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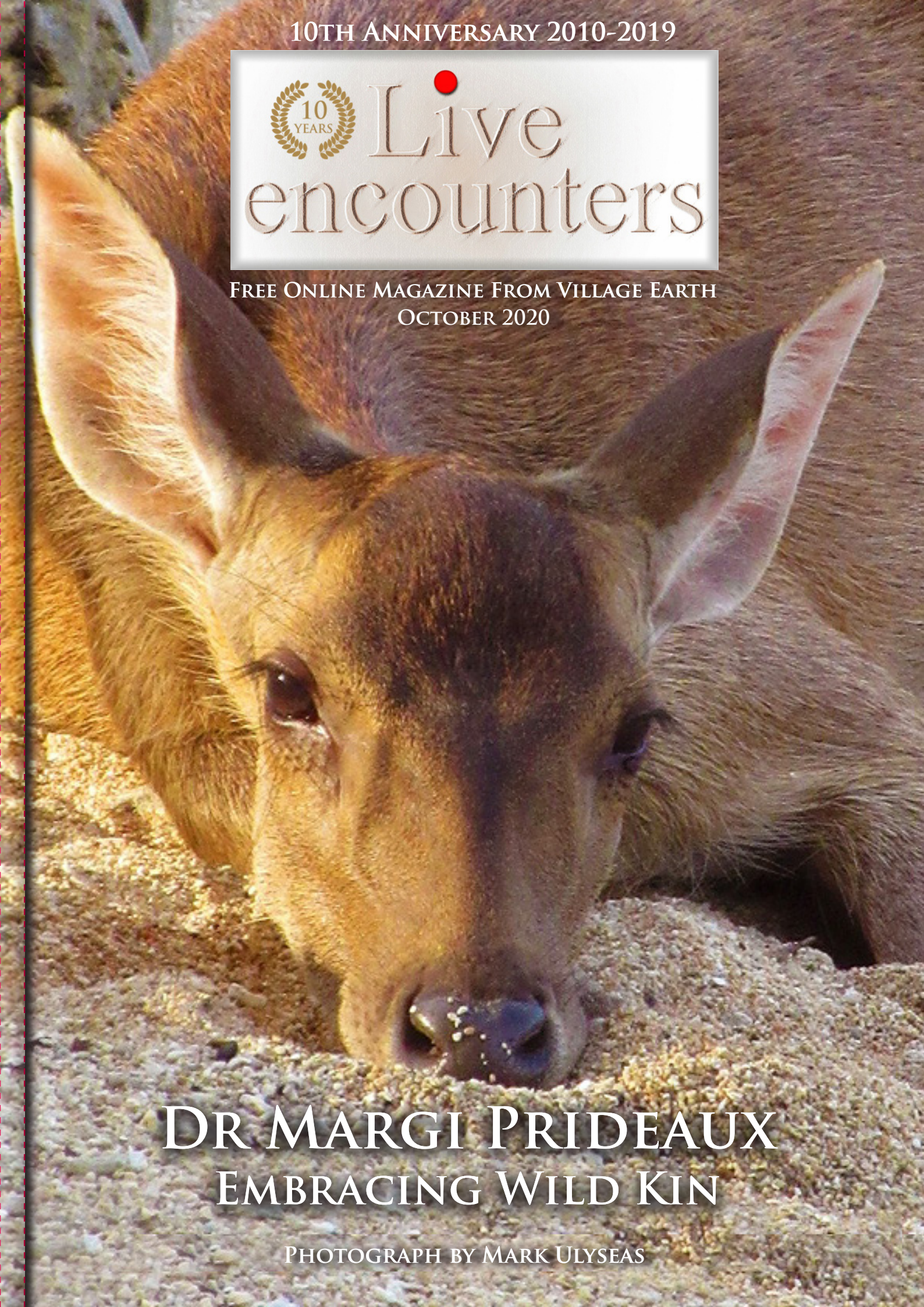

Dr Margi Prideaux
Embracing Wild Kin

Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

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October 2020

Beetle on the banks of the Mekong River, photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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Embracing Wild Kin:

Dr Margi Prideaux

International wildlife policy writer, negotiator and academic

Our illusions about human superiority are shifting as scientists and philosophers explore the social complexity and intelligence of other species. At least some wildlife qualify as persons, creating tension in how we perceive the world.

For the past two decades, scientists have mapped the breadth and depth of communities or societies of dolphins, elephants, wolves and apes, among other species. They have recognised social complexity and intelligence. Their results have been startling, even to the researchers. Despite preconceived Judaeo-Christian notions of human superiority, scientists have discovered that many species engage in complex social interactions with each other. A tantalising insight emerges – that knowledge transmission exists beyond humans. Our assumption about our superiority is undermined.

Until recently there were only a small handful of academics willing to speak openly about this subject. Speaking out confronted, sometimes violently, the inherit bias of human superiority in western society. Being vocal risked accusations that tarnished reputations; brought scientists into conflict with deeply conservative religious views; or risked association with radical activists.

Five years ago when I published a mainstream review of the latest knowledge about dolphin culture,[1] online commentators labelled my article ‘preposterous’ and ‘outrageous’. That reaction was only a sliver of what the scientists at the time experienced. Despite the difficulties, the commitment of scientists has continued to grow.

Dr Margi Prideaux

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Iberian wolf. Photographer: Juan José González Vega https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/

Elisabetta Palagi and Giada Cordoni have found the social status among wolves is dependent on sophisticated cooperative relationships and conflict resolution. These abilities have significant impacts on group dynamics in wolf packs. Other scientists are delving into the cognitive abilities in dogs and wolves and discovering they are similar to that found in humans. Individual wolves share intentions – they understand each other's mental states.

The last decade of studies into dolphin, elephant, wolf and great ape behaviour has highlighted how complex their communications are. It is difficult not to draw parallels with human communication. Empirically, their brains have many key features associated with high intelligence. We have underestimated their capacity, and while their intelligence is different in form, it is difficult to dismiss. Scientists can now confidently state their findings as scientific and justifiable, speaking over the accusatory claims that have sought to dampen them.

The high-profile studies on the great apes continue to lead the field, but there is progress for other species too. For instance, Lori Marino's informed position is that dolphins have distinct personalities, a strong sense of self, can think about the future, and have the innate ability to learn language; both their own and a rudimentary symbol-based language created to bridge the communication chasm between dolphins and humans. She asserts that because of their complex intelligence, it is morally wrong for us to treat them in psychologically harmful ways; that they are due our respect.[2, 3] Luke Rendell and Hal Whitehead agree, having explored the presence and nature of cultural processes in whales and dolphins, as an independent evolution of social learning and cultural transmission.[4, 5] Philippa Brakes and Mark Simmonds also believe the weight of science warrants a shift in global perception of this group of animals.[6]

Elisabetta Palagi and Giada Cordoni have found the social status among wolves is dependent on sophisticated cooperative relationships and conflict resolution.[7, 8] These abilities have significant impacts on group dynamics in wolf packs. Other scientists are delving into the cognitive abilities in dogs and wolves and discovering they are similar to that found in humans.[9] Individual wolves share intentions – they understand each other's mental states.[10]

Michael Garstang profoundly explores the existence of memory, morality, emotions, empathy and altruism, sophisticated communication and language, learning and teaching in elephants.[11] Karen McComb has presented evidence that elephants have the ability not only to identify human voices but also to identify specific cues in human vocalisations – broad age, sex, and ethnic identity – as a signal of potential threat to the herd.[12] Caitlin O'Connell has illuminated the complexities of elephant communities and communication abilities.[13]

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Fellow philosopher, Kristin Andrews, agrees with White that other species deserve moral standing. She argues that non-human apes are “autonomous agents with their own projects that need to be respected”. There is of course much more research than has been highlighted here. The science and the philosophy are clear. Yet, it is difficult information to resolve through the dominant political context of our time – the ‘sustainability paradigm’ – which premises all of ‘nature’ as a resource for humans.

