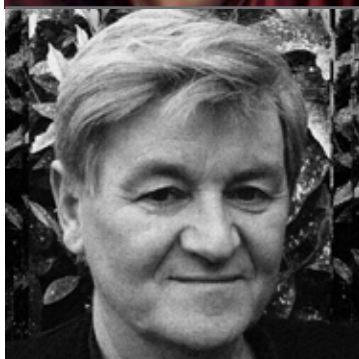
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Segregation in Israel

Anat Hoffman Civil & Human Rights Activist

Anat Hoffman is a major leader for social justice in Israel. She is perhaps best known for never giving-up, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Anat was born and raised in Jerusalem and she served in the Jerusalem City Council for 14 years, leading the opposition to the right wing and ultra-Orthodox administration. She was a founding member of Women of the Wall and continues to be a tireless advocate for freedom of religion and women's rights. In 2002, Anat Hoffman became the Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), the legal and advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel. www.irac.org



Philip Casey

speaks to Mark Ulyseas in an exclusive interview

Philip Casey has published four collections of poetry, including Dialogue in Fading Light (New Island Books, 2005), and three novels, The Fabulists (Lilliput 1994), The Water Star (Picador, 1991) and The Fisher Child (Picador, 2001). He has completed a children's novel and is currently writing non-fiction. He's a member of Aosdána, and lives in Dublin.

[Philip Casey's website](#) . [Irish Writers Online](#) . [A Guide to Irish Culture](#)



Autumn

Terry McDonagh

Poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh has published four collections of poetry; a play; a book of letters, novel and poetry for children. His work has been translated into Indonesian and German, funded by Ireland Literature Exchange. [In the Light of Bridges - Hamburg Fragments](#) is his latest book that was launched in Hamburg on 26th April, 2012. www.terry-mcdonagh.com www.podcasts.ie www.killedan-and-nowhere-else.com

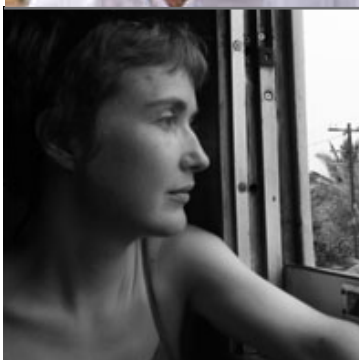


Photo Gallery - Paradox in Paradise

Mark Ulyseas

Let us for a moment reflect on what we do to the other inhabitants of village earth. These photographs were taken by me in Bali, Indonesia. Village earth is paradise and we are the paradox in paradise.

<http://www.coroflot.com/markulyseas>

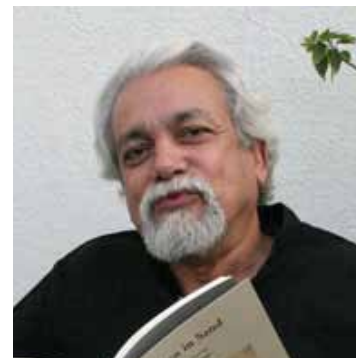


Pleiad

Jemima Fincken

Jemima Fincken is a writer and poet born in Wales. She is currently based in London with her husband Mike Fincken, a captain who sails and works with the international environmental NGO, Greenpeace. They are recently married and are expecting their first baby in early Summer followed by 'plans to run back to the wilds to settle as a family'.

<http://www.jemimaroberts.wordpress.com>



Tribal India - Beyond Fences

The Nari Kuravar Gypsies in a Time of Change by **Randhir Khare**

Khare is an award winning author of twenty one volumes of non-fiction, fiction, translation and poetry. Executive Editor of Heritage India, the International Culture Journal, a Director of The Rewachand Bhojwani Academy and Visiting Professor to the Dept Of English, Pune University. Recently he was given The Residency Award by The Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) for his contribution to Indian Literature and the Human Rights Award for his efforts to preserve and celebrate marginal and minority cultures.

www.khare-bullough.com/randhir/randhir.html



Elephant Aid International

A report in third person by **Founder Carol Buckley**

This lady has been working with elephants for the last 38 years. She had set up an elephant haven in the USA for rescued animals from circuses, zoos etc. Carol has won many international awards. She is Founder of Elephant Aid International. Presently, Carol is in India to help set up an elephant care centre, the first of its kind in Asia.

<http://www.elephantaiddinternational.org>



I'm Damned

Arjun Bagga

Oscillating between low and high life, Arjun ran his bakery business for nine years but landed in Mumbai and joined movies. Known more for the fights that he's had with his colleagues on set and the times he's been chased by the cops from dance bars, he's been a damn good movies guy. He's made a bunch of friends who swear by him and a number of enemies who might want to shove a beer bottle up his

Email: bagga.arjun@gmail.com



Meditation

Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is an internationally known Intuitive Life Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Seminar leader, Hypnotherapist and Author. She specializes in assisting others to gain their own personal power and to live a life of abundance, happiness and joy. Early 2012 she will be releasing her book 12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine.

<http://www.12weekstoselfhealing.com>

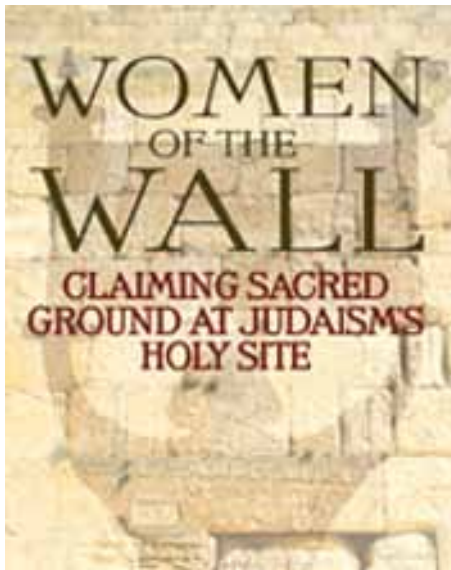


Three Poems

John Chester Lewis

Lewis was born in Southern California and began writing poetry during university in Colorado. He lives in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia where he works on his poetry, music, and painting, when not running JL Galleries fine art.

www.poempress.com - www.jlgalleries.com - www.johnniechester.com



“Political freedom is a function of compromise, but religion is generally not that flexible.
If we are ruled by religious dogma instead of religious values we will never even have the option to pursue a lasting peace.”
- Anat Hoffman

When veteran journalist **Natalie Irene Wood**, a regular contributor to Live Encounters and a resident of Karmiel, Galilee, Israel told me about Anat Hoffman of **Irak**, I began my research into her life and work. It was a journey into truth that ended with hearing the true voice of Israel, Anat Hoffman - a courageous, remarkable woman who continues to face great odds in her fight for justice for those citizens of Israel who continue to suffer segregation, racism and bigotry from mainly Ultra Orthodox Jews.

There are numerous instances where she has been detained by police for crossing the line between imposed dogma and freedom of expression. And yet she carries on regardless down the dangerous path to confront the ills of her society which she and the organisation, Irak, hope to change for the better to one of religious pluralism, sexual equality and protection of the minorities' rights and privileges.

Presently the favourite *whipping boy* of the Middle East appears to be Israel. It has become fashionable to denigrate it at every instance. And it is this rising trend that has obfuscated the truth; Lack of knowledge of the many wonderful Israelis who are fighting a battle against powerful adversaries to bring about a comprehensive change in their society...a change that would make pluralism a corner stone on all levels and spheres of their society.

I thank **Natalie Irene Wood**, a supporter of Live Encounters for introducing me to the world of Israeli Activism; **Emily Singer** (*Development Associate, Irak*) and **Steven Beck** (*Director of Israel – Diaspora, Irak*) for assisting me at every twist and turn to make this happen; and lastly and most importantly **Anat Hoffman** for writing the Special Feature.

This is the first in a series of articles on Israeli Activism and the critical role that it plays in the area of civil and human rights in the State of Israel.

If you want to help in any way or need any information or help in matters relating to the work that Irak does please send an email with your full name, address, contact number and stating the reason thereof to development@irac.org

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Excerpt from Irak's -
ExcludEd, For God's sake: Gender Segregation and the Exclusion of Women in Public Space in Israel Second Annual Report – January 2012

The trend toward the exclusion of women from public space is also manifested in efforts to conceal or subdue their visibility. The demand for modest dress, which was previously confined to the places of residence and meeting places of specific religious groups, is now spreading into the general public domain; where such demands were already present, they are becoming increasingly extreme.

By way of example, it was recently reported that a special “modesty certificate” has been introduced for shops in the town of Sderot. The certificate is awarded to businesses that undertake to ensure that their employees are dressed modestly and that their advertisements maintain similar standards.

In Beit Shemesh, which has become a benchmark for extremism in the exclusion of women, shops have been forbidden to display immodest clothes in their windows, red clothing has been outlawed, and numerous incidents have been reported in which violence has been used to enforce modesty rules and gender segregation. The police response has been ineffective, abandoning the women involved to the rising tide of violence.

In a recent case, Na'ama, a girl who attends Orot School in Beit Shemesh, has been unable to walk the few hundred meters from her home to school without suffering curses and spitting attacks from a minority of local Haredim who oppose the presence of the national-religious school in the area.

Affiliates of irac.org
Please click on the image for weblink





Segregation in Israel

by Anat Hoffman

Civil & Human Rights Activist
Executive Director of Irac

“The US and Israeli public alike talk of countries like Iran not only in terms of their military and security threats, but also in terms of how their world view clashes with our own “open and democratic” world view. I do not believe that all Saudis think it is necessary to forbid women to drive a car or travel without the permission of a male relative, but the power of extreme religious interests inside the political systems of certain countries have made it nearly impossible for the true will of the people to find expression. When I see Israeli politicians and the public at large compromising their own values to pacify one extreme voice in society, I fear we could one day be in the same situation.”

