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JANUARY 2022



JILL GOCHER
Jaisalmer - Wild and Warm

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY JILL GOCHER



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Live Encounters Magazine (2010), Live Encounters Poetry & Writing (2016), Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers (2019) and now, Live Encounters Books (August 2020).

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor
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Novice monk at a temple in Luang Prabang, Laos PDR. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

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JILL GOCHER

JAISALMER

Wild and Warm

Text & Photographs

Sitting at the chai stand, with a cup of steaming sweet chai in hand, on the corner of the Jaisalmer market, I watch the passing parade of folk. Many Indians and tribal folk in particular, possess a wonderful dress sense, each portraying their own taste and colour combinations. I was instantly inspired to pull out my camera and start capturing their wild beauty.

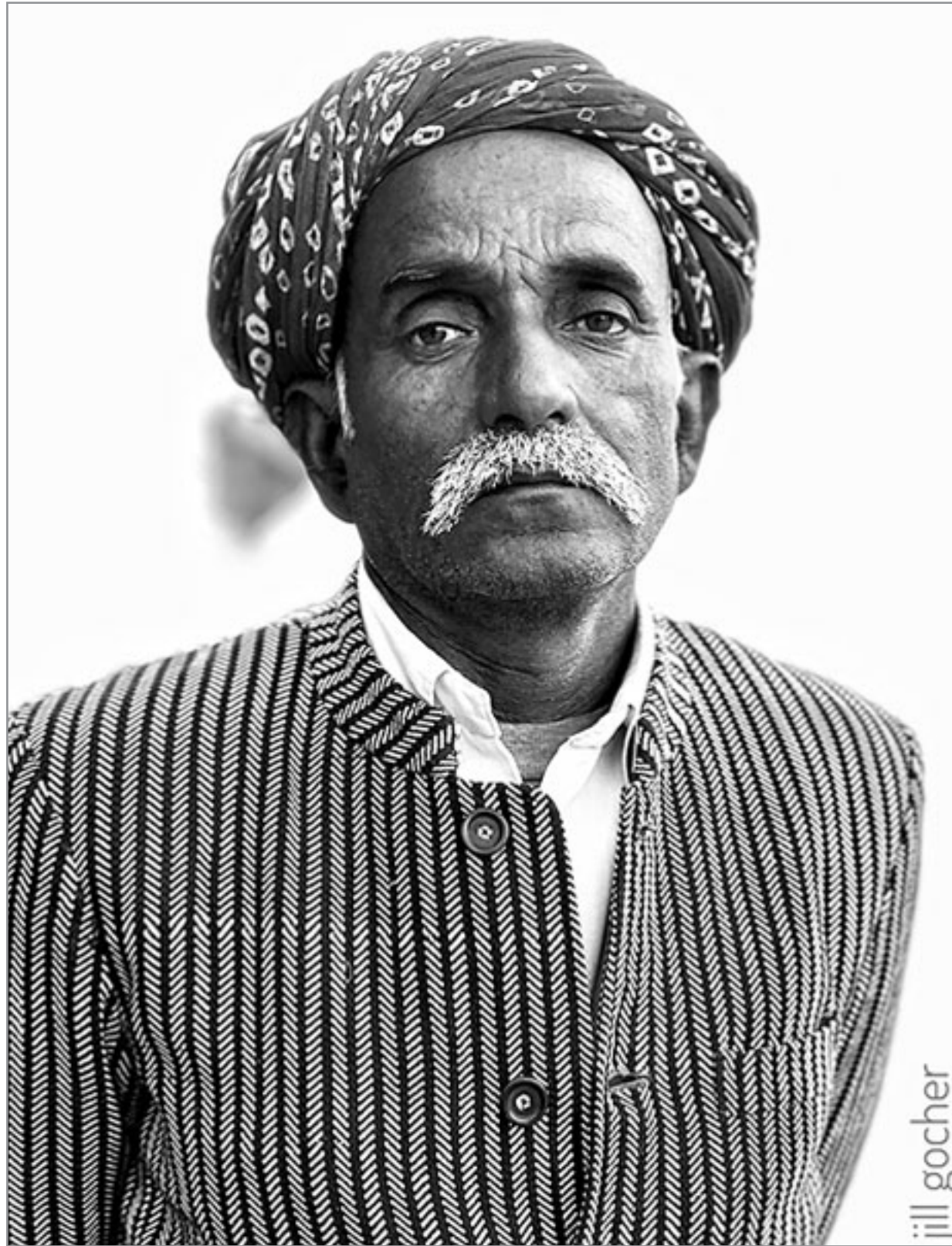
The tribal folk and their life in general exude a rawness that comes with desert life and living so close to the elements.

The men are so handsome and rough but they are also gentlemen and I found that even the toughest looking men were basically shy and kind of melted with a smile. If only more people were like that.

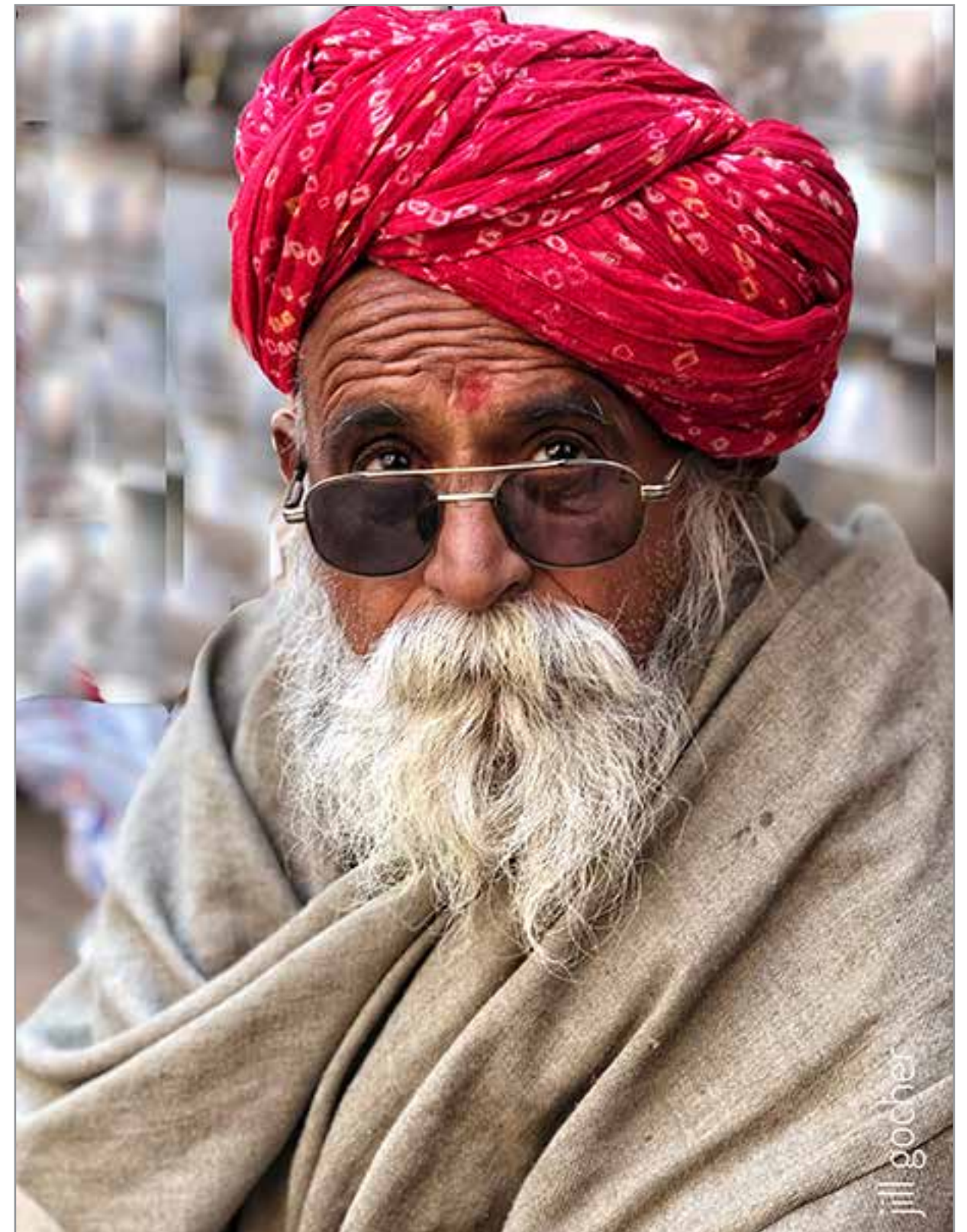
The women are used to being a little hidden and they use their dupatta to great advantage pulling it across their face and adjusting it constantly to preserve privacy and avoid confrontation with curious eyes. It's modest and kind of seductive at the same time.