Philosophers are also considering the implications of what this new knowledge means for humans. Thomas White has considered the ethical issues connected with human/dolphin interaction – for example, deaths and injuries of dolphins in the fishing industry or dolphins held in captivity. He contends that *“dolphins have intellectual and emotional abilities sophisticated enough to grant them ‘moral standing’; they should be regarded at least as ‘nonhuman persons’”.*[14]

Fellow philosopher, Kristin Andrews, agrees with White that other species deserve moral standing. She argues that non-human apes are “autonomous agents with their own projects that need to be respected”.[15] There is of course much more research than has been highlighted here. The science and the philosophy are clear. Yet, it is difficult information to resolve through the dominant political context of our time – the ‘sustainability paradigm’ – which premises all of ‘nature’ as a resource for humans.

This paradigm is not based on fact. It is born of the dominant Judaeo-Christian belief about human dominion and has been successfully imposed into every corner of the globe, complete with some uncomfortable ironies – a tree has become timber; a gorilla has become an ecotourism destination; a school of bluefin tuna has become a fishery. The inherent moral standing of any species is outside consideration.[16] The ripples of this paradigm have shaped new shorelines and a neoliberal market environmentalism agenda has become mainstream in the western world.[17-19] It values everything non-human as a resource to be used.[20, 21]

To reflect consciously on this emerging science we need to remove our well established, uniquely western, blinkers that are masking important information from view. Centuries of religious ideologies and the science informed by those ideologies has created an illusion of space between ourselves and other animals. Through a tradition that reaches over 2000 years to both Greek philosophy and Judaeo-Christian religious doctrines, a western idea of human exceptionalism and unique dignity has developed.[22]

Despite the knowledge that humans are animals, our label ‘animal’ distinguishes them (non-human) as separate from us (human). We choose to believe there is difference, even though a biological one does not exist.

Orangutan. Photographer: Sergey Uryadnikov/Shutterstock
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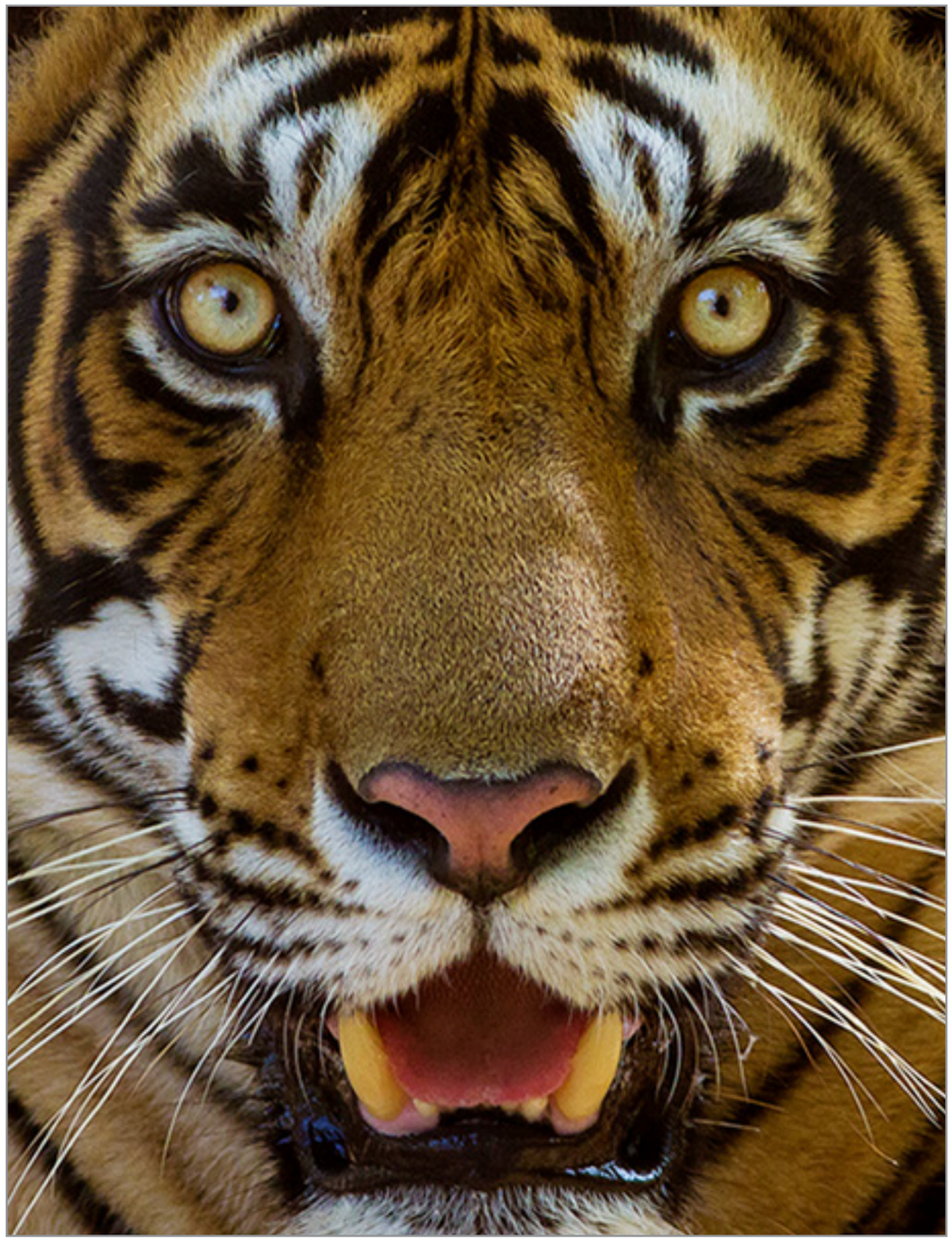

Bengal Tiger. Photographer: Dibyendu Ash. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tiger_facial_marking_Sultan_(T72)_Ranthambhore_India_12.10.2014.jpg

The wild tapestry of the Earth is better described as ‘a communion of subjects not a collection of objects’. In Jainism, the spiritual well-being of human is tied to the physical well-being of all forms of life. Buddhism encourages kindness towards animals and instils a sense of community with all sentient beings. Rich and diverse animist worldviews also weave traditional environmental knowledge with the notion of personhood.

They are our wild kin. Even with Darwin’s compelling logic that similar traits should equal similar abilities – that differences in cognitive abilities and emotions among animals are differences in degree rather than differences in kind – an unreasonable weight of evidence is demanded to prove the assertion that we are the same, rather than the more logical requirement to disprove our connection. The blinkers we wear impede how we consider the effects of our actions on other animals; animals that many non-Judaeo-Christian societies regard as having moral significance. These are human communities and cultures that we can learn from, if we choose to listen.

Those who live near wildlife share the wind and the rain, the dawn and the dusk, the ebb and flow of the seasons of their region with their wildlife community kin. They share the pain when their home is destroyed. People around the world reflect wildlife in their myths, symbols and rituals. Many call it a kinship with all life.[23] The wild tapestry of the Earth is better described as ‘a communion of subjects not a collection of objects’.[23] In Jainism, the spiritual well-being of human is tied to the physical well-being of all forms of life.[24] Buddhism encourages kindness towards animals and instils a sense of community with all sentient beings.[25] Rich and diverse animist worldviews also weave traditional environmental knowledge with the notion of personhood.

The Chewong of Malaysia consciously share the rainforest with other life-forms and have a sophisticated understanding of the fundamental difference and likenesses between humans and non-humans. The Chewong cosmos does not credit humans any superiority. Freed of such partitioning, they believe that different species poses their own ‘med mesign’, or ways of seeing. Each animal species in the forest inherits a med mesign that is different from others species. In their moving account, Peter Knudtson and David Suzuki explain “*[t]here is a ‘siamang way’ of perceiving the world. A ‘tiger way’. A ‘fruit bat way’. A ‘hornbill way’. A ‘monitor lizard way’. A ‘tapir way’. An ‘anteater way’. A ‘slow loris way’. An ‘elephant way’. A ‘water snail way’.*” The distinct sensory worlds of the exquisitely adapted species within the lush Malaysian jungle is fully recognised and respected.[26]

The Mentawai in Sumatra, Indonesia, do not believe they have a right to kill, consume, or use any animals at will. The Mentawaians are generous toward non-humans, crediting a soul and personhood not only to animals and plants, but to almost all of their surroundings.[27] There are rituals performed when killing animals for human food that confer a deep respect for and connection to that soul.[27]

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I don’t discount or dismiss the tension this discussion creates. I welcome it. Such tensions propel humans to explore more layers to our existing world view. We can learn from the scientists as well as the Mentawai, Chewong, Lakota, Cree and Salish peoples and accept wildlife as persons. Adopting new ways of seeing our wild kin may help us find our way out of the spiralling destruction we are committing across the world.

