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# Live encounters

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JOHN PETTIGREW  
IRISH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT & ARTIST  
IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ULYSEAS



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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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John Keeble Pettigrew was born and lived his formative year in the Republic of Ireland. He was educated at St.Columba's college up in the foothills above Dublin. After finishing school he attended Gurteen Agricultural/Horticultural College in County Tipperary, followed by The Horticultural Institute, Malahide and finally The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin where he graduated in 1980. He has been designing Gardens for nearly four decades in Asia, Europe and the USA. His landscape architect company, *Design In Nature*, is based in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia, where he lives with his family. John's landscape designs are inspired by nature and his love of water and other natural elements. He has won a number of international awards. He is available at *Design in Nature* studio, Rumah John, Banjar Daging Labak, Singakerta, Ubud, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia. Email: the\_grew@hotmail.com

**JOHN PETTIGREW**  
 INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED  
 IRISH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT & ARTIST  
*in an interview with*  
 Mark Ulyseas

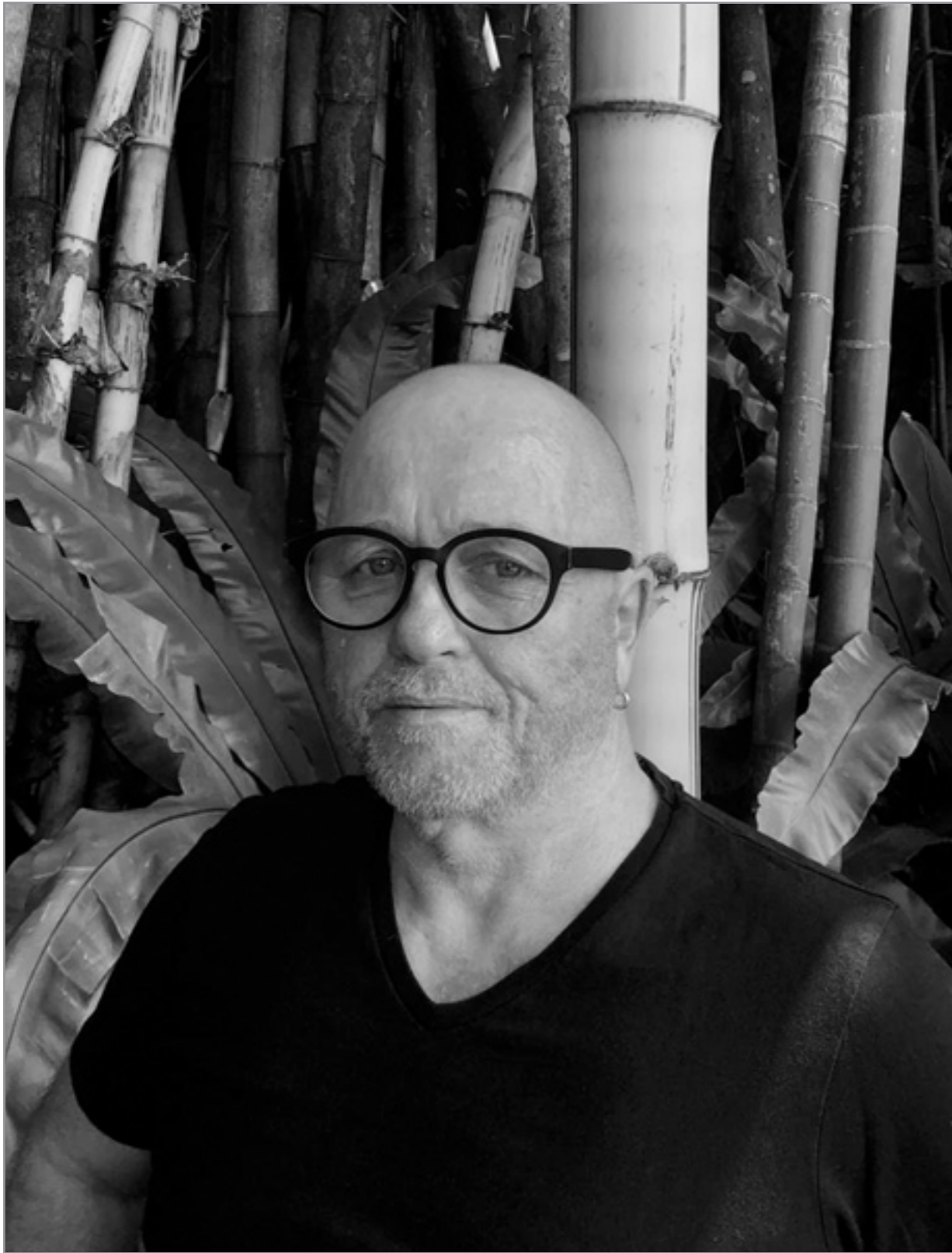
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John is one of those rare creatures that flourishes in a sublime world, the world of nature, abiding by her unwritten rules, to sculpt landscapes that resonate with the six senses.

His *artwork* reflects a deep understanding and respect for the living world of trees, flowers, water bodies and more. It is as if he guides the natural forms to engage and assist his every creation to form a delightful and harmonious environment that embraces all who venture therein.

John is based with his family in Bali, Indonesia.

This interview with John is a mere glimpse of his life and works.



John Pettigrew. Photograph by Nikita Sasha Pettigrew.

*Why are you a landscape architect? What was your inspiration to become one? Does your ancestry have anything to do with this?*

I have always had a love of nature and the outdoors, inspired by my surroundings growing up in County Wicklow - The Garden of Ireland.

My father [Stanley Pettigrew](#), an accomplished Irish landscape artist, was the Rector and later Canon of Wicklow and Glendalough Parish. My mother, [Vera Pettigrew](#), an author in her own standing, was a great lover of animals and nature in all its forms. We lived in an old Victorian house with a sprawling garden surrounded by fields and beyond that by the beautiful Murrough lakes, which flowed out into the ocean through Wicklow Town Harbour.

The formative years of childhood was embedded with images of the great Irish outdoors: rolling verdant hills, the purple mountains in the distance, the fascinating aquatic life in gurgling streams and still water bodies and the abundant wildlife. My father's artwork reflected this pulsating ethereal beauty of nature, unblemished images of Irish countryside; truly a celebration of life itself.

My mother's (Vera Pettigrew) books recorded for posterity the enchanting aspects of rural Ireland and its natural environs. Perhaps one should read her book [Where the River Flows: Annamoe Rectory](#).

With such parents one couldn't but be influenced by all things beautiful and wholesome. It was these formative years that drew me towards nature's embrace. After I left boarding school I enrolled with the Gurteen Agricultural College in Tipperary. This was followed by a year at the Horticultural Institute, which was just outside Dublin. I was lucky enough to be awarded a scholarship to The National Botanic Gardens and College in Glasnevin, Dublin from where I graduated in 1980.

It is said that we are the sum total of our ancestors and that we carry the dreams of our loved ones who have gone before us. Perhaps this is true for me, in a manner of speaking, for my ancestor [Professor James Bell Pettigrew](#) was a Scottish anatomist and noted amateur naturalist, aviation pioneer and museum curator. He was a distinguished naturalist in Britain and Professor of Anatomy at St. Andrews University from 1875 until his death. It was here that *The Bell Pettigrew Museum* was set up, posthumously.



*Ritz Carlton Mandapa (Reserve), Kedewatan, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*



*Ubud Hanging Gardens, Payangan, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

His early design included the construction of a flying machine prior to the Wright Brothers. In fact it was the Wright brothers who studied Professor James Bell Pettigrew's volumes on design titled *Design In Nature*. On his first flight Professor James Bell crashed, was injured and shortly passed away. But the flying machine was not his only invention. *Design in Nature* has become essential reading for academics.

I have named my landscape architecture company *Design in Nature* in honour of him.

Another uncle, engineer [Henry Bell](#), designed and built the first paddle steam engine called the Comet. It was in operation in 1812 and provided steam ship service on the River Clyde.

It is really fascinating to read their volumes and manuscripts and study all their mechanical drawings and hand drawn sketches. Their works give me inspiration and also a sense of meaning to the *design* in nature.

My ancestors and my parents have been the guiding light, the inspiration for my artwork in nature. And for this I am grateful

*What is your design philosophy? What role does Nature play in this? And what do you hope to achieve?*

I have a deep love of nature and this is reflected in the raw materials that I use in my design landscape architecture plans. Local raw materials are sourced keeping in mind the delicate balance of the natural world. So my design of hotels, resorts and private gardens centres on indigenous tree and plant species. This enables my art to come alive and take on a life of its own in harmony with its environs whether it is in Bali, India, China or anywhere else in the world.

Water is an intrinsic element in my art. I don't recall that I have ever designed a garden without a pond, stream, lake or any other water feature. Water is the very breath of nature. It sustains all life. The sound of water flowing, trickling, gushing or cascading creates a sense of perception, a feeling of freshness, of being alive. The colours of the natural world that reflect on the surface of water give life to the montage of greenery.



*Tamara Resort, Coorg, Karnataka, India. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*



*Ananta Resort, Pushkar, Rajasthan, India. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

*From Ireland to Bali is a long way – why are you based here?*

After I graduated from college I started designing gardens around Dublin and County Wicklow where I lived ... in those days it was mainly for private houses or schools.

During the winter months when the soil freezes over people don't think about their gardens so much. So during these months I would go off travelling.

*Our family has quite a lot of travel in our blood. My father was born and lived the first four years of his life in Chile, where my grandfather Keeble Pettigrew was an engineer designing bridges and roads in Chuquicamata, north of Valparaiso. I also have uncles and their families living in Africa and New Zealand.*

I would head off with my backpack for a few months and travel around the southern Mediterranean where the climate was warmer.... and have my own adventure ... after that it was India, Nepal, Mexico and South East Asia.

I would always secure landscape projects prior to taking the winter months off so that I would have work to come back to in Spring.

Despite my travels over the winter months, I had always taken my work very seriously.

From 1984 to 86 I moved to the USA. I lived and worked in San Francisco and the Bay Area .

I was very fortunate during the 1980's because I started redesigning the gardens of a large house and estate just outside the Village of Delgany in County Wicklow. This was a great opportunity as the client was happy to let me take off for a few months during the winter. This allowed me to continue with my travels.



*Private residence, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

I arrived in Bali In 1988 after travelling around Thailand, Malaysia and other parts of South East Asia.

I first visited Ubud (the cultural centre of Bali), which is home to artists, carvers, dancers, up in the foothills of the island. I fell in love with the stunning natural tropical beauty of the jungle, the deep verdant gorges, the fast flowing rivers and the lush green rice fields. Added to this was the intricately designed temples and palaces and the warm and friendly Balinese village folk.

In the early days my plan was to continue working in Ireland and visit Bali a few months during the winter. However, in the early 1990s when the building boom hit Bali some projects were offered to me. From then on I started working here.

I secured a piece of land and built a small house overlooking a beautiful valley just outside Ubud. This has been my home where my family, our animals and I live.

The first few years were challenging. There was no electricity or running water.

