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Dr Namrata Goswami
Ethnic Conflicts in Northeast India

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The Film industry has been used and abused in the Wars. It has careened from one crisis to another, held together by Chinese whispers of Freedom of Speech (*whatever this means*). It continues to beat a path through life's wild environs booby trapped by PC guerrillas ready to raise the banner of emotive incontinence (*Political Correctness means a black person can call another - a nigger - but no one else can. If anyone else uses this term, read as non-black, the person is promptly branded a racist LINK. And Black people can call non-black people by obnoxious terms and this includes Asians, this is acceptable*).



Third Word War - Are we seeing the end of the Word as we know it?

The Word, for some time, was relegated to religion, its attendant caravan of believers and the ongoing existential conflict that is intrinsic to humankind's inability to comprehend the magnitude of celestial consciousness. The savage is still playing with fire and has yet to evolve to a higher being.

With the advent of the radio the Word became active and reactive. It did not come from a higher consciousness, it came from another human – groomed and channelled to present a sanitised reality with glimpses of the darker side of humanity to balance the perceived truth.

It was then that the First Word War (WW1) began in earnest.

The radio became the weapon for those seeking mass control over minds, hearts and to sell anything and everything. WW1 destroyed many savages and invented others. It was a primitive tool of mass mesmerisation that infiltrated millions of homes. Broadcasts began for a few hours a day and then morphed into a twenty four seven service.

But this war had its drawback - it had sound but no visuals thereby leaving the listeners to translate the Word into subjective images.

And so the Second Word War (WW2), television, began, taking over where Radio left off.

The first wave was a box transmitting black and white images, which was followed by colour. It corralled many a family at home and pulverised their brains with serials paid for from the sale of soap suds (*soap opera LINK*). WW2 offered a ringside seat (*in the comfort of one's home*) to the horrors of wars and other despicable acts of inhumanity. It was entertaining to watch people in far off lands being disembowelled by high incendiary while eating one's dinner (*Vietnam War LINK*). This was the beginning of the end of the Word as we knew it – a disconnection that metaphorically severed the senses of the savage.

The Third Word War (WW3) began with the invention of the internet. It has prodded the evolution in the revolution of communication – the hand held phone that is now a radio, TV and communication device like many scoops of different flavours of ice cream in one cone.

WW3 begins and ends at the fingertips of any soul on earth who desires to share his/her litany of urges and purges - From personal hygiene to preference of faith. The Word is out on the street and morphing as we speak into images that don't necessarily reflect reality but subjective summations of the self-importance of an individual.

The fallout in the lexicon has spurred the spin doctors peddling politicians and their schemes of hysterical inducements into cloning phrases and thereby inventing the truth. CNN, BBC, RT, NDTV, CNTV, FOX and others vie for a place in the firmament - The slick renditions of news presented from unique angles that defy the gravity of a situation, anchor folk uttering and sputtering the unpronounceable with the backdrop of moving pictures interspersed with other people talking to the drumbeat (*soundtrack*) of the WW3 to rev up the viewers' emotions. (*I know it's true 'cause I saw it on TV - John Fogerty LINK*).

And not to be outdone there are Word guerrillas who often hijack a phrase and give it another meaning or ambush the mainstream cavalry of intellects forcing them to accede to yet another addition to the lexicon. (*"As happy as a bastard on Father's Day" - very unhappy or miserable - Oxford Dictionary 2015 LINK*).

The Film industry has been used and abused in the Wars. It has careened from one crisis to another, held together by Chinese whispers of Freedom of Speech (*whatever this means*). It continues to beat a path through life's wild environs booby trapped by PC guerrillas ready to raise the banner of emotive incontinence (*Political Correctness means a black person can call another - a nigger - but no one else can. If anyone else uses this term, read as non-black, the person is promptly branded a racist LINK. And Black people can call non-black people by obnoxious terms and this includes Asians, this is acceptable*).

Fiddling with the Word has now reached schools and colleges where loving hands at home are busy rewriting and sanitising history of one's country in an insidious attempt to inculcate a sense of the exceptional in the citizens. (*Texas officials: Schools should teach that slavery was 'side issue' to Civil War - LINK*).

While we take shelter in our pathetic little words, the illegitimate offspring of the original Word (*How ISIS Is Waging a 'War of Ideas' Through Social Media LINK*) has embarked on a journey devoid of commas or full stops... just exclamations in the blood soaked earth - Beheadings, torture, rape and throwing gay people from rooftops (*Gay as in homosexual and not its original meaning - light hearted, carefree, bright coloured, showy*).

Will the Third Word war end in silence and a brave new Word become omnipresent? And what would the Word be like then? Perhaps our tongues will be tied and we shall evolve into the personification of the Word, where the Word is one and we are one with the Word.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Click on title of article to go to page



Ethnic Conflicts in Northeast India

Dr Namrata Goswami

Dr. Namrata Goswami is Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. She specializes in ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution and also has an interest in international relations theory and Great Power behavior. Dr. Goswami was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., a Visiting Fellow at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, La Trobe University Melbourne, Australia as well as Heidelberg University, Germany. She is a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Fellowship.



Introducing the IFRC/UNDP Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction

Camilla R Barker FRSA AFHEA

Barker is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Law, University of Oxford and is supervised by Catherine Redgwell, Chichele Professor of Public International Law and Fellow at All Souls College. She holds law degrees from Harvard Law School (LL.M., Fulbright Scholar) and the University of London (LL.B. (Hons)). Camilla's doctoral research involves humanitarian access in natural disasters, and she has been grateful for the opportunities to work on this as a Scholar-in-Residence at NYU Law summer of 2014, and as a member of the Policy Advice and Planning Section at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in New York summer 2015.



Creating Permanent Memories of Torture

Dr Cynthia Banham

Dr Banham is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Australian National University (ANU), in the Regulatory Institutions Network's Centre for International Governance and Justice. Her PhD, which she completed at the ANU, was entitled "The Responses of Liberal Democracies to the Torture of Citizens: A Comparative Study". She is a former foreign affairs and defence correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald, and spent almost a decade working in the Canberra Press Gallery. Cynthia also has a Masters of International Affairs from the ANU and was a Visiting Fellow/Journalist in Residence in the ANU's International Relations Department. She is a lawyer, and previously worked as a solicitor.



Listen To The Authentic Voice Of The People

David Morgan

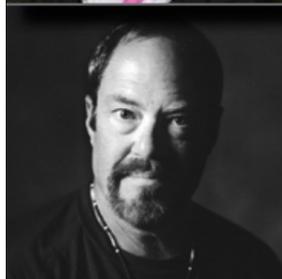
David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from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



House of Lords Reform: Keeping the Expertise

Daniel Holt LL.B (Hons), Trustee of Disability Rights UK

Daniel Holt LL.B (Hons) is a postgraduate student at the Centre for Commercial Legal Studies, University of London. His main interests lie in equality and human rights, particularly the UK's Human Rights Act, the equal rights of all citizens and equal opportunity for disabled people. He also concerns himself with constitutional law, administrative law, public law, mental health law, European Union rights, family law and access to justice.



The Native American Sports Legend, Jim Thorpe

John Thorpe, grandson of Jim Thorpe, on the controversy surrounding the final resting place of his grandfather.

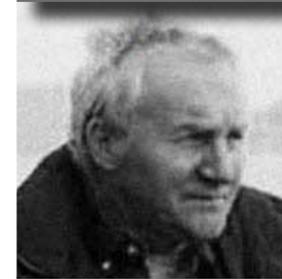
John Thorpe was born in Inglewood, NJ and has been living in Lake Tahoe for the past 25 years. He has been a DJ most of his life. His interest in this line of work started after going to work with his father, who was a DJ at WNYC. He is now a self-employed DJ dealing primarily with weddings in South Lake Tahoe, CA. He can be found at <http://highsierrasounds.com/>



Pomegranates and Grapes

Dr Nuray Aykin

Aykin was born in 1957 in Tarsus, Turkey. She came to the United States in 1981 to pursue her doctorate in Industrial Engineering. She is the author of Pomegranates and Grapes: Landscapes from My Childhood, in which she takes her son on a wonderful journey through Turkey and the United States. She currently runs a blog about Turkey. She lives in Keyport, NJ with her husband. She loves to travel around the world, but Turkey is always her destination twice a year. www.pomegranatesandgrapes.com www.amazon.com



Father & Son

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published 7 poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection Ripple Effect/Arlen House; children's story, Michel the Merman, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ). He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. www.terry-mcdonagh.com



The Love of Complete Contempt

Natalie Wood

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



Amit Dasgupta author of Lessons From Ruslana

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.randhirkhare.in



Cultivating Kabir

Aryaa Naik

Aryaa is currently the Head, Creatives at Gyaan Adab Centre. Her educational qualifications include Bachelors in Philosophy from Ferguson College, Pune, Post Graduate diploma in Social Communications Media from Sophia College, Mumbai and Masters in Gender, Culture and Development Studies from the University of Pune. Her experience includes script writing and feature writing for publications such as Times of India, Femina, Life 365 and Maharashtra Herald. www.gyaanadab.org



The Child Archetype

Dr Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is the #1 Best-selling author of *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. She is a Blogger, Intuitive Success Coach and International Psychic Medium. She has practiced as a mental health and chemical dependency counselor for over 30 years. www.12weekstoselfhealing.com

Dr Namrata Goswami's latest book published by Routledge, London and New York, 2015 is on *Indian National Security and Counterinsurgency: The Use of Force Vs. Non Violent Response* [LINK](#) in which she explores the contrasting influence of Kautilya, India's classical realist thinker vis-a-vis Gandhi's prohibition on a violent response. She was co-lead and editor of two IDSA sponsored works on long-term trends, *Imagining Asia in 2030* [LINK](#), and *Asia 2030 The Unfolding Future* [LINK](#).



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ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN NORTHEAST INDIA



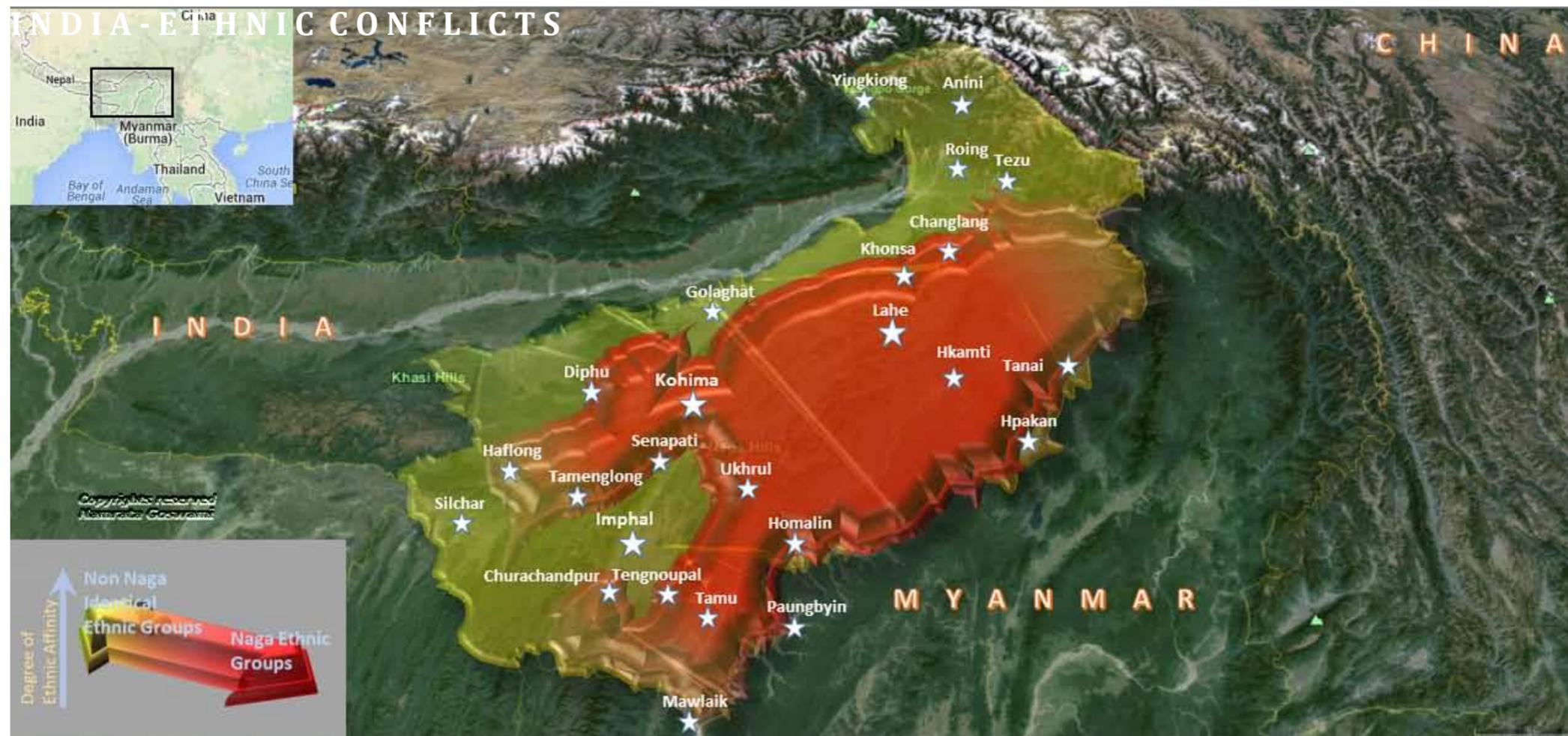
A photo of Naga taken in the 1870s - "Early nagas" by Original uploader Acavnala at en.wikipedia - [LINK](#)

Northeast India is one of the most picturesque regions of India. Any traveler to the region is taken in by the beauty of the landscape with the rolling hills, and rivers, the flora and fauna, and the myriad cultures that inhabit it. For long, this region witnessed migrations from across Southeast and East Asia. In 1228, the Ahoms, tracing their origin to the Tai race in Yunnan and Thailand arrived at the borders of Assam via Burma. They took over land with their superior fighting skills and soon came to dominate most of Assam for nearly 600 years. Interestingly, the Ahoms intermarried with local women and established a culture of plurality, adoption of local customs and traditions, and a symbiotic way of life.

In 1671, one of the most revered generals of the Ahom kingdom, Lachit Barphukan defeated the Mughals in their attempt to coercively integrate Assam into the Mughal Empire thereby ensuring that these lands maintained their way of life. It was only in 1826 after the Ahoms were defeated by the Burmese that the British decided to intervene, defeated the Burmese, and took over control of Assam under the provisions of the Treaty of Yandaboo. The British then sent numerous expeditions into the hills of Assam including areas inhabited by the Nagas, the Meiteis, the Thadous, etc.

Steadily, they established their administration, albeit in a minimal fashion in the hill areas. The British's primary business in Assam was tea. In this, they faced difficulties especially from the Naga raids that disturbed the lucrative nature of the business. In order to put an end to it, they established special legislation like the 1873 Inner Line Regulation Act which restricted the movement of people from the plains to the hills and vice versa. In 1880, the Excluded Areas Act was passed which categorized the hill areas as separate from the plains and kept them isolated and excluded from the rest of the country. When the British left India in 1947, Assam along with its hill areas were transferred to the newly established modern Indian state. The meeting of the modern state system based on territorial integrity and sovereignty and the ethnic communities based on community connections across the borders led to two kinds of anxieties; the anxiety of ethnic communities was that a predatory state will take away their land and subjugate their unique culture and tradition; the anxiety of the state which viewed these areas as frontier zones bordering China, Bhutan, Bangladesh (since 1971) and Burma (now called Myanmar) was that they were vulnerable to external infiltration and influence and hence in need of special protection. As a result, these areas were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs until 1972 unlike the usual practice of Ministry of Home jurisdiction over states in India.

It was the Nagas who first resisted inclusion within the future Indian Union. In 1918, the Naga Club was established by 20 Naga members of the French Labour Corp who after experiencing the European battlefield came home awakened to their sense of unique identity and history. In 1929, the Club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission (the Statutory Simon Commission was a group of seven British Members of Parliament sent to British India to study constitutional reform) in which they asserted that the Nagas and the rest of India have nothing in common between them. Hence, the Nagas should be left alone to their ancient ways of governance based on village autonomy. In 1946, the Naga Club was succeeded by the Naga National Council (NNC) led by Angami Zhapu Phizo. Phizo contacted Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army (INA) in Burma with the hope of obtaining the latter's help to overthrow British rule from Naga areas. The INA or Azad Hind Force was an armed force formed in 1942 by Bose to secure Indian independence with the help of Imperial Japan during the Second World War. Interestingly, when the Japanese forces advanced towards Kohima in 1944, Phizo simultaneously advanced to Kohima with a group of armed Naga men in an attempt to liberate Naga areas from British rule.



Above : Figure - Map of Nagalim. Source and copyright Namrata Goswami. Right: Dima Halam Daogah Camp, Dhansiripar, Karbi Anglong, Assam. Photograph © Namrata Goswami

It was during this time that Phizo developed his skills in guerrilla warfare, which he later imparted to NNC members. On June 27-28, 1947 an agreement was signed between the NNC and then Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari, in which the Nagas' right to develop themselves freely was recognized. However, Clause 9 of the agreement created divisions as it stated that after a period of 10 years the NNC will be asked whether the agreement be extended or a new agreement arrived at. The NNC interpreted this to mean the attainment of sovereignty by the Nagas whereas the Government of India interpreted it as the signing of a new arrangement within the Indian Union. On August 14, 1947, Phizo, along with eight other Naga leaders declared Naga independence. The 1950s to the mid-1990s was a turbulent period with insurgency and counterinsurgency resulting in civilian deaths. While efforts were made to resolve the conflict with the grant of Nagaland state in 1963, and the signing of ceasefires with subsequent Naga armed groups like the National Socialist Council of Nagalim—NSCN (IM) and NSCN (Khaplang), the demand for sovereignty and territorial integration of Naga inhabited areas were the major sticking points in the negotiations.

The NSCN (I-M)' goal of an independent 'Greater Nagaland' encompasses large swathes of contiguous territory inhabited by both Naga and non-Naga ethnic groups in India and Myanmar (See Figure above). In Myanmar, major chunks of claimed areas have mixed Naga and other ethnic groups populations. Tanai Township in Kachin State have several Naga villages along with the Kachins. Even Khampti Township, which was earlier headquarters of the 'Burma Naga Hills District,' have a sizeable minority of Nagas living with Bamar, Shans, Chinese and Indians. Other 'Naga towns' like *Homalin*, inhabited by fewer Nagas, are dominated by Bamar, Shans, Chin, Chinese and Indians. The NSCN (I-M) has not been active in Myanmar to press their claims of *Nagalim* after a declared 'unilateral ceasefire' with the Myanmar government.