In describing the animistic traditions of the Lakota, Cree and Salish peoples of North America, each embedded with a deep respect for non-human persons, John Grim highlights the inherent tension in arguing the sustainability paradigm:

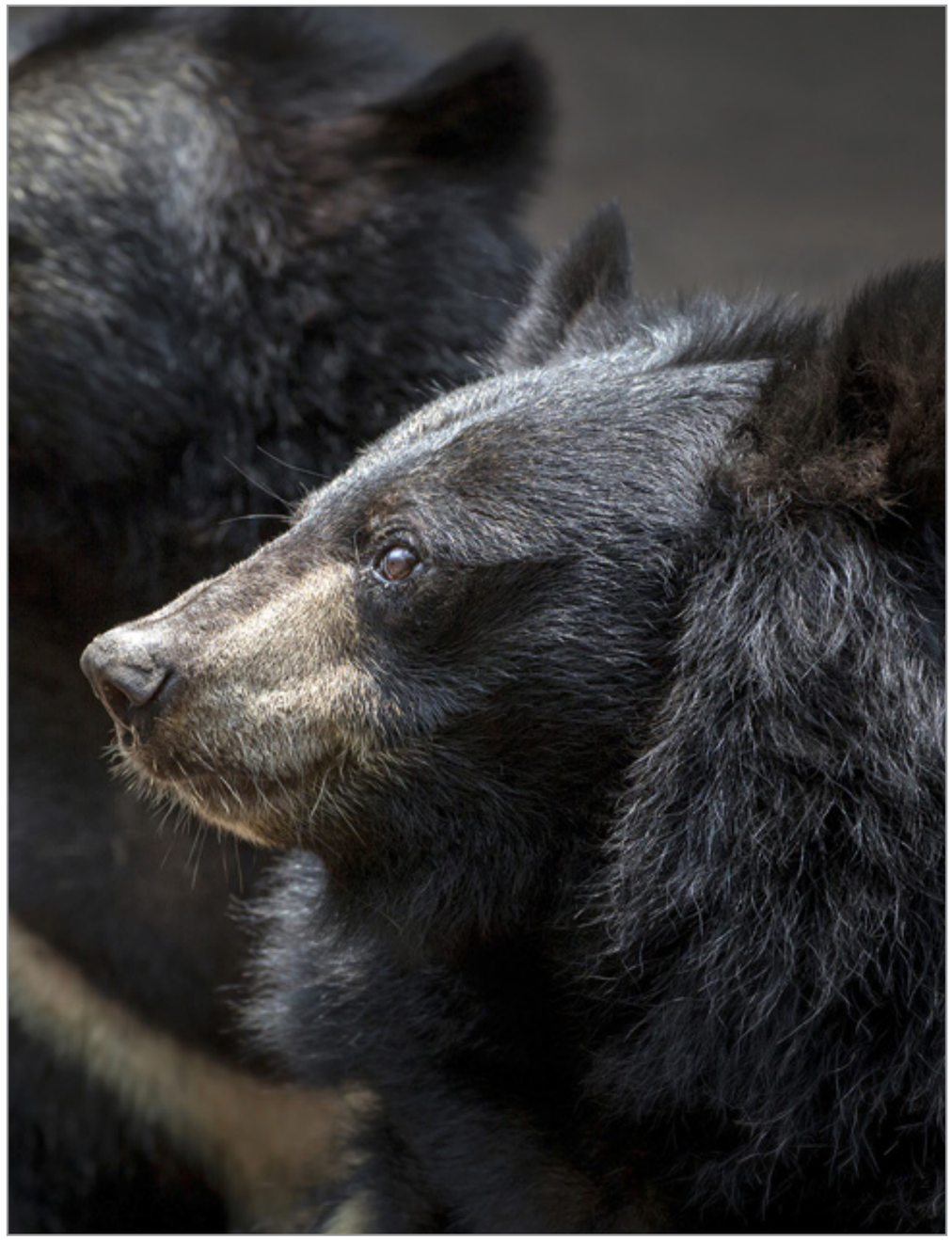
“... where indigenous peoples have maintained these anthrocosmic rituals focused on animals, sustainable bioregions are evident. These sustainable fields break down where historical events have brought invasions of peoples, ideas, and ways of interacting with the surrounding world that fragment indigenous knowing and being known by animals.”

Despite our common misuse of the word, ‘person’ is simply a legal concept that affords basic rights to a group of individuals. In the west all humans are now considered persons (although not so long ago women, children, non-landowners, minorities, slaves and other unfortunates were not). While in common speech we interchange the term ‘persons’ with ‘people’ or ‘humans’, they are not the same. A person is actually any individual being – elephant, human, clone, entity from another galaxy – that we respect enough to confer them a basic moral right. We respect their right to live a meaningful life, to have their individual liberty protected and to be free from torture. No one in these emerging scientific and philosophical fields suggest that wildlife be granted a right to vote, to hold a driver’s licence, or to receive a free and fair education. Such knee-jerk arguments simply reveal a poor understanding of the core meaning of a ‘right’.

I don’t propose the west shifts its religious philosophies either. I only seek to highlight that these philosophies are born of belief, not facts. I mean to unlock the potential for people to look at the world in different ways – for people to see the forests, the tundras, the skies and the oceans are filled with many forms of non-human persons.

I don’t discount or dismiss the tension this discussion creates. I welcome it. Such tensions propel humans to explore more layers to our existing world view. We can learn from the scientists as well as the Mentawai, Chewong, Lakota, Cree and Salish peoples and accept wildlife as persons. Adopting new ways of seeing our wild kin may help us find our way out of the spiralling destruction we are committing across the world.

Profound? Yes. Preposterous or outrageous? I don’t think so.



Moon bear. Photographer: Jeep2499/Shutterstock http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-275844617.html