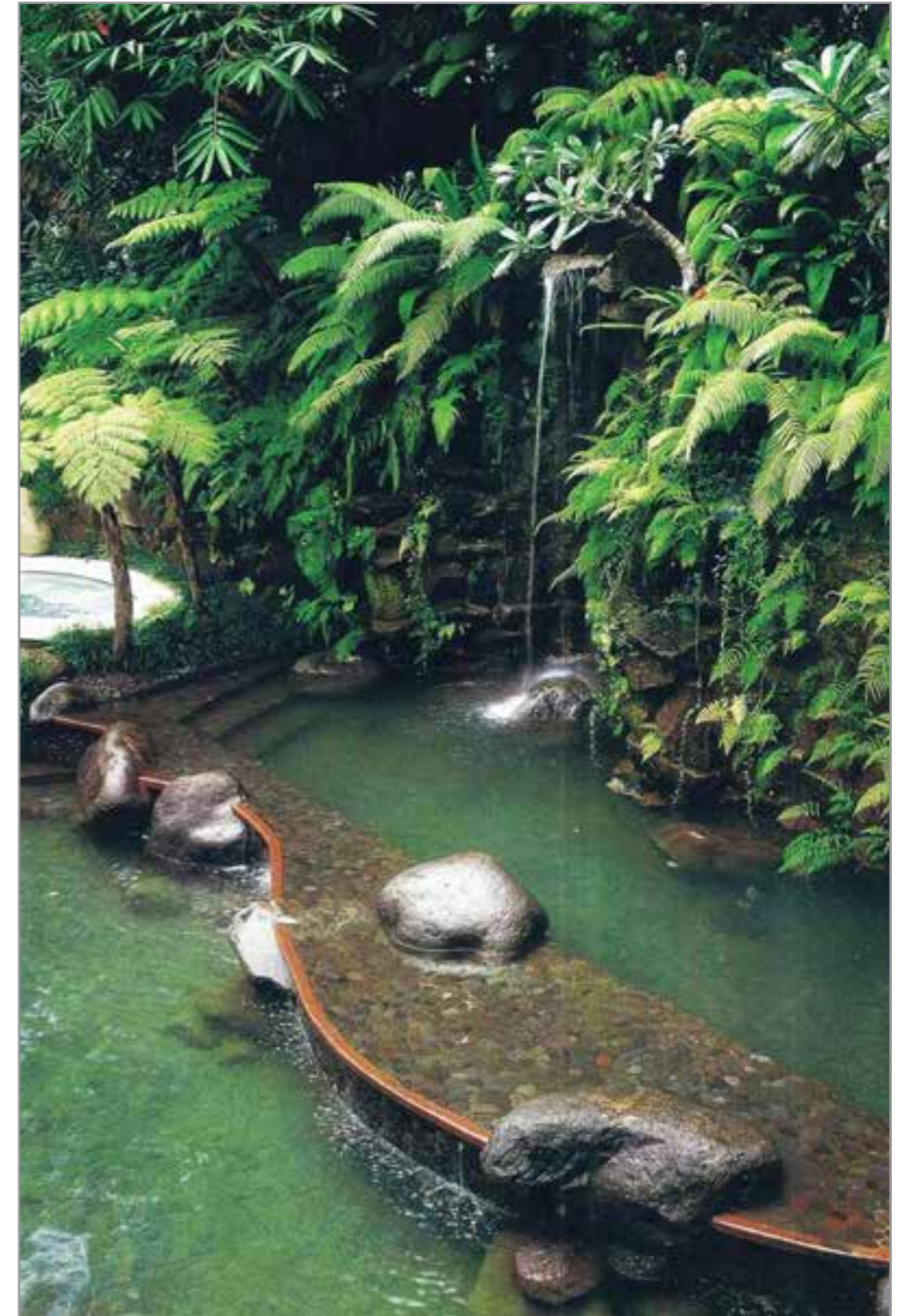
The first break came when I got the contract to design the Bali Reptile Park in Singapadu. Following this was a project for a high end hotel/resort.

Not long after this I met my future wife, Novi (Anindra Novitasari), who originally comes from Surabaya in Java. She happened to be working in Sales & Marketing at the resort, Begawan Giri now Como Shambhala Estate, where I was designing the gardens.

*Could you share with the readers a short summary of your years as a landscape architect, some of your favourite projects in various countries - Perhaps a personal story or two to highlight the different milestones of your fascinating career?*

Begawan Giri Estate in the Village of Begawan, which is about half an hour north of Ubud was designed on a stunningly beautiful peninsula perched high above fast flowing rivers and tropical jungle.

Looking back on this period I realise this was a great project for me to be involved in as it set a new bench mark in high end boutique tropical hotel/resorts at the time. It was a great opportunity challenging to say the least because the design team (architects & interior designers) were already experienced and had a large number of exclusive hotel/resorts under their belts and also awards to their credit.



Como Shambhala Resort, Payangan, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia.  
Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.



*Bulgari Resort Bali (Beach Club), Bali, Indonesia. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

When you are surrounded by talented designers who are quite happy to make comments about your work and not always in a positive manner it can become quite stressful. In those days I quite frankly wasn't sure that I was that talented at all. It was for me a great learning curve and I will always be grateful for the years I spent designing those gardens. I worked with a team of up to 200 workers sculpting the terraced gardens, designing the water gardens, waterfalls and the gardens that surrounded the large residences and hotel and the extensive slopes that swept down to the river below. During the first few years there I was accompanied by my friend and landscape partner at the time - Thorsten D'Heurese. We worked designing the gardens together.

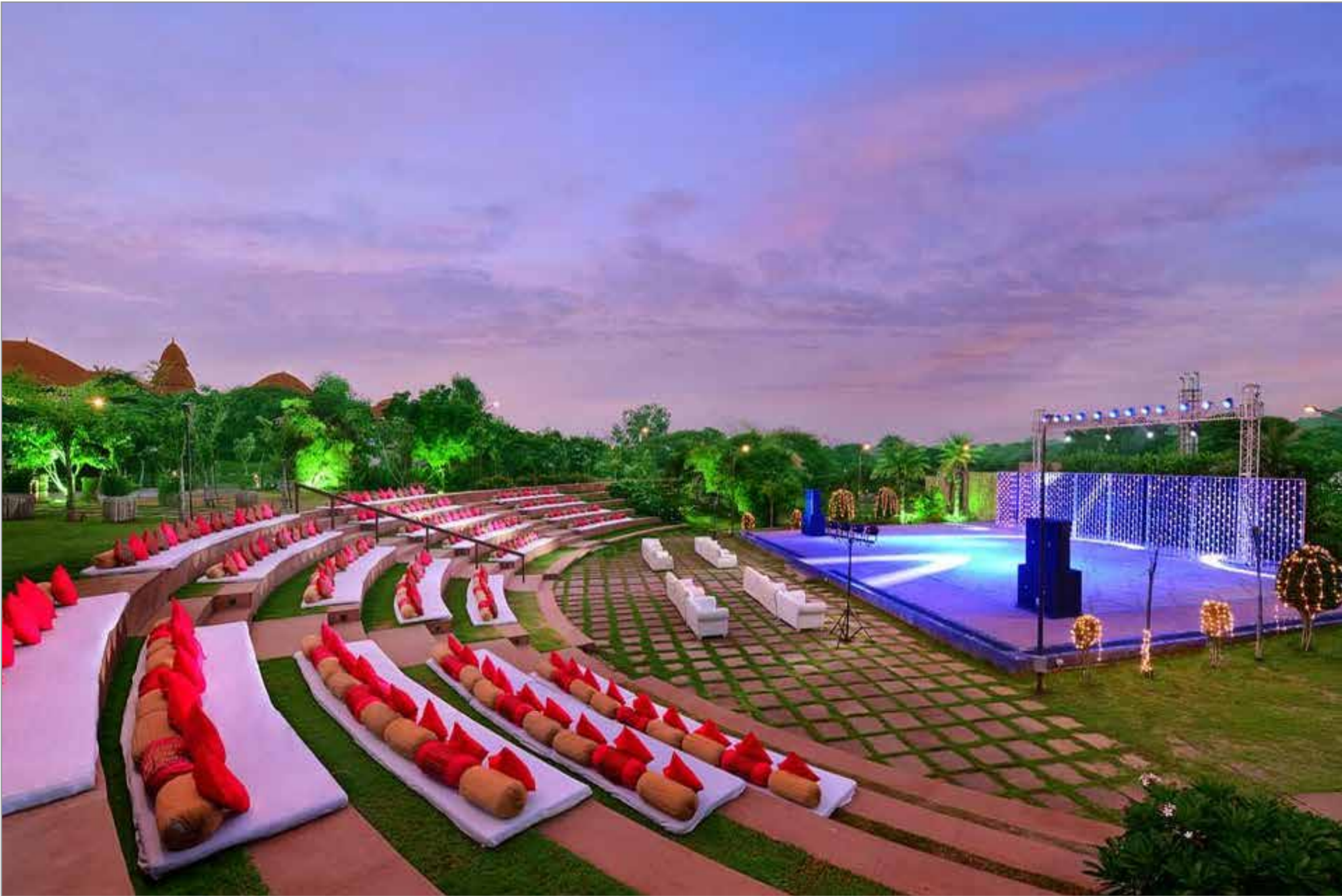
Over the years that followed I have designed a number of Four Seasons Resorts, Ritz Carlton and Bvlgari Resorts around Asia.

I feel very fortunate to have a really good team of Balinese landscape architects who have been working with me for many years now and have a lot of experience. Also my wife, Novi, has taken care of the business and accounting end of things. Actually Novi is the managing director of the company so I guess she's my boss. Novi is a Fashion Designer who is constantly turning out beautiful creations in her design studio, which is on the ground floor of our design studio that I built on our property about fifteen years ago. I hope that someday both (or even one) of my daughters will take over the reins of our work and take things forward. Nikita, our eldest, who is almost seventeen informs us that she is not interested. That she has her own life, as an accomplished dancer, musician who is into the performing arts. Our youngest Ashley, almost six years old, spends most of her time when she's not at School - painting, sketching and designing amazing houses for her Lego family ... *so you never know!*

I remember a time in the mid 1980's (when I was on my travels) arriving in the beautiful city of Udaipur (city of lakes and palaces) in Rajasthan (India) and thinking to myself - *there must be somebody who would like to have a garden here*. So it is wonderful to be back there again designing hotel/ resorts in Udaipur and also around India.



*Teja Suara Residence,, Como Shambhala Estate (ex Begawan Giri Ertate) Begawan village, Payangan, Bali, Indonesia.  
Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew*



Ananta Resort, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.

With the larger projects ... also comes more pressure and deadlines ... and as I write this... it's about 8. 30 pm ... I am at my desk while all my team members are working - finishing a planting plan for a new Ritz Carlton(Reserve) project we are working on that is located on the Tibetan Plateau in Sichuan, China .

I feel fortunate to be working on these large projects nowadays and wonder if I still lived in Ireland would I have had the same opportunities there. That being said I have worked hard over the years and as I mentioned I have great support from our team.

I firmly believe that if you work hard and do your best regardless of what you do opportunities will come your way... it's about seizing those opportunities and making them a reality.

In the words of Daisaku Ikeda  
(President of Soka Gakkai International)  
The Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin

“Life is best lived by Being Bold and Daring “  
People tend to grow fearful when they taste failure,  
face a daunting challenge or fall ill,  
Yet that is precisely the time to become even bolder .  
Those who are victors at heart are the greatest of all champions.

*What message do you have for the world, particularly for those young aspiring landscape architects fresh from college?*

Passion ... I believe is so important. I am very fortunate that I really love my work. I have put in the years and I have no intention of retiring even though I have been at this for almost forty years now. In fact I think my passion has only grown over the years.



*Ritz Carlton Mandapa (Reserve), Kedewatan, Bali, Indonesia. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

It's always a great help if you can sketch or paint and even if you're not good at it, you will improve over time. I am fortunate that my Dad is a very talented and recognised Irish landscape painter (RHA). Even now when we visit him in Ireland every summer we both get up at the crack of dawn and go out into the wild with our canvases and brushes and paint, to paint in the embrace of the elements. My 93 year-old Dad is still creating!

It always helps in your landscape design presentations if you have some hand drawn sketches it gives a personal touch and is always appreciated by clients. Of course you need the 3D Max images, Photoshop work and Autocad.

It seems funny to see myself writing this for I was always the designer who used to say 'No way, I'm never going to get into computers!' Now with all the different programs available these days, my team of designers do all their work on their computers in my studio. But I am still happy with my pencils and colours. The closest I get is my iPad and iPhone, which I use constantly. I can't imagine those early days without these gadgets.

Hard work is also very important and giving it your best shot. Like everything in life if you stick to something for long enough and do your best eventually opportunities will come along. However, with the larger projects also comes more pressure and less free time.

But these days for me it's more about balancing my work, my family, and my love of art and music and to dedicate enough time to each.



*Gentry family villa residence, Sayan, Bali. Photograph courtesy John Pettigrew.*

Dr. Namrata Goswami is an author, strategic analyst, and consultant on counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, alternate futures, and great power politics. Earlier, she was Senior Fellow at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and Research Fellow at the Institute for Défense Studies and Analyses (IDSA). She is the recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship. Currently, she is working on a book project on the topic of 'Great Power Ambitions in Outer Space' to be published by Lexington Press, an imprint of Rowman and Littlefield.

## THE RACE TO THE MOON IS GETTING CROWDED: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Dr Namrata Goswami

The strategic focus of spacefaring states like the U.S, Russia, China, India and Japan is the Moon, and cislunar space [space between Earth and the Moon].[1] This focus on deep space, beyond orbital space, implies an expansion of the space economy from purely information services of use to Earth (satellite-based), weaponization and militarization of space (limited vision), to sectors that include space mining and manufacturing (expanded vision). The expanded space vision includes the use of key logistical nodes specifically the Earth-Moon Lagrange points for economic advantage.[2] An estimate by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory specifies that the Moon has three vital resources we could utilize: Helium 3, to develop future technology like nuclear fusion; water to convert into rocket fuel, agriculture, and to sustain life; and rare earth elements like platinum, titanium, scandium and yttrium. [3] A reusable space transportation architecture compatible with lunar propellant is the shaping platform to enable the broader "econsphere".[4] Lunar propellant further lowers the cost of access and movement throughout the entire volume of cislunar space.