As the people move from remote villages, to more convenient locations closer to the city, where water and other of life's necessities are more readily available, they begin to lose their heritage, but fortunately, enough remains for these wonderful folk to keep their identity.

Jill Gocher



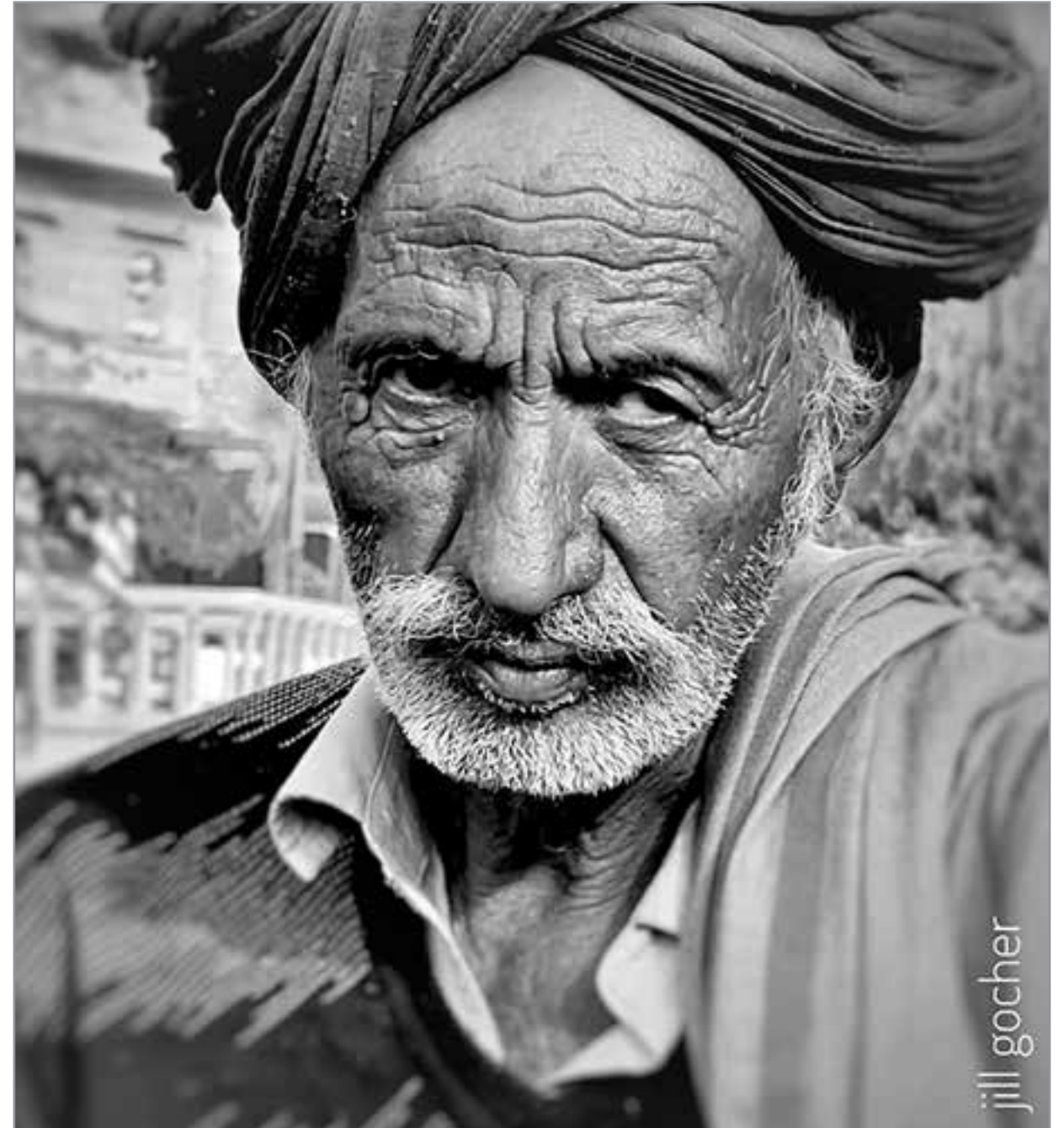
This elegant man looks so nice when you see him walking around town.



With his red turban and big woollen shawl, his dignified demeanour is such a good look.



Many Rajasthani men like to wear a gold earring or two.



His rugged face belies his hard life, but when he smiled he was as sweet as a pussycat.



This Muslim trader was pleased as punch to be photographed.



Although he looks as if he is from Afghanistan, he is really from the Thar.



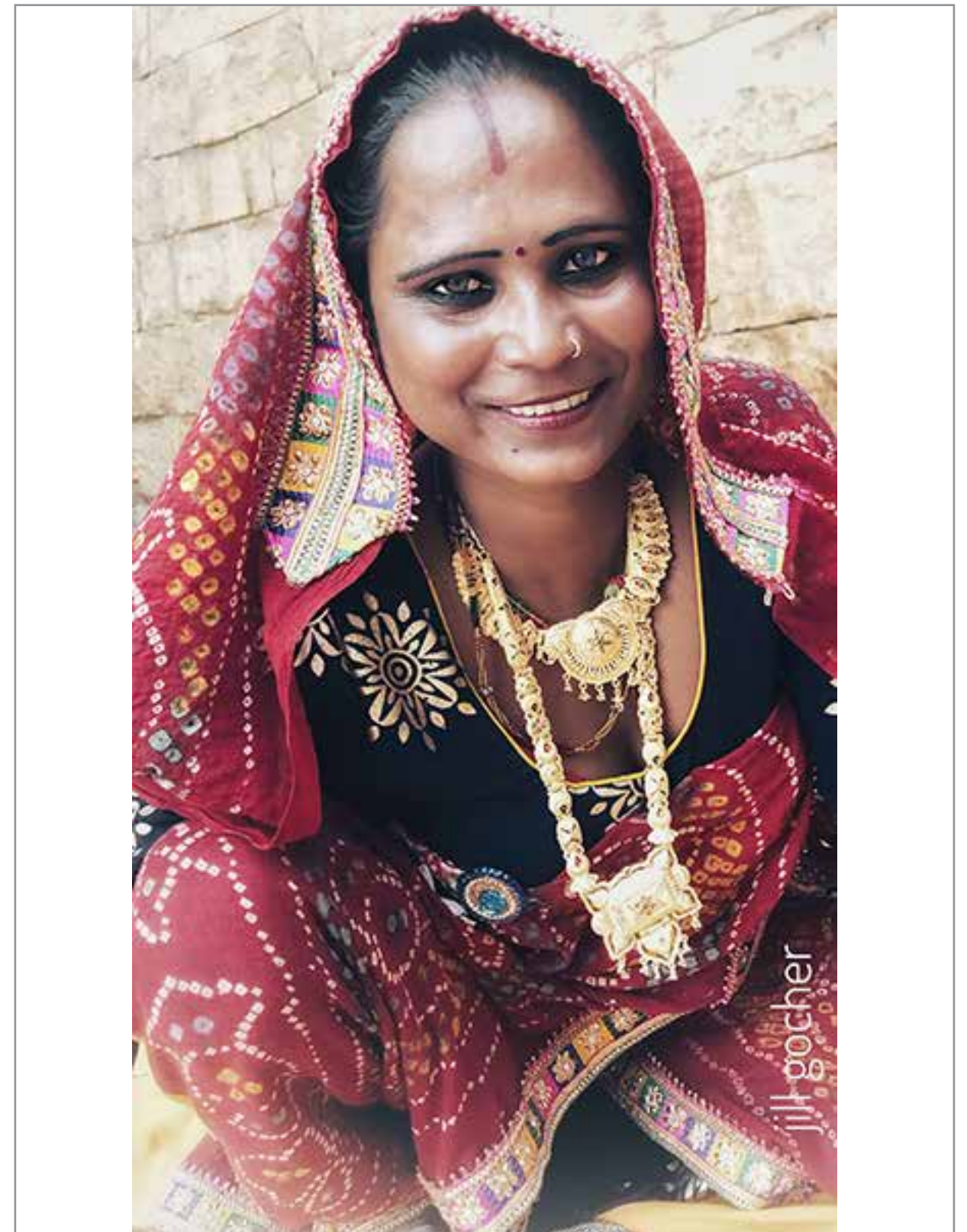
Dignity is his trademark.