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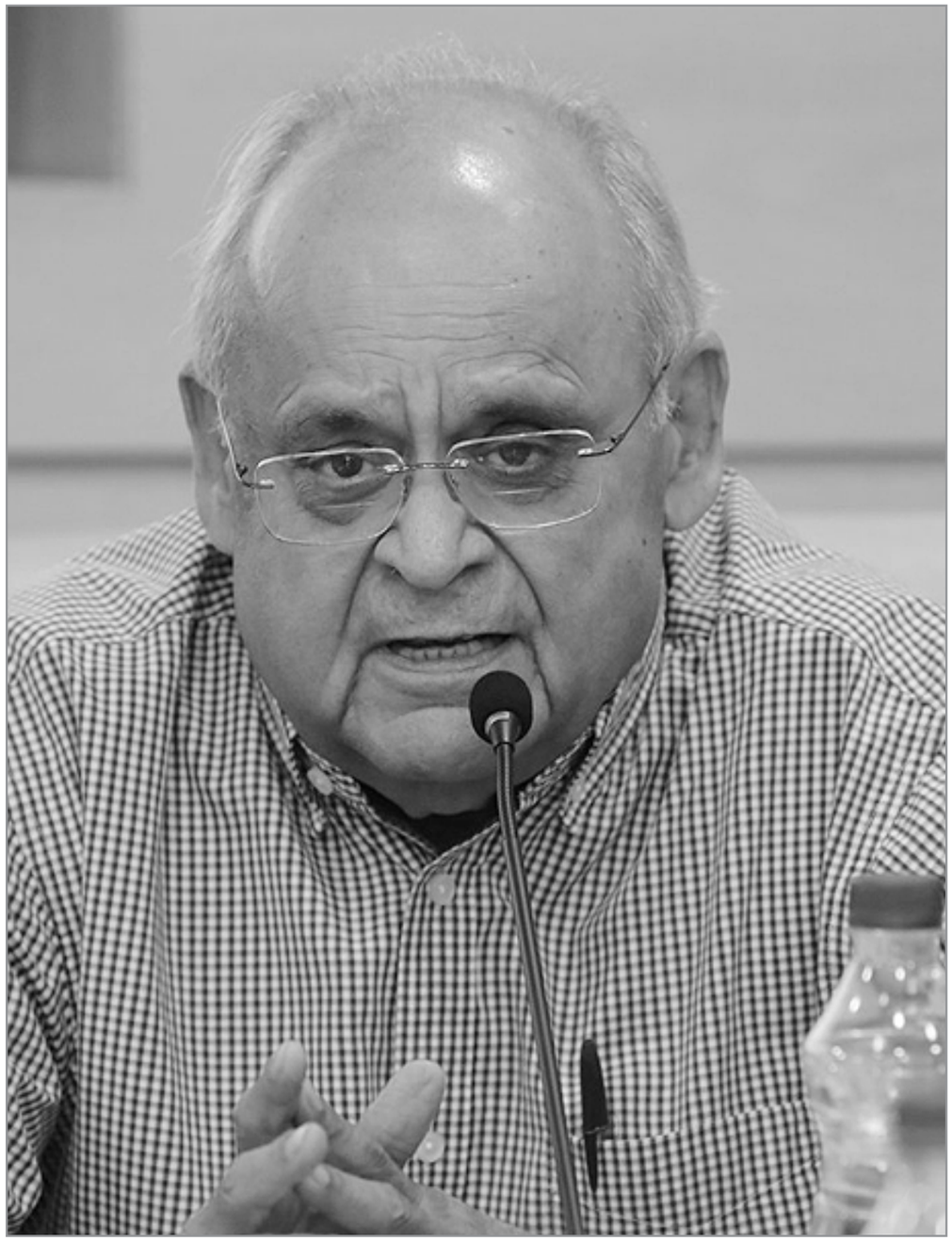

Vikram Sood. Photo credit: Observer Research Foundation https://www.facebook.com/ORFOnline/

Vikram Sood was a career intelligence officer and served in the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) India's external intelligence agency till his retirement in March 2003 after heading the organisation. He is currently Adviser at the Observer Research Foundation, an independent public policy think tank based in New Delhi. He has been regularly writing on intelligence, terrorism, security, foreign relations and strategic issues in journals and newspapers for the last fifteen years. He has contributed chapters relating to security, intelligence, terrorism and India's neighbourhood, for various books including China and Pakistan, published in the last few years. He is the author of *'The Unending Game - A former R&AW Chief's Insights into Espionage'* published by Penguin Random House in 2018. His second book – *'The Ultimate Goal – A Former R&AW Chief Deconstructs How Nations Construct Narratives'* is scheduled to be released by HarperCollins India, next month. This article was originally published on Fair Observer LINK.

Vikram Sood

Countering Insurgencies and Violent Extremism in South and Southeast Asia

South and Southeast Asia need fresh thinking, institutional overhaul and wise, decisive action to provide security in the region.

Today, people's rising aspirations often sit at odds with political stability. Impatience, dissent and violent protests can easily slip into insurgency and terrorism. Various state machineries stand guilty of weaponizing political disaffection in pursuit of political goals. These policies often result in blowback. Yet these short-horizon policies have mushroomed across geographies and ideological divides resulting in even more insurgency and terrorism.

So far, a comprehensive solution to this violence has been elusive. If insurgent groups are extreme, it is difficult to apply Nelson Mandela's reconciliatory method. The tendency to call for peace negotiations at the first sign of ephemeral success usually rebounds on the state.

Politicians prize the urgent over important and thus feel pressured to deliver a "peace deal." Such deals are used as breathers by insurgent organizations who mistake it for the weakness of the state. Ironically, the road to peace passes through the valley of war. Appeasement is a must avoid by a state if it wishes to succeed. There can be no lasting deal with insurgents unless they are first weakened. Insurgents have to be weakened by physical force, financial marginalization, destruction of safe havens, intelligence sharing and soft power before going the Mandela way.

A key element of the strategy to end insurgency and terrorism lies in "winning hearts and minds." This is a complex challenge and the toughest to implement. Such an approach can only succeed on intergenerational time scales and cannot replace counterinsurgency in the short term, which many politicians and theorists often forget.

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Of all the chapters, the one authored by Marvin Weinbaum titled “Insurgency and Violent Extremism in Pakistan” struck my eye. It is an unflattering account of the terror and insurgency situation in Pakistan. Things are dire. However, Weinbaum takes the view that Pakistan is unlikely to break apart “under the weight of provincially based insurgencies or yield power to radical Islamists.”

Weinbaum may be wrong. Bit by bit, Pakistan is making concession after concession to Islamists. In the past two months, the country’s radical actions have proved controversial. Islamabad stood idly by Islamic extremists destroyed a statue of Buddha that was accidentally unearthed in northwest Pakistan. Authorities stopped the construction of the capital Islamabad’s first Hindu temple.

Extremism and Insurgency Are Complicated

For decades, experts and practitioners have argued about the best strategies to curb insurgencies and violent extremism. Shanthie Mariet D’Souza, a scholar with field experience in South Asia, has made an important intervention in the field. D’Souza has edited a book, “Understanding Insurgencies and Violent extremism in South and South East Asia,” on the subject that, in her own words, recognizes the complexity of “violent internal challenges” faced by countries in the region and engages in an “all policy-relevant work to enhance comprehension”.

D’Souza ably delineates the dilemma democracies face in countering insurgencies and terrorism. Democracies struggle with the politicization of national security issues. In addition, bureaucratic establishments get siloed due to the need to guard secrets closely and to keep important matters confidential. This contributes to interdepartmental rivalries and further complicates policymaking.

Reading between the lines, D’Souza makes an important observation. She highlights the problematic mix in most democracies. An indifferent and vacillating political leadership exists alongside an activist and biased media. This mix is the greatest impediment to a successful counterterror or counterinsurgency operation in most countries. The state also comes up short when dealing with insurgencies that use violence as propaganda by the deed and as an enabler for their ideology-driven movement.

D’Souza’s book is divided into four sections: “Emerging Challenges,” “Cautious Optimism — or False Dawn?” “Quagmires” and “Victory?” The book is an international, multidisciplinary endeavor for the serious reader and a useful guide to an important problem.

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The Punjab Assembly unanimously passed the Tahaffuz-e-Bunyad-e-Islam Bill 2020, which gives the all-powerful Directorate General Public Relations even more powers. It can now visit and inspect any printing press, publication house, bookstore and confiscate any book, before or after printing. The law has also “made it mandatory that the blessed name of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) shall be preceded by the title Khatam-an-Nabiyyin or Khatam-un-Nabiyyin followed by ‘Sallallahu alaihi wasallam’ (darood) in the Arabic text.”

One might argue that such types of legislation may be token acts for winning over the religious vote. However, these small steps, one province at a time, indicate where Pakistan is headed. It demonstrates how Islamization is becoming increasingly entrenched and will not unravel easily. It is clear that the deradicalization of Pakistan is highly unlikely.

To be fair, Weinbaum acknowledges the direction in which Pakistan is headed. He writes: “South Punjab is the organizational home of several of the country’s leading jihadi organisations and most powerful Islamic movements, all of which aim to replace the current order with an idealised state governed by Sharia law. The province’s mosques and madrassas are among Pakistan’s largest and most influential, frequently serve up recruits for violent extremist groups, as do ostensibly non-political organisations like the Tablighi Jamaat, a proselytising movement preaching moral rearmament.”

The Pakistani military is aware of this phenomenon, but its relationship with the Afghan Taliban remains inviolable. Therefore, it cannot act effectively against jihadi organizations that serve up the cannon fodder for the Taliban.