### Strategic Shift

This race to the Moon and its resources is the beginning of a long-term strategic shift regarding the conception of outer-space; from short term presence (flags and footprints) and mysterious awe, to long term habitats and familiarity. China has the most advanced lunar industrialization vision so far, operationalized, by a well-constructed strategy.[5] The strategy as specified by Chinese civilian space officials, senior scientists and PLA Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) space officials, is to establish China's permanent space station (2022), followed by a lunar base (2036), with resource extraction capabilities (2040).[6] Lunar resources, from the Chinese perspective, can be utilized for the construction of Space Solar Power Satellites, employed to beam power (laser or microwave) to its lunar bases, enabling China to engage in deep space.[7] On May 5, 2020, China successfully launched the Long March 5B with a lift capacity of 22 tons to Low Earth Orbit (LEO). [8]



Dr Namrata Goswami



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/spacex-spaceship-satellite-orbit-693229/>

The Long March 5B will lift China's permanent space station components and the critical Chang'e 5 lunar sample return mission by the end of this year. For China, the focus on controlling cislunar is connected to their overall grand strategy of national rejuvenation. [9]

In comparison, the U.S. space strategy has oscillated between a focus on the Moon, [10] to a change in focus to Mars, [11] back to a focus on a 'Moon to Mars' strategy. [12] For the U.S. space community at large, there is a continuing sense of achievement and nostalgia with the Apollo human landings on the Moon in 1969, even so it was only to achieve ideological victory vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. [13] As Brent Ziarnick point out: it did not result in any long term sustainable lunar presence or bases, or advance deep space faring human presence capacities. [14] This end result was expected by some U.S. space enthusiasts...children of Apollo, as they fashion themselves, the likes of Rick Tumlinson, one of the foremost and influential space enthusiast. [15] Unlike China with its Chang'e 4 robotic mission actively scouting the Moon's far side as we speak, [16] the U.S. does not have a presence on the Moon. Neither does the U.S. have an independent launch capacity to get to the lunar surface today. It is aspiring to change that by 2024 with NASA's Space Launch System (SLS), [17] the Orion spacecraft, and its latest award of lunar lander contracts to Blue Origin, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Dynetics and Space X. [18]

Russia announced its refocus on the Moon with resource extraction ambitions backed by a three phase base construction plan between 2025 and 2040. [19] The first stage is a lunar orbiter module (2025), the second phase will be the construction of a lunar base (2025-2034) and the third phase (2040) is the construction of an "integrated manned moon exploration system." [20] Japan is prioritizing the Moon since the discovery of water-ice on its surface, with an eye on a lunar base by 2030, Moon colonies, and resource extraction by 2040. [21] India's lunar mission *Chandrayaan 1* was the first mission to confirm the presence of water ice on the Moon in 2008. [22] The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) specified what that discovery meant for space resources.

The comprehensive evidence for lunar water coming from surface, sub-surface, deep interior and the exosphere is most exciting as one looks at future space exploration and travel...As we begin a wider exploration of space and the solar system, Moon could form the base for fuel and oxygen and other critical raw materials. If Moon can be considered a pit-stop for resources including water, space transportation could be more affordable as some studies have shown. [23]

India's subsequent lunar mission in 2019 made an attempt to soft land close to the lunar south pole, but failed in the last few seconds. The third Indian lunar mission is scheduled for 2021. [24]

## Legal Implications

As major spacefaring countries are shifting the space discourse from planting 'flags and footprints', to focusing on lunar bases and space resource exploitation, how to regulate these activities remains at best, ambiguous. Major space faring states have divergent motivations and may resist signing onto multilateral legal frameworks especially in the context of trillions of dollars to be made in space. [25] Ouyang Ziyuan, father of the Chang'e mission and Ye Peijian, the head of China's Moon mission specifies that it is critical for China to be first on the Moon and establish sustainable presence so that it has the lead role in framing that normative framework. [26] NASA released the Artemis Accords in May 2020, to create an international normative framework led by the U.S. in regard to the Moon. [27] The Accords highlight the importance of international partnerships, and the primacy of bilateral agreements between NASA and other international space agencies regarding lunar exploration and development. What is new in the Accords is the thrust on commercial space activities and the establishment of safety zones specifically to avoid harmful interference resulting in conflict. With regard to space resources, the Accords specify that "the ability to extract and utilize resources on the Moon, Mars, and asteroids will be critical to support safe and sustainable space exploration and development...the Artemis Accords reinforce that space resource extraction and utilization can and will be conducted under the auspices of the Outer Space Treaty, with specific emphasis on Articles II, VI, and XI." [28] The accord, however, does not establish how space resources once extracted, will be owned or who will own them.

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) prohibits any kind of national appropriation of celestial bodies, but does not prohibit exploration and use of outer-space. Article 1 of the OST states: "Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be *free for exploration and use* by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and there shall be free access to all areas of celestial bodies". [29]

Does that mean that exploitation and extraction of space resources under the Artemis Accords support private profit or individual state profit? There are some who argue that "the United States clearly views space resources utilization as both a key part of achieving the long-term goals of the Artemis program and future human space exploration, and as a foundational element of a robust future commercial space economy." [30] Wayne White submitted a proposal called the "Space Pioneer Act" to the Members of the U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Aviation and Space and Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Space & Aeronautics in October 2019 that offered a legal framework for limited property rights in space. [31]

There is, however, strong disagreement on the utilization and ownership of space resources given the OST Article 1 also specifies that “the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the *interests of all countries*, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind.”[32] Some interpret the terms ‘province of mankind’ as meaning ‘space as a global common’.

The International Institute of Space Law (IISL) published a background paper in 2016 on space resource ownership issues. The paper, perhaps driven by the 2015 U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act that supported U.S. citizens’ ownership of space resources, offered a detailed analysis of international space law and the impact of such national legislations on asteroid mining. The IISL paper argued that OST Article VI, sentence 2 “the activities of nongovernmental entities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall require authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate state party to the treaty” could imply the requirement by the signatory state for national regulatory legislation for the private space sector.[33] This is even more so for the launching state or from where the private entity is launching into space due to the 1972 convention on international liability for damage caused by state objects. [34]

As mentioned earlier, the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act Title *IV Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act of 2015* specified the space resource context for U.S. citizens:

(1) facilitate commercial exploration for and commercial recovery of space resources by United States citizens; (2) discourage government barriers to the development in the United States of economically viable, safe, and stable industries for commercial exploration for and commercial recovery of space resources in manners consistent with the international obligations of the United States; and (3) *promote the right of United States citizens to engage in commercial exploration for and commercial recovery of space resources free from harmful interference*, in accordance with the international obligations of the United States and subject to authorization and continuing supervision by the Federal Government. [35]

Continuing on with that Title IV specification of the 2015 Act, President Donald Trump signed an executive order on April 6, 2020, squarely dealing with the issue of utilization and recovery of space resources as directed by the Act.

Uncertainty regarding the right to recover and use space resources, including the extension of the right to commercial recovery and use of lunar resources, however, has discouraged some commercial entities from participating in this enterprise.



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/moon-planet-universe-jupiter-1817885/>



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/landscape-water-rock-spaceship-1328858/>

Questions as to whether the 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (the “Moon Agreement”) establishes the legal framework for nation states concerning the recovery and use of space resources have deepened this uncertainty, particularly because the United States has neither signed nor ratified the Moon Agreement... Americans should have the right to engage in commercial exploration, recovery, and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law. Outer space is a legally and physically unique domain of human activity, and the United States *does not view it as a global commons* [emphasis added] Accordingly, it shall be the policy of the United States to encourage international support for the public and private recovery and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law. [36]

Russia reacted to Trump’s April 6 executive order with its space agency, Roscosmos, asserting that “attempts to expropriate outer space and aggressive plans to actually take over other planets” is against international cooperation. [37] The Kremlin likened Trump’s executive order to colonization of space with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov coming out strong, stating it would be “unacceptable” for the U.S. to privatize and colonize space.[38] Such statements from Russia are ironic since Russia itself revealed its 2040 Moon colonization plans in 2014.[39] Yevgeny Mikrin, Russia’s Chief Designer of its Manned Space Programs in an interview to the state run RIA Novosti news in November 2018, specified, that the construction of the moon colony was to begin in 2025.”[40] And despite its stress on international cooperation, Russia’s lunar plans stressed that “independence of the national lunar program must be ensured regardless of the conditions and the extent of the participation in it by foreign partners.” Russia itself has space mining goals with expressed interest to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Luxembourg [one of the few countries with space mining legislation].[41] In March 2019, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova specified that, “In January [2019] we offered Luxembourg a framework agreement on cooperation in the use of (mining) exploration in space. We expect an answer from Luxembourg...”[42] Russia’s own 1993 space law does not specifically mention space resources. However, Article 2 (1) of the law states that “space activity shall be defined as any activity immediately connected with operations to explore and use outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies.”[43] Article 2 (2) states, “space activity comprises creating (including development, manufacture and test), as well as using and transferring of space techniques, space technology, other products and services necessary for carrying out space activity.”[44] Extraction of extra-terrestrial resources finds mention in the Keystones of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Area of Space Activities for the Period till 2030. [45] And despite Russia’s protests against U.S. space privatization, their 1993 space law Article 4 (1) highlights “restriction of monopolistic activity (read state) and the development of entrepreneurial activity.”[46]

In April 2019, Greece submitted a ‘Proposal for the establishment of a working group for the development of an international regime for the utilization and exploitation of space resources’ to the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Greece called for the establishment of an ad hoc working group “with a mandate to develop and propose alternative legal solutions capable of providing the legal certainty necessary for acts of exploration, exploitation and utilization of outer space resources”. Greece’s proposal was supported by Belgium, a signatory to the 1979 Moon agreement (ratified by 18 states so far), with a joint working paper on how one could formulate a space resources legal regime, based on existing international law. Interestingly, the Greece and Belgium Working paper stated: -

The need for an international legal regime for space resource exploitation also arises from the fact that national approaches to space resource exploitation are bound to result in conflicts between competing players, if left to evolve on their own without international guidance. Hence, even if there is no legal objection to States interpreting at will their international obligations under the Outer Space Treaty when regulating space resources, there is still a clear need for an international institutional framework to regulate competing activities. In order for such a framework to be effective, it would have to be focused on the main purposes described in article 11, paragraph 7, of the Moon Agreement, the value of which is greater and goes beyond any views on the ratification of the Moon Agreement. Those purposes include the following: (a) the orderly and safe development of natural resources from outer space; (b) the rational management of those resources; (c) the expansion of opportunities in the use of those resources; and (d) an equitable sharing by all States in the benefits derived from those resources, whereby the interests and needs of the developing countries, as well as the efforts of those countries which have contributed either directly or indirectly to the exploration of outer space, shall be given special consideration... article 11 of the Moon Agreement, even though currently only ratified by 18 States, can provide a useful starting point for further discussions concerning the establishment of an international regime for the exploitation of space resources in accordance with established principles of international space law.[47]

The viability of the Moon agreement was however annulled by Trump’s April 06 executive order, a serious move considering it came from the primary space power. That executive order clearly directed the U.S. Secretary of State to reject the Moon agreement of 1979, especially any attempts to treat it as customary international law.

The Moon Agreement. The United States is not a party to the Moon Agreement. Further, the United States does not consider the Moon Agreement to be an effective or necessary instrument to guide nation states regarding the promotion of commercial participation in the long-term exploration, scientific discovery, and use of the Moon, Mars, or other celestial bodies. Accordingly, the Secretary of State shall object to any attempt by any other state or international organization to treat the Moon Agreement as reflecting or otherwise expressing customary international law. [48]

On November 12, 2019, The Hague International Space Resources Governance Working Group adopted Building Blocks for The Development of an International Framework on Space Resource Activities to offer us some insights on space resources. The Hague Group, however, hesitated to come up with anything definite stating that:

Guided by the principle of adaptive governance, the Working Group considered it neither necessary nor feasible to attempt to comprehensively address space resource activities in the building blocks: space resource activities should be incrementally addressed at the appropriate time on the basis of contemporary technology and practices. [49]

The Hague group supported the creation of an enabling environment for space resources, and called for the establishment of an international framework that defined space resources within international treaty law, especially within the provisions of the United Nations treaties on space. The group called for the development of recommendations on domestic space legislations pertaining to space resources and dispute resolution mechanisms. The Hague Group's block 13 suggested that "the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and humankind." [50] The Trump executive order of April 6 contradicts the Hague group's block 13 point of shared benefits based on the premise of space as a 'global common'. Nothing concrete pertaining to how space resources once extracted, would be dealt with, were offered by the Hague Group, meaning there was no clear legal procedure offered, to work from. So, the key question remains unanswered: would the state or group of states or private company that develops the space mining technology, and funds the extraction and logistics mission, be permitted to profit from their investments?