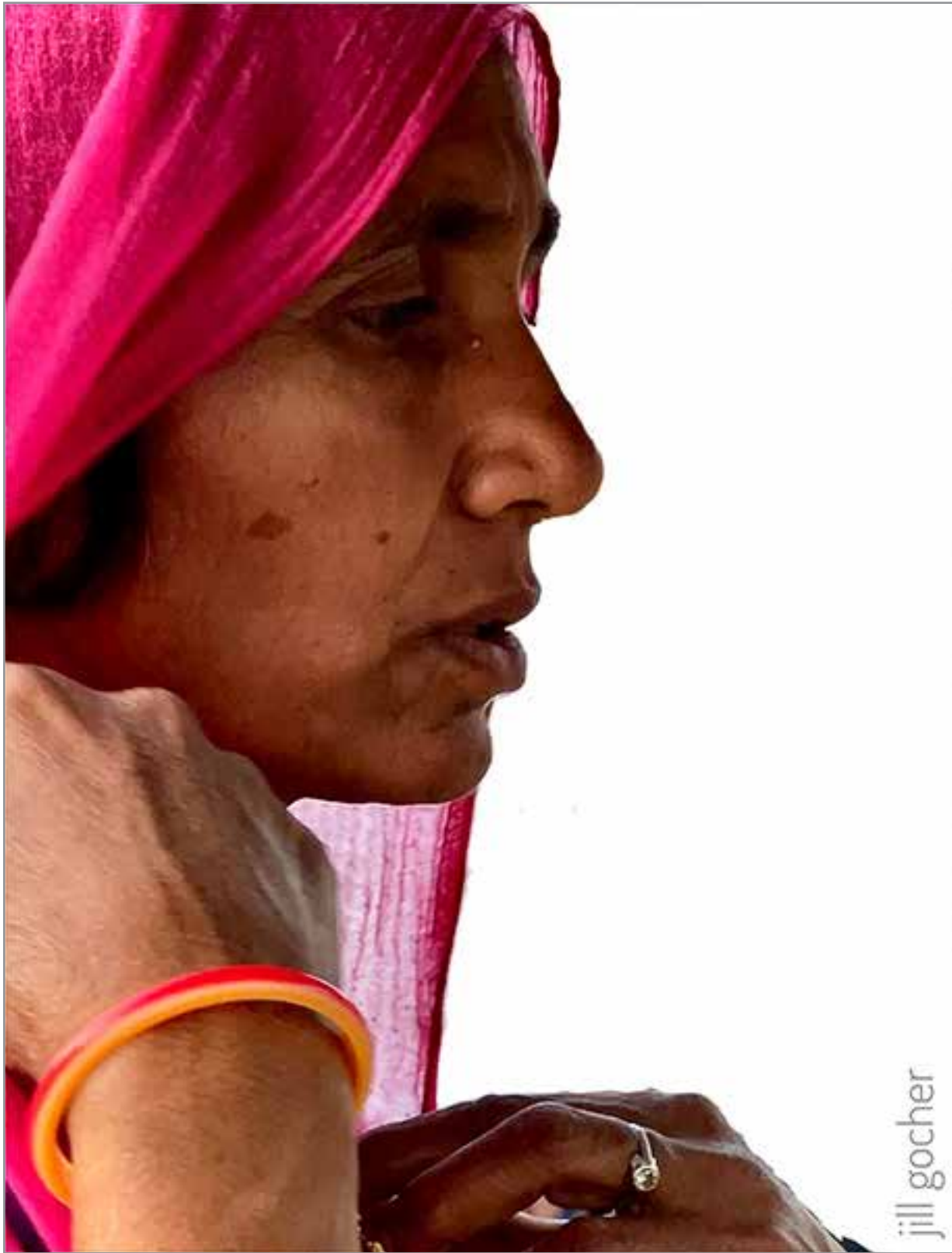
Her Dupatta adds grace and style to her demeanour.



White is the trademark look of his caste.



Tribal girls love to dress up with gold and jewellery - the more, the merrier.

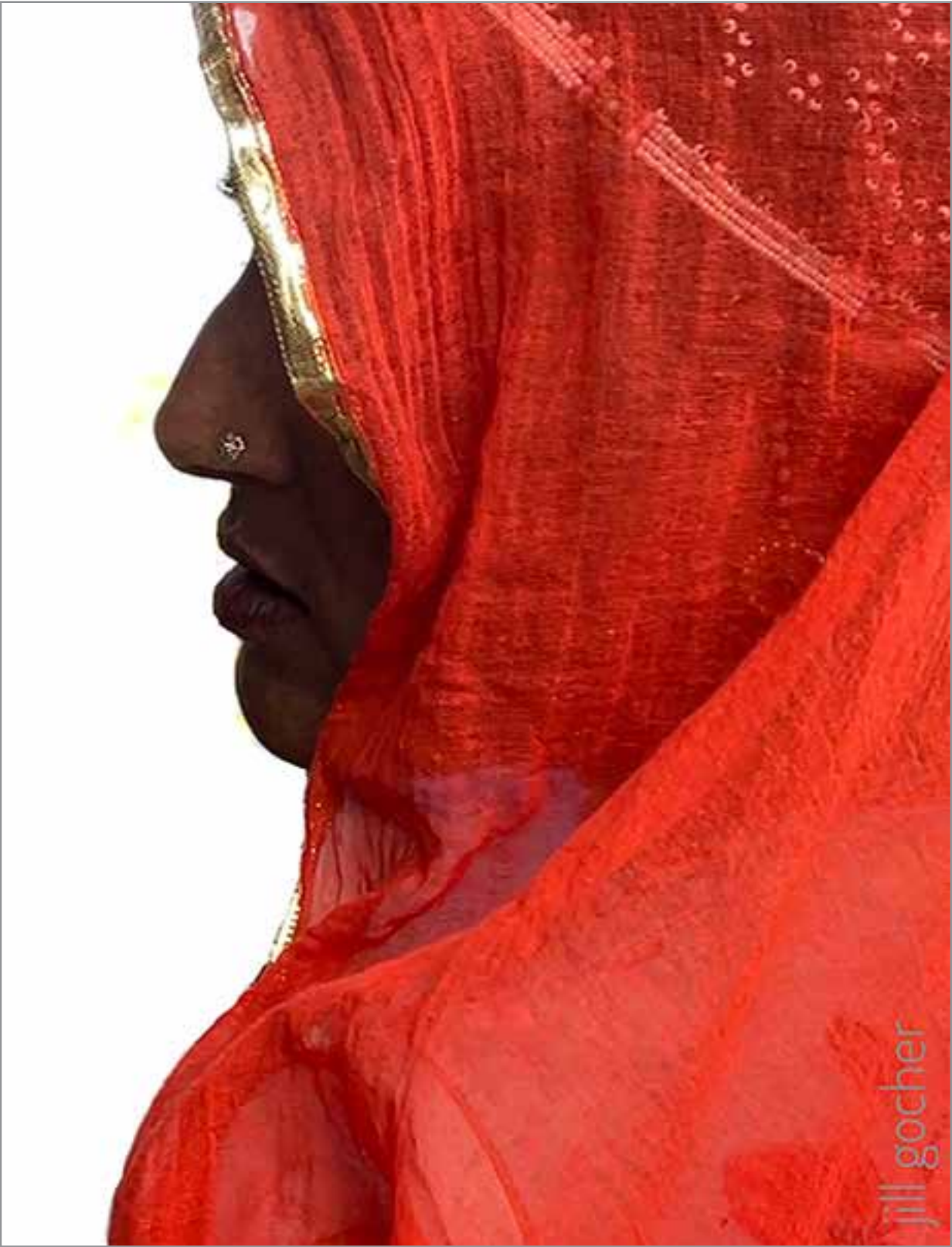


Red is the predominant colour for Rajasthani women - whether red Dupatta or their long swirling skirts.