- Anat Hoffman



All pics courtesy irac.org

This article will explore the emerging trend of segregation of women in Israel, how it is affecting their psyches, and what is being done to stop it.

For any reader who has never heard of the [Israel Religious Action Center](#), let me tell you a little bit about us. We were founded as the political and legal arm of the progressive movement in Israel.

While the rabbis and synagogue communities are working hard to provide a spiritual alternative for Israelis, it is our job to reclaim Judaism, by representing our progressive Jewish values of social justice and equality, and by working against people who use Judaism as a weapon for racism of fundamentalism.

We also advocate for Israel's non-Jewish citizens, mainly the Israeli Arabs.

IRAC's team of attorneys and professionals follow the guiding principles of [Israel's Declaration of Independence](#), articulated in May 1948, promising its citizens "freedom of religion and conscience along with equality of social and political rights, irrespective of religion, race or gender."

We are committed to Israel as a Jewish state, and we are dedicated to protecting the democratic character of Israel. In that vein, these are [IRAC's main goals](#):

1. To win equal recognition for the Reform & Conservative Movements' rabbis, synagogues, and schools, so that they can function on the same level as Orthodox rabbis and institutions and have the right to perform all life cycle events (marriages, divorces, conversions, burials, etc.).
2. To win the right for all Israelis to marry any person they choose, regardless of religious status or sexual orientation, without needing the sanction of the Orthodox Rabbinate.
3. To combat all forms of racism, particularly state-sanctioned racism toward ethnic minorities by rabbis employed by the state.
4. To end unfair preferences in government funding given to Orthodox institutions.
5. To generate public support for greater pluralism, tolerance, equality and an end to religious coercion.

One of the main tools at IRAC's disposal is the Israeli court system. For all the criticism that can be thrown at all levels of the Israeli government, I want to assure you that our court system is something of which all Israelis can be proud. We have had some of our biggest victories (and some pretty hefty setbacks) in the courts. We file an average of 60 lawsuits a year, more than one a week.

Now that you've been introduced to IRAC (*and please visit our website, www.irac.org, to learn more. Join our newsletter!*), I want to tell you a little more about me. I am a Sabra, native-born Israeli, and I was also a swimming champion. I mention the swimming because thanks to that unique skill that not many other Israelis had, I was able to study in the United States. My English comes from the sunny and somewhat confusing state of California. I never realized all those years ago how important my swim training would be since, as an advocate for civil rights in Israel for over thirty years, I've had to constantly swim upstream and against the tide.

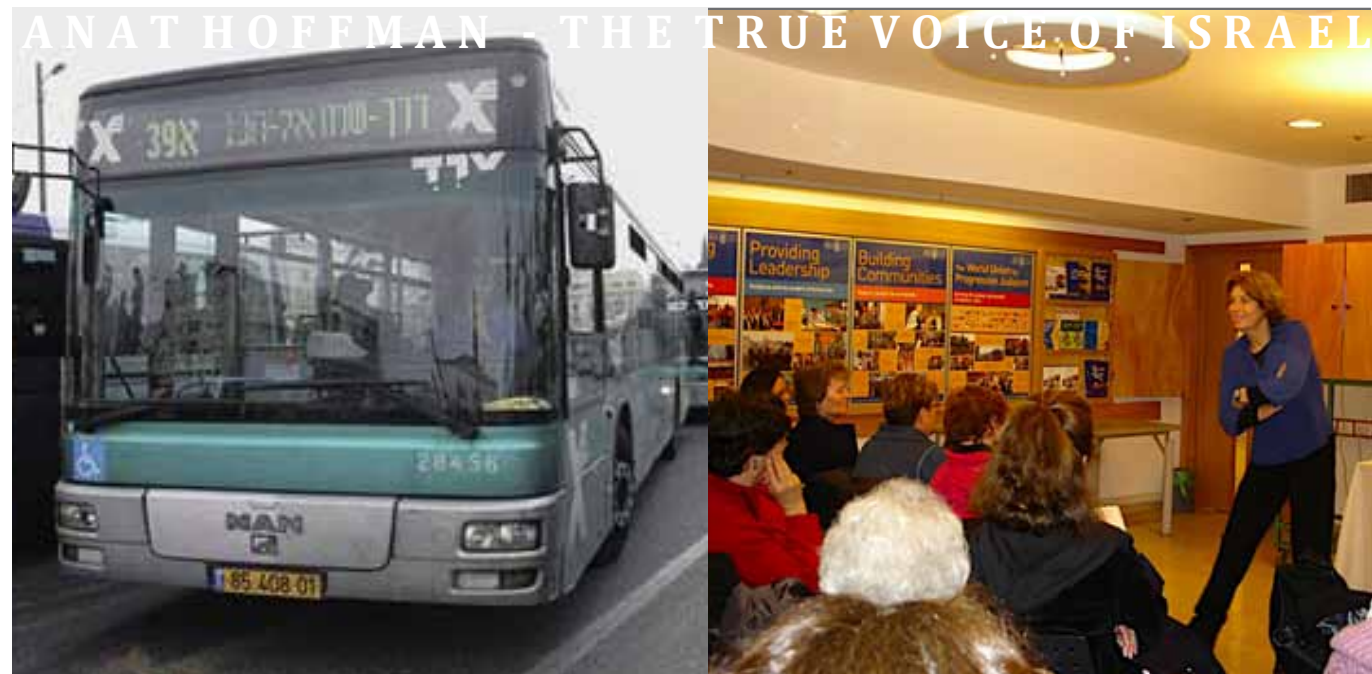
I used to be in government. For fourteen years, I was a member of the [Jerusalem City Council](#). For those of you familiar with the Israeli system of government you know that we have many political parties, and no one party gets a majority of the seats. We have to make coalitions. (That's right: Jews have to work together.) So while you have two major parties, *Democratic and Republican*, and they take turns being the majority, we have coalitions. The majority coalition runs the government and a minority, or opposition, tries to keep them honest.

As the opposition leader, it was my job to keep the majority honest, and that was a full time job. I was always suing the city to obtain information the good old boys would rather I didn't see. The mayor and his deputies were always looking for new and creative ways to shut me up; interrupting me and calling me names in Yiddish was their mode of choice. When the Mayor (*Olmert*) would do this, the other members in the chamber would laugh and it became impossible to get a word out of my mouth.

I went back to the official record of the city and I counted how many lines women, myself included, were able to get out before being interrupted. The average was around three lines. There was one exception to this phenomenon. One female member of the council always started with a little self-deprecating humor. She would say things like "I'm such a silly girl" or "I couldn't possibly understand this" and the mayor and the other deputies would chime in with "No dear, that is ridiculous." "Go ahead and ask your question. Please, talk." So it seems that if a woman wants her voice to be part of the debate in Israeli society, she needs to play these games. As IRAC's executive director, I made "a women's voice" one of our key issues.



women of the wall נשות הקיר



All pics courtesy irac.org

I love Israel and I want everyone who experiences Israel in one way or another to love her as well. **Although, I am not looking for you to love Israel the way Fox News loves America**, I want you to love Israel the way a grown child loves a parent. This is when the idealism of youth is gone and she sees the cracks and imperfections that exist in every person. Nevertheless, now that their parent is a “human” and not “an ideal”, they are able to love them even more. I have come to believe that real love is what remains when you finally know the truth.

For the last three years, we at **IRAC** have been on the forefront of one of Israel’s hottest controversies: gender segregation on buses and in other public areas. There are few social issues that are debated as passionately today in Israel as that of bus segregation.

Here is a little background:

Segregated bus lines, referred to as **Mehadrin buses**, first started operating in 1999 as a trial project in Jerusalem and B’nai B’rak, areas with high numbers of **ultra-Orthodox Jews** who requested separation from the opposite gender. After this small, and largely hidden, trial run, the number of Mehadrin bus lines swelled to around 90 lines operating all over the country. These buses were part of the **Egged system**, which is the national public bus company, meaning it is funded and administered by the government!

On Mehadrin bus lines, men enter and sit in the front, women enter and sit in the back, and modesty requirements for women’s dress are imposed. Though these requirements were technically voluntary, in reality the social pressure and intimidation by groups of **Haredi men**, often young **yeshiva** students encouraged by their rabbis, would enforce the segregation while the bus drivers would do nothing.

These bus lines are a result of **ultra-Orthodox** demands that Egged chose to concede to in order to not lose ultra-Orthodox business. As a result of a petition submitted by IRAC in 2008, the Supreme Court ruled declared unequivocally that bus segregation, as it was practiced at the time, was illegal. All buses had to post a sign saying that segregation was illegal and the bus drivers were supposed to keep riders from being intimidated for choosing a seat in the front of the bus. Even after the court ruling saying that segregation was illegal, we found that all too often this was not being enforced.

So what did we do at IRAC? We made it our mission to keep the bus company honest and monitor the enforcement of the law. We started sending volunteer Freedom Riders on the bus lines that were known to segregate in spite of the court ruling. We had brave women go on to these buses and sit in the front and even encourage other women to do the same.

Sometimes they were just ignored, but other times they met resistance and even aggression from ultra-Orthodox men. They were called terrible names and even spit at and threatened while the bus drivers would sit back and do nothing. We also found an elegant solution to this problem. We sue them!

We have found that civil lawsuits against the bus drivers have been a very effective method of encouraging Egged to obey the law. The average settlement has been around 4000 **shekels** and word spread fast among the drivers that sitting back and allowing the Haredi to squash the rights of other Israelis is going to really hit them where it counts---in the wallet.

Where are things now? The buses are improving but this fight has moved to other public spaces.