Significantly, major spacefaring nations like China and India have started working on their national space legislation. China's space legislation is expected this year, with CNSA Secretary-General Tian Yulong, stating that "national space law has been listed in the national legislation plan, and the CNSA is drafting the law".[51] There are indications that China's national space law will prioritize 'first



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/astronaut-astronomy-satellite-moon-1946806/>

'first come, first serve.' India is working on a space law as well especially with the rise of its new private space sector. [52] Japan enacted its Space Activities Act in 2016, aimed at regulating its private space sector, address issues of liability, insurance, financial guarantees and licenses, but was silent on space resources.[53] Luxembourg has a space mining legislation. The UAE has come out with its National Space Policy, that prioritizes the development and regulation of its commercial space sector, and showcase Arab and Middle East space innovation. [54] The UAE space law offers permits for space tourism and ownership of space objects. A collection of national space laws is found in the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs website.[55]

With the growing focus on the Moon's resources and cislunar space, it is appropriate to establish the process of how resources can be owned and privately distributed from space and in space, and how to share profits or individually profit. What transpires if a conflict breaks out over ownership of trillions of dollars' worth of space resources between states or their private entities with an adversary state? Who will be the adjudicating body? If there is an international legal vacuum, individual states will legislate on their own given the pressure they face from their private space entities to establish some legal clarity for ownership and control over their investments in space resources. The key strategic requirement is enforceability of a legal norm. Chinese space policy makers have made it known that they understand the strategic logic of being somewhere first on the Moon for logistical and normative advantage. This perspective is backed by an aggressive long term lunar program. In this scenario of legal uncertainty, the state with a cislunar space presence capacity and a space resource industrial vision will benefit. Afterall, it will be their strategy that will drive their technology, not the other way around.

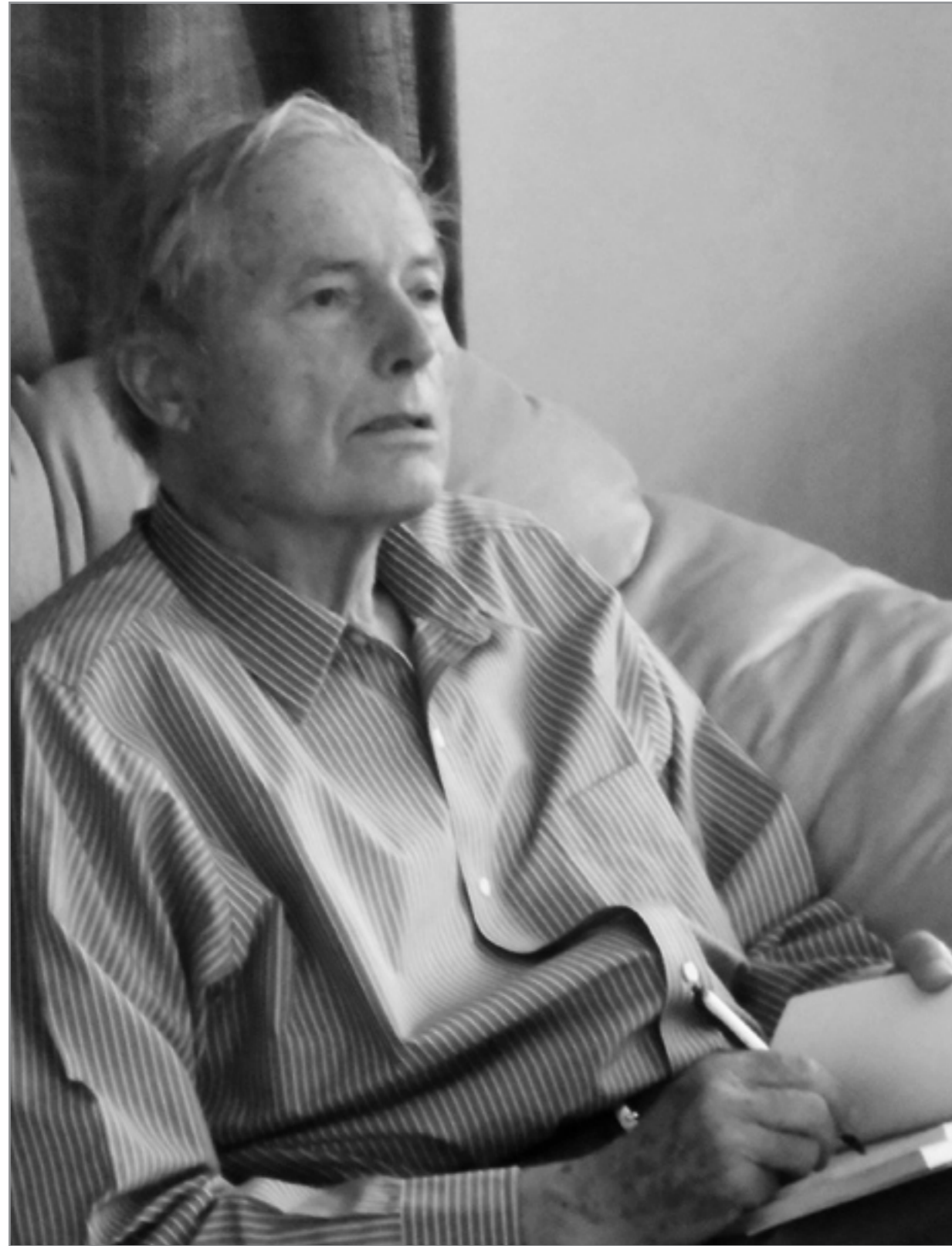
*End-notes overleaf...*

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## DR HOWARD RICHARDS

### WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIES THAT WILL EMERGE AFTER THE PANDEMIC

What economies and living conditions will be like after the coronavirus pandemic is a matter of uncertainty and foreboding. The pandemic may never go away. It may continue to propagate itself indefinitely. It may mutate several more times. If so, human cultures will not only have to evolve, but will have to evolve several times, in order to cope with changing physical realities. Surely, in any case, we human beings will be wiser to organize ourselves collectively to defend ourselves than we would be simply to wait while fate determines our destiny. In the process of species-self-defence, teachers are key.

This short note will be a sketch, or rather an illustration, of a proposal. As Peter Drucker and many others have said, intriguingly and I think to some extent truly, you cannot predict the future, but you can invent it. Quarantined, forbidden to leave the house, I have been watching more informational programs than Netflix. Three of them seemed especially relevant to defining the social responsibilities of education in 2020. The first of these was about cash flow management for business managers: 'managing cash flow when revenue and funding dry up'. Most of the managers in the seminar felt threatened with bankruptcy by today's recession. [1] Typically they expected to lose 35 to 40 percent of their revenue. The solutions considered by the presenters consisted mainly of demanding payment forcefully to maximize revenues as much as possible under the circumstances; and making careful choices about which bills to pay under the circumstances. The seminar leaders observed that the best managed businesses would survive, while the less well managed businesses would fail and cease to exist.

Dr Howard Richards. Photo credit: Pasquale Misuraca, Italian filmmaker.



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/photos/child-asian-kid-baby-girl-young-5058511/>

The second was an interview with Noam Chomsky. [2] Chomsky urged that the end of the pandemic, when it comes, MUST NOT BE NEOLIBERALISM passed off as the return of NORMALCY. He cites facts showing that, especially in the United States, the pandemic itself was aggravated by heartless neoliberalism. For example: a ventilator manufacturer discontinued its line of inexpensive ventilators because it interfered with its sales of expensive ventilators. For a capitalist firm, that was normal, not abnormal. To paraphrase Pink Floyd, 'We don't want no normalcy!'

Thirdly, I attended some of the Weekly Economics Briefings of the New Economics Foundation, for example 'Child Care Under Lockdown.' They were about public policies for people markets do not provide for, and who therefore have to be provided for some other way. I learned that for most poor people in the UK raising the money to pay the rent and the utilities is more stressful than obtaining food.

Let these three programs represent three considerable swaths of our 'students,' the world's population, for whom we proudly (perhaps too proudly) are 'teachers' or 'teacher/learners.' The three swaths are: those concerned with saving the businesses that are now providing jobs, products, services and profits; the indignados; and the losers in the marketplace (that is to say, those who do not sell enough at high enough prices to earn a decent living). What we must teach them, or facilitate everybody learning, is how to emerge from today's pandemic plus economic collapse with economies that sustainably meet human needs in harmony with nature. The methodology some of us are proposing is called 'unbounded organizing.' [3] Its objective is to align across sectors for the common good. One of its premises is that the presently dominant system does not serve the true interests of even one single human being. [4]

Bounded? What that means can be seen from current responses of governments to the economic crisis triggered in many countries by the virus. (In other countries the economic crisis, which many have predicted for some time, had a different trigger. Here in Chile the trigger was an increase in subway fares the 18th of October, 2019. By the time the Coronavirus arrived we had already agreed on a new social compact and started writing a new constitution.) Whatever the trigger, the response tends to feature one or more 'economic stimuli.'

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The 'stimuli' presuppose a picture of an economy somewhat like a picture of a machine. Investment, as Keynes put it, is the *causa causans* that moves the machine. [5] The purpose of the stimuli is to make investors confident that their investments will be profitable. They consist of money in several forms: subsidies, tax cuts, loans, public works, public purchase of private debts unlikely to be paid, subsidies to consumers to encourage them to buy and thus make sales to them profitable... They have several sources: increasing the public debt, cutting other budget lines (e.g. education, and generally defunding the welfare state), creating more money by state fiat.

Concerning whether today's wave of stimuli will solve today's social and ecological problems, let me just say that I agree with what I suspect you already think. The thinking guiding mainstream governmental economic responses to the crisis attributed to the Coronavirus illustrates the meaning of 'bounded.' It assumes a world of self-interested actors each regarding himself or herself as the centre of the universe; the number of possible solutions to the problem is regarded as small; it is conventional; it does not question today's dominant institutions.

'Unbounded organizing' emerged from experiences in community development organizing cooperatives for small producers of poultry and hogs In Botswana, in the movements resisting apartheid in South Africa; [6] from the work in northeast Brazil of Paulo Freire's friend Clodomiro Santos de Moraes running 'laboratories' where peasants learned how to organize by organizing, [7] from C.H.A.T. (Cultural Historical Activity Theory), [8] from the South African Research Chair in Development Education [9] and numerous other experiences and theories.

### An Example of Unbounded Thinking and Topics for Discussion

Consider, for example, an 'unbounded' construction of the economies of the future that will emerge after the pandemic:

1. The exponential increases in the development and application of amazing new technologies should be organized to meet the needs of every human being in harmony with nature. [10]
2. The human population of the earth should be appropriate for the carrying capacity of the earth.



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/photos/shopping-spending-till-slip-879498/>

3. The majorities who will be redundant in the labour market should and can be able to lead dignified and meaningful lives engaging in intrinsically worthwhile activities. It will no longer be required (for most people) to sell something or to contribute to making something to be sold (a 'vendible commodity' in Adam Smith's definition of 'productive' [11] ) in order to earn money to buy what they need.

4. An example: a few of the millions of unemployed young people in South Africa were put to work singing and dancing. They had to audition to join the troupe. They needed talent to start with, and then they had to be punctual, neat and clean, drug-free, easy to get along with --and dedicated to practice practice practice. They performed for the students at local elementary schools. The performances were great successes, even though their impoverished young fans had no money to buy tickets. [12]

5. Where did the money to pay the young artists come from? Guy Standing emphasizes the importance of rents in financing a Universal Basic Income. The same can be said when outside funding discreetly supports an intrinsically desirable activity. [13] Rents (or surplus) can roughly be defined as money that can safely be moved to where it is more needed without unduly impairing the capacity of its source to continue producing. But the teachers and the students have to ponder the concepts of rent and surplus in much more detail if humanity is going to construct the new, humane, and green economies it needs.