The girls of this caste wear huge nose rings and distinctive heavy silver bangles.

Vibrant red together with the quiet dignity of these women adds to the beauty of Indian women.





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'* 235 publications (till January 2022). 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://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas/> <https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Ulyseas/e/B01FUUQVBG>



MARK ULYSEAS

LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE

"Each day is a little life:
every waking and rising a little birth,
every fresh morning a little youth,
every going to rest and sleep a little death."
– Arthur Schopenhauer

Many among us are drawn to the lamp of excess... loud, flashy and pointless. The urgency to be seen, heard and in some cases felt is the rule rather than the exception. On the periphery of the bright lights exists a reality that has sustained itself when all have gone to seed - the contentment that follows the celebration of the little things in life.

Like a quiet walk down a crowded street observing the shenanigans of humanity in the throes of self-indulgence without immersing oneself in the mindlessness.

Like the warmth of banana fritters, packed in a banana leaf, bought from a small wayside outlet. The aroma permeating the air around.

Like listening to the gentle breathing of one's pet dog as he lies across your feet.

Bees at work in a lotus flower. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Like the sound of a mosquito waiting to penetrate your aura. And you waiting expectantly to smack it between your palms.

Like the aroma of coffee wafting from the mug in your hand as you sit on the rocky beach watching the fishing boats return, illuminated by a rising sun.

Like eating curry and rice with your hands, breaking the succulent pieces and popping them into your mouth, followed by a liberal dose of Arak, whilst sitting cross legged on the ground. And then, when the feast is over, to lie down and dose off to the rhythm of a fan, its blades slicing the still air.

Like reading a book under a lamp on a monsoon night... the smell of paper and fresh earth mingling with that of frangipani.

Or munching on boiled salted peanuts.

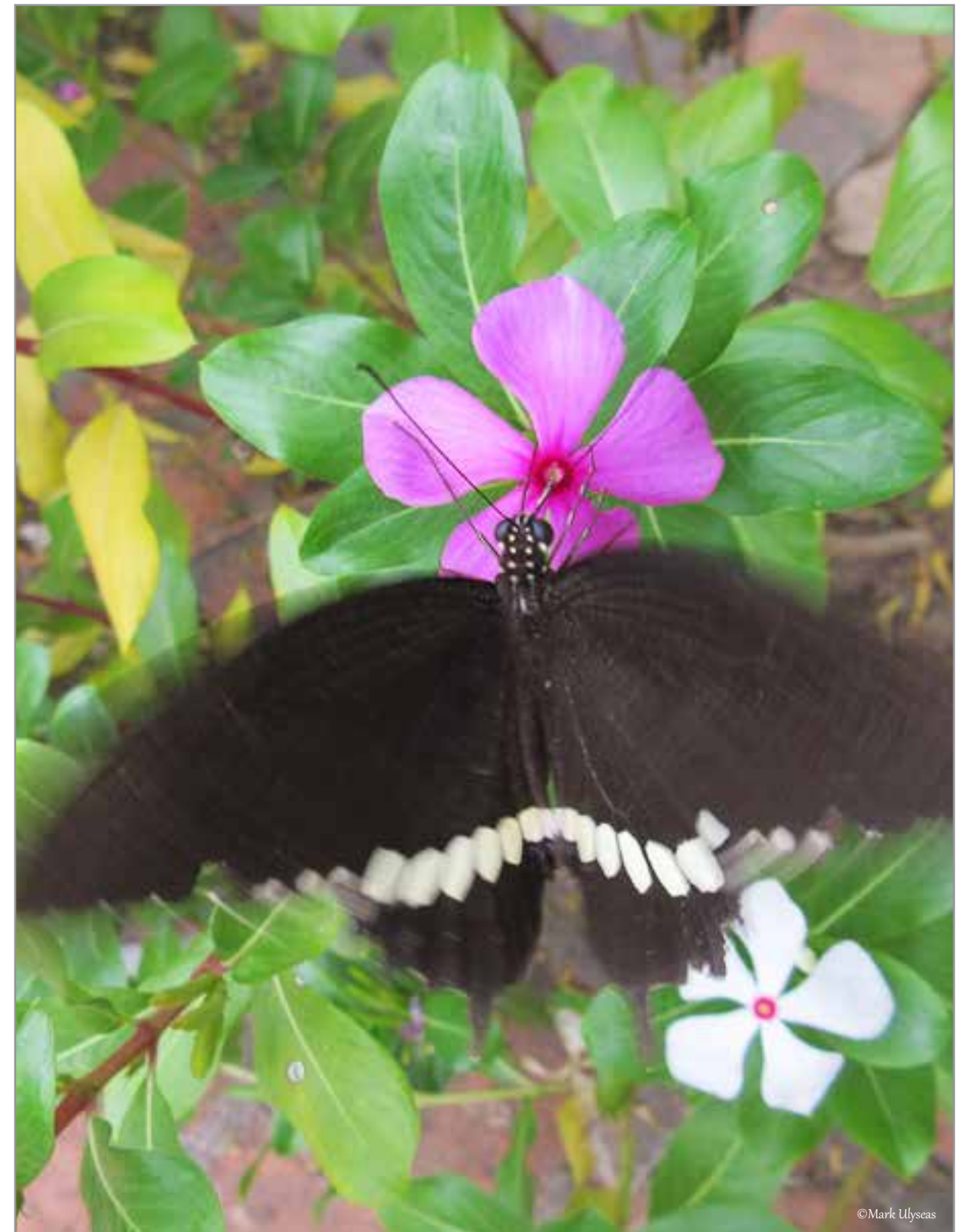
Or marvelling at the soft pink petals of a lotus flower as they fall in the wind.

Many among us ignore the little things in life and in doing so forget our humaneness.

And when despair and death come knocking we suddenly become aware of the sound of a butterfly's wings.

But by then, it is too late.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



Butterfly at work. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Dr. Namrata Goswami is an independent scholar on space policy and Great Power Politics. Recently, she has been invited to teach at the Thunderbird School of Global Management, Arizona State University for their Executive Masters in Global Management, Space course. She is a consultant for [Space Fund Intelligence](#). She was subject matter expert in international affairs with Futures Laboratory, Alabama and guest lecturer, India Today Class, Emory University. She worked as [Research Fellow](#) at MP-Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi; a [visiting Fellow](#) at Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway; La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia; [University of Heidelberg](#), Germany; Jennings-Randolph Senior Fellow, United States Institute of Peace; and was a Fulbright Senior Fellowship Awardee. She was awarded the Minerva grant by the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense to study great power competition in outer space. In April 2019, Dr. Goswami [testified](#) before the U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission on China's space program. Her co-authored book, *Scramble for the Skies: The Great Power Competition to Control the Resources of Outer Space* was published in 2020 by Lexington Press; Rowman and Littlefield. Her book on *The Naga Ethnic Movement for a Separate Homeland* was published 2020 by Oxford University Press.

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DR NAMRATA GOSWAMI A CHALLENGE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDIES TO MAKE ITS THEORIES AND CONCEPTS TRULY 'INTERNATIONAL'.

As I approach my 21st anniversary of studying International Relations (IR) and Security, I get the uncomfortable feeling that IR concepts and theories, and the statistically neat models, are mostly aimed at those scholars who are already sold to these concepts and methods, to the exclusion of those who do not necessarily find them useful to explain international politics. In the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Conference, 2019 held in Toronto (Canada) I presented a paper with the same title as above, addressing key questions asked by the organizers: 'how can we communicate our theories and findings beyond scholars who share our approaches and methods?'; and 'are there more integrative and inclusive ontological and epistemological possibilities that do not compromise diversity?'.² While such questions were/are timely, IR as a discipline will not progress much if we continue to utilize the same old concepts, models and theories, drawn heavily from Western academia to study progress, human emancipation, conflict, change and innovation. This article offers perspectives coming from a multiplicity of sources [to include African sociology, South Asian history, Southeast Asian IR and policy, West Asian politics and culture, and European history], to fill the gap on a discipline that argues for multidisciplinary approaches and conceptual diversity, yet whose language and concepts are not truly inclusive.