These groups also act as appendages of the Pakistani state against India. Weinbaum points out how Jaish-e-Mohammed, an organization committed to waging jihad against India, frequently receives instructions from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan’s elite intelligence agency. This makes the ISI and the Pakistani state cannot act seriously against such an organization.

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Bibhu Prasad Routray's chapter titled "India's Fleeting Attachment to the Counter-insurgency Grand Strategy" is particularly relevant in the context of India's current problems in Kashmir and the communist Naxalite insurgencies. In general, insurgencies must be tackled by local forces. In India, multiple paramilitary forces and the army operate in Kashmir, making coordination and unity of action diifcult. The army has tried to win hearts and minds, but accusations of human rights violations have dogged it in the absence of a political solution.

The counterinsurgency strategy of relying solely on violent and overwhelming force without a political component has not succeeded. We now need new insights. The scholars in Shanthie Mariet D'Souza's book provide some valuable ones for policymakers and security professionals, which are most relevant and will remain so in the years ahead.

Given Weinbaum's observations, it is surprising to see him conclude optimistically. He suggests that through the unglamorous but steady implementation of political, legal and social reforms, combined with economic improvements in the border areas, Pakistan could emerge from this spiral of fanatical Islamist violence. Weinbaum fails to outline how these reforms will come into being. Pakistan has fallen prey to the terrorism it has sponsored assiduously in its neighborhood for decades. Unless the country stops using terror as a tactic in its geopolitical strategy, Weinbaum's conclusion about unglamorous reforms will remain a pious but forlorn hope.

New Challenges and Aging Institutions

Another section of D'Souza's book that caught my eye is Dawood Azami's chapter titled, "Countering the Islamic State in Asia." In recent times, the Islamic State (IS) group has frequently targeted Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The organization has sympathizers and volunteers in all three countries. One way of dealing with such a multinational insurgency is close intelligence, counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency cooperation. This requires mutual trust and common strategic goals. Both of these conditions do not exist.

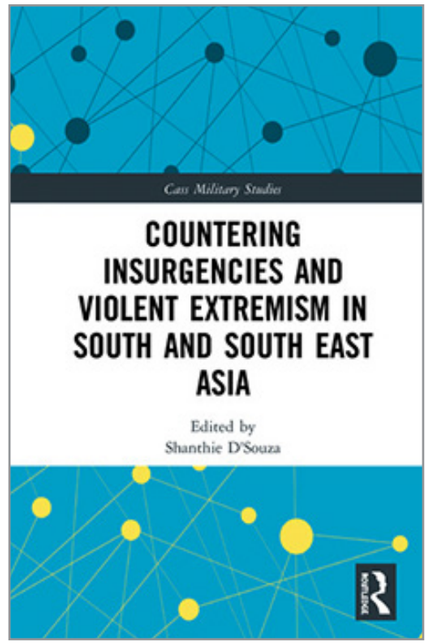
Unless Afghanistan, Pakistan and India can build trust and agree upon common goals, they will be unable to combat the new security challenge. An Islamic state in Khorasan — a historical term for modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan — stretching all the way from Central Asia to Southeast Asia will keep extremists, radicals and fanatics busy. It is unlikely that IS militants in the Middle East will send volunteers to engage in this battle for Khorasan, a region often cited by Islamic fundamentalists. The group's new model is akin to the American franchise system. The Islamic State group will rely on local franchises that will provide the manpower to fight this jihad. Azami is spot on when he asserts that the response mechanisms of the states in the region remain far from adequate.

Bibhu Prasad Routray's chapter titled "India's Fleeting Attachment to the Counterinsurgency Grand Strategy" is particularly relevant in the context of India's current problems in Kashmir and the communist Naxalite insurgencies. In general, insurgencies must be tackled by local forces. In India, multiple paramilitary forces and the army operate in Kashmir, making coordination and unity of action difficult. The army has tried to win hearts and minds, but accusations of human rights violations have dogged it in the absence of a political solution.

Instead of using the army, Routray suggests that India should use a local counterinsurgency or paramilitary force in Kashmir. Using the army is counterproductive in the long run. In fact, real success in counterinsurgency is based on a political solution. The Indian states of Mizoram, Tripura and Punjab serve as good examples. The challenge with Routray's suggestion when it comes to Kashmir is the involvement of Pakistan. India's increasingly Islamized neighbor no longer wants a solution. Therefore, any discussion with Pakistan leads to a dead end and India perforce has to solve the Kashmir problem on its own.

D'Souza's concluding remarks sum up the key problems of the region. Inadequate resources, inappropriate force mobilization, lack of united effort and weak political will have led to prolonged insurgency and an increase in extremism. Social, regional and religious fault lines add fuel to the fire. Insurgent and extremist groups have proved most adaptable. They have survived by splintering, lying low, exploiting peace deals or merging with other groups. Maoists in Nepal and Naxalites in India as well as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have been around for decades.

Since the Taliban got involved with al-Qaeda in the 1990s, a local problem has become a global one. The attacks of September 11, 2001, brought the US to the region. Since then, eye-catching headlines have made the news while local issues or threats have been ignored. The counterinsurgency strategy of relying solely on violent and overwhelming force without a political component has not succeeded. We now need new insights. The scholars in Shanthie Mariet D'Souza's book provide some valuable ones for policymakers and security professionals, which are most relevant and will remain so in the years ahead.



Countering Insurgencies and Violent Extremism in South and South East Asia
Edited by Shanthie D'Souza
https://www.routledge.com

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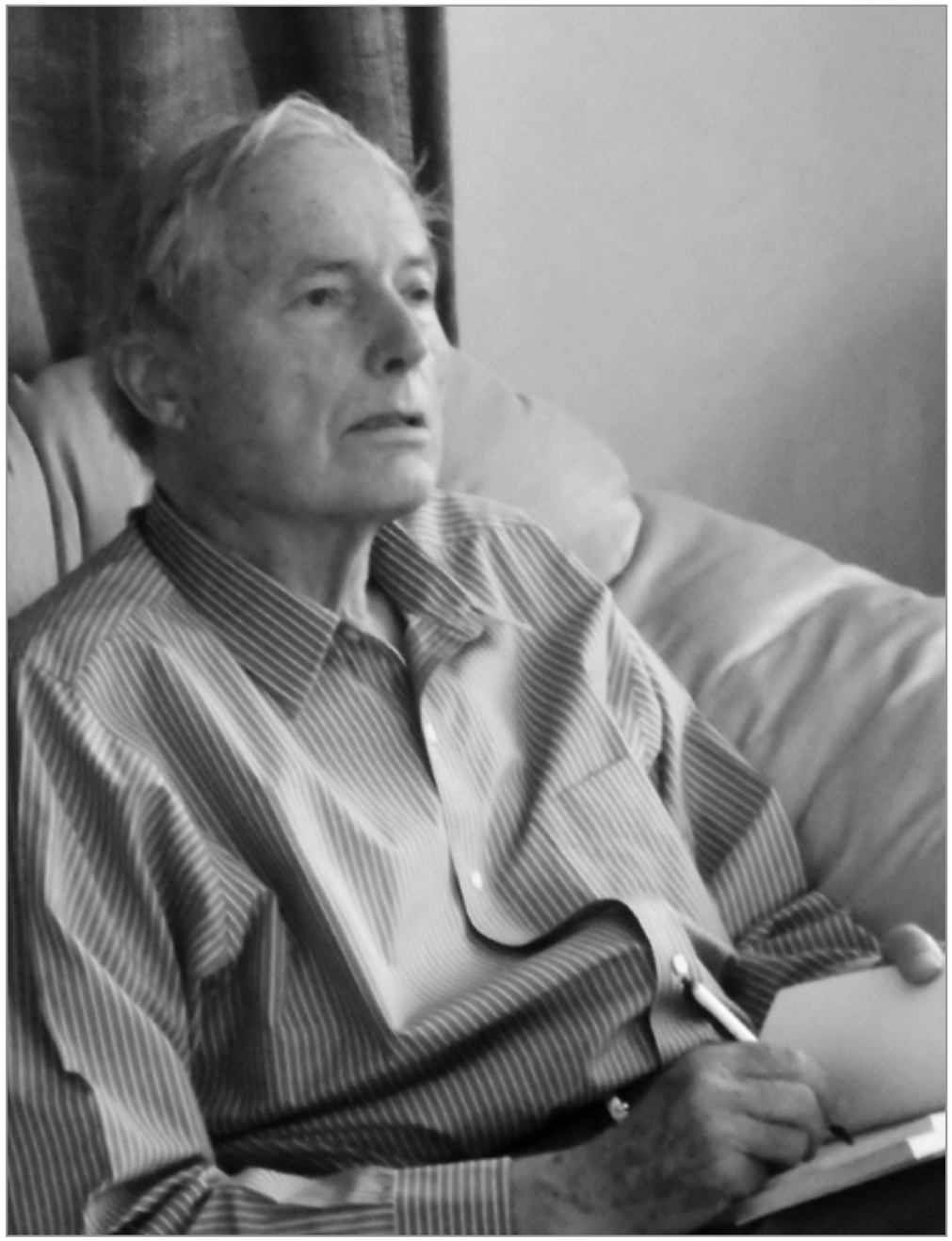