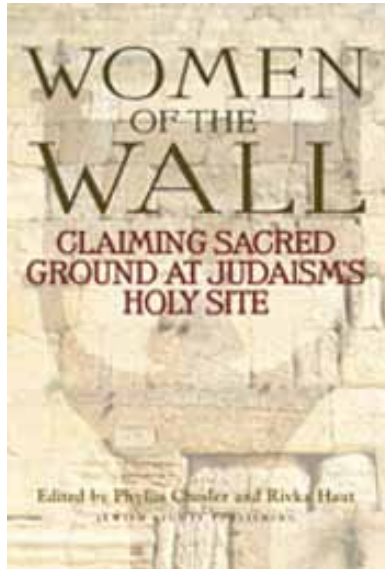
First the buses: we have gone from over 2500 bus rides a day being segregated down to under 1000 and dwindling. It has turned into a “cause célèbre” in Israel in recent months. Israelis from all walks of life and all sides of the political spectrum have begun to see that this is not simply a strange and localized “quirk” practiced in Haredi neighborhoods. Many now see that this affects larger Israeli society. There have been major protests against bus segregation in Jerusalem, Beit Shemesh, and other parts of the country. I have to say that we might actually see this phenomenon die out or shrink to almost nothing in a matter of months. That is the good news.

On the other hand, segregation is popping up in other areas. For a while now, private advertising companies in Jerusalem have bent to Haredi demands to keep images of women off billboards and other advertisements. We have found supermarkets, stores, and even medical clinics that are segregating men and women. In some parts of Jerusalem, women need to have their heart attacks on even days!

Certain radio stations have been coerced into keeping women from speaking on air for the same issue of religious modesty. At a recent Knesset hearing on this very issue we were told by the program director of one of these radio stations that they have a dignified solution to “problem” of hearing a women’s voice on the radio!

They set up a fax machine where women can fax their questions or comments and a man will read them on the air. Our jaws dropped in shock and I spent the rest of the hearing thinking of things I would like to fax him!

Now we have cases where prominent rabbis are telling religious soldiers not to participate in military ceremonies (like memorial services) if women are singing. Where does it end?



Segregation is not something that the majority of Orthodox, or even the majority of ultra-Orthodox Jews wanted, but the level of extremism among that community has been growing steadily over the past twenty years. At the same time, ultra-Orthodox power in government has grown at an equal or even faster rate. In many ways, we let this happen right under our noses. Our leadership decided that staying in power was important enough to justify making tremendous concessions to this one minority interest group.

I know that to many this might seem like a purely internal Israeli affair. I understand that many readers outside of Israel might wonder how it affects them or the more pressing issues in Israel like peace. Here is my answer.

In addition to being a very real civil rights issue, segregation is also a symbol for something much deeper. As I stated, most religious Jews do not want this kind of segregation but, at the same time, they are afraid of secular Israeli society---and secular Israelis---creating an Israel where their way of life is threatened. The external conflicts and the internal conflicts must be dealt with at the same time. If we do not, we might find that we have created a state with secure external borders that is destroying itself from the inside.

For years in Israel, we have been trying to find a middle ground that allows for a full and diverse Jewish life inside the Jewish state, similar to what Jews enjoy in the Diaspora. It might seem counter-intuitive that removing religious authority from the Jewish state would actually make Jews freer to practice Judaism, but that is the situation in which we find ourselves.

Political freedom is a function of compromise, but religion is generally not that flexible. If we are ruled by religious dogma instead of religious values we will never even have the option to pursue a lasting peace.

The US and Israeli publics alike talk of countries like Iran not only in terms of their military and security threats, but also in terms of how their world view clashes with our own “open and democratic” world view.

I do not believe that all Saudis think it is necessary to forbid women to drive a car or travel without the permission of a male relative, but the power of extreme religious interests inside the political systems of certain countries have made it nearly impossible for the true will of the people to find expression. When I see Israeli politicians and the public at large compromising their own values to pacify one extreme voice in society, I fear we could one day be in the same situation.

The opposite of love is not hate. Rather, it is indifference. Love and hate are both forms of engaging with something you feel strong about and want to see turn in a certain direction. Indifference towards Israel is the real enemy. Once people concede that Israel's founding values are not worth fighting for and simply slip away into indifference, the State is doomed.

For Orthodox Jews to have religious freedom in Israel, they need to accept that the Jewish state needs to recognize all forms of Judaism---and even Jews that need no religion at all. If not, their religious hegemony could turn into a theocratic rule just like the one that has been ruling Iran since 1979. Why should we beat the war drum against Iran if we are losing the values that separated us from them in the first place?

When this conflict with our neighbors is settled, the battle will not be over, and we cannot put off any longer what kind of Israel we are creating. Will Israel be a society that gives voice to the voiceless and strength to the weak? Will Israel be the kind of country that continues to excel in creativity or will we descend into a medieval world of oppression, paranoia and religious extremism?

Before I close, I want to return to my time as an opposition leader in the [Jerusalem City Council](#). I spent years criticizing and scrutinizing every action taken by the city government. I didn't do it because I hated the city; in fact, it was the opposite. If I didn't want that city that is so important to Jews and non-Jews alike to live up to the high ideals our tradition demands, I would have simply sat back and kept my mouth shut. Criticism is a good thing.

I didn't keep my mouth shut because it is the vigilance of a strong opposition that keeps democracy honest and functioning. *You can disagree and even speak out without compromising your Zionism, or patriotism or any other -ism you hold dear.*

The opposite of love is not hate. Rather, it is indifference. Love and hate are both forms of engaging with something you feel strong about and want to see turn in a certain direction. Indifference towards Israel is the real enemy. Once people concede that Israel's founding values are not worth fighting for and simply slip away into indifference, the State is doomed.

It is for this reason that I will never disengage with Israel, and I know one day we will see a Jerusalem free of segregation.

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Philip Casey

speaks to Mark Ulyseas in an exclusive interview

Well known Irish Poet, Writer, Editor and member of *Aosdána*, which honours artists whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the Arts in Ireland, speaks candidly on his life, work, [Irish Writers Online](#) and [A Guide to Irish Culture](#).

“There are people who think writers are elitist loafers and leeches and never do a day’s work, and while the Catholic Church was at its most powerful and obscurantist in the 1940s and 1950s, books were banned and writers were hounded from their jobs, a notable case being the novelist and short-story writer John McGahern. Most writers of note had to leave the country.

Today is a different matter, and I think there is a general respect for writing as a profession. I know that writing friends from abroad have commented on the fact that if you declare yourself to be a writer in Ireland, nobody thinks it’s strange!”

- Philip Casey

[Twitter@Philip_Casey](#) . [Philip Casey’s Website](#) . [Slimming for the Beach](#) . [Irish Literary Revival](#)



“...reading and dreaming
is a significant part of being a writer
– maybe even more so for a poet.
The peculiar thing about poetry
is that a lifetime’s experience can be distilled into a few lines...”

Could you share with the readers a glimpse of your life and work?

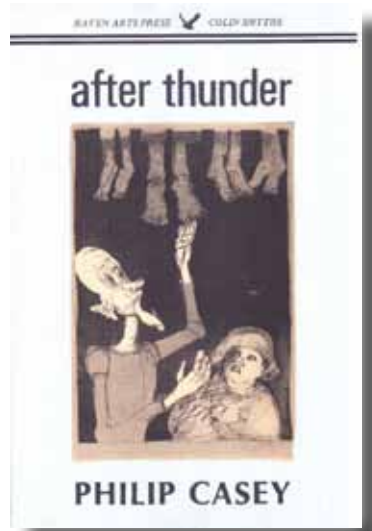
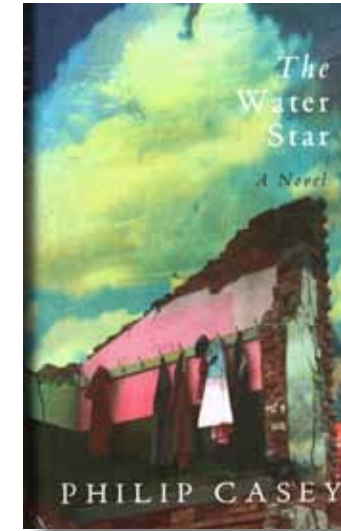
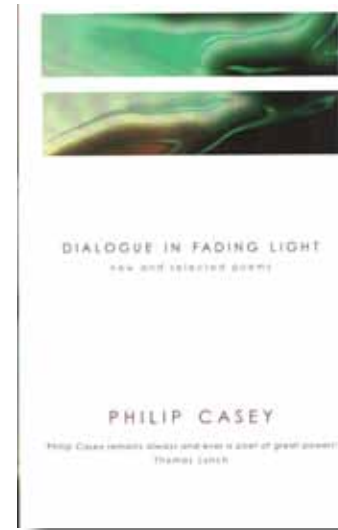
I was born in London in 1950 to Irish parents, grew up in Co Wexford (South-East Ireland) on my parents’ farm, spent a long time in hospital in my teens, and moved to Dublin in 1971. I emigrated to Barcelona in 1974, just as the Franco era was ending, and was at a champagne party the night the Generalissimo died. I returned to Dublin just after the first free elections in Spain in 1974, and after a few years of trying to be respectable, decided I was a round peg in a square hole, and that all I wanted to do was write. I gave up my job, and survived on very little. I was 29, and the following year **I published my first book of verse**. I’ve since published four collections in all, and three novels. I’ve also written a children’s novel which I hope will be published over the next year or so, and am presently writing non-fiction.

Why do you write?

As a child I told stories to my brothers (my sister was a late arrival) and as a teenager I wrote songs. One night on Irish radio I heard a poetry programme. ‘I can do that,’ I told myself. To put that in context I was living in the countryside with little access to books, TV wasn’t common, and needless to say there was no such thing as the internet. Moreover, I was a late starter in secondary school because of long periods in hospital, and was only vaguely aware of literature until I did. So I’ve always had the impulse to create. Actually while I was in hospital for the third time in my teens I won my first literary prize – for an essay on Keats.