Dr Namrata Goswami

The critical problem with the field of international relations and studies as I know it, is that concepts that dominate (what is, and how we know what is) through theories like Realism, Marxism, Neo-Classical Realism, Critical Theory, Liberalism, Constructivism, Post-Modernism, are based on ideas originated in their modern form in academic circles that trace their affiliations in the West. This ethno-centric approach is then passed off as universal, instead of being offered as the North American area studies field or British or German, or French International relations. Stephan Walt vindicates my point by asserting that scholars outside of the Anglo-Saxon world are not offering big ideas or thinking on international relations, by which he means Great Power behavior, and hence, in this endeavor, U.S. centric authors dominate.

At the outset, let me explain the meaning of ontology, drawn from the Latin word (*ontologia*), to mean the science of being. This term was popularized by German rationalist philosopher, Christopher Wolf, in his book, *Philosophia Prima sive Ontologia (1730; "First Philosophy or Ontology")*. Kant argued that Wolf's method was premised on "the regular ascertainment of principles, the clear determination of concepts, the attempt at strictness in proofs, and the prevention of audacious leaps in inferences."⁴ Epistemology is defined as how do we know, what we know. This concept determines the nature of knowledge, critically, what does it mean when we assume that someone knows something. Epistemology deals with "the *extent* of human knowledge; that is, how much do we, or can we, know? How can we use our reason, our senses, the testimony of others, and other resources to acquire knowledge? Are there limits to what we can know? For instance, are some things unknowable? Is it possible that we do not know nearly as much as we think we do?"⁵

The critical problem with the field of international relations and studies as I know it, is that concepts that dominate (what is, and how we know what is) through theories like Realism,⁶ Marxism,⁷ Neo-Classical Realism,⁸ Critical Theory,⁹ Liberalism,¹⁰ Constructivism,¹¹ Post-Modernism,¹² are based on ideas originated in their modern form in academic circles that trace their affiliations in the West.¹³ This ethno-centric approach is then passed off as universal, instead of being offered as the North American area studies field or British or German, or French International relations. Stephan Walt vindicates my point by asserting that scholars outside of the Anglo-Saxon world are not offering big ideas or thinking on international relations, by which he means Great Power behavior, and hence, in this endeavor, U.S. centric authors dominate.

I was discussing this issue with a colleague in D.C. the other day, and he argued that one reason was the simple fact that there were hardly any world-class foreign policy intellectuals outside the Anglo-Saxon world. He wasn't saying that there weren't smart people writing on world affairs in other countries; his point was that there are very few people writing on foreign affairs outside North America or Britain whose works become the object of global attention and debate.¹⁴

By global attention, Walt and his colleague perhaps meant those that did get attention in the U.S., U.K. or Canadian academic circles to merit world class status. At least, that's what I understood from his concluding statement: "put these two reasons together, and it's not surprising that the IR field is still dominated by scholars from the Anglo-Saxon world (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada)".¹⁵ And what are those two reasons Walt specifies, that merit attention.

First, that Great Powers spent a lot of their time thinking about global issues, and what they do catches world attention, and by extension, what scholars from Great Powers write or say in public 'triggers cross-national debates'. This first notion, he draws from Stanley Hoffman's article on a similar topic¹⁶. Second, because the U.S., U.K, and Canada have competitive academic institutions, they generate world class scholars. As for the countries beyond the three, Walt asserts, "You might have first-class mathematicians or doctors or engineers in such a society, but you aren't going to generate many (any?) world-class social scientists".¹⁷ Why? Because, the U.S. alone has thousands of colleges and universities, which ensures that no single intellectual paradigm dominates any field of study.¹⁸ And by big thinking and big ideas, which Walt faults the world outside of the Anglo-Saxon world as lacking, implies, "And by "big thinking" I mean ideas and arguments that immediately trigger debates that cross-national boundaries, and become key elements in a global conversation".¹⁹

Yet big thinking and big ideas animate the world outside of the U.S, U.K. and Canada. Take for example, big ideas like non-alignment as an instrument of global studies,²⁰ Indonesia's Pancasila-or the five principles of peaceful co-existence, Chinese concepts of 'what is a major power',²¹ or their Belt and Road initiative.²² These ideas animated a large part of the globe, triggered a heated debate and crossed national boundaries, fitting well within Walt's definition of big thinking. To be fair, Walt does throw in a few names, of scholars, he thinks have contributed to international relations, from outside the Anglo-Saxon world, like Ole Weaver, Kanti Bajpai, Thomas Risse. However, please notice the absence of any Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Ghanaian, Nigerian, or Russian scholar in this mix.²³

This brings me to my central thesis.

Most scholarship that originates in Asia, Africa, or Middle-east is posited within the already existing frames of reference (European/American based) who act as gatekeepers on which ideas fit in and which don't. These stringent gate-keeping forces academics to either locate their own scholarship within that Western field of generalizable knowledge or be relegated to the domain of area studies. I had this unique experience in an International Studies Association Annual Conference a few years back, in which I offered a general theory of insurgency and counter-insurgency utilizing insights from Kautilya and Gandhi. Instead of my paper finding its place in a panel that debated on general theories of insurgencies, some of which used insights from French military officer, David Galula,²⁴ and Jomini,²⁵ or from British officer, Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency*,²⁶ my paper made it to a panel on India, where papers were mostly focused on India's nuclear weapons and foreign policy.

The central point I make here is that the field of international relations is dominated by European history and concepts. The mainstream discourses to include Marxism, Liberalism, Post-modernism, Realism, Critical Theory are conceptualized in universities in the West. All then that is left for scholarships from Asia or Africa or Middleeast is to be transferred to the 'domain of area studies' including those papers that offer interesting generalizations. We simply must fit in, to the academic powers that be. Having an Asian or African scholar that has perfected Western concepts as a representative of diversity, does not change my central claim.

It dawned on me suddenly as I was navigating the difficult task of being relevant in this panel, that I had been assigned to the 'area studies realm' of South Asia. Whereas, my paper utilized Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (a general treatise on statecraft)²⁷ that offered abstract stratagems across time and space and had no reference to any Indian kingdom.²⁸ As George Modelski, writing in the *American Political Science Review* specifies:

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is, above all, a manual of statecraft, a collection of rules which a king or administrator would be wise to follow if he wishes to acquire and maintain power. In inspiration it is therefore close to other digests of rules of statecraft and of advice to princes such as Sun Tzu's work on *The Art of War* or Niccolò Machiavelli *The Prince*... Today's students of international relations, ever sensitive to the criticism that their work lacks "historical illustrations" or "empirical concreteness" should be delighted with Kautilya's complete lack of historical sense... A work of learning must detach itself from its immediate milieu if it is to endure for long. Kautilya achieved this not only by avoiding historical references, but also by making his work remarkably abstract. Indeed the strength and the interest of the *Arthashastra* lie in its abstractness and in the systematic quality of its propositions.²⁹

My paper also utilized Gandhi's ideas on 'Conflict Transformation' which again were abstract theorizing on how to achieve that, and did not refer to any specific instances in South Africa or India.³⁰ Imagine a situation where a paper that utilized Machiavelli's insights limited to a panel on Italy, or Clausewitz being relegated to a panel on Prussia or Galula to a panel on France or Johan Galtung to a panel on Norway, or Jiurgen Habermas to a panel on Germany. Interesting thought experiment that, isn't it? So why is it that scholarships based on an African, Asian, or Middle-eastern thinker offering abstract ideas and concepts, very rarely make it to a panel on theoretical concepts like Realism, Neo-realism, Liberalism or even Constructivism. I cannot simply buy the argument that such scholarship does not exist. It does.³¹

The central point I make here is that the field of international relations is dominated by European history and concepts. The mainstream discourses to include Marxism, Liberalism, Post-modernism, Realism, Critical Theory are conceptualized in universities in the West. All then that is left for scholarships from Asia or Africa or Middleeast is to be transferred to the 'domain of area studies' including those papers that offer interesting generalizations. We simply must fit in, to the academic powers that be. Having an Asian or African scholar that has perfected Western concepts as a representative of diversity, does not change my central claim.



Main stupa of Sariputta in the ancient Nalanda University, Bihar, India.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nalanda.jpg>



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MongolsBesiegingACityInTheMiddleEast13thCentury.jpg>

This is not about ethnic diversity, for example, an Indian scholar from Assam, Northeast India presenting papers on Realism, as offering up a diversified experience and inclusivity. This is about whether IR concepts themselves are diversified and truly based on a general experience; a reflection of western and eastern thinking on IR or a blend of both.