Dr Howard Richards

Dr Howard Richards (born June 10, 1938) is a philosopher of Social Science who has worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He holds the title of Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College, a liberal arts college in Richmond, Indiana, USA, the Quaker School where he taught for thirty years. He officially retired from Earlham College, together with his wife Caroline Higgins in 2007, but retained the title of Research Professor of Philosophy. A member of the Yale class of 1960, he holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa Barbara, a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the Stanford Law School, an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) from Oxford University (UK) and a PhD in Educational Planning, with a specialization in applied psychology and moral education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. Dr Richards is a Catholic, a member of Holy Trinity (Santisima Trinidad) parish in Limache, Chile, and a member of the third order of St. Francis, S.F.O www.wikipedia.org

Three Cheers for the Cheerfully Deluded

An excerpt from *Howard Richards, Gavin Andersson* and *Malose Langa´s* forthcoming book about South Africa´s public employment program, the Community Work Program (CWP). *Economic Theory and Community Development.* Dignity Press

A compassionate realist acknowledges the delusions present in the participants' rhetoric about CWP at Orange Farm: Delusions about how many jobs there are (*"Many people are excited about the new mall. People are thinking about job opportunities."*). Delusions about public employment being a temporary stopgap until participants find work and exit ("*We do not want to see a participant remaining a CWP participant—we want them to exit the programme and open space for other needy people to benefit from it."*). Delusions about the power of education and training to guarantee employment (*"Most of them are saying why you don't take us to school to learn things like welding and plumbing? If I could do such a thing and get a certificate I would be fine."*). And so on.

But delusions often have positive social functions. People whose self-esteem is so high that they overestimate the probability of their success are likely to become optimists. Complete optimists are people who, when in a single day they fail an examination, are dismissed from their employment, and dumped by their lover, hit the books to study for the next exam that very night. The next day, they are pounding the sidewalks with a CV in their hand, a smile on their face, and their shoes nicely shined. The next evening they are flirting on Facebook.

People whose self-esteem is so low that their estimate of the probability of getting a good job is close to the truth are bad news. They drain the emotional energy of their friends. They swell the ranks of the whiners, the depressed, the alcoholics, the addicts, the delinquents. Pessimists may have truth on their side, but there is little else to be said in their favour.[1]

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Urban agriculture in both Johannesburg and Rosario represents a principle that can be widely amplified: the belief of the optimists that they can make it on their own can be gently brought into synch with economic reality through discrete subsidies. What is not possible in pure markets is possible in impure markets. Public policies and public sympathy can rescue not only the bodies of the poor but also their dignity.

CWP in Orange Farm is different things for different people. It relates to illusions and to truth in more than one way. For young eager beavers CWP is *perceived* as a pathway to a career. For the many rejected by the labour market CWP means dignity at last. Unlike many other public employment programmes, CWP provides support for participants for as long as they need it. It is a way of life for participants who find joy in service. However, for many men CWP is not an attractive option because it pays less than they need to get by. Men sometimes join, participate for a while, and then drop out. Given a world where, year by year, there is a growing precariat[2] whose members, even if well-educated and have technical skills, never achieve steady employment, and where even people who do have steady employment most are poorly paid,[3] the observations of CWP at Orange Farm highlight two crying needs: (1) to create soft landings for the many young eager beavers who will inevitably be disappointed, and (2) to raise wages. 'To raise wages' means to raise wages in public employment programmes and to raise the wages of the poorly paid in general. The two are connected. As we saw in the chapters on India and Sweden, public employment guarantees provide a floor under private sector wages.

This chapter's story about the realities of life on the south side of Johannesburg tell could be told, with variations, about many other places—the south side of Chicago, the south side of Mexico City, the south side of Paris, the south side of Cairo, the south side of Mumbai, and so on, and about those cities' north, east, and west sides too. Many other cities can sing of Johannesburg what the Beatles sang of the Nowhere Man: "Isn't he a bit like you and me?" In the spring of 1972, Michel Foucault participated in a panel discussion (on life in the public housing projects in the *banlieues* of Paris) during which he described the global trend as one where the plebeians increasingly outnumber the proletariat.[4] The proletariat are the workers with steady jobs. The plebeians are the excluded. Intelligent policy makers will not waste time imagining a future when private for-profit employers offer good jobs to every person who needs one. They will accept the reality that in the present there are, and in the future there will be, dispossessed millions living on transfer payments or, worse, somehow subsisting without them. But there is another reality that is also part of the world as it is. There are millions of optimists who *believe* they can get a good job or successfully run a business of their own. They want that. Their positive attitudes are a big plus for society. If, in the coming years, they are regularly frustrated, many will defect to the pessimists. Then there will be even more people with bad attitudes than the many we already have.

Creative, outside-the-box solutions exist that combine social support with private enterprise. One of them is the City of Johannesburg's urban agriculture programme. Discrete subsidies make it possible for mini-entrepreneurs to enjoy the dignity of earning their own living. Rosario, Argentina has gone in the same direction as Johannesburg but further.[5] In Rosario every child development centre has an agricultural adviser. A child development centre[6] is a combination kindergarten, community centre, and drop-in study hall for older children. The families with children in the centre are advised on what food they can produce, even if it is only rabbits kept in a small space and fed on kitchen scraps. Private and public entities lend land for free. Private and public entities give free courses on everything from how to comply with sanitation laws to how to cultivate worms in compost. Free advertising touts the health benefits of the urban farmers' organic products. They get free stalls in the municipal marketplaces. It is their business, but community support makes it possible.

So let's hear three cheers for the cheerfully deluded! Instead of telling them that their dreams are likely to fail, let's change the world to make it possible for more of their dreams to come true. Urban agriculture in both Johannesburg and Rosario represents a principle that can be widely amplified: the belief of the optimists that they can make it on their own can be gently brought into synch with economic reality through discrete subsidies. What is not possible in pure markets is possible in impure markets. Public policies and public sympathy can rescue not only the bodies of the poor but also their dignity.

Foot Notes

1. This literary image of the optimist is suggested by the cheerfulness of the young people at Orange Farm who treat CWP as an opportunity to start on the path of success. Empirical studies tend to show that optimism rewards the optimist only when it is moderate. See for example Puri, M., & Robinson, D. T. (2007). 'Optimism and economic choice'. Journal of Financial Economics, 86 (1), 71-99.
2. Guy Standing, The Precariat. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011 (op cit)
3. Guy Standing, 'Economic Insecurity and Global Casualisation' Social Indicators Research. Vol. 88 (2008) pp. 15-30.
4. Michel Foucault et al, Table Ronde in Esprit for April-May 1972. Pp. 678-703. Reprinted in Michel Foucault, Dits et Ecrits. Paris: Gallimard, 1994. Pages 316-339.
5. Howard Richards, Solidaridad, Participación, Transparencia: conversaciones sobre el socialismo en Rosario, Argentina. Rosario: Fundacion Estevez Boero, 2008.
6. Centro Crecer.