I always try to avoid writing, especially novels or non-fiction. It’s only when I’ve nowhere else to turn that I give in and write. Perhaps it’s a delay tactic to wait until I’m ready to write! On the other hand if I don’t write or am prevented from writing by one circumstance or another, I get ill. I’d like to get back to writing poems, but I’ve written only a handful since my last collection, and there’s a novel I want to write after I’ve finished the present non-fiction work.

In a nutshell I write because I have to and I don’t really want to do anything else.



Is there such a thing as a full time poet or writer?

I certainly think of myself as a full-time writer. Of course, like most writers I can spend a long time staring through windows, friends often call unannounced, I’m asked to read a lot of manuscripts, or books, and there are a million excuses not to write. So it’s not like a proper job, 9-5. On the other hand, a writer is always on call, so to speak. And reading and dreaming is a significant part of being a writer – maybe even more so for a poet. The peculiar thing about poetry is that a lifetime’s experience can be distilled into a few lines, though I think any poet is lucky if he or she leaves behind one durable poem. To leave more than half a dozen durable poems is to be a great poet.

What is the responsibility of a poet or writer to society?

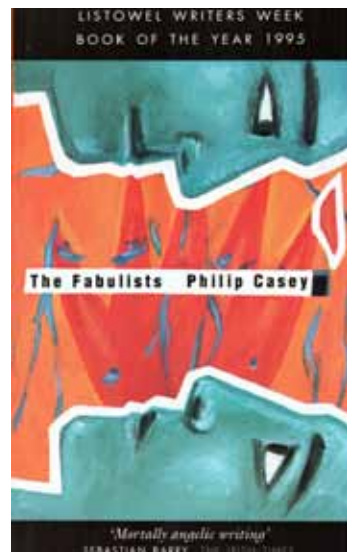
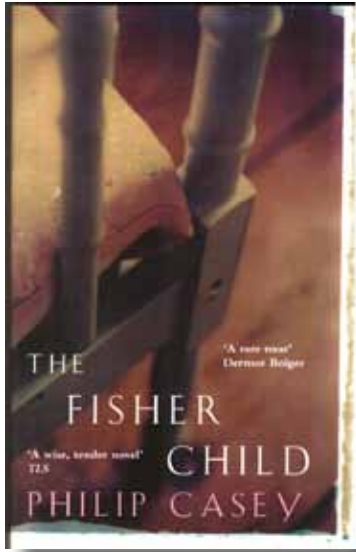
I think a lot about society, both in Ireland and abroad. **I’m very interested in history and politics, and having lived through the dying days of Fascism in Spain, I’m worried about its resurgence in Europe and how so-called austerity is facilitating its success. I’m passionate about creating a world without fossil fuels. I’m optimistic about how technology can help create a better world if it is matched with a generous society. Yet I think it would be a mistake for me to enter politics per se.** I hope I can best contribute to society through what I think I do best – my literary work. My current non-fiction is on an aspect of Irish history both in Ireland itself and amongst the Irish diaspora, which I hope will make readers think about how ‘the other’ is treated in society. How one treats ‘the other’ is a fundamental measure of any society.

When did you start Irish Writers Online?

I’m not sure exactly when I started **Irish Writers Online**. The Internet Archive has a record of 20th Century Irish Writers, which is what it was called then, from 1999, but I think I started it a few years earlier. I had learned some basic html, and had made a little website for myself called The Fabulists, after my first novel, and I thought as I was promoting my own work, why not promote that of my writer friends too?

Naturally I had to call it something else once the 20th century ended, and so **Irish Writers Online was born, with its own dedicated website. It is now accessed by lovers of literature, students, academics, writers and media from all over the world, and presently lists concise bio-bibliographies of more than 600 Irish writers. I’ve lately been adding images and videos where they are available.**

Irish Culture Guide is its sister site, and that has over 1,000 descriptive links to websites featuring aspects of Irish Culture. It’s not quite as well-known as **Irish Writers Online** but has been gaining slowly in popularity.



Does the Irish Literary community get funding from either the State or Private donors?

There are various private sponsors such as [Hennessey Brandy](#), which co-sponsors with state bodies the [New Irish Writing](#) series, long established in various Irish newspapers, and most recently in [The Irish Independent](#). [The Irish Times](#), for example, has also sponsored prizes for both fiction and poetry, as well as the annual theatre awards. There are also prizes [The Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award](#) which is the richest of its kind in the world, though of course that is open to international writers also. However Irish writer [Edna O'Brien](#) won it in 2011. Then there is [The Michael Harnett Award](#) for poetry, commemorating perhaps the finest Irish poet in both languages. The main funding for literature, however, is from the State in the form of bursaries and support for publication of books and magazines.

It also funds a unique institution known as [Aosdána](#). The word comes from an ancient Irish term for people of the arts, *aes dána*. It honours those artists whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the arts in Ireland, and encourages and assists members in devoting their energies fully to their art. Those whose income is solely from writing and/or is below a certain threshold, receive a stipend known as the *cnuas*. I'm privileged to be a member of Aosdána and can vouch that its monetary support changed my life.

Has the internet helped promote the Irish literary community monetarily? And has the growing popularity of the Kindle affected the sale of printed books?

I don't know if I can answer this question directly. Of course it has helped writers in all sorts of ways, from cutting postage costs (most agents and publishers accept email submissions now), facilitating newsletters, to readers buying their books on [Amazon](#) or Irish web shops or indeed directly from their publishers – you can see a list of both Irish bookshops on the web and Irish publishers at the bottom of the page on Irish Writers Online. Many, not most, Irish writers have their own website, and some, not many, are on Facebook and Twitter. In other words, Irish writers are like writers in most countries in this regard. As for ebooks, I see some writers publishing direct to **Kindle**, but as yet not many. I don't own a Kindle and probably won't, as I believe in open formats and I distrust the Kindle's proprietary format. I do however sometimes read ebooks, mostly free classics, on my old smart phone and I think as the technology evolves and open formats become better appreciated then writers will be more comfortable with e-publishing.

Some of Philip Casey published works...

The Year of the Knife (Poems 1980 – 1990), After Thunder, The Fabulists, The Fisher Child, The Water Star, Dialogue in Fading Light, completed a children's novel, The Tins & the Pale Lady (a chapter will be published in a prestigious Brazilian journal in 2012); And many more, including work in progress non-fiction that is on an aspect of Irish history both in Ireland itself and amongst the Irish diaspora.

We are all caught up in the great wild web and this has given rise to copyright infringement and plagiarism. How has it affected the Irish literary community?

There was some concern and puzzlement about the [Google Books Agreement](#) a year or two ago, but otherwise I'm not aware of significant copyright infringement or plagiarism. Which is not to say that it doesn't exist. Several Irish writers including myself have made some of our work freely available under a [Creative Commons Licence](#), which allows a reader to download the work and distribute it but (in our case) not change it or profit from it. Have a look at [Irish Literary Revival](#) and my own website and the Creative Commons website for more detail.

Do you think Media (Print and Electronic) in Ireland has helped promote writers and poets? And can they do more for the struggling community?

Of course there's always a clamour for more to be done, but I think Ireland is relatively fortunate in that the media, particularly [The Irish Times](#), give good coverage of books, and usually publishes a poem every week, and now that the Irish Independent has recently taken on [New Irish Writing](#), it has made up for its previous scant coverage of Irish literary work. The main Irish TV station, RTÉ, no longer has a dedicated books program, alas, but its main arts presenter [John Kelly](#) is a novelist himself and is sympathetic to literature and covers it when he can, I think. Of course if a writer wins a significant prize, then that's big news.

In your opinion how do people view writers and poets today? Do they view them as catalysts for change?

There are people who think writers are elitist loafers and leeches and never do a day's work, and while the Catholic Church was at its most powerful and obscurantist in the 1940s and 1950s, books were banned and writers were hounded from their jobs, a notable case being the novelist and short-story writer [John Macgahern](#). Most writers of note had to leave the country. Today is a different matter, and I think there is a general respect for writing as a profession. I know that writing friends from abroad have commented on the fact that if you declare yourself to be a writer in Ireland, nobody thinks it's strange!



This poem is taken from: **A SONG FOR JOANNA** - HAMBURG - MELBOURNE - A JOURNAL IN VERSE

Autumn

Autumn in Melbourne
is a time for silence
and simple living
on slow pulse and karma.

If I could I would try
to describe the morning
as it caught me
at Glen Waverly, or
the very different set of words
it takes to paint trees
that don't change from green
to brown and yellow.
They gladly house animals
that never struggle with hibernation
or give up eating.

It rained in great lumps
the other night and yesterday
rough grasses were fighting
for the right to be called green.

You walk softly in such a climate.
There's no reason to rush
- the air
doesn't let you.

You want to stop,
look at a postcard
of the Snowy Mountains, or dream
of a slow train-ride to Mildura.

At Port Melbourne, a cooler breeze
was blowing up from Tasmania.
the moon lay on its back.
I buttoned up, walked up Bay Street
all the way to Flinders Street Station
to catch a train to my home
- for now.

Let us for a moment reflect on
what we do to the other inhabitants
of village earth.