6. Why did I write 'discreetly' in the previous paragraph? Because on an unbounded organizing approach, local resources are organized first in response to locally identified problems. Outside supporters contribute resources (in this case the whole salaries of the artists) while encouraging local ownership (In this case as in many others the outside supporters never would have thought of the idea, much less organized it and run it).

7. The good news is that at a physical level, science is delivering to humanity the capacity to generate huge surpluses. The robots are more than happy to do nearly all the heavy lifting and most of the complicated thinking for us. They do not ask for vacations and they do not even need to sleep at night. But humanity lacks institutions to organize and ethically legitimate sharing the wealth with, and cheering the souls of, the millions who are no longer needed in the work force, and the other millions who never were needed in the work force.

From Socrates onward teachers have provoked learners to have long talks about questions with more than one answer. In 1637 in his *Discourse on Method* René Descartes complained: the ancients went on and on about virtue without ever establishing any definite conclusions resting on firm foundations. But Descartes missed something, Often the point is not to establish facts. It is to construct *human relationships, institutions, social reality*. In our case, the new economies cannot be built by the research methods Descartes pioneered and advocated. They require culture shifts.

I feel embarrassed because I must leave this topic when there are so many more issues that immediately cry out to be discussed. And there are so many ways that what I have already written could be easily misunderstood when it is delivered with so little context to explain it. I would beg the reader to put these ideas a little more in context by reading a four page summary of my philosophy which will be found here : <https://researchoutreach.org/articles/moral-ethical-realism-unbounded-organization/>

I will end with a few words concerning teachers *nombre que Tú llevaste por la tierra*. [14] I began with three samples of the population of the earth. It is a population that at this point in history must learn functional morals and ethics, hitting the ground as functional economies. First the stressed-out managers. Second the outraged. Third the victims. The three can be compared to the three blind men grasping respectively the trunk, a leg and the tail of an elephant. Each lives a different reality; performs for a different generalized other; perfects (as best she or he can, with more or less motivation or discouragement) a different personality.

At this point I applaud what many teachers are already doing. They are facilitating activities showing that although any one of us only has a very partial view, we are all living in the same elephant. Our fates are joined. Our viewpoints are multiple.

From Socrates onward teachers have provoked learners to have long talks about questions with more than one answer. In 1637 in his *Discourse on Method* René Descartes complained: the ancients went on and on about virtue without ever establishing any definite conclusions resting on firm foundations. But Descartes missed something, Often the point is not to establish facts. It is to construct *human relationships, institutions, social reality*. In our case, the new economies cannot be built by the research methods Descartes pioneered and advocated. They require culture shifts.

For the latter purposes, no findings are better established in the psychology of moral development than the salutary effects of understanding other people's point of view, perspective-taking. [15] From Jean Piaget's children playing marbles onwards; taking into account the feelings, needs and thoughts of others is a gateway to games with rules and institutions with norms. Perspective-taking appears to trigger the remarkable human capacity for what John Searle calls deontic ethics. Because their motives can be deontic, humans are capable of doing things they would not otherwise want to do, because it is their duty; because it is the rule; because it is the right thing to do. [16] Without this remarkable capacity we humans could not have created many institutions we take for granted, and without nurturing it we will not be able to create the new more ethical economies we need.



Photograph <https://pixabay.com/photos/store-shop-market-signs-signage-1245758/>

Lastly, I would like to mention an argument made some time ago by Georges Gusdorf. In the long run there is, he suggests, no reason for employing human teachers, as electronic devices become more effective and more inexpensive for learning subject after subject; except one decisive reason: To form responsible and caring people who will build responsible and caring institutions, it is indispensable for learners to interact with responsible and caring flesh and blood human beings.[17]

End Notes

1. Africa.com Liquidity: Managing Cash Flow When Revenue and Funding are Drying Up. April 22 1500 South Africa Time

2. Portside Chomsky and Pollin: To Heal From COVID-19 portside.org › 2020-04-20 ›

3. Gavin Andersson and Howard Richards (2015). *Unbounded Organizing in Community*. Lake Oswego OR: World Dignity University Press. [www.unboundedacademy.org](http://www.unboundedacademy.org)

4. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett document the point that it does not serve the true interests of anybody to live in a highly unequal society. *The Spirit Level*. London: Allen Lane, 2009.

5. John Maynard Keynes (1937) *The General Theory of Employment*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 51, pp. 209-223. P. 221

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9. Catherine Hoppers and Howard Richards (2012) *Rethinking Thinking*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Perspective-taking appears to trigger the remarkable human capacity for what John Searle calls deontic ethics. Because their motives can be deontic, humans are capable of doing things they would not otherwise want to do, because it is their duty; because it is the rule; because it is the right thing to do.[16] Without this remarkable capacity we humans could not have created many institutions we take for granted, and without nurturing it we will not be able to create the new more ethical economies we need.

10. Peter H. Diamandis and Steven Kotler. (2012) *Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think*. New York: Free. Press.

11. Adam Smith (2012/1776) *The Wealth of Nations*. Position 5118 near the beginning of chapter three of book one. Digi reads Kindle edition [www.digireads.com](http://www.digireads.com)

12. This dancing and singing example is one of numerous examples found in my forthcoming book with Gavin Andersson, *Economic Theory and Community Development*. Lake Oswego, OR: World Dignity University Press.

13. Guy Standing, (2015) *Basic Income --And How We Can Make It Happen*. London, Penguin.

14. A famous quotation from a famous poem by the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral. It means that when Jesus was on earth he was called a teacher. Gabriela was a teacher and a third order Franciscan.

15. John Gibbs (2019). *Moral Development and Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

16. John Searle (2010) *Making the Social World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Not in my view to be confused with Immanuel Kant’s deontic ethics, nor as general agreement with all Searle s approaches and views.

17. Georges Gusdorf (1963) *Pourquoi des Professeurs?* Paris: Payot.



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## AFGHANISTAN'S WAR ON COVID-19: POLITICS OF THE PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

*Afghanistan, in the coming days, is projected to have one of the worst Covid-19 infection rates in the world. As the government attempts to deal with the pandemic with its overstretched health services, the Taliban seem to be exploiting this opportunity to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Afghans. On one front, the group has continued to carry out incessant attacks on civilians and on the other, it is amenable to let healthcare workers provide services in areas under its control. As the situation worsens, the Taliban are likely to use this space to improve their bargaining strategy and acceptability not only with the Afghans but also with the international community.*

### Two-front war

Afghanistan is presently fighting a two-front war—against the scourge of terrorism and the Covid-19 pandemic. In the face of rising violence and limited testing capabilities, the number of infections has risen sharply to 8065 with 179 deaths (as on 19 May 2020).[1] The International Organization for Migration, in the first week of May, projected that the country could be on its way to have one of the highest Covid-19 infections in the world. The projection was made after results of a randomized sample of 500 people in Kabul, which so far has been the worst affected[2], showed an alarming infection rate of 50 percent. Cases of infections have been reported from all the 34 provinces of the country.

As this crisis stretches the capacity of the health sector in the country, lethal insurgent attacks have not provided the citizens any respite. Both the Taliban as well as the Islamic State have been relentless in their attacks on civilian facilities. Targets, in the recent past, have included including a maternity hospital in Kabul and funeral gathering in Jalalabad, as well as security forces. This has posed a serious challenge for the Afghan government and US-Taliban peace deal.

### Health Service Delivery

By all means, the worst is yet to come. But fears have already been expressed that the Covid-19 pandemic may prove to be a more dangerous killer than the 18 years of war. The country's health sector is in shambles. According to the National Statistics and Information Authority, there are only [536 hospitals](#) with approximately 15,000 beds and roughly [three doctors for every 10,000 patients](#) in the entire country. The Afghan Ministry of Public Health said on 7 April that that there are only [300 ventilators](#) in the whole country. Testing kits are in [short supply](#) and the hundreds of infected refugees returning from Iran to all provinces of the country have added to the crisis. Provinces sharing border with Iran such as Herat are projected as the hotspots. Government's ability to conduct extensive testing and its appeal for self-quarantine has been largely unsuccessful. Till 5 April, the government was not even successful in closing the mosques. Without external assistance, there is no way that Afghanistan will be able to meet the challenge.

### Battle for 'Hearts and Minds'

The pandemic is being actively used by the insurgents to win the 'hearts and minds' of the populace. Amidst spiraling cases and concerns of the spread of the virus, the Taliban are taking steps to gain acceptability among the Afghans and the international community. Unlike other global jihadist groups like the Islamic State and the al Qaeda, who are using the opportunity to scale up attacks and recruitment by using the narrative of the present pandemic as 'divine retribution', the Taliban have launched a public-health awareness campaign in the Logar and Nangarhar in the east; and Herat and Jawzjan provinces in the east. According to [media reports](#), Taliban teams have spoken to people of the region of the benefits of washing hand with detergent and have distributed pamphlets, hand sanitizers, and masks among them.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid told [media](#), "The spread of Covid-19 is an important issue for us. We have taken all measures to fight against it as strong as possible, and we also have a structured plan." He said Taliban fighters are traveling to remote villages via motorcycles to distribute leaflets, soap bars, and hand sanitizer.



A health worker checks the temperature of car passengers as they enter the city in the Paghman district of Kabul. Photo Courtesy: [The Week](#)

Another Taliban commander also spoke of not allowing the virus to gain control of 'our country'. The group's 'General Commission for Public Health' has listed precautions that people should take, including regular prayers, eating "halal" as well as medical advice. In some villages, [media has reported](#), people have even been provided with a list of vegetables that contain high amounts of vitamin C to boost immunity. In the provinces where the Taliban have shadow governments, new directors of Public Health [have been appointed](#) by the group. The group has even accessed testing kits from undisclosed sources, which is apparently in short supply in the government.

### Taliban's Outreach

A part of the reason for the Taliban's activism could be due to the fact that its own cadres have been infected by the virus. In the absence of proactive measures, the infections could simply grow and impact the group's fighting capacities. According to a [media report](#) in April, the Médecins Sans Frontières reported 125 positive cases of infection in Taliban's different ranks in six provinces (Paktiya, Badghis, Ghazni, Helmand, Wardak and Baghlan) within a time span of 72 hours. Out of 472 suspected samples, 31 positive cases were registered in Paktiya, 40 in Badghis, 17 in Ghazni, 13 in Helmand, 9 in Wardak and 15 in Baghlan provinces. Following this revelation, the Taliban stopped the MSF from testing more samples in the regions under their control, the report said.

Nevertheless, the Taliban strategies are also geared towards gaining wider acceptability. The group has been spoken of its willingness to announce ceasefire in areas that have been affected by an outbreak of the virus. In September 2019, the group had [lifted a ban](#) on the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Red Cross on certain conditions. In a statement in March 2020, [it promised](#) safe passage to international healthcare organisations and humanitarian workers fighting the pandemic. The group even urged health agencies to provide medicine, send aid and the necessary equipment to areas under their control. However, with regard to house-to-house vaccination for other diseases like Polio, a blanket ban by the Taliban has not been relaxed.

### Trust building

The Taliban has allowed NGOs approved by the government access to its territory where they are able to deliver the healthcare assistance the government cannot. The group is in fact asking the refugees returning from Iran to avail the testing facility provided by the government hospitals, quarantine themselves for 14 days, and have even [provided ambulances](#) to ferry the patients. On occasions, they have quarantined infected persons and have detained returnees from Iran who escaped from government-run quarantine facilities. The government departments, in turn, are appreciative of such gestures and have welcomed whatever assistance they can get from the insurgents in terms of raising awareness of the people regarding the virus.[3] This has led some to predict that the pandemic can help [build trust](#) between the two warring sides. The Human Rights Watch has [opined](#) that both the government and the insurgents should 'work together with the UN and humanitarian agencies to ensure that aid reaches the whole country, or a dire situation will become catastrophic.'[4]

### Blurred Red lines

However, such gestures by the Taliban could merely be directed at gaining publicity, some sort of legitimacy and winning the 'hearts and minds' of the common Afghans vis-à-vis the government. This is clear from the fact that the Taliban have [refused to accede to an appeal](#) for a ceasefire by President Ghani, with its spokesperson Suhail Shaheen terming it neither 'rational nor convincing.' The group has [promised to declare ceasefire](#) only if areas it controls 'are hit by a coronavirus outbreak'.

The group is suspected to be behind the gruesome attack on civilians and subsequently on a military base in Gardez that killed five civilians and wounded 19 people including five Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel. This has forced the government [to order the launch of an offensive](#) against the Taliban and suspend release of Taliban prisoners, a move that has been decried by the Russia's presidential envoy as detrimental to the ongoing peace process.