The *Nagalim* territorial claims in India include large strips of territory peripheral to Naga inhabited areas, which have minuscule Naga populations as in Assam's Cachar, Nagaon, Golaghat, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts. In Dima Hasao (formerly North Cachar Hills) district, Nagas are a sizeable

minority and a small minority in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Arunachal Pradesh's Lohit, Anjaw, Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley and Upper Siang districts are inhabited by ethnic groups such as the Adi, Mishmi, Zekhring, Khampti, Deori, Monpa, Memba, Tai Ahom, Singpho, Chakma and Tibetans, with distinctive identities bearing no affiliation to Naga ethnicity. The NSCN (I-M) however, has been actively engaged in endeavours to expand its influence to all Naga inhabited areas of India as well as mentoring other non-Naga insurgencies of northeast India in a sort of titular 'mother of all insurgencies' role. The overlapping demands for territory with other ethnic groups have led to the spurge of ethnic based insurgencies in other areas as well in an effort to question the Nagalim demand and stake their own claims. For instance, the Dimasa inhabited areas of Assam which are included in the *Nagalim* map have seen the rise of armed groups like the Dimasa National Security Force (DNSF) and the Dima-Halam Daogah (DHD). The Karbi inhabited areas in Assam have seen the armed group, the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS).

Moreover, Manipur, in which the *Nagalim* map claims four of its hill districts, have demonstrated the fiercest resistance of all, to the idea of Nagalim. In 2001, when the Government of India extended the cease-fire with the NSCN (IM) to the hill districts of Manipur, huge protests broke out in the capital city Imphal with the state assembly building being burnt down that resulted in the Government retracting its decision. Meiteis feared that lurking in the cease-fire extension was a legitimization of the Nagalim idea. Manipur has its own set of ethnic insurgencies. In 1964, the United National Liberation Front of Manipur (UNLF) was formed with the political demand for a separate Manipur state outside of India. The UNLF questioned the ascension of Manipur to India as it asserted that the 'instrument of ascension' signed by the Manipur king was under duress. In 1978, an even more radical organization based on a socialist/communist ideology, the Peoples' Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) and its political wing, the Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF) was formed. Both these two armed groups have not entered ceasefires with the Government of India. The Kukis, an important ethnicity in Manipur and across the border in Myanmar have their own ethnically based armed groups, the Kuki National Front (KNF) and the Kuki National Army (KNA).



Above: Peace Festival: Dhansiripar, Karbi Anglong, Assam. Right: Flags of Peace: Taken in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. Photographs © Namrata Goswami

In a landscape interspersed by ethnic distrust between the Meities and the Nagas, the Kukis and the Nagas, further entrenched by the ethnically slanted armed groups, the common people end up insecure and in the dire need of self-preservation. It does not help matters much that the state forces are distrusted as well and instead of offering security to the people, they end up adding to the situation of insecurity.

During my field research in Manipur, most people related to me that they do not trust state forces and are often mistreated especially by the security forces. This, they stated, assaulted their sense of dignity. Sadly enough, they did not trust their own armed groups beyond a point due to the networks of extortions that they ran. However, some believed that they gave resources to the armed groups in the hope that their needs and aspirations will be secured in an atmosphere of anarchy and weak governing institutions.

The most searching interviews that I conducted were in Jeme (Naga) villages in Assam. When I visited some villages in the insurgency affected areas of Assam-Nagaland border, villagers expressed their anxiety and need for self-preservation given that some of their village youths were cadres of armed groups. One village elder told me in anguish that 'if I talk to the army, the insurgents threaten me with death; and if I stay silent for fear of being killed by the insurgents, the army suspects me of being hand in glove with the insurgents; tell me, what can I do in this situation'. This situation reveals that perhaps it is imperative for states to ensure that the monopoly of legitimate organized violence lay with the state for the urgent need of accountability. Otherwise, parallel government structures established by armed groups which includes practices like coercively taking money in the name of 'taxes for the cause' from local people creates deep seated anxieties.

Assam, one of the key states in the Northeast, has had its own experience with armed conflicts. It started in 1979 when the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was formed as an armed movement to assert for Assam's sovereignty based on identity and history.

ULFA's main contention was that Assam's status should be reverted back to its pre-Yandaboo treaty days when it was independent of British rule. ULFA also argued that Assam's main resources like tea and oil were being exported to other parts of India, and that the revenues from the trade were not benefitting Assam. ULFA was popular during the 1970s and 1990s but lost much of its appeal after a spate of kidnappings as well as its killing of renowned civil society activist, Sanjoy Ghosh at Majuli, Assam's largest river island. Ghosh had stumbled upon ULFA's illegal collaboration with construction networks by which its leaders were making huge amounts of money for their own personal benefit in the name of revolution.

Coming to the conflict resolution framework that the Indian state has utilized vis-à-vis armed conflicts, the state responded with a massive use of force against the Naga insurgency in the beginning years which resulted in civil deaths and human rights violations. This was similar in its responses to armed conflicts in Assam with massive deployment of security personnel under Operations Rhino 1 and Rhino 2 in the 1990s. However, over the years, a more proportionate response has been the practice coupled with efforts at peace negotiations. Currently, there are negotiations ongoing with one faction of the ULFA led by Arabinda Rajkhowa, for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, after the leaders were arrested in the Assam-Bangladesh border. The flip side to these negotiations is that one of the main ULFA leaders, Paresh Barua is in Myanmar and is against the talks. While he cannot do much from Myanmar besides carrying out a few attacks on security forces, armed conflicts where all leaders are not part of the peace deal reemerge on some later date as was seen from the experience of the Naga conflict. On August 03, 2015, a framework agreement was signed between the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) for a peaceful dialogue to resolution.

Most of the ethnic conflicts in Northeast India are based on a political ideology that demands greater representation of an ethnic group in terms of politics, and such demands range from greater autonomy within India to complete independence. Moreover, the issues that have ignited conflicts are related to emotions and sense of self-worth, and to notions of dignity.



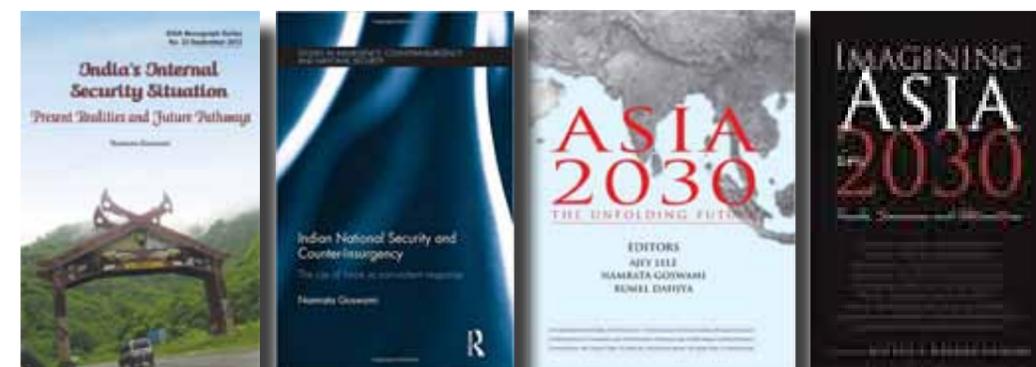
Above: Hornbill Festival. Right: Morung of Pochury Tribe. Photographs of Nagaland courtesy <http://www.mapsofindia.com/nagaland/>

Inter-ethnic conflicts have also been fueled by a deep seated fear of loss of ancestral land. The weakness of democratic Indian institutions and flawed representative structures which are based on a majoritarian bias have left minority ethnic communities feeling insecure. For example, Kukis who are part of the Nagalim map fear that in case an ethnically slanted future Nagalim in which their villages may be included, is formed, their lot may not be forwarded in a fair manner. The example of the present Bodo Territorial Council in Assam is pertinent as this ethnically slanted council has failed to account for the fears and anxieties of the minorities living there.

The complexity of these armed conflicts, the terse and, at the same time, close relations that they enjoy with their social networks perhaps makes a strong case for exploring the idea of peace negotiations with these groups. Peace negotiations, if rightly implemented as a framework of both managing and resolving the differences that led to conflict, offer the promise of ending violent ethnic conflicts of this nature. However, given the distrust that exists between the State, the armed actors and the societies they represent, peace processes in the Northeast have never been easy and have been rather dysfunctional at times. It is pertinent that the first step to be adopted in this context is to establish the human connection between the two (the State and the armed actor), especially given the fact that the asymmetry of power between the state and the ethnic armed actor is rather stark. It is critical that State representatives are seen as legitimate and willing to go beyond transactional hard core bargaining to more transformational conflict resolution. Transformational conflict resolution is a process that not only conducts negotiations but also, at the same time, is sensitive to the root causes that led to the conflict. It is rather important to acknowledge that conflicts do not occur only because there are material interests or goods to be gained but also because there is a fundamental mismatch between what a State stands for and what the conflicting group aspires as its future. In a conflict situation, the category of 'friend' and 'enemy' takes centre-stage with identities other than ones' own, relegated to the background or disregarded, especially in areas where the conflict is wrapped around notions of ethnic identity. As a result, the language used to describe the other is negative and the worldviews are narrow and parochial.

These categories are very much entrenched in Northeast India where there are multiple competing groups claiming to represent people's aspirations and their politics. Since in conflict situation, people's basest needs to be guaranteed are their physical safety and survival, it makes them focus on how the public sphere mostly constituted by an elite core addresses these issues. In these situations, the needs and aspirations of the other side, the perceived enemy or adversary, is not given any weightage and is mostly absent from the dominant public sphere discourse. The aim should be to deeply understand and study the narratives that led to the conflicts, and a peace process should ideally engage with such issues first: engaging with preferences and existing frameworks that offer justifications for a particular status quo of violence, and how these preferences and frameworks might neither be optimal nor the only way through which a conflict situation can be understood. It is also critical to realize that in a protracted conflict situation, the emergence of new frames of reference may take time and effort as the situation is deeply mired in negativity, anxieties and fears. Thereby, patience on either side is the key.

Books published by Dr Namrata Goswami. Click on any image below for link to respective website - Amazon and IDSA.





CAMILLA R BARKER FRSA AFHEA

INTRODUCING THE IFRC/UNDP CHECKLIST ON LAW AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Flooding in Thailand in 2011 - An SH-60F Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) 14, flies around the Bangkok area with members of the humanitarian assessment survey team and the Royal Thai Armed Forces to assess the damage caused by flooding. Photograph [LINK](#)

The [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC) has warned that natural disasters are increasing worldwide. This is attributed to the increase not only in the frequency and severity of what we might term ‘abnormal’ meteorological events, but also in the number of populations living in precarious situations. International migration, whatever its cause, has immediate and long-term negative impacts on individuals, families, communities, and States. It is no surprise, therefore, that we are witnessing collective calls for better disaster legislation in initiatives such as the 2005 [Hyogo Framework for Action](#) (recognised by 168 UN Member States) and the 2015 [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). In response to those calls, governments across the globe are developing new domestic legislation at a relatively impressive pace. Whilst this increase in legislative activity is undoubtedly welcome considering the desperate need for greater regulation in this area, close attention should be paid to the manner in which that legislation is being developed in order to ensure that the regulation is actually effective. What is the best approach? How should priorities be identified? What works and what does not? These and other questions have been addressed by a joint project of the IFRC and the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), with their main product being the [Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (hereinafter ‘the Checklist’). This article explores why States legislate for disaster risk reduction and introduces the Checklist as an important part of international efforts in that area.

Why legislate for disaster risk reduction?

Law plays a critical role in reducing the risks that are posed by natural disasters. According to the IFRC, disaster risk reduction, also known as risk mitigation, involves activities that limit the adverse impacts of natural hazards in advance of the disaster occurring, which might include requiring new buildings to be more disaster resistant, ensuring that early warning systems are in place to notify the population of potential risks, creating specialist bodies to coordinate and manage disasters when they happen, and training local emergency authorities in disaster-related services. This legislation is crucially important, as States – no matter how well developed – often find their capacities overwhelmed when a disaster strikes. In 2005, for example, the United States – one of the world’s most developed countries according to the [Human Development Index](#) – found itself over-stretched in dealing with [Hurricane Katrina](#) and the \$100 billion worth of direct damage it caused. The consequence of poor legislation in this area, then, is the poor overall management of disasters, which in turn contributes to higher numbers of fatalities, more extensive damage, a weakened ability to rebuild, and more.

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The Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction

In 2012, the IFRC and the UNDP began work on a project to ‘research, compare and consult on the efforts of various countries to strengthen how their laws support the reduction of disaster risks, particularly at the community level.’ (see [here](#)). The project had two intended products: (1) a multi-country report examining the disaster risk reduction legislation in thirty-one countries, and (2) a ten point Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction. The multi-country report was launched in June 2014, and the Checklist in March 2015. The overall aim of the project is to provide States with practical guidance on legislating for disaster risk reduction.

The Checklist aims to help States identify strengths in their laws, areas where greater focus is needed on implementation, and whether drafting or revising might be needed. It does so by asking the following ten questions:

1. Do you have a dedicated law for disaster risk management that prioritises risk reduction and is tailored to your country context?
2. Do your laws establish clear roles and responsibilities related to risk reduction for all relevant institutions from national to local level?
3. Do your key sectoral laws incorporate provisions to increase safety and reduce vulnerability?
4. Do your laws ensure that sufficient resources are budgeted for disaster risk reduction?
5. Do your laws establish clear procedures and responsibilities for risk assessments and ensure risk information is considered in development processes?
6. Do your laws establish clear procedures and responsibilities for early warning?
7. Do your laws require education, training and awareness-raising to promote a whole-of-society approach to disaster risk reduction?

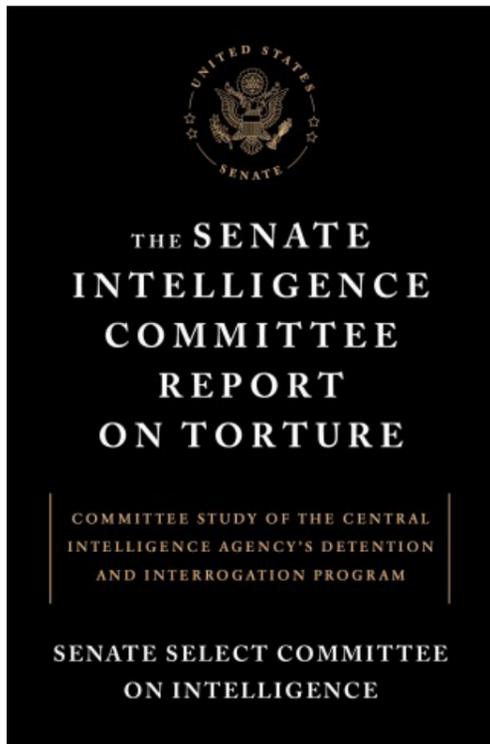
The Checklist has now been available to States for around five months. It is clearly in its infancy and only time will tell if it is an effective tool for lawmakers working in this area. That being said, the Checklist is no doubt promising in its current form: it encourages a holistic approach to disaster risk reduction and legislative planning; it uses expert research to show issues and trends affecting numerous countries, hence it promotes reliable case-based approaches to regulation; and it advocates active strategising to ensure risk mitigation occurs earlier in the disaster cycle.

8. Do your laws ensure the engagement of civil society, the private sector, scientific institutions and communities in risk reduction decisions and activities?
9. Do your laws adequately address gender considerations and the special needs of particularly vulnerable categories of persons?
10. Do your laws include adequate mechanisms to ensure that responsibilities are fulfilled and rights are protected?

When answering each of these questions, lawmakers are provided with an explanation of why the question is important, a list of other guiding questions, and suggestions of laws and regulations to check, for example: the State’s constitution; civil defence laws; criminal laws; tort laws; and human rights. Importantly, the Checklist also provides guidance on follow-up actions so that lawmakers know what to do next if they find their State’s legislation lacking in a particular area.

Conclusion

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DR CYNTHIA BANHAM, CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE CREATING PERMANENT MEMORIES OF TORTURE

Since Christmas 2014, it's been possible to buy a book version of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program on global book selling websites like Book Depository and Amazon.[1] The book version of the "torture report," as it's commonly known, was published by independent New York publisher Melville House. [According to media accounts](#), it took 72 hours and the services of a dozen employees and a team of volunteers to transform the torture report into a properly formatted manuscript ready to send to the printers for publication as a paperback and ebook. Before it was a book, the torture report was (and still is) available as a PDF document that can be freely downloaded from the Internet.

The decision to publish a book version of the report prompted questions for me about what this move meant for accountability for state torture and, in particular, the different kinds of accountability that are possible. The torture report is the result of a comprehensive act of political accountability by the US Congress for a post-9.11 program that breached international human rights laws and principles and damaged the US's reputation in this area. Given this, what – if anything – could the book version of the torture report achieve for accountability that the original Committee report could not?

The book version is easier to read than the poor-quality, low-resolution Internet version released by the Committee. The ebook is also searchable, [unlike the original PDF](#). But it was a comment in a New Yorker piece about Melville House co-founder and co-publisher Dennis Johnson that I found most interesting. The author of the piece noted Johnson's faith in the "[power of the book as a physical object](#)". Johnson [described](#) the torture report as "probably the most important government document of our generation". He said he feared it would "fade quickly from the news cycle," and that publishing it was an attempt [to ensure the torture report reached the widest possible audience](#).

The act of publishing can thus be seen as an attempt by the citizenry to increase the report's impact beyond what the Committee could achieve. It is about making the report permanent, by giving it physical form. Beyond this, I wondered, could publishing the book also be viewed as an attempt by citizens to accept some responsibility for what occurred in their name after 9.11?

The US government released the torture report on 9 December 2014, following a protracted battle to make it public. The Committee's chairman, Democrats Senator Dianne Feinstein, had to fight both the CIA and the Obama White House for the release of the declassified 528-page document, which is just the executive summary of a report that runs to 6,700 pages. The rest of the report is still classified.

I recently read every page of the executive summary, including the 2,725 footnotes typed in tiny, headache-inducing script. The torture report makes for occasionally horrific, sometimes astonishing, and often mind-numbingly repetitive reading.