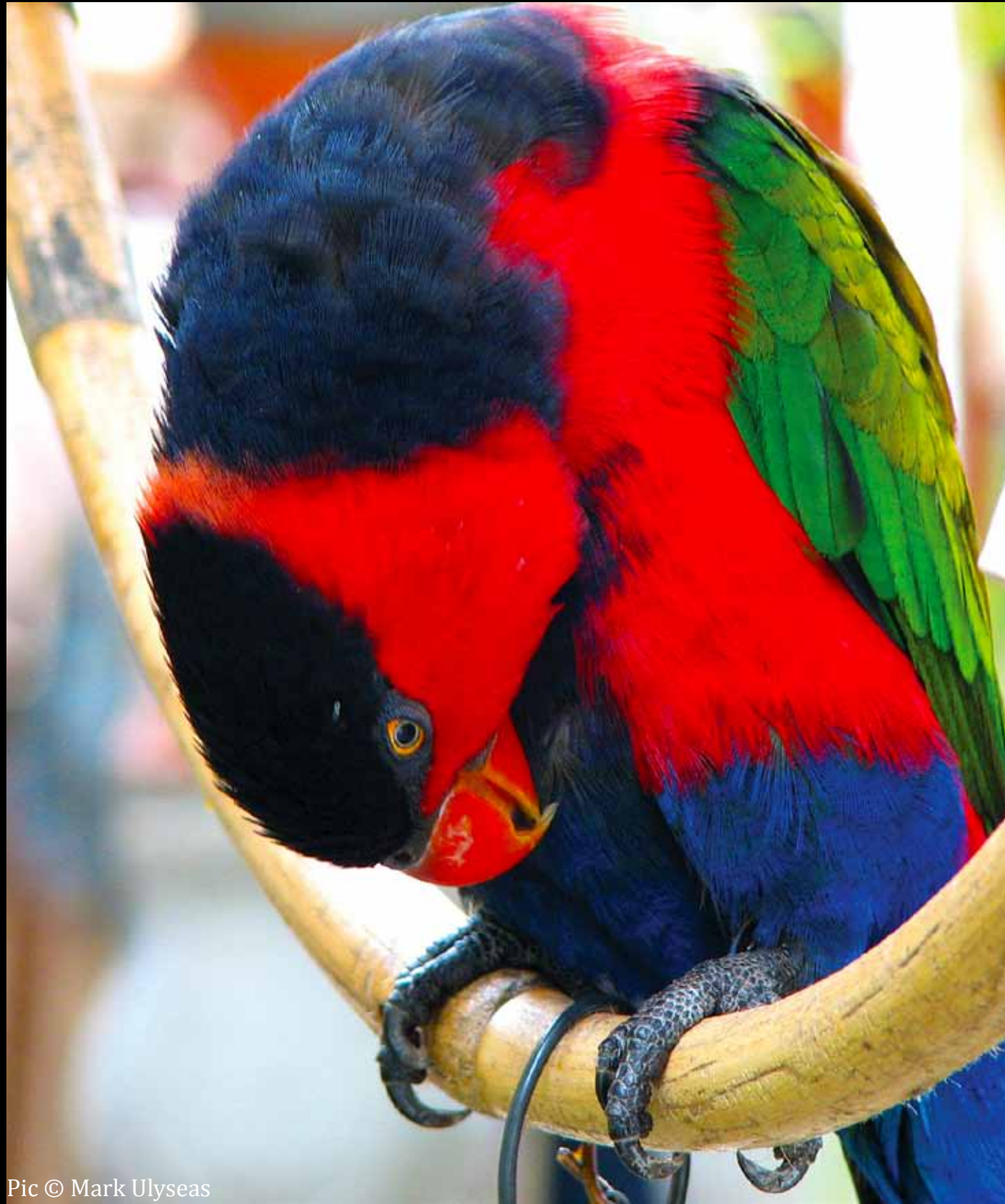
These photographs were taken by me
in Bali, Indonesia.

Village earth is paradise
and we are the paradox in paradise.



Mark Ulyseas, Photographer





Pic © Mark Ulyseas

A parakeet chained to a perch and hung on a tree for the entertainment of guests. Apparently it had been there for months. Most of the time it hung its head in total resignation to its horrible existence.



Pic © Mark Ulyseas

A dog chained at the entrance of a small hotel day in and day out. Some locals told me that twice a day it was led to a tree to do its business and then tied up again. All it did was sit there watching people in quiet desperation for it never barked.



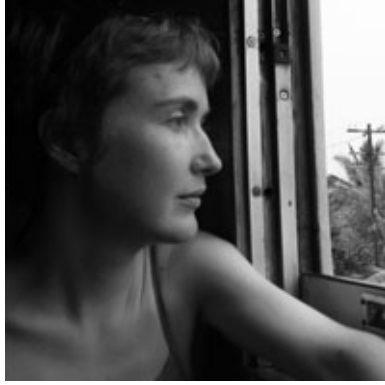
Pic © Mark Ulyseas

An orangutan on display for the entertainment of visitors at a hotel.



Pic © Mark Ulyseas

A mother and child watch tourists photograph them.



Pleiad

Yellow is the morning light
streaming high over cliffs and peaks,
dipping low into valleys
and lifting up the lids of sleep,
it is the hum of garrulous bees
giddy and gloved in perfume,
furry stripes dusted with neon talc

Green is the hills, the mountains, the fields -
unfolding like a patchwork of sheets
over the rotund trunk of a slumbering giant,
it is new leaves and young shoots
tenacious tendrils of delicate roots,
it is the quiet custodian, the hue of harmony,
the gentle tether of minds wandering skyward

Red is the sizzling wick
waxing along ice-hard veins,
it is the pace and pulse of honest toil
the blistering heat of summer
scorched across bare skin,
it is skipping beats and rising ire
flushed cheeks and burnished pride

Blue is the reflection of water on sky
or sky tipping into water -
and the rushing tumble as it falls,
it is the wind-wrinkled skin
of pools, of ponds, of lakes,
raindrops pearling the necks of branches
it is the fluid motion of the dancer
silken as a ribbon in the breeze



Orange is autumn leaves
falling from vermilion trees,
the sun melting onto the sailor's horizon
as thick as syrup falling from a spoon,
it is the haloed glow
tracing the lick of candlelight,
it is walking hand in hand -
over the rise and fall of a shared arc

Indigo is the night sky,
draped as heavy as curtains
over the gossamer lace of dusk,
it is dark brooding clouds
pregnant with stormy rains,
tossing small boats into the spray -
like corks popping from a bottle
at a grand waltz of the elements

Violet is the late afternoon light
spilling like thin ink over a winter landscape
it is the quiet, wordless gesture,
warmed by the gentle wisdom of age,
it is lavender rockeries lulling sleep
the quivering petals of wallflowers,
the ash in the grate of the fire
when darkness falls like a shroud



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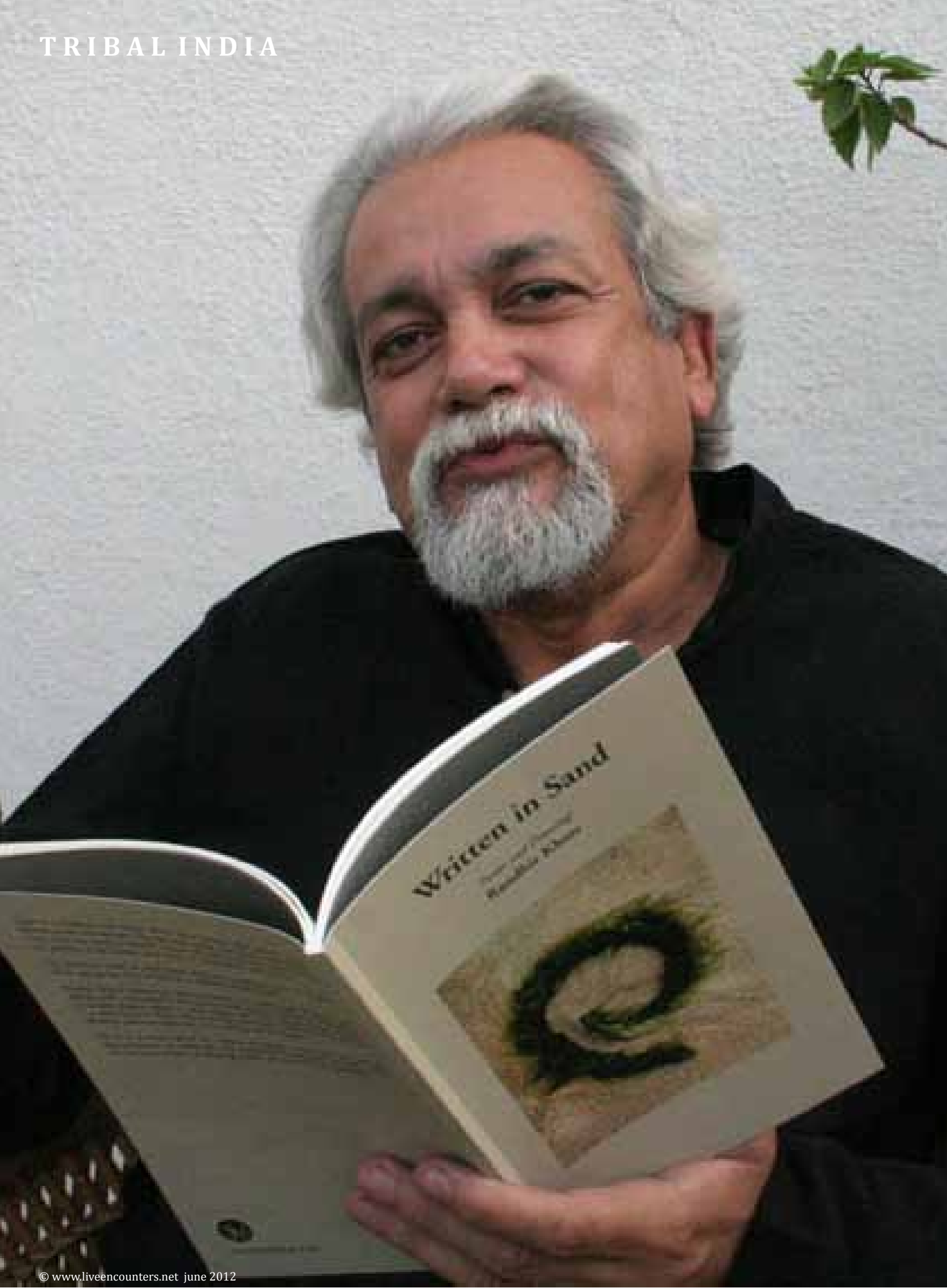


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122/ 1 & 2 Brigade Road, Opposite Brigade Towers,

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Fax: +91 80 4147 8600 www.ssplindia.net



BEYOND FENCES



THE NARI KURAVAR GYPSIES IN A TIME OF CHANGE

They were once travellers on the high roads of freedom, crafting their own destinies as hunters, gatherers, traders, transporters and craftsmen but exist today in the no-mans-land of the settled world. But they persist.