According to a field report, on 16 May 2020, Taliban cadres have been ordered by the group's leadership to carry out widespread attacks on Afghan civil and military installations and deny their role in case of any civilian casualty. The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Mullah Yaqoob (son of Mullah Omar), who is the military chief of the group at Akora Khattak in Peshawar. The meeting was attended by representatives from both the Quetta and Peshawar shuras. The overall strategy of the group is to capture three provinces before start of the intra-Afghan talks, which will exert maximum pressure on the Afghan government.

### The 'Peace' Paradox

This indicates that, in the days to come, intense fighting will continue between the government forces and the insurgents even as the country grapples with how to deal with the pandemic. Former Chief Executive of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah had once remarked that the money Afghanistan spends in a day's war with the insurgents is enough to build a modern hospital.[5] The incessant fight bleeds the country's economy, leaving it with little option but to continue dependence on international assistance. Seeking a way out of this permanent state of war has not been easy. The recently concluded deal between the U.S. and the Taliban is stuck in a limbo due to a variety of reasons that includes distrust between the government and the insurgents; prisoner release; and the lack of progress in initiating an intra-Afghan dialogue.

The Covid-19 pandemic could not have come at a worse time for Afghanistan. It will add to the pressure and limited capacity of the Afghan health sector and service delivery mechanism, thereby impinging on the credibility of the Afghan state. At the same time, the Taliban measures to elicit acceptability may boost its bargaining potential. The U.S., which is largely seen as bolting to the door, may further pressure the Afghan government to move ahead with the peace process with the insurgents, in the lines as envisaged in the U.S.-Taliban deal.

### End Notes

[1] World Health Organization, COVID-19 Situation Report#116, 15 May 2020, [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200515-covid-19-sitrep-116.pdf?sfvrsn=8dd60956\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200515-covid-19-sitrep-116.pdf?sfvrsn=8dd60956_2). Accessed on 16 May 2020.

[2] According to the Ministry of Public Health, Kabul, followed by Herat, Kandahar and Balkh are the worst affected provinces in the country. However, it could also be due to the samples collected in these provinces are higher than the other provinces. MoPH Datawarehouse Dashboard, <https://moph-dw.gov.af/dhis-web-dashboard/#/>. Accessed on 19 May 2020.

[3] An adviser to the Ministry of Public Health told the media, "We noticed photos circulating on social media that show the Taliban's campaign, and regardless of their intention, we appreciate the cooperation from anyone or any group that supports the fight against coronavirus."

[4] Human Rights Watch, 'Afghanistan: Leaders Bicker Amid COVID-19 Crisis', 30 March 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/30/afghanistan-leaders-bicker-amid-covid-19-crisis>. Accessed on 19 May 2020.

[5] Ali M Latifi, "Years of war and poverty take toll on Afghanistan's healthcare", Al Jazeera, 25 May 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/years-war-poverty-toll-afghanistan-healthcare-190525101842119.html>. Accessed on 19 May 2020.



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## DR BIBHU PRASAD ROUTRAY

### ISLAMIC STATE'S KHORASAN PROVINCE: A MELTING POT FOR SOUTH ASIAN JIHADISTS

#### Abstract

*The arrest of Aslam Farooqi, chief of the Islamic State's Khorasan Province (IS-KP) in the first week of April and the former chief of the group, Zia-ul Haq in May 2020, by the Afghan intelligence agency has been hailed as a major breakthrough in weakening the group. Irrespective of whether the group is weakened by these arrests or not, the group has gradually emerged as a 'melting pot' for Islamist extremists from South Asian countries. Amid the fledgling attempts to establish peace in Afghanistan through the US-Taliban peace deal, Farooqi's connections with other armed groups like the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), the Haqqani Network and their state sponsors, raise critical questions about the symbiotic relationship and operational dynamics of the IS-KP, and future of the peace processes in Afghanistan*

#### Key Arrests

The Islamic State's Khorasan province (IS-KP) in Afghanistan, it may appear, is disintegrating like a sand castle. Since late March, ever since the group claimed responsibility for the attack on a Gurdwara in Kabul, a number of its key functionaries and cadres have been arrested. On 11 May, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), intelligence agency of Afghanistan, claimed to have arrested Mawlawi Zia-ul Haq alias Sheikh Abu Omar Al-Khorasani, former chief of the IS-KP; Sahib, the public relations chief; and Abul Ali, the intelligence chief of the group from an undisclosed location.[1] Haq is largely considered to be powerless and his arrest may be inconsequential.

While the NDS has claimed Farooqi's arrest to be a major development, contrasting opinions have surfaced underplaying the militant leader's significance. Doubts have also been expressed regarding the genuineness of the arrest, terming the incident as a surrender by a terrorist leader whose cadres are on the run[3]. In a show of one-upmanship, the Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that Farooqi surrendered to the Afghan government's forces under pressure from the Taliban.

In contrast, the previous arrests have been marked by contrasting narratives of achievement, mystery and even downright disapprobation. Sometime in the last week of March 2020, special forces of the NDS launched a successful operation in Kandahar to nab an explosives and weapons supplier named Shah Wali. However, little did they know that Shah Wali's arrest would pave the way for further successive operations in Kandahar that led them to a prize catch. In the words of an NDS commander, 12 successive 'complex and precise'[2] operations were carried out in six days and nights. By the end, the NDS had arrested Mawlawi Aslam Farooqi alias Abdullah Orakzai, the chief of the Islamic State's Khorasan province (IS-KP) along with 19 others.

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"The Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate had besieged Farooqi in Mazar Darra area in Kunar and he established contact with the Kabul administration's forces and surrendered to the government in the wake of his contact." Former spokesman for the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Ehsanullah Ehsan, on the other hand said, that Farooqi was not IS-KP chief but had been removed one year ago. "Daesh is presently headed by an Afghan national from Kunar".[4]

On 22 April, the NDS announced the arrest of another IS-KP leader identified as Muneeb. While the location of the arrest was not revealed, Muneeb was described as a Pakistani national and a key member of the central Council of the group. Muneeb reportedly was in charge of shadow court, coordination and contact with the other groups including LeT and the Haqqani network.[5] On 6 May, the NDS further claimed to have busted a joint cell of the IS-KP and the Haqqani network. 'Five members of the cell were killed and eight others arrested when security forces stormed two hide-outs of the group in Kabul and Shakar Dara district.'[6]



On 4 April 2020, the NDS released this photo of Farooqi, after his arrest from Kandahar.



Militants arrested from Kandahar, Photo Courtesy: [Khama Press](#)

According to an estimate, by 2017 there were already 25 individuals from Kerala with the IS-KP. Included among them were 22 people, including six women and 3 children, who between May and July 2016, had gone missing before eventually landing in Afghanistan. They hailed from Kasaragod and Palakkad districts and left the country from Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai airports for Dubai, Muscat, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. The group included hardcore Muslims as well as new converts from Hinduism as well as Christianity. It included doctors, engineers and MBA graduates.

### Other Arrests: Revealing the ‘Nexus’

Irrespective of whether Farooqi was arrested or surrendered, arrests of two other persons along with him signify how the IS-KP, in spite of its operational limitations, might have emerged as a melting pot for other terrorists of varying aspirations in South Asia, to join or align themselves with the IS-KP as members or affiliates.

Included among the two is Aijaz Ahmad Ahangar aka Abu Usman Al Kashmiri from Srinagar. Arrested in the mid-1990s for his terror links, Ahangar escaped to Bangladesh and from there to Pakistan in a regular commercial flight. According to a media report[7], Ahangar settled in Islamabad with the help of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan’s spy agency. Ahangar married a resident from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in 2008 and later relocated to Miranshah area of Waziristan near the Afghan border. He had a brief association with the al Qaeda and joined the Islamic State soon after its formation. Subsequently, he became a part of the group’s Khorasan province. Ahangar’s son Abdullah Umair, also a part of the IS-KP was killed a few years in Afghanistan’s Nangarhar province. His son-in-law, Huzafa-al-Bakistani, who was an online recruiter for the IS-KP and later the IS-JK, too was killed in US drone attack in Nangarhar province on 18 July 2019. Ahangar, now in his mid-50s, was in charge of the logistics affairs of the IS-KP, coordinating foreign funds to support the group’s activities in Afghanistan. In the early rounds of his questioning, Ahangar identified himself as Ali Mohammed from Islamabad. However, only later he was identified by the sources in New Delhi.[8]

The second person of significance to be arrested along with Farooqi is Mohammad Tanvir. An engineering graduate of Bangladesh University, Tanvir had fled to Afghanistan while pursuing his MBA degree from at Dhaka University.[9] He is accused in a terror plot in which Islamic State-linked neo-Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) terrorists had planned to carry out an explosion in a hotel in Dhaka in August 2017. According to the NDS, Tanvir was in charge of IS-KP’s IT department and was responsible for organizing secret communications between IS-KP leaders.[10] He had been trained by Esa Panjabi, a resident of Punjab of Pakistan, about whom little is known.

A few days before these arrests, on 25 March, the IS-KP had successfully organized a major attack on a Gurdawara in Kabul, which claimed 27 lives including that of an Indian.[11] Among the three attackers, who were killed by the Afghan security forces, was an Indian- Muhammed Muhsin, a 29-year-old man from Kerala’s Kasaragod district. Muhsin, a school dropout, reportedly went to the United Arab Emirates in 2018 from where he is believed to have joined the ranks of the IS-KP. The group’s weekly propaganda magazine, Al Naba, identified him as Abu Khalid Al-Hindi alias Abdul Khayoom and Abdul Khalid. The magazine published a photograph of him holding a Type 56 assault rifle.

Seeking a sense of purpose and higher calling, none of them attempted to travel to Syria or Iraq and reached Afghanistan via Iran. Most of the men in the group are now dead and the surviving women and children, who are among the 900 IS-KP fighters and support elements who surrendered in November 2019 and have been lodged in prisons in Afghanistan, wish to return to India.

Sajid Kuthirummal, a shopkeeper from Kasaragod, is also suspected to have taken part in the attack. [12] Sajid had moved to Dubai in 2018, lost touch with his family and is suspected to have become a part of the IS-KP.

### Patterns of Recruitment and Radicalisation

Over the years, apart from Ahangar, Tanvir, Muhsin and Sajid, the IS-KP has proved to be a magnet of sorts for several other radicalized individuals. In April 2017, Sheikh Abdul Haseeb, head of the IS-KP was killed in a raid by Afghan and American forces. Among the several commanders and 35 fighters killed with Haseeb, were two members from Kerala: Bestin Vincent alias Yahiya from Palakkad, and the commander of Indian jihadists in the region, Sajeer Mangalasseri Abdulla, a former resident of Sultan Bathery. Haseeb had a long-standing relationship with the LeT and after being appointed as the head of IS-KP had taken onto himself the task of attracting as many Indians as possible to the fold of the group.[13]

According to an estimate, by 2017 there were already 25 individuals from Kerala with the IS-KP. Included among them were 22 people, including six women and 3 children, who between May and July 2016, had gone missing before eventually landing in Afghanistan. They hailed from Kasaragod and Palakkad districts and left the country from Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai airports for Dubai, Muscat, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. The group included hardcore Muslims as well as new converts from Hinduism as well as Christianity. It included doctors, engineers and MBA graduates. Seeking a sense of purpose and higher calling, none of them attempted to travel to Syria or Iraq and reached Afghanistan via Iran. Most of the men in the group are now dead and the surviving women and children, who are among the 900 IS-KP fighters and support elements who surrendered in November 2019 and have been lodged in prisons in Afghanistan, wish to return to India.

The wide criticism, however, did not deter several others from undertaking similar travels. Online radicalization as well as preaching by radical organizations at home resulted in over 100 men and women joining the Islamic State between 2016 and 2018.[14] Over 20 Keralites travelled out of the country to join the group in 2018. No data exists on how many expats from India and other South Asian countries working in the Gulf, would have joined the IS-KP.

While many of these ventures by individuals were initially seen by the state agencies as harmless, without much repercussions on national security, such beliefs have been periodically challenged by the active participation of these recruits in operations carried out by the group. The attack on the Gurdawara in Kabul was perhaps the most blatant of them, using an Indian national to carry out assault on the Sikhs.

Farooqui, an Afridi Pashtun from Pakistan, wore many hats. He joined the LeT in 2004 and in 2007, moved to Afghanistan, where he stayed till 2014. The ISI was aware of Farooqi's existence and had maintained close contact with him. Sometime in 2014, Farooqui was dispatched to Syria, along with a batch of 167 LeT fighters, to fight alongside the Islamic State. The group also included fighters from other groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and the TTP.