The torture of Abu Zubaydah, a "high-value detainee," is particularly disturbing, and worth singling out as an illustration of the depravity documented in the report. Zubaydah, who is today being held in indefinite detention at Guantánamo Bay, was subject to the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques from 4 to 23 August 2002 on a "near 24-hour-per-day basis".[2] It began after he had spent 47 days in isolation, a circumstance itself at odds with the "ticking time-bomb" scenario often invoked by liberals after 9.11 to justify torture).

According to the torture report, security personnel entered his cell, shackled and hooded a naked Zubaydah and, without asking him any questions, placed a rolled towel around his neck as a collar, backed him up against a wall, removed his hood and forced him to watch while a coffin-like box was brought into his cell. For the next 17 days Zubaydah was subjected to "walling, attention grasps, slapping, facial hold, stress positions, cramped confinement, white noise and sleep deprivation," along with waterboarding two to four times a day.[3] When Zubaydah was left alone, he was "placed in a stress position, left on the waterboard with a cloth over his face or locked in one of two confinement boxes". In all, Zubaydah spent 266 hours in a large coffin-like box, and 29 hours in a smaller one.

Zubaydah's utter domination and dehumanisation was laid out graphically in this paragraph:

DETENTION SITE GREEN cables describe Abu Zubaydah as 'compliant,' informing CIA Headquarters that when the interrogator 'raised his eyebrow, without instructions,' Abu Zubaydah 'slowly walked on his own to the water table and sat down.' When the interrogator 'snapped his fingers twice,' Abu Zubaydah would lie flat on the waterboard.[4]

The torture report makes clear that Zubaydah never provided the information for which the CIA program was approved. Yet a subsequent cable from his detention site determined his interrogation was a success and should be used as a template for future interrogations of detainees. This was not because the brutal techniques produced useful information, but rather "because their use confirmed that Abu Zubaydah did not possess the intelligence that CIA Headquarters had assessed" him to have.[5]

Despite the horrors uncovered in the torture report, the Obama Administration has refused, for political reasons, to pursue prosecutions of the officials who ordered the torture or the agents who carried it out. President Barack Obama made his position clear in 2009, saying “nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past”.

It is a mind-boggling, medieval justification for the use of torture. By such reasoning, “high-value” detainees should be tortured to prove they don’t possess critical information about terrorist threats. Most of the torture report is concerned with setting out in great detail the ineffectiveness and mismanagement of the CIA’s program. The report is laden with examples of the CIA’s omissions and misrepresentations about the value of the intelligence it was getting from using “enhanced interrogation techniques” on detainees. “The information provided by the CIA was inaccurate,” is an often-repeated refrain throughout the report.

Some of the CIA’s misrepresentations, for example, formed the basis for claims made by President George W Bush in his 2006 speech defending the agency’s detention and interrogation program. [6] The speech, based on CIA information, included the claim that the brutal CIA interrogation of Zubaydah led to the capture of a key al Qaeda operative, Ramzi bin al-Shibh. This was a claim the Committee found to be completely unsupported by the CIA’s records. The operative in question was actually captured unexpectedly during raids conducted by Pakistani authorities targeting another individual. It is one example of many such fabrications. Despite the horrors uncovered in the torture report, the Obama Administration has refused, for political reasons, to pursue prosecutions of the officials who ordered the torture or the agents who carried it out. President Barack Obama made his position clear in 2009, saying “nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past”. Which brings me back to Melville House’s book.

The torture report is [not the first time a US government report has been published as a book](#). The 9/11 Commission Report was published as a book (by WW Norton) as was the Starr Report on President Bill Clinton’s relationship with Monica Lewinsky (by PublicAffairs Books). The difference in the case of the torture report was that the government did not give preferential treatment to any particular publisher, as [previously occurred](#). This was said to make publication of the torture report less attractive to mainstream publishers. Melville House did not have to pay for the rights to publish the torture report, since it was a public document. The publisher claimed the decision to publish was a “great” financial risk for the company (though Melville House published [an initial 50,000 copies of the paperback version, which sold immediately](#)). Putting aside financial considerations, Johnson indicated his main purpose for publishing [was a civic-minded one](#): “We are a mission-driven company, and we want people to read this because we think it’s important for our democracy”.

James Booth writes about the work of “memory-justice” and the relationship between doing justice and memory work.[7] In seeking to act on the past by making it present in a morally grounded manner, he argues, citizens are doing the work of justice. Acting on the past “attempts to overcome the void or absence created by the crime by abolishing, after a fashion, the moral indifference inherent in the irreversibility of time, which the passage of time and often human effort seem to seal”.[8]

Civil society’s various members – lawyers, media, and human rights NGOs – have done a great deal in the years since 11 September 2001 to constrain the US government from breaching human rights in its response to the terrorist attacks. Groups like the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and reporters from The Washington Post have brought litigation in the US Supreme Court and exposed secret illegal detention practices that have forced the US government to reign in its behaviour on a number of fronts.

In the absence of executive accountability, the publication of the torture report as a book is doing socially active memory work. The act of publication can be viewed as performing the work of memory-justice, in creating a permanent memory of past human rights injustices, in a more durable form than a document on the Internet that may become harder to track down in the years to come. It is putting the past into circulation, building a counter-public sphere to the one whose participants would rather ignore or forget things that are painful.[9]

Civil society’s various members – lawyers, media, and human rights NGOs – have done a great deal in the years since 11 September 2001 to constrain the US government from breaching human rights in its response to the terrorist attacks. Groups like the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and reporters from The Washington Post have brought litigation in the US Supreme Court and exposed secret illegal detention practices that have forced the US government to reign in its behaviour on a number of fronts. The torture report as a book can be seen as a conscious act by civil society – by the publishers and those who buy the book – to not allow the report to fade from the community’s consciousness, to fight collective amnesia where official accountability is lacking.[10] The book entrenches the efforts of the Committee to ensure torture – and specifically its use after 9.11 – is not allowed to remain something abstract, something that may have occurred, but is so awful to contemplate that perhaps in decades to come it will be too hard to believe, leaving the door open to recidivism.

Is there also, perhaps, an owning by the citizenry of the crime? Could this represent a moment where the citizenry, in whose names the torture was carried out – to make them safe – restores integrity to itself by, as Booth theorised, condemning a deviation from its own core values?[11] In making sure people do not forget how detainees were treated in the war on terror, is there not some sort of community healing occurring here as well? More than just acknowledging that wrong has occurred, I wonder whether the act of publishing and buying this ‘Book of Torture’ (as The Atlantic dubbed it) represents [a kind of restorative act on the part of the public](#). We let this happen, but we will not let it happen again.

[1] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, The Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Torture: Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program (Melville House, 2014).

[2] Ibid., 51.

[3] Ibid., 52.

[4] Ibid., 53.

[5] Ibid., 55.

[6] Ibid., 236-237.

[7] W James Booth, Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity and Justice (Cornell University Press, 2006) 116-117.

[8] Ibid., 115.

[9] Michael Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization (Stanford University Press, 2009) 221.

[10] Joachim J Savelsberg and Ryan D King, ‘Law and Collective Memory’ (2007) 3 Annual Review of Law and Social Science 189, 200.

[11] Booth, above note 17, 127.



DAVID MORGAN

LISTEN TO THE AUTHENTIC VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

The authentic voice of the people can be heard in social movements all over the world and many of these are led by young people as in past times. It is the rise of these movements that gives real hope that genuine democracy can be revived in the future after decades of disenchantment fostered by neoliberalism and the political elite who have ruled the world and made such a mess of it.

Society has shifted over many generations from a gradual "process of civilisation" (Norbert Elias) to a "process of barbarisation" (Eric Hobsbawm). It is time to shift it back towards civilisation.

In a previous article, I reflected on the need for humanity to embrace a new sensibility if we are to extricate ourselves from the vice-like grip of conflict, destruction, hatred and killing that if continued will inevitably take us towards total disaster and ultimate extinction. This follow up article seeks to identify forces that are resisting this trend. These are resources of hope.

There are some very powerful forces, at both state and non-state level, with vested interests in maintaining a permanent state of conflict and insecurity. In fact, it is easy to identify the entities that thrive on other people's misery; arms manufacturers, state armies, mercenaries, hired assassins, intelligence and security firms, to terrorist groups and tyrants, elected politicians and corporations, to cite a few. Thus the combined forces ranged against any attempts to eliminate conflict and eradicate fear are very formidable.

But this is a historic struggle of cosmic proportions where the whole of existence is at stake. A belief in our capacity to reverse the drift to disaster is a necessity: we need to stop killing each other, destroying our environment and consigning the creatures who share our fragile planet to extinction. The final result will be that we extinguish ourselves too. The elusive but resilient principle of hope is the basic resource that is required to avert an ultimate catastrophe. Of course, many millions of people are already enduring intolerable circumstances in their daily lives as a result of the internecine conflicts, civil wars and the abuses of power. These people are in the very front line of any struggle for change.

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The democracy project of the Kurds was last witnessed in action in their courageous defence of Kobani, a Kurdish border town in Syria, when it came under the assault of ISIS (Islamic State) gangs. An international campaign of support for the heroic struggle of the people of Kobani was quickly established led by Kurdish communities in the diaspora. Through mustering the human resources of both men and women, they succeeded in repelling the ISIS onslaught, despite the Islamist terrorists enjoying the covert and overt of some powerful regional and international players.



Young Kurdish women defending their city of Kobani from attacks by ISIS

The Meaning of Kobani

In the Middle East, there is one such attempt to formulate a new way of thinking that has been embraced by a mass popular movement and that poses a strong countervailing force to combat the forces of death, intolerance and enslavement. This is the Kurdish movement inspired by the ideas of their jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan. His arguments for social justice, grassroots democracy, gender equality and ecological awareness, have apparently been adapted from the ideas of radical thinkers in the West to meet the circumstances prevailing in the Mideast where they have an extremely powerful impact. The question of women's equality, for example, is truly revolutionary in a culture where women are not even permitted to venture outside the home unaccompanied by a male adult. It can be understood that what the Kurds represent is a more authentic and truthful way of organising society for the benefit of the entire community as opposed to the selfish interests of ruthless local elites and political rulers who seek only to possess as much of their land's rich resources for themselves to enable them to join the ranks of the world's super rich.

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Kobani became a symbol of a different approach to constituting society and offered the hope of establishing a free, open, tolerant and democratically organised community within the violence and turmoil of the modern Middle East where mass killing, oppression and insecurity are too often the norm. Against all the odds, Kobani still stands free even today, despite Turkey launching a bombing campaign against Kurdish targets in Syria and Iraq, ostensibly in order to push back ISIS. This struggle represents an existential confrontation between lies and deception, on the one side, against truth and justice, on the other. A notable characteristic of the Kurdish movement in both Turkey and Syria is that it is frequently led by young men and women, which is indicative of how a generation has been politicised over the past twenty or thirty years. In fact, it is worth mentioning that Abdullah Ocalan was only 30 years old when he founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 1978.

His relative youth when he first rose to prominence is far from unusual since throughout history radical social and political movements have tended to attract idealistic young people and even to be led by youth.

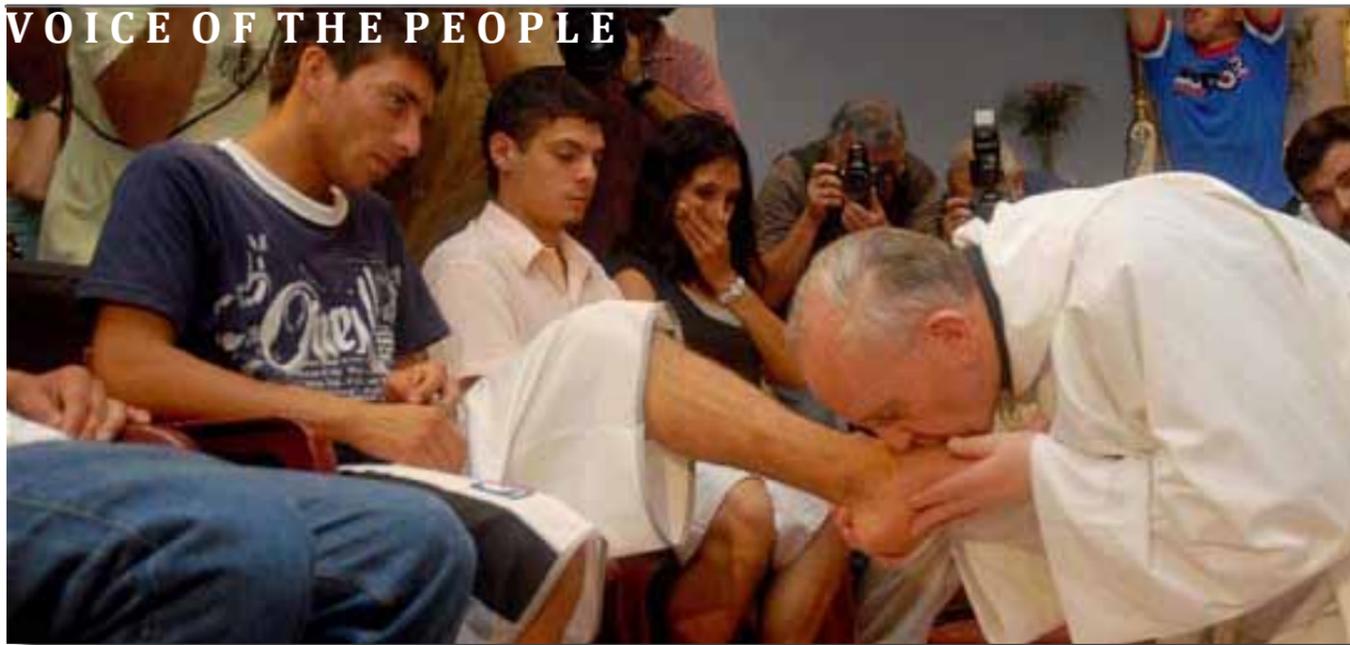
Thus movements for social change can invariably also be defined as youth movements. To cite a few examples: the Romantic poets of the late 18th century who welcomed the French Revolution were men – mostly men - in their youth: both Wordsworth and Coleridge were hardly out of their teens when the revolution broke out in Paris. Marx and Engels were both under 30 years old when they wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Che Guevara and Fidel Castro were both in their twenties when they waged the struggle that was to culminate in the Cuban Revolution. Nelson Mandela was only in his twenties when he first joined the anti-apartheid movement. It is evidently a fundamental characteristic of any political movement's authenticity that the youth are attracted to it and become key players.

A Radical in the Vatican

The 81 year old Rev Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, a former foreign minister of Nicaragua, who had been suspended from the priesthood by Pope John Paul II, wrote to Pope Francis requesting to be allowed to celebrate Mass once more before he died. Pope Francis, once more demonstrating his essential humanity, agreed to the request in August 2015.

D'Escoto had been Nicaraguan foreign minister from 1979-1990 under the Sandinista government, where he served alongside two other Catholic priests, Jesuit Father Fernando Cardenal and Trappist Father Ernesto Cardenal. All three were suspended in 1985 when Pope John Paul II imposed a ban on clergy holding public office. At the time the US led by President Ronald Reagan was conducting a brutal campaign of destabilisation against the Sandinistas which included support for Contra terrorists seeking to overthrow the legitimate government in Managua. The ban was part of Pope John Paul II's attempt to eradicate liberation theology from Latin America which he saw as little more than a front for subversion and Communism. Liberation theology, also termed the "popular church", was noted for its turn to the poor with adherents espousing a belief that social liberation was intrinsic to the message of the Gospels. Pope Francis, while not a follower of liberation theology, clearly shares its determination to eliminate poverty and achieve greater social justice through good works. Pope John Paul II treated the radicals almost as if they were medieval heretics; only in the Middle Ages heretics such as the Cathars, for example, were physically eliminated by being burned alive.

Pope Francis's unambiguous message of peace and social justice has inspired people far beyond the "faithful" to believe that change in the way the world is run through collective action is a real possibility. He has not sought to preach to the converted or offer comfort with homely homilies; he has attempted to reach out to the whole of humanity by addressing the fundamental challenges that people are confronting in contemporary life.



Pope Francis shows compassion for the poor as well as a determination to end world poverty

A Radical in the Vatican contd...

His progressive message has started to attract a young following and he has even been compared to Che Guevara, no doubt largely because of his Latin American background.

The Pope has spoken uncompromisingly to the rich and powerful to urge them to face up to their own responsibilities as global citizens. He has carefully located the causes of gross inequality, human suffering and social problems in the misplaced priorities inherent in the entire system of capitalism. In so doing, he has connected with the concerns of many people and in the process made his office relevant and meaningful. He has achieved this feat despite the fact that the Vatican is a deeply conservative institution and a pinnacle of the establishment.

His message seems genuinely radical. In an encyclical released in May, titled *On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis attempts to trace the basis of the world's current problems to the capitalist system as presently constituted and makes a powerful case for urgent collective action to achieve social change. Transforming capitalism, he contends, is "one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day." An edited version of the encyclical was even deemed worthy of being published by New Left publisher Verso Books.

Perhaps unsurprisingly Pope Francis cites St Francis of Assisi as an inspiration, stating that St Francis "helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason". St Francis of Assisi, it might be added, was a mere 44 years old when he died. Pope Francis says that St Francis's "response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'". He argues that the conviction shown by St Francis should not be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine human behaviour. "If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder," he says, "if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs.

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By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled."

Pope Francis points to the vital role played by young people, many of whom are involved in environmental movements and attracted to green politics. "Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded."

He says that "people no longer seem to believe in a happy future; they no longer have blind trust in a better tomorrow based on the present state of the world and our technical abilities. There is a growing awareness that scientific and technological progress cannot be equated with the progress of humanity and history, a growing sense that the way to a better future lies elsewhere."

Cultural Revolution

Pope Francis even calls for a new cultural revolution. He argues that there is now an "urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution" and insists that science and technology are not neutral forces. "Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur." It is the uses to which innovations in science and technology are put that is the vital issue.

These arguments provide solid justification for those who argue that the human ingenuity that has created astounding advances in science and technology has been profoundly misused to produce sophisticated modern weapons that have the potential to destroy the planet. Increasingly, people are questioning this waste of resources on missile systems and weapons of death which are produced in vast quantities at great expense but which are never intended to be used because to do so would be catastrophic. People are asking, along with Pope Francis, that the remarkable innovations and huge resources devoted to armaments could be much better used to relieve poverty, disease and inequality. It is often argued that even a small proportion of what is spent on the arms trade could relieve world poverty. Pope Francis's intervention can surely only be to the public good and should embolden those who are demanding change. It is to be hoped that many more people will sit up, take note and seek to put his ideas into action.