To the uninitiated, Nari Kuravar Gypsies are an uncivilised wild bunch of people who are only familiar with life on the road. They resist change and live in the present with no notion of the future. They don't want their children to be educated and are suspicious of the settled way of life. Well-meaning social workers will glibly say...

"For years now, we have been trying our best. They even refuse to talk our language. This stubbornness hasn't helped them in the least. It has been to their detriment. They walk around with weapons, steal, cheat, rummage around in garbage bins and in tourist places dupe unsuspecting victims. They just can't keep still. We have done our best to civilize them but have not succeeded. They just can't settle down."

This is the usual response of people from settled communities who regard those who are nomadic as unreliable because they don't 'belong' to a specific physical space. And around this perceived notion is woven a myriad misconceptions which are based on rumour and prejudice.

To experience the story of this community, a visit to one of its settlements would be a good way to start. Let's take for example a Nari Kuravar settlement in Tirumullayvayal in Tamil Nadu.

Off on the side of a busy main road, the settlement is tucked away in a wild grove of babul, neem and other trees and as you approach, a pathway opens up between crouched dwellings made of discarded junk like wooden crates, wire, rusted tin sheeting, worn out truck tyres and a host of other bits and pieces ingeniously patched together to create shelters. Nevertheless, however desperate the settlement may appear it throbs with life. Men women and children are everywhere.

To one side, a group of men and women industriously sort junk that they have collected from the city's bins, another group plays cards, a third fabricates primitive muzzle-loading shot guns, a fourth busily beheads chickens for a midnight feast and a fifth works on stringing beads into necklaces.

Children are being bathed, women cook on open fires. Cats, dogs, goats, pigeons, doves, rabbits, hamsters and a host of domestic creatures, caged and free, are everywhere. You are soon overwhelmed by the sheer exuberance of life that oozes from the settlement.



You walk along through the settlement, nodding and smiling at people. Children gather curiously around. A few people come forward, wanting to talk. Listening to the words they speak, you soon realized that they were speaking a dialect of Hindi. Simple conversations open up a channel of communication and you are effortlessly drawn in amongst them.

An old man sitting on a khatiya calls out to you, "Come here. Don't disturb them, they are going about their daily work...some making guns and others doing a lot else. I've ordered a gun from that lot there and they haven't produced it as yet. At this rate they'll never produce it. Come here."

Dada sits there, sunk into himself. His long grey hair falls about his shoulders and a deep scar runs all the way down his chest. **"This,"** he says, running his fingers down the scar, **"is from an operation. This is why I can't travel anymore. Now, I'm not saying this because I want you to pity me and give me money. No, no, I don't want pity and I don't want your money, friend. I heard you chatting to those young gun makers there and you seemed to get on with them. So I thought to myself that maybe you'll want to chat with me.**

"I was among the first to arrive in this settlement. I know what it was like to get even this space. Yes we needed this space. We needed somewhere secure to be for a while. Just for a while. We are not settlers like everyone else. We are Nari Kuravars. And Nari Kuravars have never been like settlers. We have our own ways. See me and my wife and family. We've travelled everywhere. Everywhere, I tell you. I have been to Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Calcutta, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Cochin, everywhere. My forefathers too have travelled everywhere. This land had no boundaries then. No boundaries at all. We'd travel often by road, walking, maybe sometimes getting a lift here and there, camp out under the stars, collect wild fruits, and sometimes hunt wild boar and other animals and birds. We were traders. Making and selling all kinds of bead necklaces and household items. Do you want to know what we are can do best? Recycle waste materials. I think we are the best in the country. You throw away your garbage and we'll find something in it that can be made beautiful. See that boy there. What do you think he is making? Mehendi printing blocks from the soles of rubber chappals that some city person threw in a garbage bin. Who knows – some tourist will buy it and carry it off not knowing where it came from. But then sometimes too we buy goods at a cheap rate at one place and sell it for a profit somewhere else. That's what our forefathers did too."



“Who knows all this about us? People who do not know us for what we are say, ‘Never trust a Nari Kuravar, trust a hyena or a jackal but never trust a Nari Kuravar.’ The settled ones have always treated us this way. Why? Because we are not like them. Anyone who does not settle down and live in a home in one place and send their children to school and work at a job from morning to evening is treated differently. We have always been treated like criminals. There was a time when there were no cities but merely towns and villages and vast wild areas. We were masters of our own fates then. We lived off the bounties of the forests, hunted, gathered wild fruit. That’s when many of our elders had the secrets of medicinal herbs, others knew how to cure the hide of wild animals that we hunted. We were free, free to wander where we wished. When jungles began to vanish, we took to transport and trade. Though I’ve seen real jungles and hunting in my youth, I actually spent my life as a bead necklace trader. But see my state now. Do I look like I can travel any more? All my travelling is over,” Dada grunts restlessly.

Sitting amidst the bustle of the Nari Kuravar settlement in Tirumullayvayal, you look around at what had initially appeared as a junk yard and realise it is the home of a community of travellers struggling to survive in a rapidly shrinking nation. Spirits yearning to be on the move as their ancestors lived but physically limited by boundaries and differences crisscrossing the sub-continent.

The Nari Kuravars are one of the numerous traveller communities that have lived on the Indian sub-continent. Due to their ‘moving’ way of life, these communities have either been swallowed up by the mainstream, diluting their identities in the process or have, by force of circumstance, mingled one with the other to form broader groups with adapted ways of life. However, there are still a number of communities that hold on to their specific traveller identities. The Nari Kuravars are among them.

It is ironic that gypsy communities such as they hold the origins of the traveller communities in Europe and other parts of the world. According to Ronald Lee, a Roma...

“For almost five-hundred years after we appeared in Europe in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, Europeans were asking where we had come from. By then, the Roma people had almost forgotten their origins in North-Central India although some Roma did tell Italians who asked them in the Italian City States in the 15th century. This has been buried in the archives until recently.



“Because dark-skinned people from the Middle-East had been brought to Europe before the arrival of the Roma by the Venetians and other entrepreneurs to perform as acrobats, jugglers, musicians and dancers and because these people were loosely called ‘Egyptians’ the Roma too were identified as ‘Egyptians’ which in English was later shortened to ‘Gypsy’. Some Roma groups had come to Central and Eastern Europe from a region in Greece called ‘Little Egypt’ and others from Anatolia. Recent studies conducted by Indian scholars in India and Romani scholars have finally confirmed the origins of the Romani people. We originated in India but were not one specific group of Indians, not all of one caste and not even one people.”

He concludes by implying that the Roma and their origins have been misunderstood and therefore misinterpreted by others. “Romani history must be written by Roma and it is to be hoped that the young generation of Roma today in many countries who are becoming educated will collectively pursue their origins and history until the non-Roma mythology is demolished and the true story of the Roma is established.”

But what of the lives of traveller communities in India? Will they ever be empowered to write their own histories? Trace their own origins? If the state of the Nari Kuravars can be taken as an example – there appears to be little hope. Survival in the face of unimaginable odds is their main concern.

The Nari Kuravars are known by various names in various parts of the country. For example, they are known as the Koracha and Erukala in and around Andhra Pradesh and Korava in parts of Tamil Nadu. It is believed that ancient Kuravar tradition held that they were closely connected to Muruga, the Hero-God of the Tamils. According to sources Muruga, the god of the hills married Valli a Kuravar girl. In Andhra Pradesh, they are associated with Narasimha.

Records reveal that people from the community were carriers of merchandise and they moved from place to place with their donkeys along the coasts and even across the hinterland of the sub-continent. The names of their sects were based on the commodities that they transported and sold. Constant travelling brought them in touch with various types of social, political and economic situations and as such they became inadvertent gatherers of information. The rulers of the day took advantage of these repositories of information and began hiring them as spies. Tippu Sultan is believed to have inducted them into his Espionage Corps. They were apparently trained to steal from the enemy camps and raid their caravans while they were on the move



Of course not all individuals from the community were given to robbing and spying. Many still continued as traders. But the damage once done perpetuated itself, destroying the community image of these travellers. Criminal groups organized themselves and perfected the art thievery. With the modernization of transportation systems, their traditional roles as transporters and traders were affected. This induced many more to take to petty crimes.

The crimes of some condemned the entire community to being notified under the Criminal Tribes Act. This draconian Act meted out severe punishment to its people. They were herded together in thousands and shunted into 'protected settlements' in the districts of Nellore and Guntur. At the camp at Kavali, thousands died behind barbed wires.

Sometimes, the barbed wire fences could not contain them and they broke out and went back down their well-used routes to freedom. Those who had led a life of crime returned to it and others, brutalised by the 'settlements' took to crime as a form of revolt. Many were rounded up once again and returned to the camps. With the passing away of the Criminal Tribes Act, the community was thrown into disarray and any semblance of cohesion was shattered. All that remained was the stigma of criminality. This persists today.

Despite the trauma, the spirit persists. Every settlement displays its own style of community bonding, however desperate may be the struggle to survive. More than in other states, Tamil Nadu has a number of Nari Kuravar settlements. Apart from Tirumullayvayal there are other temporary settlements in the state. These may be found at Pallavaram, Moppedu, Avadi, Thirukazukundram, Thiruthami,, Manamathi, Vayalur, Uttu Kottai, Thiruvanmiyur and Kotturpuran. In some cases, patterns of settled life can be seen and the slow transition from a nomadic existence is apparent. In one such case, the homesteads had taken on the semblance of 'order'. Small garden patches surrounded them.