Whether this is a harbinger of things to come is an important question. Will IS-KP use radicalized individuals to carry out attacks on Indians or India interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the near future? This question assumes added importance not just because of the uncertainties surrounding the US-Taliban peace deal, but also because of the new revelations of Farooqi's past, closely aligning him with the LeT and elements within the Pakistani deep state. The chaos and instability have emboldened the IS-KP and its nexus with other armed groups could possibly be setting the stage for future attacks.

### Leadership Battles and Emerging Divisions

Farooqui, an Afridi Pashtun from Pakistan, wore many hats. He joined the LeT in 2004 and in 2007, moved to Afghanistan, where he stayed till 2014. The ISI was aware of Farooqi's existence and had maintained close contact with him. Sometime in 2014, Farooqui was dispatched to Syria, along with a batch of 167 LeT fighters, to fight alongside the Islamic State. The group also included fighters from other groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and the TTP. Farooqi joined the Islamic State before returning to Pakistan in 2016, as did a 100 other LeT fighters in that group. On returning to Pakistan, Farooqi was assigned responsibility to lead the IS-KP operations in the Khyber region along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Following the killing of IS-KP leader Abu Sa'id Bajauri on 14 July 2018, the group's leadership council in Afghanistan appointed Mawlawi Zia ul-Haq as the fourth 'emir' of the group since its establishment.[15]

In fact, by the middle of 2017, talk of making Farooqi the chief of IS-KP had gained momentum, with the majority of the military council of IS-KP deciding to select Farooqi as the new governor of Khorasan province. This, however, led to a split within the organization. The subject of promoting Farooqi to the helm of affairs came up again in 2018. Quoting an IS-KP source, author Antonio Giustozzi says, the decision to make Farooqi leader was the result of his contacts with the ISI. It was possibly as a tradeoff. The appointment of a leader linked to the ISI and the cessation of attacks by the IS-KP against Pakistani government targets was in return for access to safe havens in Pakistan. [16] Farooqi's appointment may also have led the ISI to start financing the IS-KP. In exchange for this support, the IS-KP reportedly agreed not to carry out attacks inside Pakistan.[17]

Finally, in April 2019, the 43-year-old Farooqi took over the responsibility of IS-KP replacing Mawlawi Zia ul-Haq. Giustozzi says, "In my understanding of the story, Farooqi was the lead candidate to governorship already in the summer of 2018, but there was no unanimity and he did not get al Baghdadi (Chief of Islamic State)'s endorsement. Hence Omar al Khorasani (Zia ul-Haq), who had been deputy, stayed on as acting governor until Farooqi finally got endorsed by Al Baghdadi and officially became governor." [18]

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The new leadership nomination was again made during a visit by a core delegation of the Islamic State.[19] Haq had been demoted owing to his poor performance, especially after a series of setbacks suffered by the IS-KP. 'By mid-2018, the clearance operations by the coalition forces had reduced IS-KP' influence to nine of the 11 districts it had held in the eastern province of Nangarhar since 2015. In addition, attacks by the Taliban had caused the group to overextend its personnel and resources'.[20]

In August 2018, a counterattack by the Taliban had resulted in deaths of 40 IS-KP fighters in the western province of Jowzjan. In another operation, nearly 128 cadres had been captured by the Taliban in Darzab district. Over 200 remaining IS-KP members surrendered to the Afghan Army citing fatigue related to simultaneous targeting from both coalition forces and the Taliban.[21] Farooqi's brief was to turn the tide.

Notwithstanding whether Farooqi lived upto this expectation, his gradual ascent in the IS-KP has been a source of resentment and division among the Afghan and Pakistan members of the group on the one hand and the Central Asian members on the other. Farooqi received support the Tehreek-e-Khilafat Pakistan (TKP) that had elements of the TTP and the LeJ, and from other three groups, Tehreek-e-Khilafat Kho (TKK), Azizullah Haqqani's and Muslim Dost's.

The TKK in particular saw itself as an anti-Afghan Taliban group. However, Farooqi's proximity with the ISI and his background with the LeT (seen as a representative of the Pakistan government), was not acceptable to the Central Asian groups inside IS-KP, such as Omar Ghazi Group, Gansu Hui's and Shamali Khilafat, as well as external supporters, like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and other Tajik affiliated groups.[22] These groups had already broken away from the Nangarhar group in the summer of 2017.

Although some experts opine that Farooqi's ascent to the IS-KP's leadership could have obliterated those differences and only the Afghan Taliban continued to see the IS-KP as a threat and fought it fiercely[23], there are others who think that the differences persisted. Farooqi led only one faction comprised mainly of Pashtun fighters from Afghanistan/Pakistan, whereas the other, based in northern Afghanistan (mainly Badakhshan and Jowzjan), was led by a Tajik national and former IMU commander named Sayvaly Shafiev alias Moawiya.[24] This faction holds Pakistan accountable for the attacks against them when they were based in Waziristan. However, compared to the Nangarhar faction, the northern Afghanistan faction is far smaller and less potent. Maowiya commanded only 200 Central Asian fighters.[25]

Following Farooqi's arrest, Pakistan requested for his extradition[27], which Kabul refused to entertain. For obvious reasons, the Afghan security establishment has claimed that Farooqi's arrest is a significant development, only to be countered not just by the description of his arrest as surrender but also by the unceasing violence perpetrated by the group. The NDS believes that unlike the Taliban, the IS-KP neither has a base nor a command centre in the country.

### Emerging Scenarios

Questions are often raised regarding the veracity of the claims of linkages between the Pakistani deep state and the groups like the LeT with both the IS-KP and the Afghan Taliban. The fratricidal warfare and area domination clashes between the two groups are cited to indicate that the ISI may not be linked as closely with the IS-KP, as it is with the Afghan Taliban. Hundreds of LeT cadres march every year into Afghanistan to train and fight alongside the Taliban.[26] Why do these cadres who belong to an outfit that Farooqi came from fight the IS-KP?

Answers to this question may have important implications for the direction of the peace making efforts in Afghanistan. Violence perpetrated by the IS-KP, especially targeting the Shias and other religious minorities, makes the Afghan Taliban more amenable, if not acceptable for the peace deal. Each killing perpetrated by the IS-KP further amplifies the image of the Taliban as a nationalist force who are fighting the foreign armed groups.



Photo courtesy: BBC

The chain of command within the group too has been disrupted following a series of setbacks suffered in Nangarhar. However, the group still has a number of shelters all over the country, even beyond the areas they had previously operated. Farooqi and others were found hiding in such shelters in Kandahar. The dispersed nature of IS-KP will pose a new set of challenge to the NDS, ANDSF and international forces.

A peace deal with the Taliban will help in fighting and decimating the IS-KP. The Afghan NDS continues to underline the link between the Haqqani network and the IS-KP that adds further complexities to the inter-group relationship between the IS-KP and the Taliban, given the latter's linkages with the Haqqani network. Over the years, hundreds of Afghan Taliban members who are not amenable have switched their loyalties and joined the IS-KP. However, the fact that Haqqanis, who are an integral part of the Taliban-led network and who were unsuccessfully courted by the IS-KP in the past, are now aiding the latter, could be unveiling the specter of new alliances and realignments as Afghanistan prepares itself for a peace deal with the Taliban.

In the coming months, four following scenarios could hold the key to the future of IS-KP and its violence potential in Afghanistan. Will Farooqi and Haq's arrest weaken the IS-KP? Will Pakistan snap linkages with the IS-KP? Will there be a move towards unification in the faction-ridden IS-KP? Or will Pakistan use its IS-KP card to influence the peace process in Afghanistan?

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Moreover, the linkages between the IS-KP and the LeT may continue to guide the former's actions in Afghanistan. The Taliban's peace agreement with the United States has somewhat undermined its image as a group that is willing to fight the West and other 'enemies of Islam'. The obvious beneficiary of this development is the IS-KP, whose attempts of being a melting pot for South Asian Jihadists could be significantly augmented in the coming days.

Arrest of Farooqi and others is a setback, but may not be serious enough to incapacitate the outfit. Moreover, for the Moawiya faction, whose numbers are small and the area of operation is not in the proximity of Kabul, Farooqi's arrest is a welcome news, but not decisive enough to work towards a unification. The central Asian fighters of the IS-KP will try to remain outside the limelight and focus on a consolidation strategy.

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This is not just bad news for Afghanistan’s search for peace and stability, but also for most of the South Asian countries who are trying to fight the scourge of terrorism. While India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka may have been able to rebuff the aspirations of global jihadists to take root in their own countries, the rise of IS-KP may simply nullify those efforts in the neighbourhood. It is for this reason that the peace process in Afghanistan needs greater coordination between Afghan government and regional countries, particularly in devising a regional counter terrorism strategy. Afghanistan’s descent into chaos could once again turn it into a hotbed of terrorism with serious implications for South Asia and beyond.

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Tina Claffey is an award winning nature photographer and author of *Tapestry of Light-Ireland's bogs & wetlands as never seen before* released in October 2017. For almost 10 years, she lived and worked in pristine wilderness areas in Botswana, and this experience awakened in her an appreciation of the natural world of Ireland. Her observations and unique perspective of the flora and fauna of the unspoilt raised bogs and wet woodlands of the Irish midlands are celebrated in her work.

<http://www.tinaclaffey.com>



Tina Claffey

## WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS

PHOTOGRAPHS & TEXT BY

TINA CLAFFEY

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I love to get 'lost' in the bogs, eskers and wetlands of Ireland with my macro lens.

The macro lens allows me to capture what cannot be seen by the naked eye, rendering the ordinary extraordinary.

Such beauty, in miniature perfection, whether it be plant, insect or mammal, prey or predator, has adapted to survive in this unique environment. Much of the flora and fauna are at ground level, so capturing my desired shot requires me to lie down, sometimes getting soaked in the process as I look for new perspectives and ways of seeing. I am transported to other worlds as I look through the lens.

Lichens become enchanted forests, mystical goblets appear that are fit for otherworldly kings and queens. Other lichen cups reflect the sky above like an all seeing eye while ancient spores emerge from their mossy bed. Wondrous caterpillars snooze on ancient mosses, and budding flowers resemble a portal to another dimension. Tentacles of carnivorous sundews glisten in the sunshine like a kaleidoscope of rubies, while tiny fungi transport us to an underworld of parasols shading golden sunlight.

Capturing these scenes that defy our sense of reality, glimpses of ancient worlds that co-exist with us, are what inspire me to keep exploring and sharing the beauty around us.