This critique is not something new,³² and has been often highlighted by several scholars, to include David Kang. In an article published in *International Security*, titled “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks”, Kang specified:

because Europe was so important for so long a period, in seeking to understand international relations, scholars have often simply deployed concepts, theories and experiences derived from the European experience to project onto and explain Asia...western analysts have predicted dire scenarios for Asia, whereas many Asian experts have expressed growing optimism about the region’s future...this is not to criticize European-derived theories purely because they are based on the Western experience: The origins of a theory are not necessarily relevant to its applicability. Rather these theories do a poor job as they are applied to Asia.³³

Let’s revert back to *Wolf’s method*, which as Kant specified was premised on “the regular ascertainment of principles, the clear determination of concepts, the attempt at strictness in proofs, and the prevention of audacious leaps in inferences”.³⁴

To an African or Assamese scholar from India, audacious leaps of imagination are an integral part of how our societies were formed. The Nagas from India, for instance, believe in their oral folktales that their tribes travelled from somewhere near the seas, and gathered in a place called Makhel (present day Nagaland in India) and then dispersed.³⁵ “The hypothesis that the Nagas must have come from the seacoast or at least seen some Islands or the seas is strengthened by the life-style of the Nagas and the ornaments being used till today in many Naga villages...Their fondness of Cowries shells for beautifying the dress, and use of Conch shells as ornaments (precious ornaments for them). Nagas have customs very similar to those living in the remote parts of Borneo, Sarawak, Indonesia, Malaysia etc. indicating that their ancient abode was near the sea, if not in some islands”.³⁶ However, Naga oral traditions were the only source and there were simply no written records. So, how do we know, what we know, based on that source. British anthropologists and colonial administration passed these stories off as folktales and myths,³⁷ whereas for the Naga societies, this was a realistic retelling of their history and formed an important part of who they were as an ethnic community.

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Based on the above, the problem I have with the assertion about ontology or the science of being is that, is it really a science? Not many things in the social world can be proven with such preciseness; for instance, while the existence of the ‘mouse’ that you use as part of your computer can be easily proven, how do you prove love or hate, or intentions, or any other such human feelings and emotions. An interesting perspective is offered by Lee M. Brown in his essay, “Understanding and Ontology in Traditional African Thought”.³⁸ Brown argues that “ontological commitments within modern Western culture are no less problematic than those within traditional African cultures. Each posits unobservable entities to explain the experiential world, and neither has ready access to those posits held as grounding or as otherwise determining what is experienced”.³⁹ Sometimes, I have found myself assuming human emotions based on my own observable life and being, and of others in a structured orderly way, to be completely proven wrong. The idea of ontology or Wolf’s assertion gives one the impressions that human life or even the state as a ‘socially constructed entity’, can be observed by using mathematical principles. But as Michal Walzer asserted in his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, that while the idea of proportionality in war (*jus ad bellum*-Right Conduct in War) gives one the impression that there is a precise mathematical calculation on what is proportionate, nothing can be further from the truth.⁴⁰ While to an extent *statistically driven* models have proven useful (polls, military balances, conflict datasets),⁴¹ consequently, in a larger number of cases, for instance, how Iraqis would greet the 2003 U.S. intervention as liberators, as the neo-conservatives asserted⁴² have proven to be completely false.

Interestingly, while western ontology and epistemology only considers the historicity of an idea, as knowing something essential about statecraft (unit of analysis: actual historical states) in Eastern thinking, mythology and folk stories are as important in forming ‘belief systems’ as is actual state behavior.⁴³ As Louise Fawcett argues, sometimes Western binary levels of analysis as strong or weak states, good or bad governance, misses a lot of complexity in attempts to offer a simplistic view of reality based on rational choice. This is true when one analyses the so-called concept of Arab spring, that ushered the false hope of democratic orderly states to follow the end of centralized authoritarian rule. Instead, what we experienced were “the subsequent failure to install new, more legitimate and inclusive governments exposed the systemic fragility of the state-society contract leading, in some cases, to anarchy or the return to a kind of pre-state model, with authority divided between different regional, ethnic, tribal and religious groups, some aided by external powers”.⁴⁴ Fawcett cautions that despite that, one cannot assume that there is state failure or that the state system in the Middle-east is weak just because it does not fit the idea of a Western modern and developed state. Moreover, Arab states are too diverse to fit into any generalization schema.

Myths could be a direct expression of reality. I suspected this when I read the stories of the Mahabharat, the Ramayana and the Panchatantra in India, as a child and then as an adult. The authors of these complex stories of statecraft utilized myths, stories and imagination to make simpler socio-economic and political systems, and explain the various complexities of human nature: order, justice, good, evil, moral, amoral, power, strategy, statecraft, concepts of war, relationship between ruler and ruled, notions of a just king, and what constitutes a normative political order.



Stone base relief depicting a scene from the Hindu epic, Mahabharata, Angkor Wat, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

As scholars of developing countries frequently remind us, we should beware the pitfalls of generalizing theory and of its crude application to any given regional environment.²⁰ Calling states 'failed' could be self-fulfilling if the definitions favour the strong and disempower the weak state. States such as Venezuela today are labelled 'failing', perhaps to justify the view that intervention by the international community to fix its sovereignty deficits might, at some point, become justified...just as the discussion of state failure is not new, nor is the argument that the Middle East system itself is endangered...scholars and media pundits have regularly predicted and speculated about the demise of this configuration. The same holds true for other regions, such as Africa and south Asia, where borders have been imposed by former colonial powers, even where such imposed borders have become robust.⁴⁵

Does international relations and security account for such mythology that is part of state creation in Middle-eastern, or eastern or African understanding of statecraft. Or that ethnicity, morality, statecraft, to include stratagem to win battles can be imbibed from lessons found in mythological epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in India,⁴⁶ or African literary works, especially their oral traditions and folk stories that are popular in such societies.⁴⁷ In African societies, myths played a critical role, as defined by Jones M. Jaja from Nigeria, "Myths are man-made stories that play explanatory functions in the African understanding of reality... It can be argued that some myths represent complex logical systems which are different from those which are usually found in contemporary western societies."⁴⁸ Myths could be a direct expression of reality. I suspected this when I read the stories of the Mahabharat, the Ramayana and the Panchatantra in India, as a child and then as an adult. The authors of these complex stories of statecraft utilized myths, stories and imagination to make simpler socio-economic and political systems, and explain the various complexities of human nature: order, justice, good, evil, moral, amoral, power, strategy, statecraft, concepts of war, relationship between ruler and ruled, notions of a just king, and what constitutes a normative political order. Similarly, as Jaja argues, myths are seen as illogical and irrational in Western analytical framework, and cannot be even termed as philosophy; a search for the logical and the rational. Myths are therefore seen as super-national explanations of the world that cannot have any philosophical generalizations, and hence rejected as part of an evidence based analytical approach. However, that rejection misses the whole picture of how African societies might view life and by extension state and societal relations.

I must clarify that I am not saying that International Relations theories like Realism Liberalism, Constructivism are not useful. I am neither saying that statistically derived models should not be attempted, or that they have no relevance. Quite the contrary. They have their own usefulness, as I have mentioned before, to include election studies, exit polls, military balances, levels of conflict datasets, economic data, etc. However, my article shows how these theories have used empirical evidence based on European history, dominated by the World Wars, the Cold War, and the British colonial experience.