Domesticated animals are kept in spaces separated from the main living quarters. And probably most noticeable of all are the fences. Some are constructed from wire whilst others from bamboo. The situation is quite different in faraway Mamallapuram, a township, southwards from Chennai, known for its magnificent rock temples. Over the years, the growing tourist population has attracted groups from the community who roam the streets and wait near temples and seaside eateries to sell their bead necklaces.



Every evening they return to their settlement a few kilometres away in a place called Pooneri. It is in a low-lying area beside a wetland which during the rains becomes impossible to live in. But they have no choice. Mamallapuram is their 'beat' and they protect it fiercely. No other Nari Kuravar group has even a ghost of a chance to set up base. They won't allow the invasion of Pondicherry or Chennai Nari Kuravars.

In this seaside township, the bead-sellers operate as a family unit. The parents move with the children. If they have a single child then the husband does the tending. If there are two children then the responsibility is shared. In the case of three children, the husband cares for two of them and the wife cares for the third. Often, he carries one of the children in a cloth sling. Both parents meet regularly through the day, spend time with each other, play with the children, feed them and put them to sleep if necessary. Interestingly, their struggle to survive by foraging in garbage bins or selling bead necklaces, does not take away from the time they choose to spend with each other in companionship and child rearing. This close family bonding is probably an important source of strength. In a hostile world, it gives them both solace as well as a feeling of acceptance and belonging.

"The family is very important for us," Ravi will tell you if you care to stop and start a conversation with him. "We value our family. We are what we are because of our family. My wife makes me, me. I make her, her. We are two halves of a whole. And this whole makes these children. Together we are one family. This is our life. This is our world."

This is the voice of the ancient hunter-gatherer speaking...surviving time... persisting against all odds.



Pic © Susan Bullough-Khare

Card Players

At a Nari Kuravar Gypsy Camp in Tirumalayvayal

Magic ring in amber shade
Held seven in a trance,
Arrack fumes and bidi smoke
Fusing touch and glance.

Bodies swayed, one slapped a thigh
Whispers rose and fell,
Glass beads rainbowed burnished skin,
She laughed and snapped the spell.

The laugh flew out and scattered,
Wandering with tattoos of light
Between pathways of pigeons
Frightened into flight.

Seven reclined and waited,
Fingering locks of hair
Till the laugh dissolved into silence
And arrack fumes smothered the air.

Hands fanned cards, magic returned,
Drunk with mystery and life,
Amber shade thickened like honey
Smeared over the blade of a knife.



FOUNDER EAI



Elephant Aid International. Working to improve elephant welfare.

Elephant Aid International (EAI) provides education and hands-on assistance to improve the lives of captive held elephants worldwide.

EAI projects include elephant foot care, mahout and elephant training and the creation of elephant care centers and retirement homes.

Our work is based on respect for elephants and the culture and traditions of the countries in which we work, appreciation for the men and women who live and work with elephants and the knowledge that small changes can make a huge difference.

EAI projects engage mahouts, local NGOs, tourist facilities, elephant welfare groups, researchers and government officials in joint efforts to:

- Improve living conditions for elephants in captivity.
- Offer alternatives to the use of chains to control and contain elephants.
- Eliminate abusive training by teaching mahouts humane methods of care.
- Facilitate the establishment of lifetime care centers (sanctuaries) across Asia.

In spite of a long history of coexistence, elephants and humans in Asia are now competing for limited land and food resources. How governments deal with the problem will determine whether elephants have a place in this rapidly developing world and what that place will be.

We cannot wait to see who will fix the pressing problems facing captive and wild elephants. EAI believes we must all be part of the solution - *one world, one elephant at a time. Please join us.*



A Carol Buckley Project

ELEPHANT AID INTERNATIONAL
One World. One Elephant at a Time



Changing the World One Elephant at a Time

Elephant Aid International (EAI) was established in 2010 with a single focus: to improve the welfare of elephants in captivity.

EAI is currently working in Southeast Asia, providing expertise, education and hands-on assistance in, as well as developing new models for, the care, training, management and rehabilitation of captive elephants.

Awe inspiring and highly revered by some religions, elephants have been declared a heritage animal in many of their native countries, yet they stand on the brink of extinction worldwide. The question is whether there is room for humans and elephants to coexist and share the limited resources of our planet.

Care centers: A lifetime home

EAI is developing innovative new models for care centers across Asia, which will provide captive elephants with a lifetime home that meets their biological and psychological needs.

EAI is currently in discussions with the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (WRRC) and Assam Elephant Foundation (AEF) in India, and the National Trust for Nature Conservation-Biodiversity Conservation Center (NTNC-BCC) in Nepal, to create model care centers that can be replicated throughout their respective countries.

Carol Buckley, EAI founder and president, originated the concept of lifetime care centers in 1995 when she established The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, 85 miles southwest of Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Care centers put elephants' physical, psychological and social needs first. Care centers:

- do not display elephants or use them for tourist and commercial purposes.
- do give elephants as much freedom as possible in a setting that mimics their natural environment.
- create the opportunity for captive elephants to live a life of autonomy in community with other elephants.

Shifting elephants from zoos, circuses, temples and other commercial venues, to care centers has the potential to create a paradigm shift in the care and welfare of elephants in captivity.



Carol Buckley teaching mahouts the benefit of proper foot care

Foot care and training: Fundamental to elephant welfare

For three consecutive years, EAI has worked closely with the [NTNC-BCC](#) in Sauraha, Chitwan, Nepal, on revolutionary elephant welfare projects.

EAI and NTNC-BCC have been providing foot care for and teaching more humane training methods to the nearly 200 elephants and their mahouts (trainers) in government camps, nongovernmental facilities and under private ownership, who are employed in the tourist trade.

EAI has collaborated on similar projects in Thailand at the Elephant Nature Park, Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary, Elephant's World and Wildlife Friends of Thailand.

Foot care and training are two fundamental ways to improve elephants' lives.

In captivity, elephants suffer from foot disease caused by unsanitary living conditions and lack of exercise, which result in overgrown pads and nails and osteomyelitis. Proper foot care helps to reduce the onset of osteomyelitis, an insidious, slow growing, and terminal bacterial infection responsible for 75 percent of adult elephant mortality in the United States. Proper foot care can actually save an elephant's life.

The role of mahouts

EAI recognizes the importance of mahout education in the effort to improve elephant welfare.

Tradition has a strong hold on elephant keeping practices in Asia. An important part of making positive change is teaching mahouts more humane methods of training and handling their elephants.

The traditional method of training elephants uses brute force and intimidation. But this brutal system is not required. Elephants are highly intelligent. They learn quickly and respond most favorably to positive reinforcement.



EAI collaborating partners Dr. Gairhe and technician Kiran, trim the tusks of a young male elephant

EAI teaches [Compassionate Elephant Care \(CEC\)](#), a progressive and time proven method of humane elephant care. By providing continuing education to mahouts, elephants will no longer experience physical injury and psychological trauma, resulting in a healthier, happier, more co-operative animal

Replacing chains with fences

This year EAI and NTNC-BCC embarked on a [pilot project](#) to create the first chain-free elephant corral in Nepal. Pioneered by EAI founder Carol Buckley nearly two decades ago, this humane approach to elephant care has proven highly effective in improving elephants' quality of life.

Chaining an elephant or enclosing land with a fence both accomplish the same goal of confining an elephant to a specific area, but the differences are profound.

Fences make good neighbor and, in the case of captive elephants, give them freedom from chains, freedom of movement and freedom of choice.

Elephants are built to move. Providing spacious confinement enables them to reclaim their nature by walking miles each day, passively engaging in the habitat, selecting, collecting and consuming hundreds of pounds of nutritious vegetation.

Perhaps most important, having ample space to roam helps heal an elephant's broken body and shattered spirit.

EAI is now in the process of [engaging a veterinarian](#) to oversee its work in Nepal. As the organization's welfare projects continue to grow, so too will the need for consistent, professional oversight.

By employing a Nepalese veterinarian, EAI will both provide an opportunity for a qualified professional to gain valuable experience in wildlife conservation and deepen its bonds with its collaborating partners in Nepal.



8 year old, captive born Sweetie Kali, being released into her new chain-free yard with the encouragement of her mahout

Education key to elephant welfare

EAI believes that knowledge is the key to improving elephant welfare. The use of captive elephants for commercial purposes may remain an accepted practice in Asian culture, but the prevalence of blatant abuse need not.

Tourism is one of the main drivers in the abuse and exploitation of captive elephants.

Tourists come to Asia wanting to take elephant rides at tourist attractions, resorts and in national parks; feed, pet and have a photo taken with an elephant; be a mahout for a day; see elephants in religious festivals and weddings; and visit them up close in zoos, circus, and temples

Tragically, they don't know where the elephants they ride, pet and admire come from or the tragic life they live in order to provide these services

They don't know that elephant families in the wild are slaughtered so their babies can be captured and sold---through the black market---into the tourist trade. They are ignorant of the illegal cross-border underground trafficking of elephants. And they have no idea that the elephants who give them a few minutes or hours of entertainment live in horribly deprived captive environments.

Education is key -- both to make the public aware of how they contribute to elephant abuse, and to teach mahouts humane training methods in place of traditionally cruel techniques.

The change EAI seeks is not easy – nor, in many cases is it popular. A shift in thinking, priorities and understanding of the role of humans in elephants' lives is vital.



Sweetie Kali in new chain-free corral - NTNC-BCC, Nepal

Saving elephants, saving ourselves

EAI believes that by considering the needs of another species we begin to create a space in the world for others, which in reality is humans' only chance at survival.

Elephants are a keystone species, an integral and essential part of the ecosystem. Take away this mega vertebrate and you chip away at the foundation of sustainable life. Bluntly put, if elephants vanish from the planet, so do we.