Cable Street in London was the scene of a historic mass resistance to fascism during the 1930s when the Blackshirts of Sir Oswald Mosley attempted to march through the area which was heavily populated by poor Jewish families at the time. Mosley's British fascists met with mass resistance from the local community who declared, "They shall not pass", echoing the cry made by the people of Spain who were resisting Franco's Spanish fascists. Cable Street is also the area of East London where in the late 19th century the notorious Jack the Ripper terrorised women and became one of Britain's most well-known serial killers, about which there remains a very unhealthy obsession deliberately cultivated by commercial agencies such as publishers which have an obvious interest in keeping the story of the Whitechapel murderer alive in all its lurid details because they can make easy money out of it.

Cultural Revolution *contd...*

Indeed, *On Care for Our Common Home* has been cited by environmental activists as justification for their green, anti-pollution campaigning. For example, it was reported that on 4 August, 13 activists in the US had been arrested as they formed a human blockade at a gas storage facility at Seneca Lake, New York. When they were arrested the activists were reading verses from Pope Francis's encyclical that refer to the threat posed by climate change. This must be the first recorded incident where people have been arrested for reading the words of a Pope. *On Care for Our Common Home* is a message that reaches out well beyond the Catholics community and even atheists and secularists will agree with its basic sentiments. This is because he is addressing unflinchingly and without compromise the fundamental issues that concern humanity today. He is talking about issues that elected politicians seem far too timid or are not too compromised too address seriously either because of their connections to commercial interests in the media and to the corporations. Unlike most modern political leaders who are widely perceived to be dishonest, Pope Francis is untainted by corruption and is able to speak up for humanity.

Our History

There is a struggle over how we see history - the heroes and heroines that a society celebrates are promoted by state institutions including the education system for a purpose: to instil appropriate values and attitudes into a nation's citizenry in order to establish an environment of social harmony based on shared values and experience. In the UK, the appropriate heroes will be kindly, courageous and jolly monarchs such as Henry VIII, Charles II, Queen Victoria, Richard the Lionheart and the present incumbent Queen Elizabeth II. National war heroes such as General Montgomery and Lord Kitchener will always be celebrated; the epitome of this panoply of heroes being Winston Churchill. The people's history, meanwhile, is systematically ignored and at best severely skewered and distorted to fit into the national patriotic story. The poor and ordinary folk have only a limited place - as those who fought for their country, demonstrating their loyalty, tenacity and patriotism, as in the myth of the Blitz which has Londoners singing in the shelters as the bombs dropped. Victorian reformers such as Edwin Chadwick, Joseph Rowntree, Florence Nightingale and Charles Kingsley are still to be admired as national heroes who selflessly helped the poor out of poverty through improved education, sanitation and better healthcare. This is done purposefully to emphasis the natural solidarity between social classes as opposed to conflict.

This is not authentic history since there is simply too much left out: rarely mentioned in the history taught in schools or portrayed on television are the popular struggles of workers demanding better conditions



Women activists in London protest at the opening of a new museum celebrating Jack the Ripper, a notorious serial killer who stalked the East End in the late 19th century.

and trade unionists like the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists, the women who became suffragettes to fight for the right to vote, the General Strike of 1925, the anti-war activists who resisted the carnage of the First World War despite the patriotic fervour that bred tremendous intolerance. Currently, there is new battle of Cable Street under way. Cable Street in London was the scene of a historic mass resistance to fascism during the 1930s when the Blackshirts of Sir Oswald Mosley attempted to march through the area which was heavily populated by poor Jewish families at the time. Mosley's British fascists met with mass resistance from the local community who declared, "They shall not pass", echoing the cry made by the people of Spain who were resisting Franco's Spanish fascists.

Cable Street is also the area of East London where in the late 19th century the notorious Jack the Ripper terrorised women and became one of Britain's most well-known serial killers, about which there remains a very unhealthy obsession deliberately cultivated by commercial agencies such as publishers which have an obvious interest in keeping the story of the Whitechapel murderer alive in all its lurid details because they can make easy money out of it. Thus the opening of a new Jack the Ripper Museum in Cable Street in the summer of 2015 provoked a public outcry and led to noisy street protests outside the new building whose owners succeeded in gaining planning permission by falsely claiming originally that they were planning to open a museum to commemorate the social history of women. The dispute is about the meaning of history, who owns our heritage and the right of people to protect the memory of the lives of real people of times past. It is about the choice between an authentic way of looking at the world and a false one driven purely by commercial gain.

At the time of writing, the museum has been unable to open to the public due to the strength of public protests it has provoked. Historians have joined forces with young activists to shame the museum into remaining closed. While it may be a trivial matter in itself, the issues that it raises are profoundly important. At stake is how we run the world and in whose interest. Once again it is about a confrontation between truthfulness and lies.

Youth in the Digital Age

The influence of youth and their fascination with social media are key factors that are reshaping the way we live. This media is a double-edged sword posing great dangers of addiction but providing enormous opportunities for communicative action. Some cultural phenomena are so overwhelmingly popular and manifestly influential that it would be highly perverse to even attempt to ignore them. The modern social media is one such phenomenon perhaps as influential as the development of the printing press.



Today privacy has virtually been abolished or at least the boundaries between the public and the private have been radically redrawn. For modern celebrities all the world's a stage has literally come true if not exactly in the sense that Shakespeare had intended it. Digital culture is a form of universal exhibitionism and voyeurism: fans are encouraged to believe that they can get up close to their heroes and heroines. This closeness is a fabricated one of course and the digital culture in reality works to perpetuate the widening material gap that exists between the happy elite and their adoring masses.

Youth in the Digital Age contd...

In March 2015, British model turned actress Cara Delevingne celebrated the fact that she had reached over 10 million followers on Instagram; just two months later she could boast to have collected 14 million followers. Delevingne, who has always refused to conform to conservative assumptions of how a super model should behave, has become a role model for young women, but their obsessive interest in everything that she does cannot be healthy.

These attractive personalities who are constantly in the spotlight are people reduced to cyphers. They are largely creations of the social media despite their attempts to be original by striking eccentric poses and occasionally issuing bold public statements, like Delevingne and other masters of this medium such as comedian turned activist Russell Brand. Are they really making significant interventions in public debate? Are they about to change the world by their activities and often outspoken pronouncements? Despite Brand having published a book provocatively titled, *Revolution*, one is obliged to remain sceptical and reserve judgement on the positive impact of such personalities even though they appear to be sincere and attract a mass following undreamed of by most traditional political leaders. These celebrities live their lives on a global stage. Their every move is eagerly awaited and vicariously consumed by the avidly watching millions. But the relationship between the celebrity and her public is really quite a simple one: she lives the life that everyone watching her dreams about leading themselves. If she indulges herself, we are satiated with her, if her heart is broken through love, we feel her loss and emptiness, if she is ecstatic, so are we. That is the cultural logic of the digital age. Celebrities inhabit a world where the casual act of scratching their nose in public becomes an event to the parasitic news outlets and is made to seem of such significance that it edges real news out of the headlines, be it the latest massacre in the Mideast or the refugee tragedy in the Mediterranean, for instance.

Today privacy has virtually been abolished or at least the boundaries between the public and the private have been radically redrawn. For modern celebrities all the world's a stage has literally come true if not exactly in the sense that Shakespeare had intended it. Digital culture is a form of universal exhibitionism and voyeurism: fans are encouraged to believe that they can get up close to their heroes and heroines. This closeness is a fabricated one of course and the digital culture in reality works to perpetuate the widening material gap that exists between the happy elite and their adoring masses. The mass escapism of popular culture, a modern version of ancient Rome's bread and circuses, was never as sophisticated as when it was viewed through the latest i-Phone. It is worth recalling here that Stalin once described the telephone as an instrument of counter revolution.

Nevertheless, the divide between fantasy and reality was never so great and the gap between haves and have-nots appears insuperable despite Instagram, Twitter and the social media generally providing an artificial feeling of intimacy. It is intimacy at a distance. It is not really a relationship; it is more of an addiction and unhealthy dependency on the Internet. This digital culture is overwhelming a youth phenomenon to the extent that older users often pose as youngsters in order to gain access. Individual integrity can be violated through the Internet and the level of the addiction is enormous, as the research of psychologist Philip Zimbardo and colleagues have established, which is published in books such as *Man (Dis)connected*, subtitled, How technology has sabotaged what it means to be male. While people superficially connect with each other in the digital world, they less and less connect with others in the real world. This is essentially an inauthentic form of living experienced by many millions of people worldwide. The social media is where the youth like to spend their leisure time, but mercifully not all of them and not all of their time. Many are repudiating the digital world and entering the real world, or at least they are managing to adopt a more healthy balance through real social engagement and collective action to achieve social change. Without their involvement in social struggles democracy is seriously imperilled.

Corbymania

The summer of 2015 has also seen the rise of Jeremy Corbyn MP to almost super star status as a candidate in the battle for the leadership of the Labour Party following the party's shock election defeat in May. Despite being the oldest candidate in the race, he has attracted mass support from young people because his message of free education, jobs and housing reflects their concerns. His success has been described as "Corbymania" and is widely attributed to his honest approach to politics. Many of the young people who have found his message appealing have never been politically engaged before; so the long term challenge will be to ensure that they don't become disaffected in future.

Honesty in politics might seem a very modest demand but not so when you consider the scale of the recent expenses fiddling by elected members which has even led to a few culprits spending time languishing behind bars.

In Iraq, meanwhile, politicians had been accused of carrying cash out of the country in suitcases as state budgets went missing and donations from the international community intended to rebuild essential infrastructure simply disappeared. Mass protests of people disgusted with persisting political corruption are presently occurring across Iraq, which is potentially one of the wealthiest countries in the Arab world, but where today the living conditions of most people have been reduced to the level of one of the poorest undeveloped states.

A rally in Camden on the evening of 3 August saw Jeremy Corbyn enthusiasts coiling all the way around the huge Camden Centre on the Euston Road, London. Such enthusiasm for party politics has not been seen in the country for decades. It is perhaps no accident that Corbyn is chairman of the Stop the War Coalition which brought hundreds of thousands - some claim it was millions - onto the streets of London in the great anti-war marches against the US/UK intervention in Iraq nearly 15 years ago.

Corbymania contd...

Corruption can be found in all countries and all continents. The anti-corruption organisation Transparency International defines corruption simply as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain". Lack of progress in fighting corruption in Eastern Europe is holding back democratic progress and undermining prospects of cooperation with the European Union, warned Transparency International, in a report published on 2 July 2015. The State of Corruption: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine warns that over the next five years, while these countries were scheduled to receive some €15 billion in assistance from the EU, "the risk of this money going into corrupt pockets rather than helping people live better lives is unacceptably high". Social movements against the levels of corruption in these countries will certainly emerge eventually, as they have emerged in countries such as Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. In Britain, in 2015, a left-wing politician whose simple campaign slogan is "straight talking, honest politics" has totally transformed the national political debate within a matter of weeks. His supporters have successfully organised through communicating online thus bypassing the corporate media who normally resist any change. Grassroots politics are greatly facilitated by the digital age. It is possible to have an authentic voice through this very alienating space age media with all the distractions that inevitably come with it. We are witness to a genuine citizens' revolt of people who feel unrepresented by mainstream politics and its arcane language is not understood by those outside the "Westminster bubble", a phrase repeatedly used by Andy Burnham, a rival candidate for the labour leadership, who ironically is more a part of this Westminster club than many politicians.

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Corbyn arrested for opposing apartheid; inset: Corbyn wearing his trademark 'Lenin cap'



Corbyn addresses supporters in the streets of Camden, London

Corbymania contd...

Corbyn has succeeded in inspiring young people who are regularly dismissed as apathetic and alienated from mainstream politics. His detractors have cynically sought to turn this against him by alleging that he is only supported by naive and inexperienced people. His main campaign slogan is simply, "straight talking, honest politics" but it is resonating with huge numbers of people fed up with the politics based on deception and dumbing down expectations that they have come to expect from the mainstream parties.

The great surge in youth joining the party would actually have been welcomed as a major asset by the party's hierarchy if it wasn't so out of touch with the grassroots. Youth are the future but they have not been offered any hope by successive governments that have hiked tuition fees and removed housing support for them. Young people are only asking for what their parents and grandparents enjoyed in the post-war welfare state - a future with security. Social and political commentators constantly repeat that we are in an era of austerity; society, we are told, can no longer afford to improve the life chances, opportunities and social conditions of most of the people. This is an admission of failure and a bankruptcy of politics. Corbyn represents a popular grassroots resistance to this insistence that things can never get better. He has also articulated an alternative to a foreign policy based on ceaseless war and interventions in contrast to the UK's Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's acceptance of permanent war as the main principle of his foreign policy which means ever increasing defence spending as the inevitable accompaniment. Such an insane strategy is only making matters worse by stirring up conflict and creating greater suffering in regions such as the Middle East where Syria, Libya and Iraq all remain in turmoil as a result of past interventions.

Corbyn has raised vital issues that have been virtually concealed from public debate but which will have a fundamental bearing on peoples' futures, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which threatens a direct assault on workers' rights, health and safety standards and undermines the right to maintain publicly run services including the National Health Service. In the face of the failed record of all mainstream parties who pursue austerity at home and war abroad, it is hardly a surprise that a straight talking moral voice who is unafraid to say what he believes and prepared to challenge the political establishment has attracted huge support from those who want to believe that a better world is still possible.

Corbyn exudes an air of authenticity; he not only says what he believes and believes what he says, but he is consistent in both private and public. Not only that, he looks the part and has a lifestyle that sets him among ordinary people. Much has been made of the fact that he rides a bicycle around London,

Another ancient thinker, Menander stated, "Choose equality and flee greed"; in expressing this sentiment Menander might well have been summing up the current ethical stand taken by Corbyn and the demands of his growing support base. He is articulating the authentic voice of the people which is now a global phenomenon witnessed in places as far afield as the streets of London, Scotland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Kurdistan to list but a few. It is the return of the people to the political stage as principal players and their authentic voices can no longer be silenced.

but in his case not only when the TV cameras are on him, unlike some other well-known politicians. He has his own allotment where he loves to grow his own fruit and vegetables; he even makes his own jam. To cap it all, he has a beard, which, crazy as it sounds, was for decades judged to automatically make any aspiring politician unelectable. Thus, Corbyn's image and persona are far removed from the packaged, manicured mainstream politician who has to be groomed and styled by public relations advisers to win public favour. It seems likely that people are fed up with transparently false images of political leaders. Like the story of the emperor's new clothes, the public have at last seen through it.

Former Labour leader Tony Blair advised those members who were contemplating voting for Corbyn to get a heart transplant. His callous advice was unhelpful to Corbyn's rivals; in fact Blair's comments were met with widespread derision. His audacity, given his own record of deception, not least over the war in Iraq, meant that Blair was not the best person to be giving lessons in moral choices. The rejection of Blair is a clear reflection that the public mood has decisively shifted. They can no longer be bamboozled with catch phrases and clichés. "New Labour" as a brand is well past its sell-by date.

Alleged "unelectability" is the main charge laid against Corbyn, although he has won eight elections as MP in North London. Corbyn has succeeded in changing the terms of public debate and opened up a space to address issues that really matter to people's real lives. Corbyn's campaign is a classic exercise in genuine democracy. He actually believes in the power of the people to change their society for the better. This can be seen as nothing less than a revival of the classical tradition of democracy whose roots can be traced to the ancient world. After all, it was the Athenian Pericles who stated, "Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people." The contemporary political elite, opting for media manipulation, by turn instilling fear and offering bribes to the public, are today forced to realise the errors of their ways and they will need to learn the real meaning of popular democracy all over again as expressed in these fine sentiments two millennia ago.

LINKS

A campaign for action on climate change inspired by Pope Francis's message
<http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/One-Climate-One-World/climate-petition>

The Pope's encyclical published by Verso Books (free e-book)

<http://www.versobooks.com/books/2065-encyclical-on-capitalism-and-inequality>

Jeremy Corbyn MP's campaign for the leadership of the Labour Party

<http://www.jeremycorbyn.org.uk/>

Resources about the Kurds and Kobani

<http://peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/resources/kobane-the-rojava-revolution-and-the-kurdish-struggle-useful-resources/>

Transparency International

<https://www.transparency.org/>

Campaign against Jack the Ripper Museum

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/celebrate-suffragettes-not-serial-killers>



DANIEL HOLT LL.B (HONS), TRUSTEE OF [DISABILITY RIGHTS UK](#) HOUSE OF LORDS REFORM: KEEPING THE EXPERTISE



Introduction

The 26th July 2015 edition of English tabloid newspaper The Sun on Sunday published footage showing Lord Sewel snorting a white substance reported to be cocaine at a party with prostitutes in his London flat. Lord Sewel was a life peer in the House of Lords and held significant roles as its Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Lords Committee for Privileges and Conduct, which investigates peers' misconduct. He resigned from these roles on the same day and gave up his seat in the House of Lords two days later.

The Daily Mirror subsequently demanded that we 'Now Let's Get Rid of the Lot of Them' in its emphatic headline. Complaints focus on the fact that unelected Lords can be a substantial obstacle to the elected Commons' desire to introduce new laws either by blocking it within the confines of the Parliaments Acts, by making significant amendments to Bills or introducing bills themselves. There is further disillusion relating to how the executive can ensure that the majority of the Lords are of the same political party. This is achieved by electing new members and the public costs of maintaining an ever-growing upper chamber.

Talk of reforming the House of Lords is nothing new and has featured in the political agenda on numerous occasions since 1539. Further reform is desirable but a unicameral Parliament will not be considered and, as a result, abolishing the House of Lords is not thought of as a viable option. The Lords often occupy a seat because they have expert knowledge and skills in their fields. This is exercised to ensure effective and appropriate legislation. They also have time to consult with subject specialists, something the Commons lacks. The undemocratic nature of the Lords is overstated as the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949 ensure the Commons can force through legislation. The 1911 Act limited the powers of the House of Lords by preventing it from blocking money bills that it did not give consent to within one month. It also stopped the Lords from stopping ordinary bills that had been introduced by the Commons in three successive Parliamentary sessions within a two-year period. The 1949 Parliament Act reduced this to two successive sessions within one year.

This is a useful safeguard against undesirable or underdeveloped bills being enacted. There have been other recent reforms withdrawing the right to automatic hereditary membership and the ability to ban if imprisonment of one or more years has been imposed through criminal proceedings.

The scope of this article is regrettably limited because of the complexity of the issues and any proposed reform has to be compatible with a flawed Commons. This article has been written on the assumption that the lower house will not be reformed at any stage as it is unlikely given the current system favours the two major parties – the Labour Party and the Conservative Party.