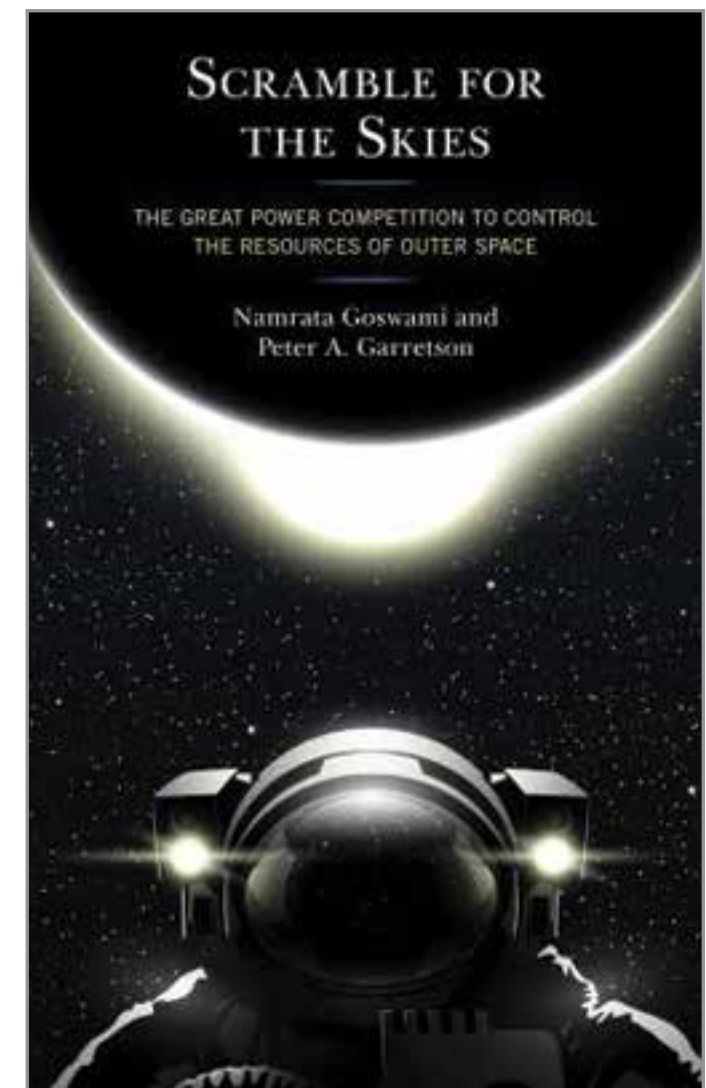
Generally, myths contain three kinds of stories namely, stories of origin, explanatory stories and didactic stories. Each of these stories is meant to explain a particular phenomenon. Myth is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery but living chronicles in the minds of Africans. They contain and express the history, the culture and the inner experience of the African himself. Africans use myths to explain how things came to be through the efforts of a supernatural being. It is concrete and expresses life better than abstract thought can do. It is indeed surprising that up till this age (2011), some scholars still doubt the existence of African philosophy. The reason being that some philosophers having basically studied Western philosophy treated African philosophy from a typical western standpoint. It is necessary to remind this class of scholars that in traditional Africa there are individuals who are capable of critical coherent and independent thinking.⁴⁹

This perspective is supported by Stephen Belcher who argues “The paucity of written records has been grounds for dismissal of the notion of African history—most notoriously in the case of Hegel, who in ignorance wrote off the home of the human species—and more recently a cause of pride among African intellectuals who have asserted the value of the oral tradition in the face of skepticism rooted in prejudice and too often in overt racism”.⁵⁰ In Africa, the usage of oral traditions, very similar to remote areas of India (Assam, Nagaland, Manipur), where I come from, are the key to understanding pre-colonial history, of who or what kind of societies and state structures evolved over centuries, as well as offer explanations of the uniqueness of cultures and traditions, that survive the colonial period.

I must clarify that I am not saying that International Relations theories like Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism are not useful. I am neither saying that statistically derived models should not be attempted, or that they have no relevance. Quite the contrary. They have their own usefulness, as I have mentioned before, to include election studies, exit polls, military balances, levels of conflict datasets, economic data, etc. However, my article shows how these theories have used empirical evidence based on European history, dominated by the World Wars, the Cold War, and the British colonial experience. Therefore, even the field of studies called pre-colonial and post-colonial, are based on the colonial experience as the main point of departure. My article highlights power politics, cultural insights, original foreign policy constructs, for example, offered by a country in Southeast Asia (Indonesia), to then make the point that somehow those concepts never make it to the general theory of state behavior;⁵¹ or that their insights are used to study international relations theory.

Instead, I can imagine a forthcoming paper on ‘Pancasila’ being relegated to Southeast Asia area studies or a panel on ASEAN whereas Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen points are viewed as a universal construct.⁵² Perhaps, I understand why. Woodrow Wilson offered those points as a negotiating framework at the end of the First World War imposed on the world by European states through their colonial systems. It had deep impact but so did Abdurrahman Wahid’s conceptualization on states in Asia. Yet we find very few universal concepts offered as general theory based on Indonesia’s first democratically elected leader.

I will finally end by stating that Western rationalist assumption of historicity,⁵³ and de-legitimizing ‘knowing truth’ through examination of myth and stories dominates IR. It is by no means clear that Africa, Middle-East, Asia and in particular South Asia have made this commitment. In fact, it is quite likely that practitioners of statecraft come to their understandings of the world not through reading IR literature, but through stories, myths and fictions. If broadening of the audience of IR is the goal, then it is worth reconsidering the limitation of historicity, and to consider the use of IR through parable, societal imaginations and coming together of East-West thinking on IR.



Book available at :
<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781498583114/Scramble-for-the-Skies-The-Great-Power-Competition-to-Control-the-Resources-of-Outer-Space>

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In conclusion, IR as a discipline will not progress much if we continue to utilize the same old concepts, models and theories, drawn heavily from Western academia to study change and innovation. Let us strive to be truly ‘conceptually’ international.

If our theories in fact capture great truths, then we should expect such truths to be relatively timeless, and to provide explanatory power not only of historical records, but also of other human attempts to capture essential truths such as through drama, fiction, story and myth.

In terms of inclusion and broader case studies, the rise of machine scanning and translation technology now unlocks a treasure trove of records of pre-colonial sovereign polity relations across Africa, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, South East and East Asia. We can now think of a grand project to code such records to look for whether or not they provide confirming evidence of our theoretical outlook outside the European Westphalian model, or whether there are, in fact, novel truths and patterns to be uncovered.

In conclusion, we need to answer a fundamental question. Who is our scholarship aimed at? This is connected to my question I highlighted in the beginning: Are these scholarships aimed at those scholars who are already sold to these concepts and methods, to the exclusion of those who do not necessarily find them useful to explain IR? Consequently, a few other questions should be discussed.

- Why don’t others find them useful? Is it alien jargon?
- Where is the role of statistical models and where is their overreach?

In conclusion, IR as a discipline will not progress much if we continue to utilize the same old concepts, models and theories, drawn heavily from Western academia to study change and innovation. Let us strive to be truly ‘conceptually’ international.

End Notes

1. This is an abridged version of a paper I presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Conference, Toronto, 2019. The original ‘unpublished paper’ offers in-depth analyses, cross cultural case studies and recommendations.

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DR CAUVERY GANAPATHY

THE LIFE OF A NATION IS A DAILY PLEBISCITE

A compelling premise inherent in Ernest Renan's exposition from the 1800s is that, in its perpetuity, the nation accords the society it is moored in, the task of continuous vigilance. The resultant political participation is the fulcrum of the democratic principle. The tradition of political participation --- active or passive --- has been an integral component of the political culture that defines liberal democracies around the world.

Contemporaneous events in the two largest representations of this form of political system, namely, India and the United States, over the past two years especially, indicates that the nature of this *daily plebiscite* has undergone a change.

The following commentary pertains to the altered nature of political participation.



Dr Cauvery Ganapathy

The internet and its reach has transformed the politics of access, and here in this world of veneer, participative democracy and the imagined high ground of political activism has degenerated to according normalcy to aggressiveness, intolerance, vilification and most importantly, a refusal to grant any courtesy to the most rudimentary principle of democracy, viz., by virtue of not being universally agreed upon, an idea or opinion in no way loses its legitimacy. It is, unfortunately, a feature that marks the public discourse of both the countries today negating the essential catholicity of political participation in a democracy. This has, by no means, been a one-way street.

A mix of disgruntlement and awareness supported by access to avenues of effective expression, has brought to fore an electorate that insists on being heard on the everyday decisions of '*public decision making*'. This new political entity, as the individual and the collective, appears to have decided that more is needed from the promise of representative democracy. The increased access to information, coupled with the phenomenal success of the social media revolution in providing multiple avenues of expression to the hitherto passive participants of representative democracy, has succeeded in engineering a paradigmatic shift in society's social and political ethos. It has managed to generate a curious binary of vociferousness on the one hand, while according the convenience of anonymity on the other. The unfortunate casualty of this dynamic has been the high principle of responsibility and of respect.