Widespread change results from the cumulative effect of many small changes multiplied. On the surface, EAI provides foot care, mahout training, shelter improvement and solutions for aging and needy elephants, all of which appreciably and immediately improve elephants' lives. But by using proven methods, developing innovative solutions and engaging the men and women who live and work with elephants, EAI goal is deeper systemic change, one elephant at a time.

Contribute to Sweetie Kali's chain free corral fund raiser -
<http://elephantaiddinternational.chipin.com/a-corral-for-sweetie-kali>





I'm Damned

a life less dead
there's no unrest around me
for freedom, peace or Stalin
no pain, no endeavor
no mates, no love
but pot, toxin and rubber
youth stained
the worldly-wise hail "greed is good"
the losers chant "hare Rama, hare Krishna"

capitalism will always find its way
war or stimulus, either way
red flag nation is the new destination
mergers and acquisitions
foreplay and orgasms
you bet
that's the game.
Warren Buffett, Bill Gates are best sellers
their quotes read widely
the Good Book pale, decays

i'm damned
dead burdened by installments
taxes and dry days
the Pathans
then, were well-behaved
now, the recovery agents knock me down
when i fail
NGOs and politicians wise up
after sun sets
Gandhi features on Mont Blanc
his props auction in the west
why did he give away his stuff?
here and there, anywhere...

MEDITATION



The greatest gift I have found to develop a greater intuitive experience is meditation. It was in my meditative experience one morning I was given a specific meditation I now use.

Many of you already meditate and if you do, that is wonderful! You know the value of creating this time for yourself and the incredible connection you find with your Higher Self and the Divine. For many there is also the experience of connecting and communicating with Angels or Guides.

Many people who have tried meditation and don't continue often think they are doing it wrong. Let me clarify some of the misconceptions. In meditation, you will not stop thinking. You have a central nervous system and therefore your brain will be thinking. What happens instead is you quiet your thoughts and rather than active thinking, you have what I call passive thinking. This means thoughts will enter and go by, but you just notice and don't actively follow them. You can then return to your quiet mind.

I have also found people have a hard time quieting their mind when they meditate in the middle of the day or in the evening. I like to meditate first thing in the morning before leaving my bed. This allows me to tap into the wisdom of my subconscious mind and my Higher Self that has guided my dreams. Meditating in the morning also allows me to become filled with the Light of the Divine first thing in the morning!

For those who have not began the practice of meditation, here is a simple way to begin. Here is the meditation I have been given.

Set a timer to begin. This will help you to lengthen the time of your meditation.

As in other meditations, sit with your spine straight. I like to place my hands on my lap with my thumb, index and middle finger touching, facing upward.

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and relax and adjust your body as needed.

Image a grounding cord such as a beam of light, a waterfall or a tree trunk going down from the base of your spine to the fiery center of Mother Earth. Release all the stress, tension and foreign energy down from the top of your head, down your face, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, upper and lower back, belly, pelvic area, hips, legs, ankles, and feet down your grounding cord.

CANDESS M CAMPBELL



Take another breath and bring your attention to your heart. Image a golden white Light spiraling in your heart. This is the spark of the Divine within you! This spiraling Light will emanate Light throughout your body and a few inches outside your body all around you.

Bring your attention to your third eye, which is between your eyes and a little above. Envision a water-blue color triangle at your third eye. Focus your attention through this triangle. Above your head about eight inches envision a burning ring of fire. This is the Eternal Flame of Isis. I share more about the triangle and the burning ring of fire when I teach intuitive reading.

Now you have the Golden Light Spiral, the Blue Triangle and the Fiery Ring of Fire set, bring your attention to your eyes. With your eyes still closed, move your eyes from right to left back and forth about 12 – 20 times. The pace is about one second for each set of from right to left and back. You can adjust this later to the best pace for yourself. This movement will be like pushing your eyes (with them closed) back and forth.

What you will notice is this takes you into a deeper into a meditative state. This increases with practice. Stop the eye movement and just be. Just notice what you experience. Stay in passive thinking and just experience and notice.

If you find you are thinking and lose the meditative sense, or you begin to come out of meditation, then use the eye movements back and forth to deepen again. This brings you back into a meditative state.

You may need to use the eye movement several times to deepen your meditation and this is fine. This takes practice, but if you commit to every day for a week, with a timer, this can change your life and increase not only your intuition, but your relationship with your Self and the Divine!

An added bonus, this eye movement is also therapeutic. It can assist in healing memories and traumas because moving your eyes from one side to the other activates the two hemispheres of the brain. When you begin your meditation you can set an intention of healing a specific situation, emotion, feeling, or thought.

I would love to hear your feedback. Contact me through my website. Like me on [Facebook \(1st profile\)](#) and/or friend me at [Facebook \(2nd profile\)](#).



Perceivability of evolution

The perceivability of evolution is a dance
Progression a relative assessment
Shimmery things tend to entice
Distraction a trade unto itself
Candles have but one end
Most plots unfold
Few stories live told
Acquisition empowers compilation
Dreams must flirt real
The trickle down effect
is highly susceptible to drought
Sustenance shuns dialogue from relative
Heritage precedes understanding
Projection supersedes decision
Ambition succumbs to fear
in the guise of responsibility
Who speaks when they listen
Which chords have been touched
Why does relation unfold
What remains of the when
that is becoming Now

Momentum

Momentum lies outside of a conceivable timeline
Term relevant fortitudes are building blocks of duration
Integration is growth of personal attainment intersecting
Universal relevance through progressions of pattern
A rose is long since capable of being in and of mere rosiness

Buck-ification

Impossibility is an ever-transforming condition relative to current intellect
Laws of nature limit only in as much of our applicable understanding
True acceleration will not create gaps but lead to metaphysical integration
Intuition is a universally genetic result of integration in resource productivity
Equal and opposite reactions cannot be synchronized to diminishing paradigms



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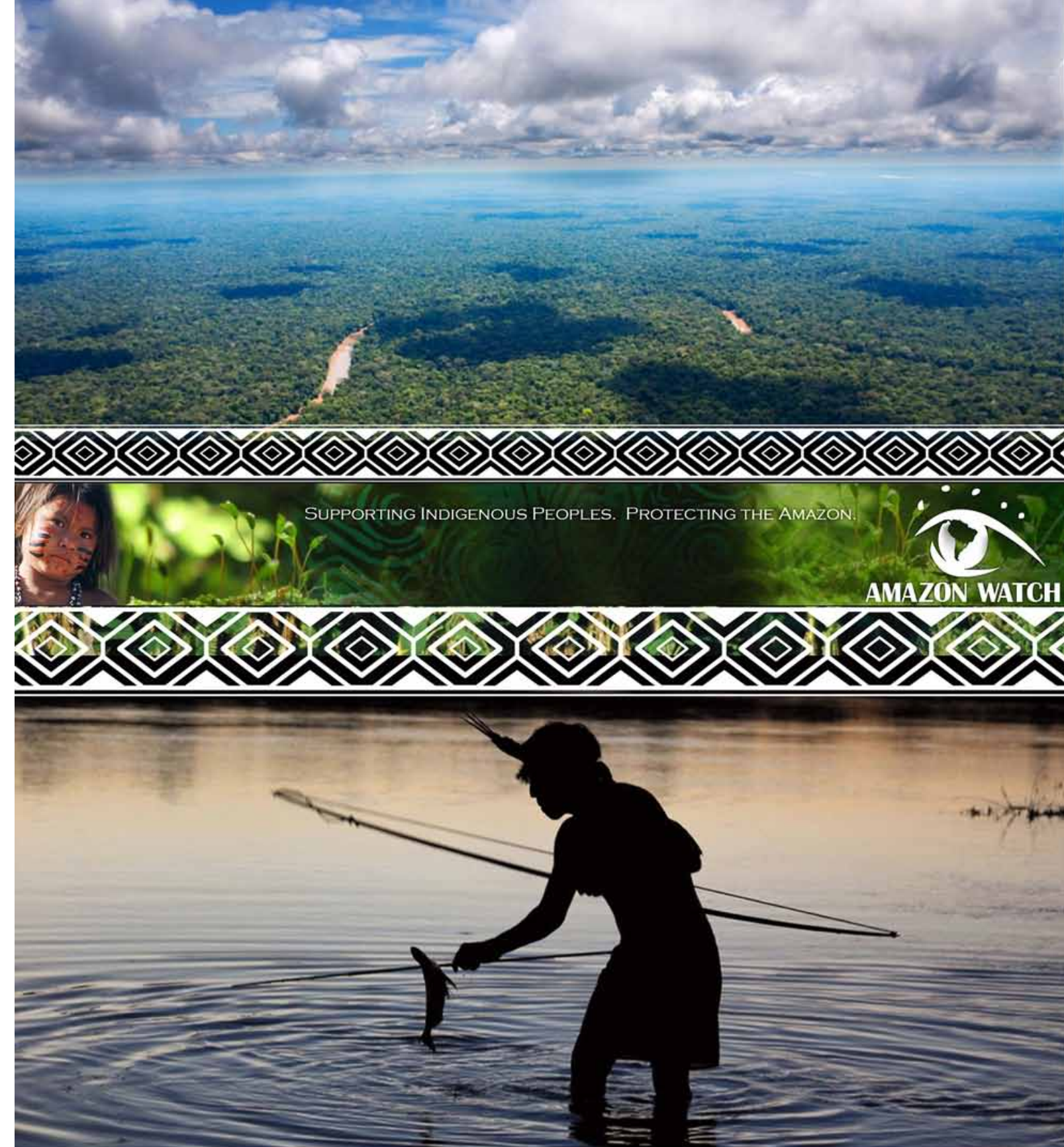
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Live encounters



**Our Lady's Grotto at Sacred Heart Church
Palasari, West Bali, Indonesia
Pic © Mark Ulyseas**

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