Reformed Composition of the House of Lords

Reform should be modelled on the Slovenian National Council in order to preserve and strengthen the expertise of the Lords. The National Council is a body representative of social, economic, occupational and local interest groups.

Extrapolating this system of 40 seats and applying it to the UK undoubtedly has its difficulties as Slovenia has a much smaller population. These exact numbers would have to be increased to cater for a much bigger country. The current size of the House of Lords is excessively large with 781 seats plus 40 peers who are on leave of absence or are otherwise disqualified from sitting. It is far larger than any other upper chamber in the world and it continues to grow as ruling political parties push for the election of their supporters. The German Bundestrat has 69 seats, for example, while the Austrian Federal Council, Swiss Council of States and French Senate have 61, 46 and 348 seats respectively. The growing size causes numerous problems. Firstly, it increases costs that put a strain on the budget. Secondly, the growth of the House of Lords is detrimental to its ability to function effectively. This includes limited opportunities to debate, increased competition for opportunities to initiate business, reduced speaking times, increasing pressure on the Chamber's mechanisms of self-regulation and difficulties gaining places on Select Committees.

The size of the House of Lords should be reduced to 152 seats, which would allow for one Lords leader, one deputy leader and 10 representatives in the following categories: Environment, Climate Change and Energy; Employment and Skills; Health; Business; Economy; Social Welfare; Social Inclusion and Inequality; Transport; Justice; Sport; Exports and Productivity; Education and Youth Development; Foreign and commonwealth policy and International Development; Devolved Nations; and Equality.

The UK's Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to represent citizens from different regions of the land called constituencies. There is one seat in the Commons for each person elected to represent each constituency, The UK Parliament, therefore, already represents different regions. This is, of course, limited as both many prospective and elected MPs belong to a political party that has uniform policies to which all members are obliged to conform.

Reformed Composition of the House of Lords *contd...*

There would be two representatives of each for Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England and two neutral officials. There would be one representative for disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, gender reassignment, race, maturity/paternity and pregnancy, religion and belief and sex in the Equality seats.

There are particular disadvantages to the proposed composition. Firstly, each of the Equality sub-categories would only have one representative each. As to whether one representative could put forward competing ideas will be questioned. This is a particular challenge in relation to the religion and belief sub-category. There are numerous religions that have different faith systems that one person may struggle to balance. All peers, however, will be able to continue to hold select committees where interested peers can debate and explore an issue and request written or oral submissions. This will allow them to consider the views of all religions and, of course, competing views in that category. Secondly, finding two peers in the Devolved Nations category that can truly be considered as neutral because it is inevitable that they will reside in one of the nations. This may cause bias but their roles will involve facilitating the competing views and desires of that category.

House of Lords' Elections

Arguments for an elected Lords are popular because it would allow for democratic appointment. Members of the Bundesrat, for example, are indirectly elected by the people's representatives, the Bundestag, to represent 16 German regions. The Netherlands' Senate is similar as its members are appointed by the States-Provincial who is directly elected to govern and represent particular regions. The two are similar but representatives of the general population elect the former whilst regional officials appoint the latter.

The UK's Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to represent citizens from different regions of the land called constituencies. There is one seat in the Commons for each person elected to represent each constituency, The UK Parliament, therefore, already represents different regions. This is, of course, limited as both many prospective and elected MPs belong to a political party that has uniform policies to which all members are obliged to conform. Mirroring this system in the Lords is possible through the mayoral system, where each mayor would occupy a seat in the Lords. This requires a change in the system as not every city or town has a mayor or wants one. It would also be unnecessary because regions are already represented in Parliament. It would prove to be detrimental too for several reasons.

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Firstly, the expertise of the Lords, which is its best quality, would be lost. Secondly, the views and values of each Lord would become transient and change to appeal to popular opinion if they were to be directly elected. This is a difficulty of the Commons, as evidenced by its recent shift to the right. Similarly, problems would persist if they were to be indirectly directed through members of the Commons. The ruling majority in the Commons would try to ensure that most of the Lords were of the same political colours as they do already.

The proposed reformed House of Lords would have representatives for each of the categories above. Persons who wish to fill the roles would campaign to put forward their merits and ideas in order to attract votes, as MPs do for their seats in the Commons. The prospective Lords peers, however, would not be seeking to impress the population of their constituency. They would be looking to gain the support of groups, organisations and charities concerned with the category or subcategory that they intend to fill. Each interested group, organisation and charity would have to register its wish to vote in a particular category. This would work in the same way citizens register to vote in elections. Any reformed House of Lords, as a result of their unelected nature, would continue to be subordinate to the Commons and the Parliament Acts would continue to apply. The procedures of expelling Lords would also remain the same.

Elections would take place every five years to mirror the Commons' term period. The Lords' elections, however, would have to take place in a different year as it may cause complication and congestion.

Conclusion

This new composition would address the issue of life and hereditary peers as they would no longer exist. Interested groups, organisations and charities would elect all representatives. This is a system that would create a Parliament that combines the peoples' representatives in the Commons and the expertise of the Lords. This would allow for well-considered legislation created with a better understanding of different issues in society and the consequences they may have. It is a system to better society where seats are earned rather than given through entitlement and party allegiances.

I must thank my friend *Torniké Liparteliani* for his political knowledge and advice.

Olympian Jim Thorpe was declared athlete of the 20th century by ABC's Wide World of Sports in 2000, leaving the greats Babe Ruth, Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan as also ran, among others.



Jim Thorpe - Wa-Tha-Huk*

“The Bright Path the Lightning Makes as It Goes Across the Sky”
Native American Sports Legend of the Sac-&-Fox Tribe

Grandson **John Thorpe**

on Jim's life and the controversy surrounding his final resting place in an exclusive interview with Mark Ulyseas

This interview gives the readers a ringside view of America's greatest athlete of the 20th century and the unseemly dispute about his final resting place as seen through the eyes and heart of his grandson, John Thorpe.

How do we remember a true son of the tribe? How do we honour his life on earth? And how do we make peace between ourselves? These questions are answered here with clarity filled with the emotive aspect of belonging to the tribe and honouring one's ancestors, their traditions, rituals and more importantly, their Word.

One hopes that truth will prevail and Jim Thorpe's memory will not be tarnished by continued disagreements in the tribe about his final resting place.

And that reverence for one's ancestors is more important than disturbing the mortal remains of Jim Thorpe, which is against the ancient beliefs of the tribe.

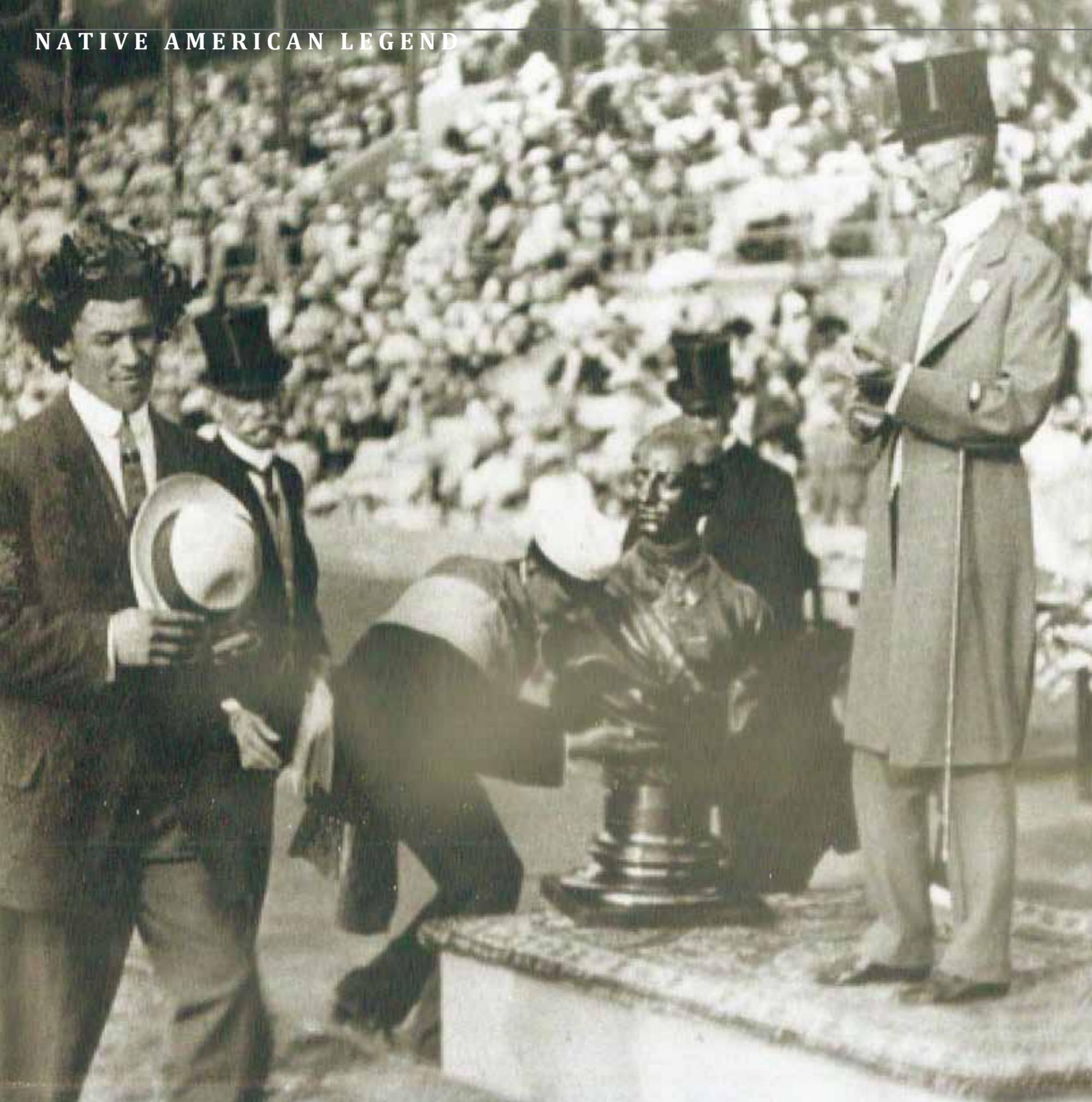
* Jim belonged to the Thunder Clan. And this was his name.

All pics by John Thorpe from Carlisle War College in PA.

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Jim Thorpe May 22, 1887 – March 28, 1953

© www.liveencounters.net september 2015



Why is he an American legend?

Jim Thorpe was a Native American athlete who won the Decathlon and Pentathlon in the 1912 Olympics, Stockholm, Sweden. My Grandfather was also the first president of what is now the NFL. (*The National Football League was once called The American Professional Football Association*).

Jim Thorpe was the first professional athlete to hit a home run and score a touchdown in the same season. He is the only professional athlete to play football, baseball and basketball in the same season.

It was reported that when Thorpe won the decathlon and the pentathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Games, Sweden's King Gustav told him, "Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world." The royal sentiment is etched on his mausoleum. ([Link](#))

The International Olympic Committee would ultimately strip Thorpe of his medals for playing semipro baseball for as little as \$2 per game in the years before competing in the Games, thereby rendering him a professional in the since-discredited era of amateurism. The IOC returned the medals nearly 30 years after his death.

Thorpe burst to fame as an All-America running back at Carlisle Indian School in central Pennsylvania, roughly 100 miles from his future burial site. In 1911, he scored all of his team's points in an 18-15 upset of Harvard. In 1912, after his Olympic triumphs, Thorpe ran roughshod in a big win against Army. Dwight Eisenhower, who played for Army that day, said Thorpe "could do anything better than any other football player I ever saw."

Grantland Rice put it more poetically: "He moved like a breeze." More poetic yet was his Thunder Clan name, Wa-tha-huk — "The Bright Path the Lightning Makes as It Goes Across the Sky." [LINK](#)

What tribe did he belong to and did his cultural background play a pivotal role in his life?

James Francis Thorpe was born in the Indian Territory that would later become the State of Oklahoma. He has most often been described as a Sac and Fox Indian, but his ancestry was complex. His mother was a member of the Citizen Pottawatomie Band. Her parents shared between them a mixture of Pottawatomie, Kickapoo, Menominee, and French ancestry. Jim's father was born to a Sac and Fox mother and an Irish-American father. Summing up his lineage he was five-eighths Indian, one fourth Irish and one-eighth French. Jim Thorpe was raised on the reservation. His father was also an accomplished athlete, thus being raised with a competitive spirit. Family has special meaning among American Indians. Even today, when one talks about oneself, he is expected to mention family first. Sharing rather than accumulating personal wealth was and remains a strong tradition among the Sac and Fox and most other Native American peoples.

Information about Thorpe's birth, name and ethnic background varies widely. He was baptized "Jacobus Franciscus Thorpe" in the Catholic Church. Thorpe was born in Indian Territory, but no birth certificate has been found. He was generally considered to have been born on May 22, 1887, near the town of Prague, Oklahoma. Thorpe himself said in an article in *The Shawnee News-Star* in 1949 that he was born May 28, 1888, on his mother's allotment "near and south of Bellemont – Pottawatomie County – along the banks of the North Fork River . . . hope this will clear up the inquiries as to my birthplace."

However, most biographers believe that he was born on May 22, 1887, as that is what is listed on his baptismal certificate. Six of the eleven children born to Charlotte and Hiram died before the age of 12, most of them at a much younger age. Jim Thorpe's brothers and sisters, in order of their birth, were George (1882), Rosetta (1882-1889), the twins, Mary (1883-1884) and Margaret (1883-1887), Jim's twin brother, Charlie (1887-1897), Mary#2 (1891), Jesse (1891-1892), Adeline (1895), Edward (1898), and Henry (1898, died at birth).

How are you related to Jim Thorpe?

My mother's name is Charlotte Thorpe. Her father is Jim Thorpe. My mother comes from my Grandfather's first marriage to Iva Miller. There are three daughters from his first marriage: Gail, Charlotte and Grace. My Grandfather also had a son Jim, Jr. who died very early.





Jim Thorpe's mausoleum at Jim Thorpe, PA.



Photograph of Jim Thorpe while playing for the Canton Bulldogs

What is the controversy surrounding Jim Thorpe's mortal remains?

The Sac and Fox Tribe and my uncles claim that his spirit is not at rest and that his remains need to be moved to Oklahoma. In most Native American cultures, it is believed that once the body is returned to Mother Earth, its spirit returns to the spirit world, hence the resting location of mortal remains by most Native American belief is of no consequence. It should be noted that tradition in most Native American cultures dictates that women are the final authority regarding decision-making in family matters. Those that come from the first marriage have more authority than those from succeeding marriages. That being said the decision regarding the final resting place for my Grandfather's remains should (by tradition) rest with my Mother and Aunts (women offspring from the first marriage). My uncles (offspring from a succeeding marriage) and the Sac and Fox Tribe disagree.

My uncles and the Sac-&-Fox tribe want to take my Grandfather out of Jim Thorpe PA and place him somewhere in Oklahoma. I asked them which burial plot (we have two). They said they were undecided but told me "The casino would close for the day."?

My mom and aunts, at one time prior to their death, all agreed my grandfather should stay in Jim Thorpe, Pa. I'm really not sure why my uncles changed their minds or why the Sac & Fox tribe would get involved in a family matter. I only know what a medicine man told me at a Sundance in the sweat lodge with the Sun Dancers. He said "Your grandfather made contact with me. He told me "I am at peace and want no more pain created in my name". What else needs to be said or done?"

I am including below an article which clearly indicates my Uncle Jack's intention regarding my Grandfather's final resting place. It was not until after my Mother and Aunt's death that he and the Sac & Fox tribe pursued the lawsuit. The Laches Doctrine clearly prohibits this type of behavior.

In a 1990 letter, Jack Thorpe wrote that he retracted his previous statements that were critical of Jim Thorpe's burial location in Jim Thorpe, Pa., and noted, "I now feel that the remains of Jim Thorpe are in a good place and that he is at peace."

The contents of this letter seem clearly at odds with the actions taken by Jack Thorpe who, in June 2010, filed a federal lawsuit against the Borough of Jim Thorpe seeking to have his father's remains returned under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The letter, dated Aug. 9, 1990, was written by Jack Thorpe to Joe Boyle on letterhead from where John Robert "Jack" Thorpe served as executive director of the Housing Authority of the Sac & Fox Nation in Shawnee, Okla.

It is my belief that my uncles, the Tribe and the Media are romanticising Indian culture instead of honouring Indian tradition. In 2010 I attended a Sun dance in Texas. For tribes that participate in Sun dance tradition, it is regarded as the most spiritual annual ritual ceremony. The Medicine Man at this Sun dance, who comes from a long lineage of medicine people from the Ute Tribe in Colorado, invited me into a sweat lodge. He told me that my Grandpa had made contact with him, indicating that he was at rest and wanted no more pain created in his name.

What is the controversy surrounding Jim Thorpe's mortal remains? contd...

Following Boyle's death on Memorial Day in 1992, his widow, Rita, and son, Joe Boyle Jr., offered the journalist's sports-related memorabilia to Rudy Bednar and Danny McGinley, two men who joined Boyle to form the Carbon County Sports Hall of Fame.

"When Joe passed away, Rita Boyle called me to take some stuff that I might be interested in," McGinley said. "That included the letter."

McGinley and Boyle met with Jack Thorpe when he came to Jim Thorpe PA in 1990.

"He was on a vacation tour around the country, and it was the first time that he decided to stop in Jim Thorpe. I spoke with him downtown. We talked about how the community was trying to honor his father. We were just starting the Carbon County Sports Hall of Fame at that time.

"He was still interested in moving the body, but knew that as long as Grace and the other girls were alive, it would never happen," McGinley explained.

In the letter, after several paragraphs in which he thanked a number of people who were welcoming to him during his 1990 visit to Jim Thorpe Phil Rodgers, Asa Dickinson, Jack Sturm, Wendy Shanefelt, Lisa Burke, Agnes McCartney and Jeff Reitz Jack Thorpe continued in the body of his letter as follows, which is unedited from the original text:

"Joe, a number of years ago I made the statement of wanting the remains of my father returned to Oklahoma. I also said; "The bones of my father will not make or break your town, it's the people living here that will do that.

"Holding to traditional Indian ways, I took Indian medicine with me for a early morning visit to my father's grave site. I prayed to the four directions and over my father's remains, I sat down on the steps of the monument and asked for inner peace and guidance. In the quite morning hours, I felt the peacefulness of the area. I felt that there was no conflict with my father's being on the hill side. I have felt the respect and love the people of Jim Thorpe have for my father and the surrounding country that makes up the town of Jim Thorpe.