Catsear Portal



© Tina Claffey



© Tina Claffey

Dark Ruby Lure



© Tina Claffey

Devil's Matchstick Lone Tree



Enchanted Pixie Goblets



Lichen Eye Droplet



Sleeping Foxmoth Caterpillar



Reindeer Lichen Tree



© Tina Claffey

Sundew Underworld

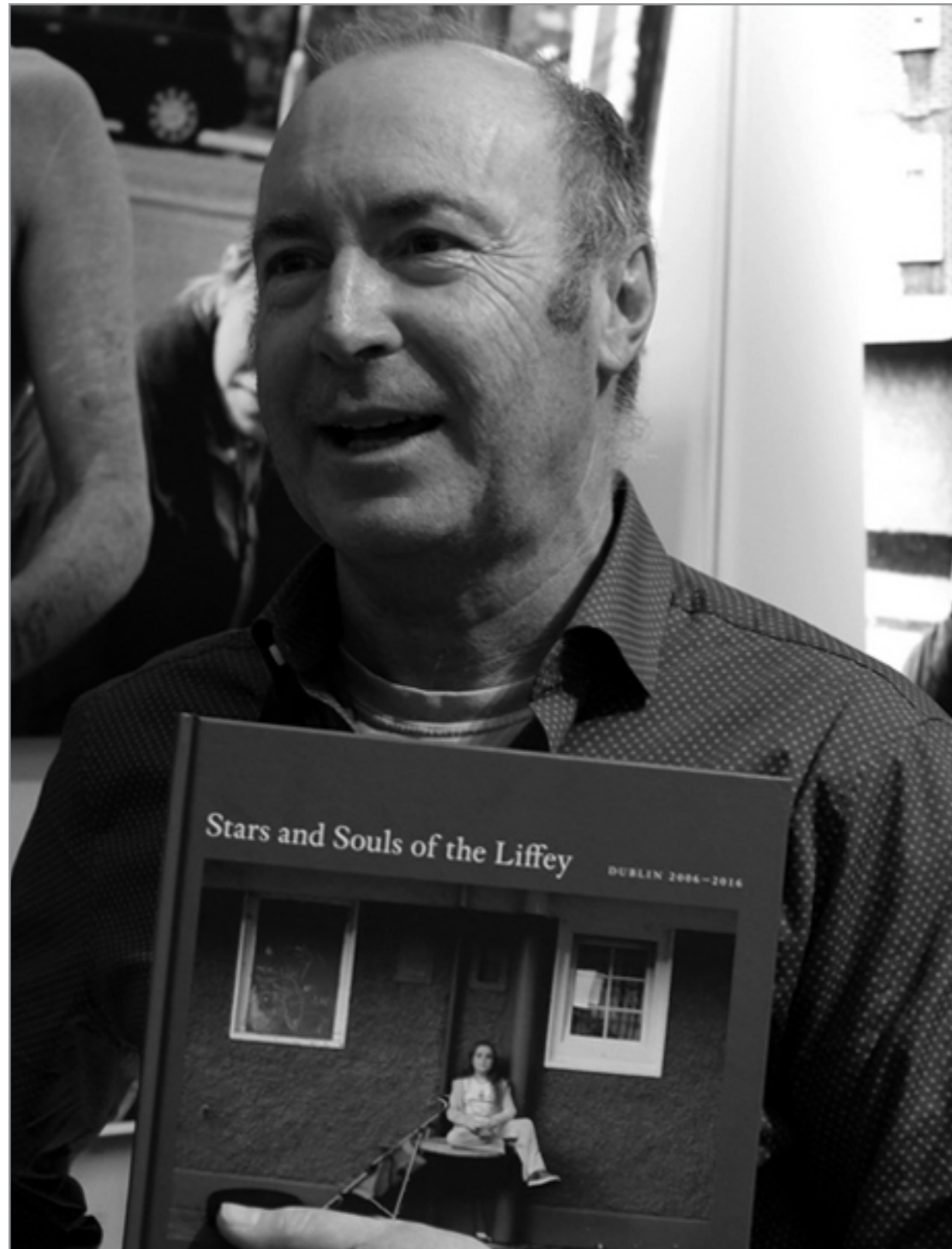


© Tina Claffey

Emerging Spore



Fungi World on Bracken



Barry Delaney is inspired by the colour, energy and DIY attitude of punk. He fled the grey Dublin of the early 80s, to travel the world and fell in love with film photography. Eked a living doing various manual and technical jobs. Twenty years later, Barry began taking pictures again. It started on the streets of Dublin, his home town, and moved on to other parts of Ireland and across the pond to his second home - America. In 2008, Barry won the TG4 Irish photographer of the 21st Century. Barry has had 4 solo exhibitions in Dublin, whilst also self-publishing three books on Blurb (including Americans Anonymous which this photo essay is based on). Last year he completed a retrospective of his inner city Dublin work in the historic GPO, Dublin. along with his debut Dublin book <https://www.hitonebooks.ie/stars-and-souls-of-the-liffey>

## 40 FOOTERS

PHOTOGRAPHS & TEXT BY

## BARRY DELANEY

For the past 15 years I have been a daily swimmer at the 40 Foot in Dun Laoghaire - my home town. Six years ago I began documenting life down at the 40 foot, particularly those summer days when the sporadic Irish sun comes out, a signal to Dubliners everywhere to descend and cool down, socialise, be intimate and above all have fun. In winter this small enclave around Sandycove harbour is deserted, bar myself and a few other hardy swimmers.

This place is special to me, two years ago I nearly drowned when a wild storm hit as I was swimming right at the 40 Foot rock. But the sea water has helped heal me spiritually, physically and mentally - everyday, however cold me and my motley crew, swim - nearly always I come out refreshed and feel so alive.

When the first days of summer come, along comes the rest of Dublin to bask by the Irish Sea. Teenagers come to celebrate the end of school; they come to have their first drink or maybe first romance - just as I did many years ago. The regulars come to top up there all year tan, and do longer swims. Lovers come to be alone, to be intimate; families congregate at the back of the 40 Foot wall, on the small Sandycove beach - the quiet side. All this happens on a tiny piece of land, on the southern tip of Dublin - but a place that makes Dublin so special. These 8 images give an insight into this unique 40 Foot life, which usually comes so alive in summer.

Today, as Covid-19 reverberates across the world just as summer returns, the 40 Foot like much of the world is closed, the crowds are absent, bar one or two locals, like the isolated surfer sailing across Dublin bay in a golden sunset, heaven, as the world endures a pandemic hell.

Barry Delaney



Barry 01



Barry 02



Barry 03



Barry 04



Barry 05



Barry 06



Barry 07



Barry 08

Vũ Tuấn Hưng is a professional photographer and tour guide based in Hồ Chí Minh city. He is a tour guide for mainly German speaking tourists. His photographs feature in numerous publications across the world. If you are visiting Vietnam and need his assistance please email - vietnaminfos@gmail.com



Vũ Tuấn Hưng  
RURAL LAOS PDR

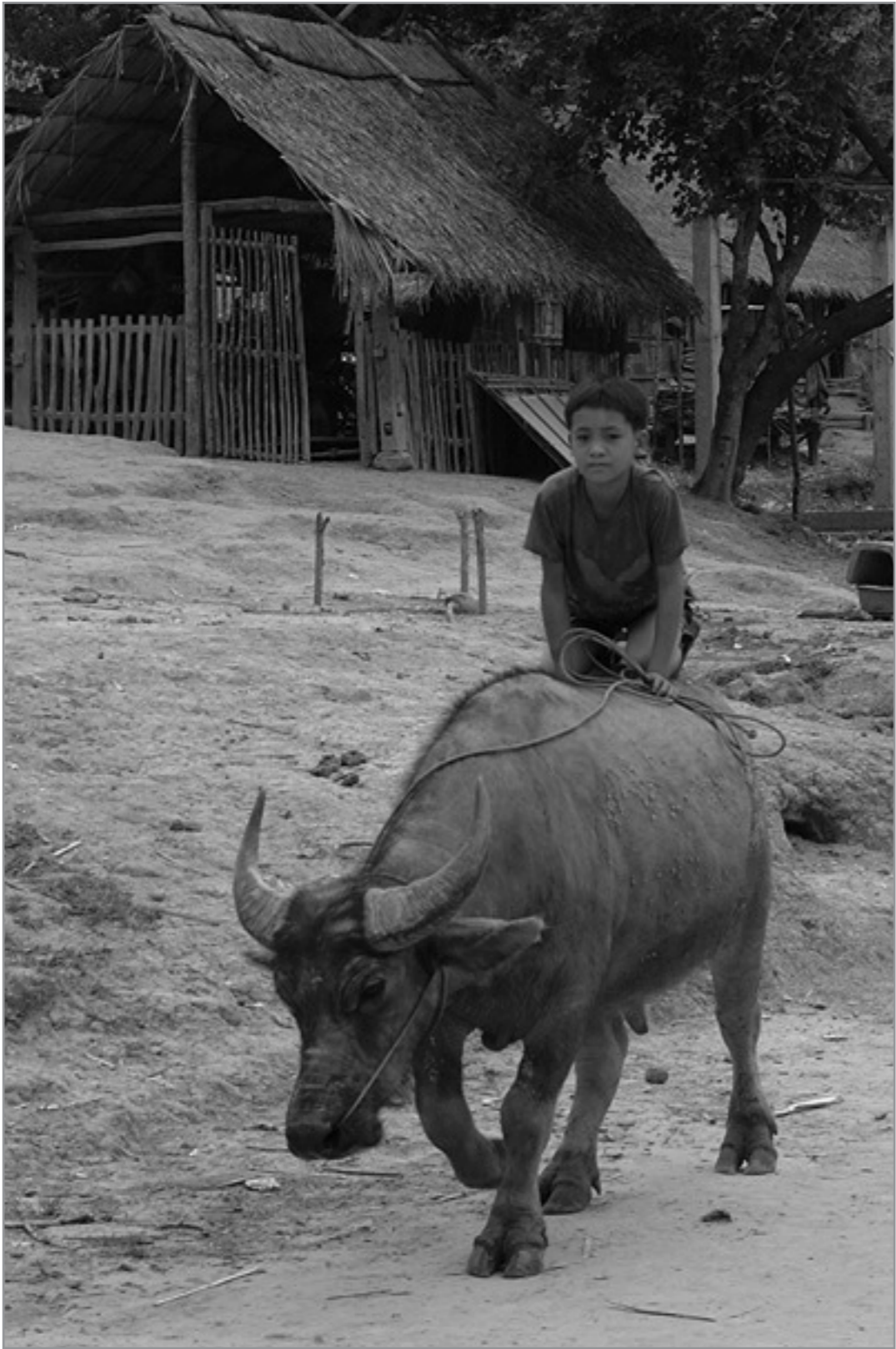
Far from the raucous tourist hordes, the cacophony of strange voices penetrating the fragile membrane of sacred rituals and traditions, there still exists a rural Laos that is far removed from an invasive modernity. These photographs are some glimpses of this world.

Vũ Tuấn Hưng

















Carl Scharwath

Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 150+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, interviews, essays, plays or art photography (His photography was featured on the cover of 6 literary journals.) Two poetry books 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press) and 'Abandoned' (ScarsTv) have been published. His first photography book was recently published by Praxis. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, poetry editor for TL Publishing Group, a competitive runner and 2nd degree black- belt in Taekwondo.

Marina M Malhotra is a Singapore based architect and aspiring poet.

PHOTOGRAPHS  
**CARL SCHARWATH**  
 POEMS  
**MARINA M MALHOTRA**



Marina M Malhotra



## IN SPRING

Inside a thick blanket  
 An artificial haven  
 I think, reflects  
 My situation  
 Am I really alive?  
 Is this a meaningful existence?  
 Where is my soul?  
 Where is my body?  
 I look for it here and there  
 I wish to convince myself  
 That I am one  
 With myself in ideas and, directions  
 The sun melts blankets of snow  
 The wind takes cover  
 Positioning itself  
 Leaves, trees and flowers  
 That dare themselves  
 "It's my time now" they utter  
 Then I ask myself  
 Is it my time too?  
 And if it is if it really is?  
 My time.... now  
 Will I be able to keep pace?  
 With the swift streams of life  
 That reject cultures, and civilizations  
 Then once again  
 I am left behind by them  
 In spring...



## SOME HANDS

The innocent hand drew with a pen.  
It drew a bad line in Africa  
Shocked a thin, starving boy  
Who was a victim of hypocrisy?  
From the plain rough hands of civilization  
Blood continues to flow from his forehead  
It froze over Mr.Karsa's old books  
His mouth moved towards the continent without sin  
Breathing increasingly tight in the ocean  
the curtain of freedom. Talking:  
Millions of years of the world remains ours  
Lift your head into space  
What is the weapon for?  
Innocent hands hiding behind bars in silent confession  
Waiting for justice everywhere  
But there is no will.



Mark Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*). He has edited, designed and produced all of *Live Encounters'* 185 publications (upto June 2020). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. [www.amazon.com/author](http://www.amazon.com/author)  
<https://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas/>

## CATAMARAN FROM BALI TO LEMBONGAN

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In January this year I took a trip by WAKA catamaran along with a gaggle of tourists from Bali to the nearby island of Lembongan.

These are some postcards of this trip, which included a quick walk-over from Lembongan via a bridge to the little island of Ceningan.

Nearly half the year is gone since then cocooned in the four walls of preconceived notions of incarceration, freedom and existential viruses that lurk in the touch of a loved one's lips.

Who knows what the future may bring?

Perhaps Nature will reclaim her lands  
 whilst we will be gone,  
 decimated by our own arrogance.

Waiting to board.





Set sail.



Arrived at Lembongan.



A bit early for cocktails.



Tourists in the swimming pool.



Lunch. Satay Babi Guling (Pork Satay close-up).



Lunch. Left to right: Satay Ayam (chicken), Satay Babi Guling (pork) and grilled Ikan (fish) served at the WAKA beach club, Lembongan.



Seaweed farming.



Harvested seaweed.



Blue Lagoon, Ceningan Island.



Tide out, Selfie Point, Ceningan Island.



A cemetery on Lembongan with umbrellas placed over each grave to protect the dearly departed from the sun.

Beringin (banyan tree) is considered sacred.





The sacred Mount Gunung Agung in Bali as seen from Lembongan Island.

10TH ANNIVERSARY 2010-2019

# Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH  
JUNE 2020

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ULYSEAS