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Paulo Coelho. Photo credit Niels Akermann

Paulo Coelho (Portuguese: ['pawlu ku'eʎu]), born August 24, 1947) is considered one of the most influential authors of our times. His works have been translated into 83 languages and are sold in 224 territories. So far, the 1,018 versions of his 30 books have sold more than 320 million books around the world. He worked as a director, theatre actor, composer and journalist. His collaboration with Brazilian composer and singer Raul Seixas gave some of the greatest classic rock songs in Brazil. He has received numerous prestigious international awards amongst them the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légin d'Honneur and the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum. He has been a member of the Academy of Letters of Brazil since 2002, and in 2007 he was proclaimed Messenger of Peace by the United Nations.
https://www.facebook.com/paulocoelho/
https://paulocoelhoblog.com/
https://santjordi-asociados.com/literature/

Paulo Coelho
Emotional independence

"At the beginning of our life and again when we get old, we need the help and affection of others. Unfortunately, between these two periods of our life, when we are strong and able to look after ourselves, we don't appreciate the value of affection and compassion. As our own life begins and ends with the need for affection, wouldn't it be better if we gave compassion and love to others while we are strong and capable?"

The above words were said by the present Dalai Lama. Really, it is very curious to see that we are proud of our emotional independence. Evidently, it is not quite like that: we continue needing others our entire life, but it is a "shame" to show that, so we prefer to cry in hiding. And when someone asks us for help, that person is considered weak and incapable of controlling his feelings.

There is an unwritten rule saying that "the world is for the strong", that "only the fittest survive." If it were like that, human beings would never have existed, because they are part of a species that needs to be protected for a long period of time (specialists say that we are only capable of surviving on our own after nine years of age, whereas a giraffe takes only six to eight months, and a bee is already independent in less than five minutes).

We are in this world, I, for my part, continue – and will always continue – depending on others. I depend on my wife, my friends and my publishers. I depend even on my enemies, who help me to be always trained in the use of the sword.

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Emotional independence leads to absolutely nowhere – except to a would-be fortress, whose only and useless objective is to impress others.

Emotional dependence, in its turn, is like a bonfire that we light.

Clearly, there are moments when this fire blows in another direction, but I always ask myself: where are the others? Have I isolated myself too much? Like any healthy person, I also need solitude and moments of reflection.

But I cannot get addicted to that.

Emotional independence leads to absolutely nowhere – except to a would-be fortress, whose only and useless objective is to impress others.

Emotional dependence, in its turn, is like a bonfire that we light.

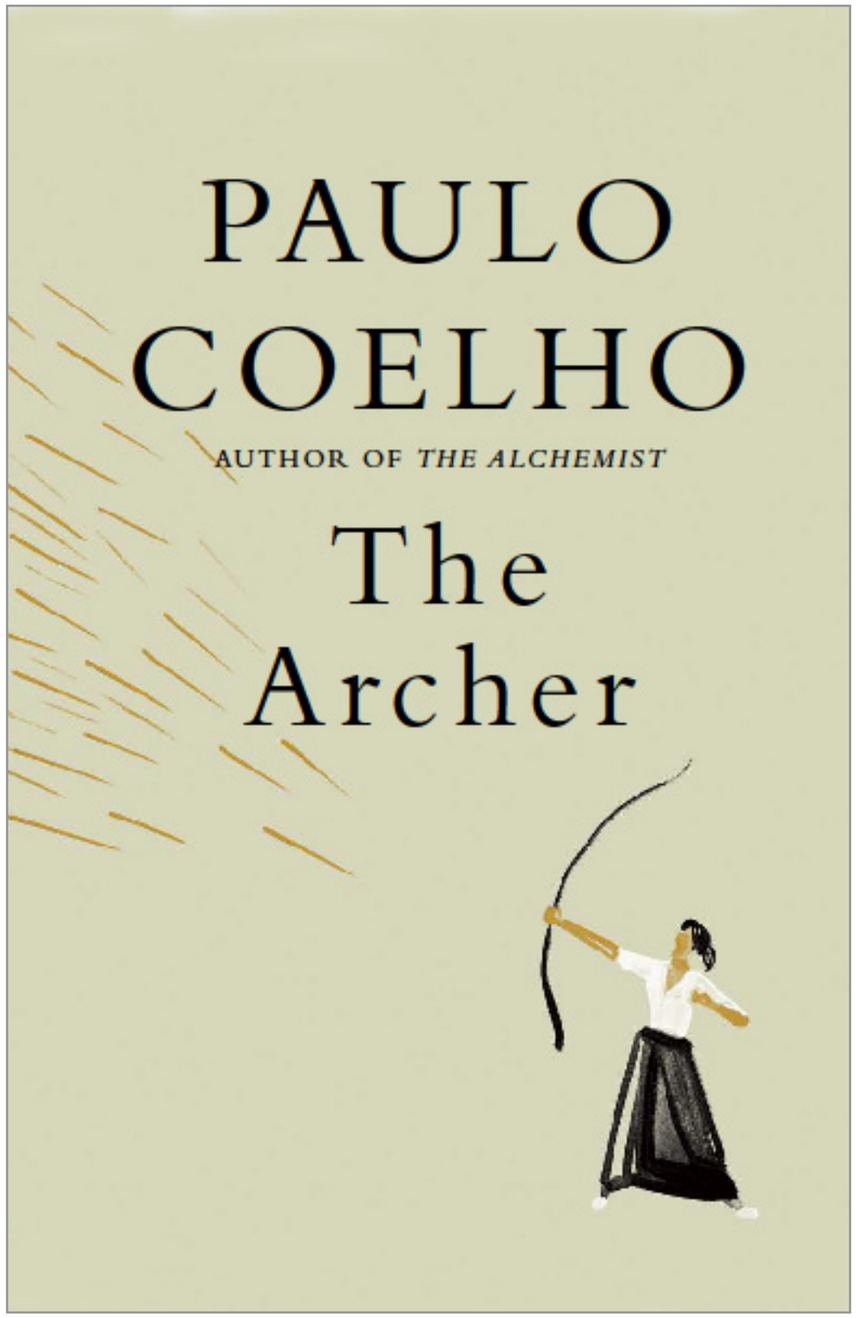
In the beginning, relationships are difficult. In the same way that fire is necessary to put up with the disagreeable smoke – which makes breathing hard, and causes tears to pour down one's face. However, once the fire is alight, the smoke disappears and the flames light up everything around us – spreading warmth, calm, and possibly making an ember pop out to burn us, but that is what makes a relationship interesting, isn't that true?

I began this column quoting a Nobel Peace Prize winner about the importance of human relationships. I am ending with Professor Albert Schweitzer, physician and missionary, who received the same Nobel prize in 1952.

"All of us know a disease in Central Africa called sleeping sickness. What we need to know is that there is a similar disease that attacks the soul – and which is very dangerous, because it catches us without being noticed. When you notice the slightest sign of indifference and lack of enthusiasm for your similar, be on the alert!"

"The only way to take precautions against this disease is to understand that the soul suffers, and suffers a lot, when we make it live superficially. The soul likes things that are beautiful and profound".

Translated by James Mulholland



Paul Coelho's latest book, *The Archer,* published by *Knopf* in the US, will be available at all bookstores on November 10th, 2020.

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Rob Carney

Rob Carney grew up in the Pacific Northwest but has lived the last 23 years in Salt Lake City, Utah. He's the author of seven books of poems, most recently Facts and Figures (Hoot 'n' Waddle 2020), and The Book of Sharks (Black Lawrence Press 2018), which was a finalist for the 2019 Washington State Book Award. In 2014 he received the Robinson Jeffers/Tor House Foundation Award for Poetry. His work has appeared in Cave Wall, The American Journal of Poetry, and many others, as well as the Norton anthology Flash Fiction Forward (2006). He's a Professor of English at Utah Valley University and writes a regular feature called "Old Roads, New Stories" for Terrain.org.