"If you and the people will allow me, I retract my previous statements (except for the part about people

Is this issue solely about business – a tourist attraction and hence your relatives insist on moving his mortal remains to Oklahoma? It appears this could be a motivating factor. My uncles indicated they would not move the remains to either of the family burial plots in Oklahoma. It has remained vague what my Uncles' intentions are, although indicators point toward burial near the Sac and Fox Casino.

making or breaking a town) I now feel that the remains of Jim Thorpe are in a good place and that he is at peace. I think that if dad were living today he would smile, shake someone's hand, pat another on the back and say "This is a good place to be."

"I believe that the town and the people of Jim Thorpe should be proud of what they have been able to build together. I wish some of the things I saw on our visit could be the same here in Oklahoma. I hope that one day we can return to "our town" and be a permanent part of the community and earn the right to be a "Thorper."

"Joe to you and the townspeople, if there is anything I can do to make the great town of Jim Thorpe a better place to be, please feel free to call on me. I will be at your service."

*Sincerely,
(Jack's signature)
Jack, Babs, Mary and Jamie Thorpe"*

And why does this controversy refuse to die down?

It is my belief that my uncles, the Tribe and the Media are romanticising Indian culture instead of honouring Indian tradition. In 2010 I attended a Sun dance in Texas. For tribes that participate in Sun dance tradition, it is regarded as the most spiritual annual ritual ceremony. The Medicine Man at this Sun dance, who comes from a long lineage of medicine people from the Ute Tribe in Colorado, invited me into a sweat lodge. He told me that my Grandpa had made contact with him, indicating that he was at rest and wanted no more pain created in his name. He was a shy and humble man who did not want attention drawn to him in life, let alone after death. The town and the people of Jim Thorpe, PA do nothing but celebrate and honour the life and legacy of my grandfather.

Is this issue solely about business – a tourist attraction and hence your relatives insist on moving his mortal remains to Oklahoma?

It appears this could be a motivating factor. My uncles indicated they would not move the remains to either of the family burial plots in Oklahoma. It has remained vague what my Uncles' intentions are, although indicators point toward burial near the Sac and Fox Casino.

I have recently teamed with Ernie LaPointe (Sitting Bull's great-grandson) who created the [Sitting Bull Family Foundation](#). Our purpose and intent is to provide support for suicide prevention among Native American youth. Knowledge of Native American tradition had been passed down generationally by oral communication. This process has deteriorated through the homogenization of tribal lands, and has left youth angry and confused

In the past, how did a tribe solve disagreements within its ranks?

If there was a tribal matter, the men would all hold a meeting. This would include the Chief, the medicine man, the war chief, the holy man and various other male members of the tribe. If it was a family matter, the women would make the decisions. My mom, aunts and the boys at one time, ALL wanted my Grandfather to stay in Jim Thorpe, PA. The Sac-&-Fox tribe has no right to get involved in a family matter as does any tribe or a government.

Does a vestige of this tradition still exist today, or, has the contamination by 'white' culture destroyed the vibrant ethos of the tribe/s?

ONLY a vestige of tradition exists today. Native American youth are without knowledge (in many cases) of their heritage and tradition, which has historically been communicated verbally, with no books or written record to be found. The suicide rate among Native American youth has grown exponentially.

Do you still follow traditions and rituals of your ancestors?

I try to walk the "Red Path". In other words, I believe (as my ancestors did) that all things on Mother Earth are related. According to Indian tradition and belief, all things in this world are interconnected. Thinking with a red heart honours all life as sacred; nothing is greater than another. We are all equal here. I believe everything has spirit and soul. I believe in the purification lodge (sweat lodge) as an ideal place to hold prayer. I believe the Pipe is sacred. I am not a true traditionalist in Indian ways, but I try to keep an open mind and think with a Red Heart.

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

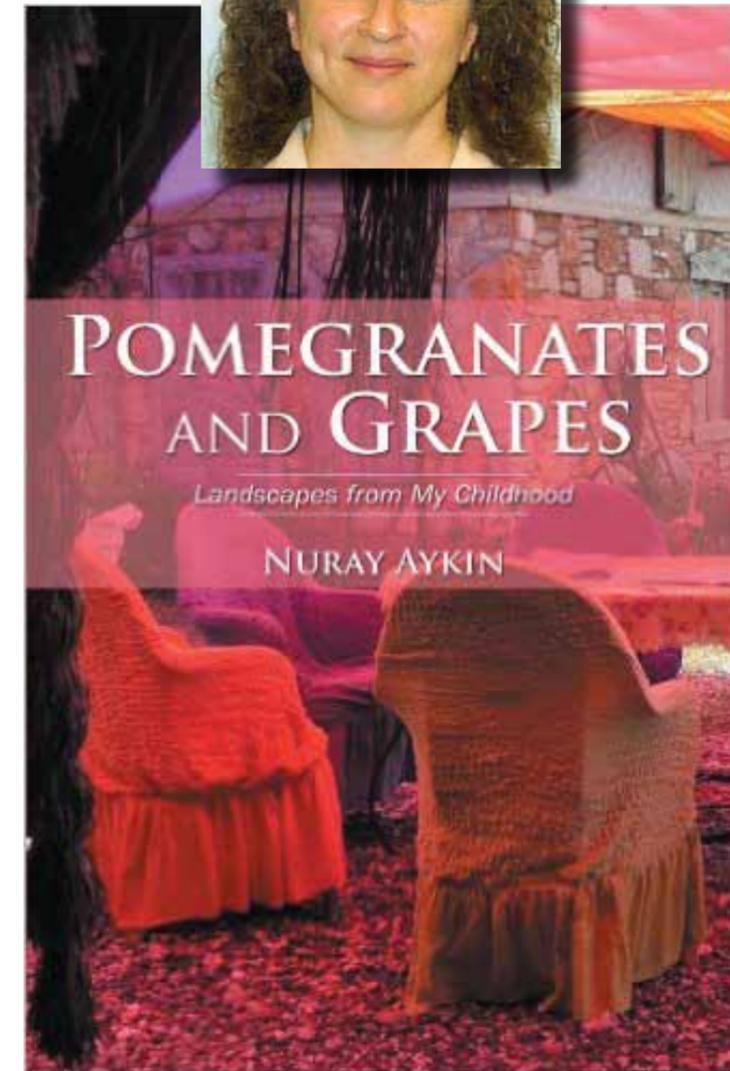
I started my DJ career at the early age of 7. My dad was a DJ for WNYC in New York City and often I would go to work with him. He would let me queue the records for him during his show and many times I would start and stop the music. I was hooked. I started my professional DJ career at Johns Green Gables Night Club in Phoenix Arizona at the age of 17.

I have been a local resident of Tahoe for 26 years, enjoying everything this year-round playground offers, especially outdoor activities.





Library of Celsus at Ephesus Photograph © Dr Nuray Aykin
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DR NURAY AYKIN
AUTHOR OF
POMEGRANATES AND GRAPES:
LANDSCAPES FROM MY CHILDHOOD
IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH MARK ULYSEAS

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Why did you write this book?

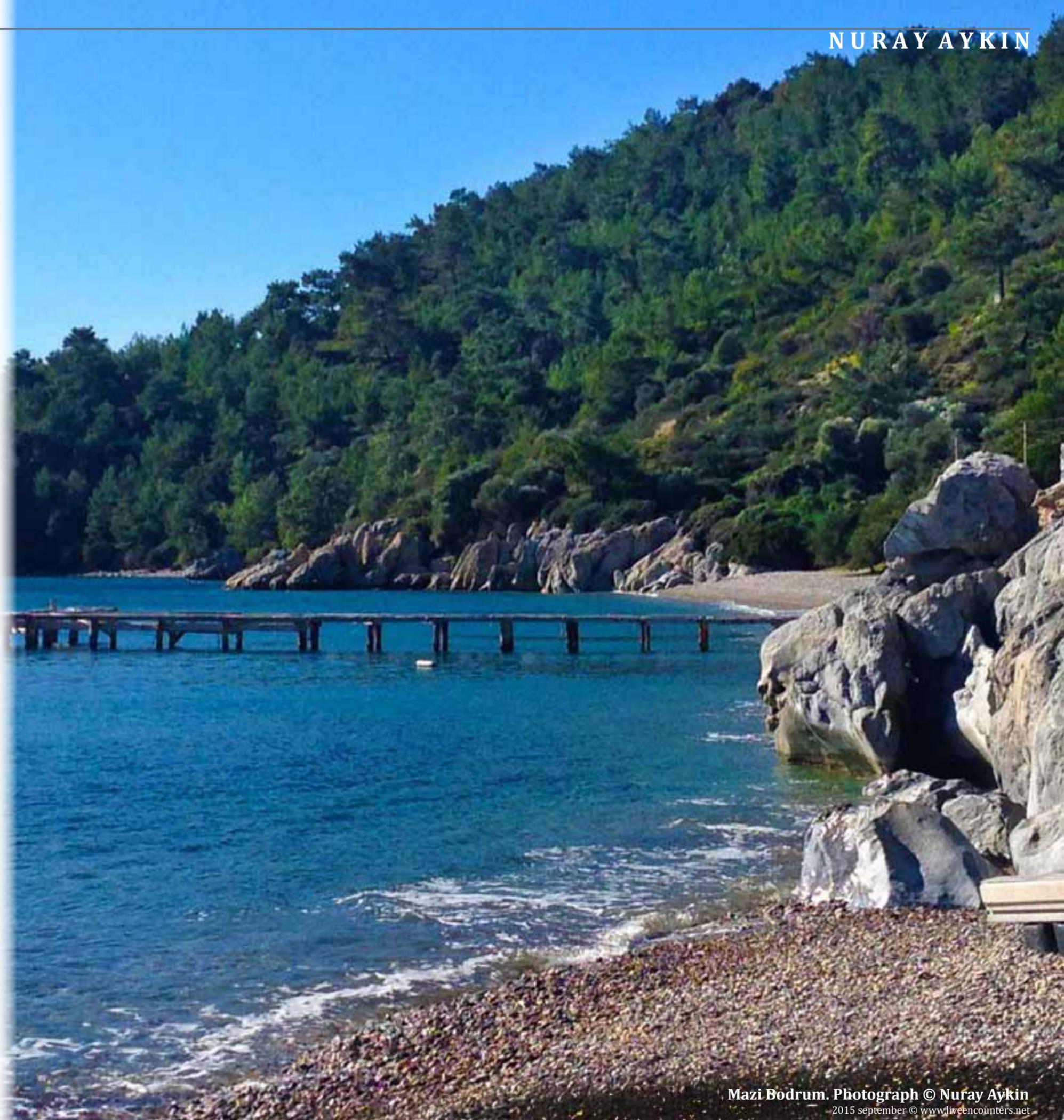
I commuted by train from New Jersey to New York from 2004 until the end of 2007.

I would take an early train so that I would not be dealing with the crowd both on the train and on my thirty-minute walk to work. It was one early spring day and I was just enjoying the beauty of the first fresh and crisp leaves adorning the trees before they get covered with the summer dust and lose their shimmer of perfect green. The train was passing through my favorite location: just next to the beach where the sea gulls walk aimlessly and tiny waves hit the sand. Somehow, the whole scene reminded me of Tasucu, where I spent entire carefree childhood summers with my grandparents.

And I started to cry.

I missed my grandfather.

I did not want to end up going to work with red eyes. And I decided, as I always do, to pull out a tiny notebook and start to write about him, Tasucu, my morning swims with nobody on the beach. Clear waters and tiny waves hitting the beach. When I reached New York, I had already decided to write a memoir to my son Bora and include everything about me, my family, Tasucu, Ankara, Turkish food, my school years, my first encounters in the United States. I wanted my son to know what made his mother who she is. I would be writing during my daily commute which would not interfere my work. That would be two hours a day. I have a son who was born and grew up in the United States. Although he has been to Turkey every year - many times twice a year - and I always told him numerous stories about my life, I believed that it would be great to leave him something that he could cherish and share in the future. So, it took me a few years to finish the book. And it took me several more years to decide to have it published.





Rumeli Hisari on the Bosphorus Istanbul. Pic <https://pixabay.com>

Could you give us an overview of Pomegranates and Grapes?

When my only son left home for college, I realized that he was on his own journey to build a life for himself and I wanted to leave him a legacy that would provide insight into how he came to be - actually how he came to be from his mother's side. This is a long letter to my son about my colourful journey through Turkey and the United States as a child, student, mother, businesswoman, gardener, wife, ex-wife, daughter, sister, aunt, and stepmother. Pomegranates and Grapes tells stories of my loved ones and describes the places where I spent my childhood-from a little Mediterranean town to the city of Ankara, Turkey's capital. I walk him through my homes in the United States: Buffalo, where cold weather and a new culture posed great challenges; Washington, DC, where our lives were deeply affected by loneliness and illnesses; and New Jersey, where we ultimately settled and found happiness. This long letter included descriptions of my bitter moments with long sighs and happy moments bursting with joy. Pomegranates and Grapes is a tribute to my family, hopefully to be cherished by my son, and by all the sons and daughters and their parents.

Have you written or edited any other books?

I have partially written and edited a professional book in the area of User Experience, entitled: *Usability and Internationalization of Information Technology*. I also edited four books on *Usability and Internationalization* as part of the book series by the HCI International Conferences. You can find them all on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Why did you do a PhD in industrial engineering?

In Turkey, when you are growing up as a smart and a successful student, everybody expects you to be either a doctor or an engineer. My two elder siblings were already in medical school when it was time for me to choose my career. Although I really wanted to be a doctor just like my brother and sister, I decided I could have trouble dealing with blood. I read the description of all the engineering types, and chose Industrial Engineering because it was the only engineering field that had the word "human" in its description. After my Bachelor's and Master's degree in Industrial Engineering, I felt that the only subsection of Industrial Engineering that is related to "human" was Human Factors Engineering. State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY at Buffalo) was one of the pioneer schools in that field to pursue my PhD.



Datca Peninsula. Photograph © Nuray Aykin

From your writings it appears that your heart remains in Turkey. So why do you live in the USA?

I can only describe it as "it just happened! "

While I was completing my PhD at Buffalo, my ex-husband and I had offers from Alfred University. It was convenient for us to be together and it was exciting that we would be teaching in the United States for a few years until we go back to Turkey. Years followed, we had a baby, I went to George Washington University, then to AT&T, then got divorced, then met a wonderful person, Allen, now my husband, and ended up staying. My son and his kids live in the United States. We now have five tiny grandchildren ages from 0 to 6. Several years ago, I realized that I belong to these two countries. We bought a house in Keyport, on the Bayshore in New Jersey. We have a beautiful view of the bay. Keyport reminds me of Turkey, a quaint little town by the water with wonderful people that walk on the streets (rare event for other towns!), great restaurants, seagulls, and friends.

Al loves Turkey. At least we get to visit Turkey twice a year. And I have a feeling that when my husband retires, we will be splitting our time between the United States and Turkey.

What is the one thing that you miss most from your childhood days in Tarsus?

It is actually not Tarsus that I miss, it is Tasucu. I was born in Tarsus, but my parents left that city when I was only two years old. I spent every summer, about three months, and winter, about two weeks, with my grandparents in Tasucu.

What I miss the most is being with my grandfather, "Kara Dede" (meaning "Dark Grandpa" because of his perpetual suntan from the Mediterranean sun). He was kind, sweet, and loving. He never said anything bad to us. His love for us was enormous. He had a lot of stories to tell and a lot of inventions to imagine. Equally, I miss the pomegranates hanging down the trees lining up the dirt path to our stone house, my early morning swims, catching fish with my brother and watching the sunrise, eating cactus fruit that my grandfather peeled and put in the refrigerator for us to eat, my cousins, restaurants serving the freshest fish, going swimming with my friends at midnight, and reading tons of books.



Anadolu Kavagi end of Bosphorus opening to the Black Sea. Photograph © Nuray Aykin

You are a health counsellor as well as an expert in healthy cooking. Share with us one of your Turkish recipes, please.

I learned cooking from my mother during her one-week hospital stay after her hysterectomy. I was nineteen then. I used to go to the hospital every morning and stay with her until noon. And she would tell me her recipes that I would write in a little black notebook. Every day, I would cook that day's recipe(s). My mother was an excellent cook and always cared about healthy eating. I think her cranberry beans dish was the best in the world. I am sure my friends and my siblings' friends who have eaten at our house many times could attest to that.

Of course, there were no measurements in my mother's recipe. It is all about a pinch of that and spoonful of that. After practicing a few times, you will get the hang of it, just like I did.

Lutfiye Metin's Cranberry Beans Dish

It is best to use fresh cranberry beans. If not, soak dried cranberry beans overnight, rinse well, and boil them with a little bit of salt until tender.

About 1 kg fresh cranberry beans, shell and rinse under water

1 medium onion, finely chopped

3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into ½ cm thick slices

4 large tomatoes, purée without skin

3 tbsp olive oil,

salt to taste

2 tbsp sugar

boiling water

finely chopped parsley

Heat oil in pot, add onions. Sauté onions for two minutes, add salt and sugar, add carrots and continue to sauté until onion pieces are soft and transparent. Add cranberry beans and continue to sauté until the moisture on the cranberry beans is gone. Add tomato purée and continue to sauté until tomato purée is hot. Add hot water just to cover the top of the cranberry beans. Taste. If needed add more tomato purée, sugar and salt. Cover and cook for an hour or more until cranberry beans and carrots are tender.

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Lutfiye Metin's Cranberry Beans Dish. Photograph © Nuray Aykin

2015 september © www.liveencounters.net



A Gulet Blue Voyage. Photograph © Nuray Aykin

Your blog covers many aspects of life in Turkey. It is a guide for those interested in travelling to this ancient country. Do you intend to write another book, this time on travel in Turkey?

I am definitely very interested in writing a book about Blue Voyages (the long and enchanting Turkish tradition of travelling the coastline on wooden boats and swimming, eating, drinking, napping, reading, and exploring coves, historic sites, and little villages) on the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. I have been on four Blue Voyages and I still cannot stop dreaming about being on the boat again. What is most fascinating about the Blue Voyage is you get to anchor in secluded coves where the hills are covered with pine trees, unique flora, and ancient ruins. You get to walk up to the historic sites that tell mythology and history dating back thousands of years ago. You can jump into the turquoise and cobalt blue waters of the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas. You get to taste the real Turkish home cooking prepared daily by the chef. On top of it, just add sleeping under the million stars without any light pollution coming from the big cities. I would like to write this book from the viewpoint of the hedonistic traveller who enjoys history, food, people, and the sea with many recipes of the Turkish food you eat on the boat.