Rob Carney
Cetology vs. Anthropology

On Mother's Day, my mom asked, "Did you see the white orca?"

I hadn't—it didn't make the Utah news—so I looked it up.

A pod of orcas from Canadian waters, or sometimes the San Juan Islands, was sighted in April at the south end of Puget Sound, and one of them, very rare, was completely white. In the articles, they mention that, technically, it's gray, but in the footage shot by aerial drones, it stands out white as a beluga whale, and by *articles* plural, I mean there were a lot. It even made *People* magazine. Not the Australian soft-core thing; it's more like *Who*, or wherever you hear which actors got divorced and what the British Royals thought about a bi-racial American woman marrying into the family. Now, though, with no new movies coming out, I guess a white orca filled the gap. There was even an easy quote they could cherry-pick since a guy told local reporters there was "a certain mystical quality" to seeing it.

I'm not writing this to quibble with his word choice, and not with People either. I'm just saying that the pod themselves didn't pay it any mind. I can't prove that, of course, because we don't speak Orca. We listen in, we record it, but so far no one can translate. *Man*, do I wish. How fantastic would that be? Plenty. And it would validate my claim that it's humans who get stuck on the color of things, hung up about the outward.

Uniquely so.

My cat doesn't hate orange cats for their orangeness, and wolves don't get resentful if the alpha has black fur, and this pod of transient orcas (more on that in a minute) doesn't care, not remotely, that one of them is white. That's a human thing.

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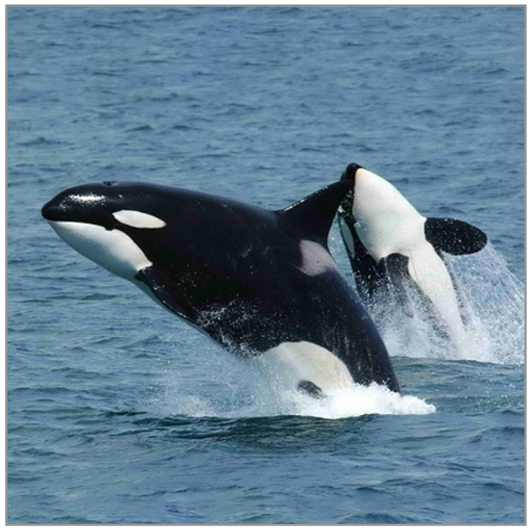

In fact, it might be the thing that makes us most distinct. Not our brains being disproportionately large for our body size; that's also true of crows. Not the use of tools, and not problem-solving intelligence; that's true of crows again, and crows again. A feeling of grievance about injustice, and being self-sacrificial, even with strangers—these two are human traits, right? But they aren't ours alone; zoologists have tested this and found them in capuchin monkeys.

"What about teaching and passing on knowledge?"

"Wolves do that, and so do orcas."

"What about the sense that our connection to others extends beyond the grave?"

"Well, we might have just learned that from elephants. They visit the bones of their dead, pick them up with their trunks, even dance with them, or seem to be dancing. A kind of ritual. An elephant ceremony."

"Okay fine, but at least we have language."

"And orcas do too. They've even got dialects; it's not the same from pod to pod. Like Chinook and King Salmon, like ballena and whale. Like us."

Speaking of whales, I'm going to finish with a whale poem.

But before I do: Though orcas are nicknamed killer whales, they aren't really whales at all; they're the biggest kind of dolphin. And "transient orcas" doesn't mean what I thought it did. It's got nothing to do with migration; it's about what they eat. This pod—the one with the white one—eats mammals, so they're doing pretty well. Laws to protect humpbacks, gray whales, and sea lions have helped the orcas too because their food source has bounced back. It's the other pods that are starving. They eat fish, and most of the salmon have been wiped out. Too much pollution. Too many dams, so they can't get upriver to spawn. Yes, hydropower is better than coal, but we still have a long ways to go.

Why We have Whales

People thought whales were fish,
but they're not.
And a whale didn't swallow Jonah,
and yes I've heard that story too, but no.
And they weren't a source of lamp oil
though we killed and used them anyway,
as if staying up late to read anything—
say, a letter to *The Picayune*
justifying slavery—
could somehow balance
the ocean's loss,
but no . . .
Now the sight offshore
of spouting water.
And seagulls above them like squawking comets.
And wind. And somewhere
a shutter banging, then again, its nails
pulled loose, the frame weathered.
Imagine you can see them breaching.
Now imagine them gone.

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Vũ Tuấn Hưng

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

Hani of Vietnam

Photographs by Vũ Tuấn Hưng

About 400 km from Hanoi towards the north near the border between Vietnam and China live the Lolo-speaking ethnic group known as *Hani* or *Ho* people. In Vietnamese they are called *Người Hà Nhì.* They are one of the officially recognized ethnic groups of Vietnam.

They are primarily rice farmers, which is reflected in the stunning architectural landscaping of the surroundings hillsides with stunning rice terraces.

When they are not farming the Hani make beautiful handicrafts that are sold in the city markets and to tourists.

The Hani are rural folk who live in harmony with Mother Nature.

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01 Multi-tasking

02 Traditional attire

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03 Local market

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04 Terraced rice-field

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05 Terraced rice-field

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06 Dwelling

07 Village children

08 Bus stop

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09 Texting

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Joachim Peter is a Visual artist and writer based in Southwest Germany, presently working on documentary and travel photography in Asia right. He loves to explore and combine all arts in his work. Joo has studied Arts; painting and graphics, worked for theatre (designing stage, costume and light) , did some work for television and film, went into teaching. He writes essays and a blog in his native tongue, German, for he feels his language combines philosophy and humour. www.joo-peter.photoshelter.com

Joo Peter

Joo Peter
Photographs of
Pushkar

The Pushkar Fair, also called the Pushkar Camel Fair or locally as Kartik Mela or Pushkar ka Mela is an annual multi-day livestock fair and cultural fête held in the town of Pushkar (Rajasthan, India).

The Pushkar fair is one of India's largest camel, horse and cattle fairs. Apart from the trading of livestock, it is an important pilgrimage season for Hindus to the Pushkar lake. Pushkar fair has also become a significant tourist attraction for domestic and international travelers, given the cooler season, the abundance of colorful cultural themes. Cultural events and competitions include dances, tug of war between women teams as well as men teams, the "matka phod", "longest moustache" competition, "bridal competition", camel races and others.

The Brahma Temple in Pushkar is believed to be over 2000 years old. There are over 500 temples in the area.*

*wikipedia.

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Girl eating snacks at the Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

Visitors to the Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

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Actor performing as Lord Arjun (?), Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

Actor performing as Lord Krishna, Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

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Aarti, girl acrobat, Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

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Holy man on pilgrimage for Kartik Purnima (eight full moon of the year) to bath in Pushkar's sacred lake, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

Holy man on pilgrimage for Kartik Purnima (eight full moon of the year) to bath in Pushkar's sacred lake, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

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Street shop for pigments used for tika in puja, Camel Fair, Pushkar, Rajasthan.

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Hmong fashionestas - 1

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 photo-grapher. 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*). In August 2020 the fourth publication, *Live Encounters Books,* was launched. He has edited, designed and produced all of *Live Encounters'* 193 publications (upto September 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.*
https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Ulyseas/e/B01FUUQVBG
https://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas/

Hmong Fashionestas

Hmong New Year festivities, Luang Prabang - Part II

Photographs by
Mark Ulyseas

The following photographs, the second in a two part series, feature the beautiful attire worn by the women and men of the Hmong tribe at their New Year celebrations that occurred in Luang Prabang, Laos PDR, in the third week of December 2019.

The Hmong are a subgroup of Miao people. They live mainly in southern China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar.

In past bloody conflicts they have held their own despite many forms of persecution. Their tenacity, sense of identity and particular form of belief - animism - have kept the Hmong singularly distinctive amidst the many tribes of this region.

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Hmong fashionestas - 2

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Free Online Magazine From Village Earth

October 2020

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