What is your message to readers of Live Encounters wishing to visit Turkey – where should they travel and what should they eat?

As you can see from my book and from my blog, I love my country. Many of my friends and Al's family who tagged along with us to Turkey in our several visits, say in unison: "This is the best vacation we ever had". Anywhere you go, you will first see that the Turkish people are very hospitable. They will go miles to make you happy. They are very kind and helpful. Couple this with the natural and historical beauty of Turkey, you really will have an amazing vacation.

If this is the first time visiting Turkey, it is best to start from Istanbul. Probably, this will be the first city that you can daily criss-cross between Europe and Asia. This is the city that carries history in every corner from pre-Roman times to modern Turkey. This is the city that you take a tour on the Bosphorus and marvel at the architecture of the houses built right on the water. This is the city where you can sample food from every region of Turkey. Do not forget to try Raki (the traditional Turkish drink, must be consumed with food) and Turkish wines.



Istanbul Market . Pic <https://pixabay.com>

I definitely recommend my own version of visiting Turkey: [Click Here](#)

I have been to many parts of Turkey, but still have missed the raw beauty of the East and the ancient history of the South East. I also want to go back to Black Sea with its mountains in all shades of green, ancient monasteries, tobacco and tea fields, and miles of hazelnut trees. I want to see it all over again so I can write about it. For these reasons, I did not include these regions in my trip itinerary. If you have more days, just add few days to include one or more of these stops.

Food! Food! Food! Turkish people love to sit for hours at a restaurant to eat, drink and converse.

There are different types of restaurants and make sure you try them all.

1) Kebab restaurants: This is where you try soft morsels of shish kebab, adana kebab (ground lamb or veal mixed with herbs and onions, skewered, and cooked on fire), pide (elongated dough topped with different ingredients of your choice of meat, vegetables, cheese, and herbs), thin-as-paper lamb chops, chicken, eggplant kebabs and many more. There are side dishes you can choose from a large selection. These are called mezes. Since they are small dishes, you can choose several to enjoy. Make sure to choose some eggplant variety and some seasonal greens. Don't forget to order Coban Salata (Shepherd's Salad with pomegranate molasses). Enjoy your food with ayran (foamy yogurt drink with salt) or raki, wine, or beer.

2) Fish Restaurants: First you choose mezes and salads from at least 10 different kinds. You order your raki, wine or beer. After a couple of hours, you can go to a display of today's catch, and choose your fish. They will cook it to your request. I always like smaller fish fried and crisped to perfection so I can eat the skin with the meat. If you are in the Mediterranean, do not forget to try Lagos. It is a large fish. The meat is snow white, firm and tender.

3) Breakfast houses: There is a high chance that you will be eating breakfast at your hotel. Breakfast houses provide very similar breakfast. In either case, you will learn to love the Turkish breakfast: eggs (boiled, fried, menemen (eggs cooked with tomatoes, onions and green peppers)), feta cheese, kasari cheese, home-made jams, black olives, green olives, butter, bread, pastries, combed honey, kaymak (clotted cream, works perfect with honey), sucuk (very spicy Turkish sausage), gozleme (flat dough filled mostly with spinach, cheese, potatoes, and herbs).



Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias. Photograph © Nuray Aykin

4) Turkish fast food: For cheap and delicious meals, try a doner (gyro) joint, gozleme houses, pide houses, borek (phyllo dough filled with delicious ingredients: ground beef, spinach, feta cheese, and herbs) and patisserie houses, 'kofte (Turkish meatballs) in bread' joints, 'fish in bread' joints. For the 'fish in bread' joints, you need to go to Galata Bridge's Eminonu side, very close to the Sultanahmet, the Old City of Istanbul.

5) Turkish street food: If you get the feeling of slight hunger, you can always buy simit (sesame ring) from a simit seller at any corner of Istanbul. There are many other street foods including stuffed mussels, feta cheese sandwiches, kokorec (barbecued intestines), and others. I would just use caution, especially if you have a sensitive stomach.

6) Desserts: Turkish people eat fruit after their lunch and dinner. At any restaurant in Turkey, you can ask for a fruit tray and they will show up with a beautiful display of seasonal fruits ready for you to eat. But, the desserts in Turkey need special attention. For that, you need to go to the patisseries. Please go to these places with a hungry stomach, especially, after a long day of sightseeing, before your late night dinner. You can choose from a variety of baklavas, tavuk gogsu, kazandibi, kunefe, kadayif, asure, zerde, profiterol, muhallebi, firind sutlac, and definitely try Maras Dondurmasi (unique ice cream that stretches and does not melt easily). I've covered all these desserts on my blog: pomegranatesandgrapes.com. I hope you will enjoy reading about them.





This poem, *Father & Son* came to me one evening while waiting for a train at Heuston Station, Dublin. I watched a moving picture of a very old man walk hand-in-hand with an intellectually disabled man, I assumed to be his son. The poem is included in my forthcoming poetry collection for young people, ECHOLOCATION.

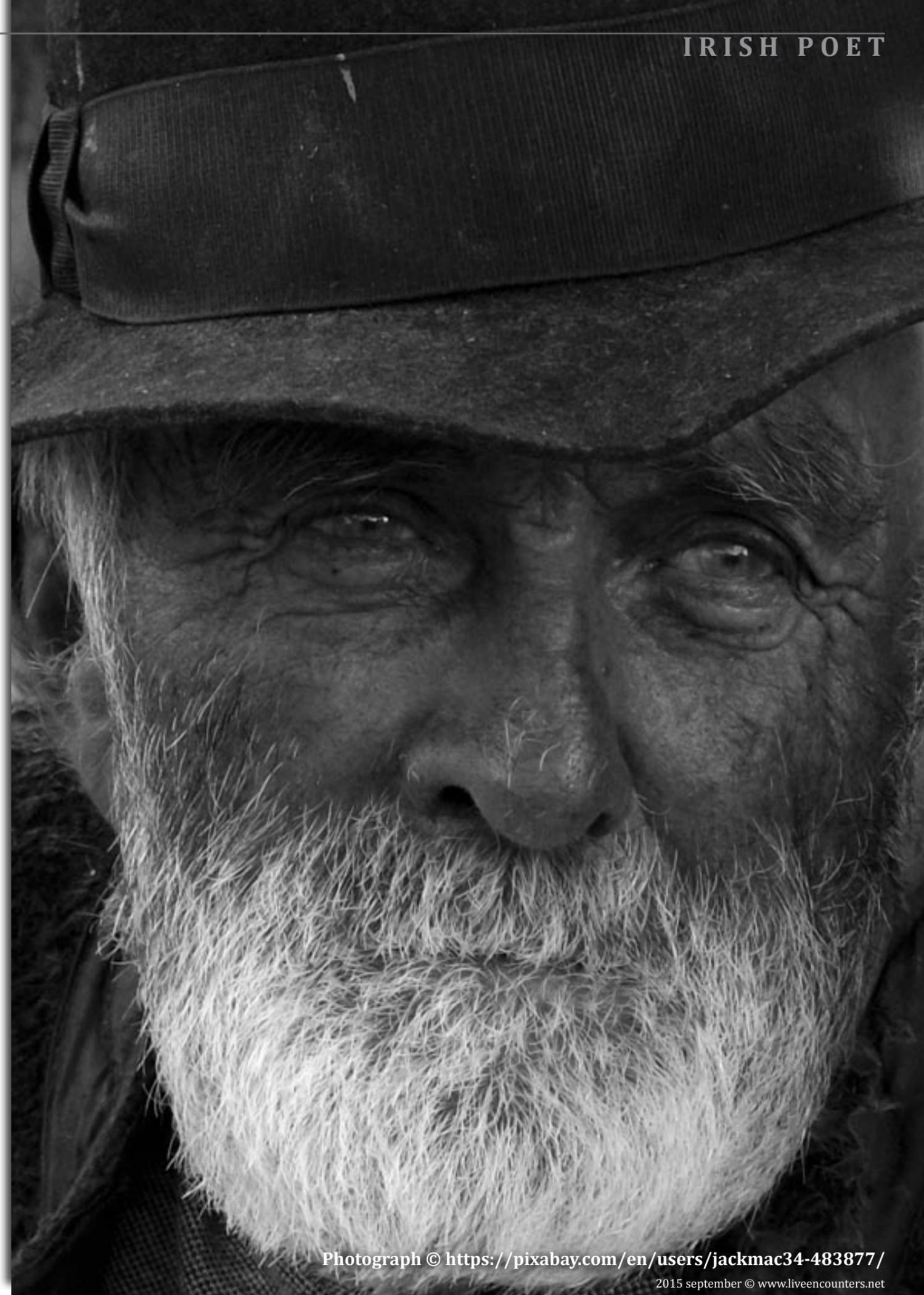
FATHER & SON

At Heuston Station, Dublin
 a very old man walks
 hand-in-hand with his ageing son
 easily, slowly
 like partners of sixty years.

The old man releases his son
 into the one vacant seat
 while he rests his weary frame
 against a glass wall.

They look tidy
 together.

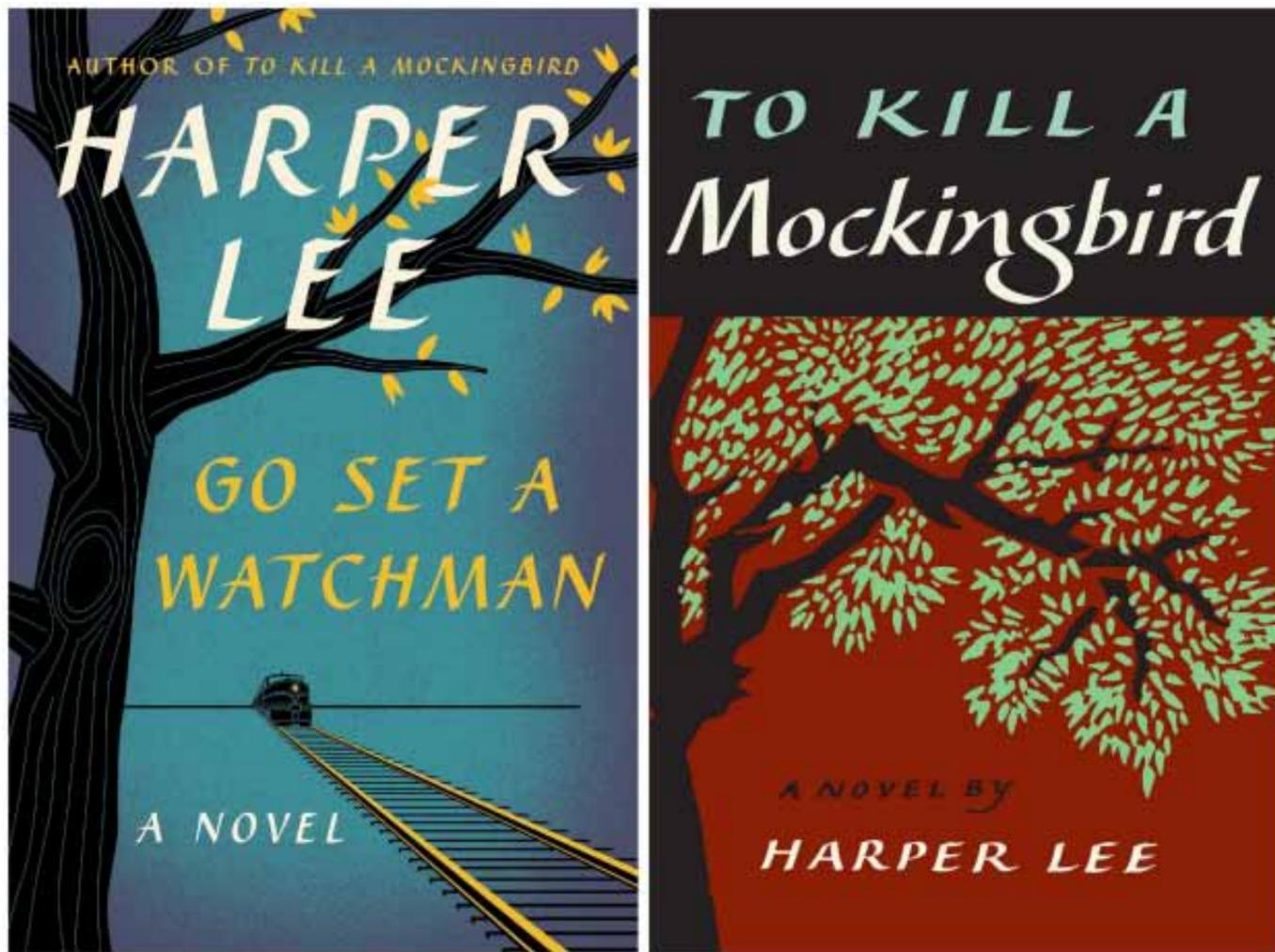
This father has no option
 but
 to keep his heart open
 and
 to live on for his son.





NATALIE WOOD

THE LOVE OF COMPLETE CONTEMPT



“For thus hath the Lord said unto me: Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth!” (Isaiah, 21:6)

“I have said what I wanted to say, and I will not say it again”.
(Harper Lee).

Scene one: You read a novel that is so compelling, its characters and what happens to them overtake reality. Suddenly you’re finished; daily life resumes. You’re left bereft. It’s the end of a wonderful world and a fragment of your soul has gone with it.

Scene two: You’re not a natural writer; more someone who juggles words most skilfully for a living. Still, you feel forced to pen the one genuine story you have to tell. It’s your own history. So, with a background in law and a student of human nature with an uncanny ability to wrest the truth from anyone in reach, you rid it from your system before life’s vicissitudes overtake you.

This, I suggest, is the battleground on which the war of wills is being fought between Harper Lee and fans of her seminal novel, [To Kill a Mockingbird](#). Those who read and viewed the beloved book and following film fifty years ago simply do not want to know the author’s real intent; the veracity of which emerges in the newly-released sequel, *Go Set a Watchman*.

Next, there's the trial scene in which he removes his watch, loosens some clothing and removes his jacket. This is the fleeting moment when we glimpse Atticus 'unbuttoned'; where he behaves in a manner previously unknown even to his children and so layer by uncovered layer becomes relaxed enough to reveal the murky underbelly of white southern US society in the 1930s.

No-one denies that *Mockingbird* and *Watchman* are effectively the same story, each written from an infant and adult perspective. Nor does any review I've so far read of *Watchman* dispute that it's a lesser work.

But it appears that far from betraying *Mockingbird* fans, *Watchman* give us a hard life lesson: that the greatest treason we all suffer, is when we discover our parents' fallibility as we mature.

First, Atticus Finch is a court-appointed defence counsel and as a consummate professional, he acts in any client's best interests, no matter their background.

Next, there's the trial scene in which he removes his watch, loosens some clothing and removes his jacket. This is the fleeting moment when we glimpse Atticus 'unbuttoned'; where he behaves in a manner previously unknown even to his children and so layer by uncovered layer becomes relaxed enough to reveal the murky underbelly of white southern US society in the 1930s.

But Finch senior is as much a product of pre-civil rights America as the children's teacher, Miss Gates who during a Current Events lesson with a look at Nazi Europe, offers unstinting praise to Jews but is overheard saying as she leaves the court house that her black neighbours are becoming self-important and "... the next thing they think they can do is marry us."

Both of them, if only they could realise it, seek an ideal of justice in the tradition of the **Hebrew bible** just like Jewish philanthropist **Julius Rosenwald**, who is said to have built 5,300 schools for black children in the 1900s Deep South.

Mockingbird was first published in 1960 and it can be no accident that the actor Gregory Peck was chosen to play Atticus in the 1962 film version as in 1947, only two years after the end of World War II, he had starred in an earlier Oscar-winning classic, *Gentleman's Agreement*. In it he appeared as non-Jewish journalist, Philip Schuyler Green who poses undercover as a Jew in an exposé of middle-class US antisemitism. The movie was based on a novel by Laura Kean Zametkin (Hobson).

Less **well-known** is that antisemitism was also tackled in another 1947 film, *Crossfire* which was based on *The Brick Foxhole*, a thriller by Richard Brooks about the murder of a Jewish veteran by a rabidly anti-Jewish army sergeant.

But I conclude here, neither in the US Deep South nor in London, UK but in Trinidad, the birth-place of the Indian novelist V S Naipaul, who forever recalls attending a school Christmas show in 1941 and seeing a small black boy singing, "Oh, I'm a happy little nigger and my name is John".

Interestingly, the American Jewish Committee, fearing it would exacerbate anti-Jewish prejudice, tried to halt production and have the victim's character changed into an African-American. The bid failed and the film won two Academy Award nominations.

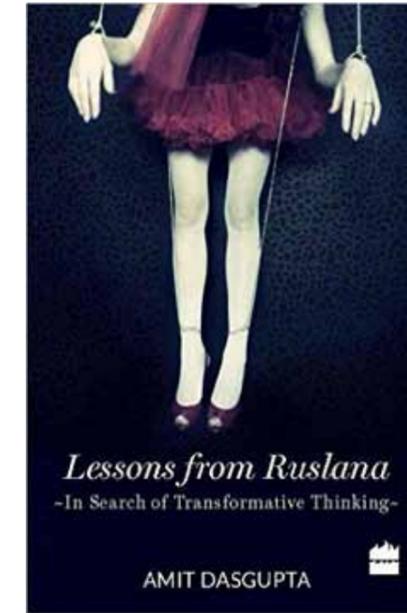
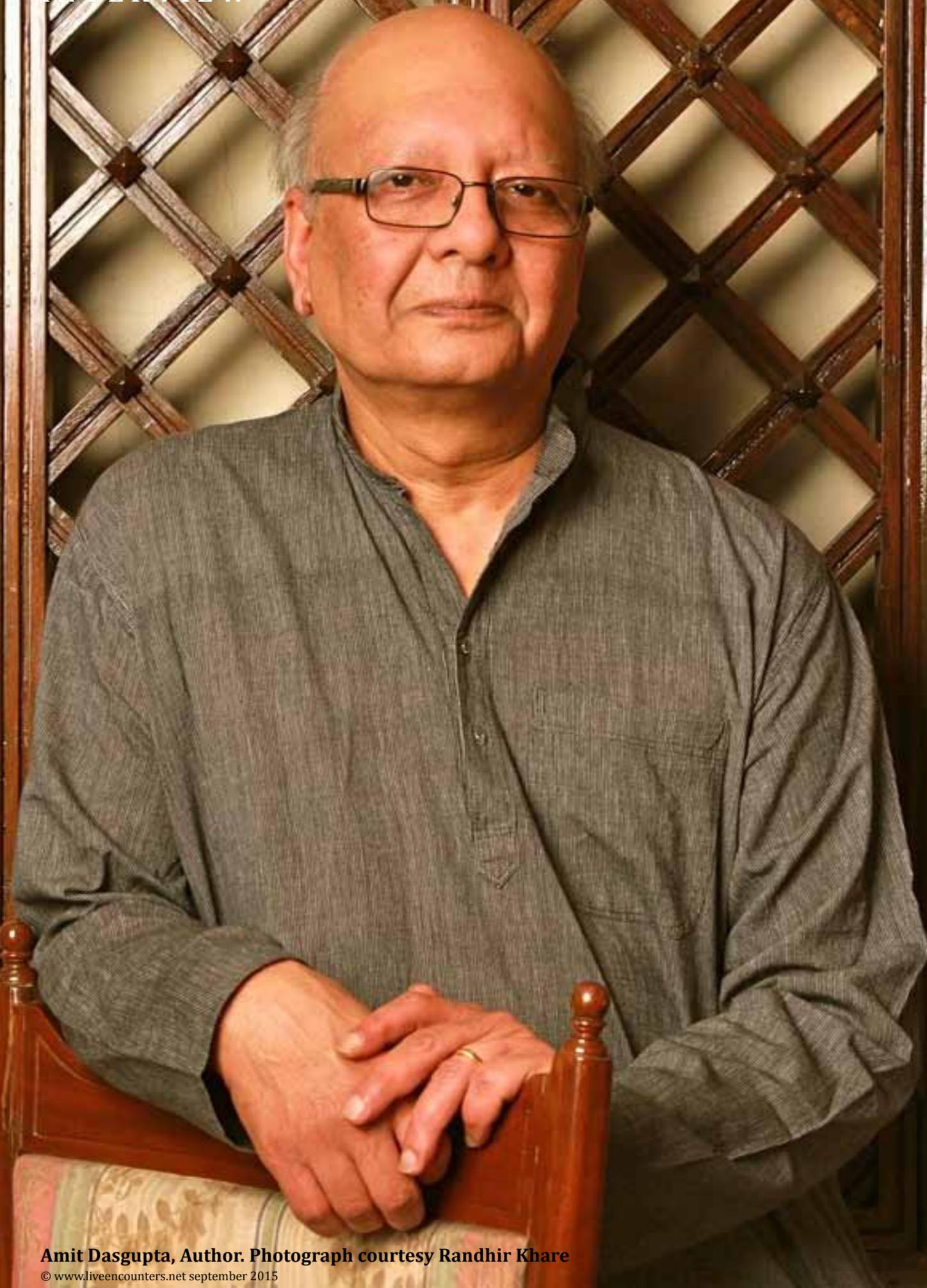
When Adam Kirsch wrote in **The Tablet** that *Watchman* "undoes the hypocritical fantasies of benevolent white power in *Mockingbird*", I think he made a bad error of judgement, caught up in the rhetoric of a fictional hero who declares, "you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it".

The fantasies become those of the temporarily impassioned reader, not the author. Characters like Atticus and Miss Gates are purely well-bred, educated products of their environment. They may always admire Jews as a concept, but would not allow their children to marry one! Indeed, just as US **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** is now seen as having abandoned his adoring Jewish constituents even when they needed him most, so it was easy for Miss Gates to love Jews as there were so few in her neighbourhood.

Putting its own gloss on matters, the online **BBC News Magazine** has asked if people become more prejudiced as they grow older. I answer 'no'. Their inherent leanings just become more apparent; become more marked by what happens to them.

But I conclude here, neither in the US Deep South nor in London, UK but in Trinidad, the birth-place of the Indian novelist V S Naipaul, who forever recalls attending a school Christmas show in 1941 and seeing a small black boy singing, "Oh, I'm a happy little nigger and my name is John".

Twenty-six years later, Naipaul had a character say "every educated black man is eaten away quietly by a memory like that". The little boy and his song were loved, say Naipaul and his biographer, Patrick French, but within that love was complete contempt.



Amit Dasgupta

diplomat, author and now head of a business school whose book *Lessons From Ruslana* is a brilliant motivational masterclass talks to childhood friend celebrated poet and writer **Randhir Khare**

What inspired you to write **LESSONS FROM RUSLANA**?

My inspiration came from a variety of sources, as I was exploring why we do what we do. What is the motivation behind human behaviour? What drives us? As you would see from the book, I delve into the writings and observations of many. I essentially argue that our actions are externally determined. What will others think? Will I be accepted? This is the common driving force: the desire to be accepted, to be welcomed, to be made 'a part of'. We end up compromising on how we actually think and feel because we crave social acceptance. Consequently, we confuse 'what is' with 'what appears to be'. This was Ruslana's extreme tragedy. Once she realized she was chasing a myth, a shadow, she felt helpless and lost because there was no escape from the world of illusion. For me she stood as the perfect example when we choose to live the dreams and aspirations that are externally imposed upon us rather than the ones we choose for ourselves.

Did you consider writing a novel instead around the same theme? Why did you choose this form?

I wanted to write non-fiction in this particular case, as I was re-visiting a theme that has been of such profound interest to so many. The survey of literature in the book provides a glimpse of the world I had entered. It might have worked as fiction but Ruslana's was not the only tragic story I recount. It is profoundly tragic because when the outside world believes she has 'everything', she herself believes, she has lost what she desires most - herself. Through the book I explore how this loss, this 'un-becoming' confronts us all. How we come out of it depends entirely upon us.



Ruslana was the face of a Nina Ricci perfume. With her striking features, she took the fashion world by storm and quickly became the toast of the glitterati. But who was she really, and why did she look so happy? No one would know until, one day, they discovered that she was just another lost and lonely girl.

What does Ruslana Korshunova and her life and tragic end represent for you?

Ruslana represents the pursuit of the transient and the ephemeral. She represents the enormous power the external environment has in terms of defining and thus, determining how we think, relate to people, circumstances & situation, and thus, how we behave. We are even willing to abandon our own thinking and principles so that we might be accepted. We are willing to shut our ears and our eyes and to say 'we did not know'. Lies become our safety net because social acceptance and survival is all we seek.

What do you mean when you mean by 'rewiring our mind-boxes'? Why is this necessary?

'Re-wiring our mind-boxes' allows us to recognize that there is a profound difference between 'what is' and 'what appears to be'. From the time of our childhood, the socialization process determines how we should think and behave. Deviance attracts punishment and hence, we are taught to conform. Our mind-boxes control us. When we decide to stand up for what we believe to be right, we are not deterred by punishment or social criticism. We have then learnt to 're-wire' our mind-boxes. Many have done it and so, it is possible to do so.

Your concept of success?

Success is doing what you love and loving what you do. Time and space then lose significance. You feel deep sense of immersion. I call it passion. At the same time, what you are doing is what drives you. I call this dispassion. But the, for true success, our actions need to be geared towards a cause or motivation bigger than oneself, I call this compassion. Success is the blending of each of these core elements.

What are the root causes of suicide? What drove Ruslana to take her own life?

Psychologists would say that there are many causes behind suicide. In several cases. In the case with Ruslana, it was a loss of self-esteem. In her own eyes, she felt diminished and inadequate. In some other cases for instance, as explored through alienation literature, there is a disconnect so deep and significant that the individual is unable to cope with who he or she is. Freedom is, then, perceived, by the individual, as lying only in the ultimate liberation - death.

How do you think your life and reading experiences have shaped the way you think and write?

I believe that from early childhood, I have had the good fortune of being exposed to exceptional writing, films and people. They have had a profound impact on me and in the shaping of my thinking. For each of us, this would have happened. For me the medium of expression is writing. It is how I am able to share my thoughts.

Has your career as a professional diplomat influenced the choices that you have made with your writing?

Being a professional diplomat gave me the opportunity to travel extensively, to interact with new cultures and to learn how despite our obvious differences, we are all essentially the same. The causes behind human thinking and behaviour are thus, profoundly similar. It is because of this that we can relate to the tragedy of Ruslana's suicide.

Tell us about some interesting people and places that you have encountered during the course of your travels. Did you write about them?

In the early days, I used to write about the many interesting people I encountered. An old Egyptian lady, of Jewish descent, for instance, who loved me and my wife like we were her children. But then, I tucked these stories away and hope to write them down soon.

Where is your writing going from here?

I am just finishing a set of long short stories set in Calcutta, which has been a wonderful writing experience. I have also started on the outline of a non-fiction manuscript on how we hate to fail and what we might be able to do about it. The latter manuscript explores in more detail one of the themes from 'Lessons from Ruslana' - that of failure and especially, the fear of failure.



ARYAA NAIK CULTIVATING KABIR

To Thee Thou hast drawn my love, O Fakir!
I was sleeping in my own chamber, and Thou didst awaken me; striking me with Thy voice, O Fakir!
I was drowning in the deeps of the ocean of this world, and Thou didst save me: upholding me with Thine arm, O Fakir!
Only one word and no second--and Thou hast made me tear off all my bonds, O Fakir!
Kabir says, "Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart, O Fakir!"

Saint Kabir

The saint poet Kabir (approx. 1440 AD - 1518 AD) expressed through his songs the ideal of seeing all of humanity as one. He awakened a lot of slumbering souls with his heartfelt poetry, simple but powerful in nature. Centuries later, his words are still a beacon of light in the darkness that engulfs human existence. A weaver by profession, Kabir ranks among the world's greatest poets.

Kabir wrote in the language of the masses, thus giving people from all walks of life an opportunity to understand the Divine. It is by the simplest metaphors, by constant appeals to needs, passions, relations which all men understand that he drove home his intense conviction - the reality of the soul's oneness with the Divine. He advocated the possibility of a "simple union" with Divine Reality, a notion that was reserved only to the learned high class and priests. He claimed, it was possible through devotion and the awareness that God resides neither in a temple nor in a mosque, but within.

*Jaise Til Mein Tel Hai, Jyon Chakmak Mein Aag
Tera Sayeen Tujh Mein Hai, Tu Jaag Sake To Jaag*

Just like Oil is Inside the Seed, and the Fire Inside the Flint Stone
Your God is Inside You, If you have the Power, Wake Up

The lucidity and profundity of Kabir's words have survived through the ages, his words hold true as much as they did 600 years ago. The simplicity and power of his poetry has influenced many people through ages, one of them being the great Indian Nobel laureate, poet Rabindranath Tagore, who deeply influenced by the mystic poet, translated many of his songs into English.



Today, in a day and age where beliefs are contested, personal relations have degenerated, the 'I' has become bigger than the universe and we live isolated lives confined in materiality, unaware of the self, Kabir's words seem to be the oasis in the desert of spiritual obliviousness. There are several attempts being made to popularize his teachings and reach out to people through popular culture.

One such effort is, **The Kabir Project**. An initiative undertaken by filmmaker Shabnam Virmani, the project brings together the experiences of a series of ongoing journeys in quest of this 15th century north Indian mystic poet as well as other Bhakti and Sufi poets in our contemporary worlds. Started in 2003, these journeys inquire into the spiritual and socio-political resonances of Kabir's poetry through songs, images and conversations.

The Kabir Project explores a stunning diversity of social, religious and musical traditions which Kabir inhabits, exploring how his poetry intersects with ideas of cultural identity, secularism, nationalism, religion, death, impermanence, folk and oral knowledge systems. The core inspiration of the project is music, and Kabir comes alive in 4 documentary films, 10 audio CDs and poetry books through the power of song.

Another initiative of The Kabir Project is **The Kabir Festival** which has been held in several cities of India and abroad and finds a yearly regular audience in Mumbai. The festival introduces the audiences to the message of Kabir. Screening of Documentary films followed by a facilitated discussion, live folk music as well as story telling sessions for the younger children all seek to foster an awareness and understanding of Kabir's message.

Reena Ginwala, in an attempt to engage people with Kabir's teachings in a more individualized manner has devised the **Kabir Samagri**, a tool kit which enables personal explorations and reflections to empower one to weave a fine fabric of the warp and weft of one's own living experience.

The Samagri is a box containing 44 insight cards illustrated in Warli folk art, 2 audio CDs of Kabir's songs and couplets in Malwi folk music, a booklet of translations and inquiry into our personal journey with Kabir, and another booklet of bhajans (devotional songs) with translations.

Neeraj Arya's **Kabir Cafe** is taking Kabir's teachings to the youth through music that will appeal to their sensibility. Infused with rock, pop, reggae and fusion, Kabir Cafe brings alive works of the mystic poet creating a 600-year-old musical dialogue between him and their audience. The band features lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist Neeraj Arya, who pioneered the Kabir Rock genre, along with Raman Iyer on the mandolin, Mukund Ramaswamy on violins and Viren Solanki on percussions and drums. Each song they perform is followed by an explanation of the poem by the band in a language easy to understand illustrated with contemporary examples. They've recently collaborated with popular Bollywood music director and singer Vishal Dadlani, taking Kabir's message beyond their live performance arena. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hrBqCpsCks>

These are attempts made by a few people to take us on Kabir's spiritual path. Now it is up to us to introspect and reflect.

*Kaal Kare So Aaj Kar, Aaj Kare So Ub
Pal Mein Pralaya Hoyegi, Bahuri Karoge Kub*

Take up the challenges of tomorrow today, do what has to be done today now.
It will only take a moment for life to end, how will you achieve all that you were meant to do



DR CANDESS M CAMPBELL

THE CHILD ARCHETYPE

The creativity of your subconscious mind not only shows up in dreams, but also shows up as archetypes in your life. Archetypes are overlying patterns that show up in all cultures that are seeded in the psyche. Some examples of archetypes are mother, judge, teacher and healer. When you begin to look at these patterns in your life, you can unleash your creative energy.

This week has been a combination of wringing every drop of sunshine and play out of the summer and thoughts of back to school! Grace, my granddaughter and I both played at the Garland Street Fair. She experienced bungee jumping and I rocked out to local blues musician [Sammy Eubanks](#).

In addition there was back to school shopping. As a child and as an adult, I have always loved learning, so looked forward to back to school. This is not true for all children. Although we all have the Child Archetype, there are different attributes in everyone.

The archetypes explored here are the Wounded Child, Orphan Child, the Magical or Innocent Child, the Nature Child, the Eternal Child and the Dependent Child. Many authors delve deep into the archetypes. Caroline Myss, a medical intuitive is a teacher and mentor that I hold in high regard. Some of this information comes from her writings.



Sammy Eubanks, Blues Musician, Spokane.

You are all the ages that you have ever been. On any given day you can access the child within. You may identify with a few of these child archetypes, but generally you will find one most prevalent. When you explore your child archetype, you may notice that you re-live your childhood through the ages of your children. For instance, if you have a two-year old, you may notice yourself saying “no!” all the time, or if you have a three-year old, you may continually question everything with “why?” I have a 16-year-old granddaughter and am reliving my adolescence for the second time. I have the same long blonde hair I had when I was 16. I bought a Mercedes “Lord won’t you buy me . . .” by Janice Joplin and I spend weekends dancing with a group of friends to the oldies of the 70s or to the blues of [Sammy Eubanks](#).

The Child archetype’s role is a balance between dependency and responsibility. It plays out in learning a healthy dependency or interdependency and figuring out when to stand up to the group and when to embrace the community.

The Wounded Child Archetype remembers the abuse, neglect and traumas experienced in childhood. Since therapy has become more available, many people identify with this archetype. It is the child that blames their parents for their lives, their choices, and the dysfunctional relationships they create. The positive side of the wounded child is they have the desire to help other wounded children and have a deep ability to be compassionate. The shadow side of the wounded child is they blame others for their pain and get stuck in the past, not moving through the painful memories into present time.

The Orphan Child Archetype is often found in childhood stories. Orphan children do not feel they belong to their families. One of my favorite stories is the Ugly Duckling. I was so happy when I realized I was not a duck at all, but was a swan. I had often felt I was dropped out of the sky into my family and wondered, “who are these people?” Orphans who do not feel they belong to the family often become independent early and feel like they raised themselves. The shadow side of the Orphan is they suffer from feelings of abandonment. They often seek out surrogate families or support groups in which to connect. Creating and maintaining healthy relationships is often a challenge for the Orphan Child.

The Magical Child and Innocent Child archetype sees beauty in all things. They are able to maintain wisdom and courage when what is happening around them may be catastrophic. A good example is Anne Frank. When her family was hiding from Nazis, she was still able to believe that humanity was good. The shadow side of the Magical Child leaves the person without a sense of possibility and a lack of transformation from evil to good. Pessimism and depression can surface, especially if the child had a dream that was discouraged by adults. Another shadow side is when as an adult, they get lost in fantasy and do not believe action and energy are required to obtain a result. They get lost in magical thinking.

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The Nature Child Archetype manifests as a child who has a strong, intimate bond with the earth and with animals. They may show a tender, emotional side, but also can be tough and have great survival skills. Many nature children can communicate with animals. Some nature children develop abilities to communicate with nature spirits and work with them to help the planet. Veterinarians and animal activists are often nature children. The shadow aspect of the Nature Child may manifest in being abusive to animals.

The Eternal Child Archetype has as an ability to stay young in body, mind and spirit. These children continue to have fun and enjoy life even as they age. They are the ones people who surf, ski and bike well into their later years, usually putting fun first. I imagine many who write books on anti-aging have this child archetype. The shadow Eternal Child manifests and an inability to grow up and be responsible. They remain child-like and don’t take their share of responsibility in a relationship or in society. I have heard clients refer to their husbands as being “another child to care for.” Women who have the Eternal Child archetype can be extremely dependent on others.

The Dependent Child Archetype is needy and dependent and feels like nothing is ever enough. They try to replace the emptiness from childhood, but they can’t figure out how to fill the hole inside. They often suffer from moderate to severe depression. If you identify with this archetype, use this information to alert yourself to when you are become too needy and self-absorbed. What helps is no matter what your resistance, get out and help someone else. When I see this archetype in full activation, it appears as a form of narcissism. Everything becomes about them and their needs.

By understanding and working with the Child Archetype, you will learn how these characteristics show up to support or challenge your relationships. Exploring your archetypes accelerates your increased consciousness and moves you toward your Divine Soul purpose.

Below take a moment to share the archetypes you identify with the most and how this plays out in your relationships and in your life.

You can find more information on the extensive research and incredible teachings of **Caroline Myss** at <http://www.myss.com>

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