The United States has all too recently emerged from an election cycle that will be remembered in large part for the vitriol it made acceptable in public discourse; and this has not been the exclusive preserve of either those seeking the positions of power, nor of those entrusted with the task of choosing their representatives for those offices. It is a phenomena that has pervaded all levels of political participation. It is also a phenomena that marked India's last outing with the gargantuan exercise of general elections in the world's largest democracy. This writing is a subjective exercise in discerning trends/patterns in the most recent elections held in India and the US. For the purpose of this commentary, I identify four trends that appear as common features in both these elections. There are, but naturally, several more concomitant elements to be considered in these elections - far more positive than the negative co-relations that this commentary has connected the dots with; yet, it is these worrying features that resonate most with a study into the changing narrative of political participation. The four features that appear conspicuous in this regard are -

- a credence to outrage
- equating self-interest with the vilification of the other
- a political lexicon that builds on aggressiveness and fear, and
- an underlying dissonance within similar spatial and temporal contexts

These last two elections, and the aftermath of both has exhibited in varying degrees and through various combinations all of the aforesaid four features. The much vilified 'Liberals' were the favorite villains in the aftermath of both the electoral results in India and the United States. This band of unfortunate believers appeared, for their part, to be caught completely unawares by the fear of the other which catapulted the political fortunes of the two mega-personalities that invoked it in these two countries. Deliberate or chosen ignorance is not a virtue in public life and intellectual rigor so this

In an ode to the categorization of James Kalb's *The Tyranny of Liberalism*, there have been attempts by the 'other side' to try and indulge in attempts at '*administering freedom, inquisitorial tolerance and equality by command.*'

is not a charge that could be levelled against the public intellectuals in either of the cases, but it is necessary to take due cognizance of the fact that they were unable to accurately gauge the undercurrent of simmering dissatisfaction in their societies - whether just or aggrandized. The resultant backlash against them has been vicious.

Significant to the central concern of this discussion, has been the quarters wherefrom this backlash emerged. The battleground of this new war has been the domain of virtual reality - the internet, that dichotomous space which affords, at once, the comfort and the impunity of anonymity.

The internet and its reach has transformed the politics of access, and here in this world of veneer, participative democracy and the imagined high ground of political activism has degenerated to according normalcy to aggressiveness, intolerance, vilification and most importantly, a refusal to grant any courtesy to the most rudimentary principle of democracy, viz., by virtue of not being universally agreed upon, an idea or opinion in no way loses its legitimacy. It is, unfortunately, a feature that marks the public discourse of both the countries today negating the essential catholicity of political participation in a democracy. This has, by no means, been a one-way street.

In an ode to the categorization of James Kalb's *The Tyranny of Liberalism*, there have been attempts by the 'other side' to try and indulge in attempts at '*administering freedom, inquisitorial tolerance and equality by command.*'



The discussions over Narendra Modi and that of Donald J. Trump in the US - their individual pasts and their possible future inflections inferred from their campaign rhetoric, overwhelmed what should have been a public discourse on policy matters of development, social upliftment and security. It is natural to ascribe blame to the governing elite in both the countries for allowing the narrative to degenerate thus.

The motivations of such advocacy, cannot of course be faulted. It behoves us, however, to consider the possibility that so subjective do these issues become that it is well-nigh impossible to compel another to abide by it, should their strongest instinct be to reject it. The changed nature of political participation and expression, of late, however, has accentuated the conflicts between the different sides and denigrated the absolute requirement of democracies which asks that there always be a readiness to be proven wrong by more compelling rationales, having first presented one's own case.

These movements and endeavours are usually characterized by more flexible structures and limitations, a more motley collective of intentions and aspirations that coalesce to rally against something than for a particular something, decentralized organizational structures, and the most pertinent feature of the last elections in India and the US - personality politics.

The discussions over Narendra Modi and that of Donald J. Trump in the US - their individual pasts and their possible future inflections inferred from their campaign rhetoric, overwhelmed what should have been a public discourse on policy matters of development, social upliftment and security. It is natural to ascribe blame to the governing elite in both the countries for allowing the narrative to degenerate thus.

However, it is necessary to also account for the changing nature of political participation itself, which rebels against anything that goes against the grain of their first natural impulse on any issue. Ideas of being congenial to the lowest common denominator or being amenable to the least-objectionable-to-the -most principle appears to be compromised in the polarized atmosphere of contemporary political participation.

The voice of the individual has begun to overwhelm the quiet acquiescence of the collective, and this can, ironically, be both, a good and a bad thing. It celebrates the essence of the democratic principle by recognizing and animating dissent, while at the same time tugging at the binds of social cohesion.

What used to be understood as the *tyranny of the majority* has now come to acquire further aggravating dimensions with the fragmentation of the social units themselves. The increasing polarization in society has resulted in a brand of political activism which is intolerant at its very core, and undemocratic in its expression. This is not an exercise to draw parallels in the policy frameworks of PM Modi and President Trump. Under a purview so restricted as a brief comment, such an exercise would result in an errant oversimplification and generalization.

Jeremy Bentham had famously suggested that “every law is the infraction of liberty.” The dilemma of contemporary political activism is that it could use an argument like Bentham's to defend individual liberty on the one hand, while at the same time being employed to rally against a socio-political economic order that is perceived as not paying perpetual dividends to one or more parts - an impossible aspiration at best and a foolhardy expectation at worst.

The purpose of this commentary is, instead, to draw parallels in the explicit nature of the political activism which is being fought hyper-valiantly over the internet and finds reflection in aggressive identity politics. The mechanism may be new, the essence of such political activism is, however, not novel. Variations of such activism have existed since the very beginning of evolution of man's discovery of the political. What is characteristic of these two elections and their aftermath is the overt aggressiveness that has become the new normal in this exercise.

Jeremy Bentham had famously suggested that “every law is the infraction of liberty.” The dilemma of contemporary political activism is that it could use an argument like Bentham's to defend individual liberty on the one hand, while at the same time being employed to rally against a socio-political economic order that is perceived as not paying perpetual dividends to one or more parts - an impossible aspiration at best and a foolhardy expectation at worst. The politics of silence does a huge disservice to the essence of a democracy. Many a people, many a groups and many a causes have been sacrificed at the altar of it. Yet, it is equally true that the politics of loud and intolerant expression does an equal amount of harm, if not more, to the body politic, as to the society wherefrom it emanates.

The new cult of political activism without accepting the responsibility of political expression nor abiding by the virtues of tolerant disagreement, corrodes the very essence of the democratic ethos.



Poet, writer and artist Greta Sykes has published her work in many anthologies. She is a member of London Voices Poetry Group and also produces art work for them. Her new volume of poetry called 'The Shipping News and Other Poems' came out in August 2016. The German translation of her book 'Under charred skies' has now been published in Germany under the title 'Unter verbranntem Himmel' by Eulenspiegel Verlag. She is the chair of the Socialist History Society and has organised joint poetry events for them at the Poetry Café. She is a trained child psychologist and has taught at the Institute of Education, London University, where she is now an associate researcher. Her particular focus is now on women's emancipation and antiquity.

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DR GRETA SYKES 1917 AND THE PASSIONS OF WOMEN WRITERS AND POETS

The Russian Revolution

At the recent commemoration event for Fidel Castro at London's TUC conference centre the Cuban Ambassador, her Excellency Teresita Vicento Sotolongo, called the Russian Revolution the singular event in human history that had the hugest effect on human-kind all over the world, raising their hopes for a better future. It was the working class women's demonstration and demand for bread on the socialist movements customary International Women's Day – 8th March 1917 - combined with an industrial lockout in the Putilov metalworks which led to a general strike. This in turn brought about the abdication of the Tsar. With the call 'All power to the Soviets' the revolution spread from Petrograd along the railway lines where exhausted soldiers made it back from the front. By the third day of action Petrograd was effectively shut down without trains, trams, taxis or even newspapers. "The great Russian revolution has realised women's boldest dreams. The First Provisional government has acknowledged the civil and political equality of the women of Russia. This equality, which as yet has been realised nowhere in the world on such a scale, lays upon the Russian women a huge responsibility" (Pelz, 2016, p 117). In October the provisional government was overthrown by the Bolsheviks. "The October Revolution was a success because the policies of (Lenin and Trotsky) placed them at the head of a genuinely popular movement." (Pelz, 2016, p 116). To 'strangle the Bolshevik baby in its crib' (Churchill) the West organised an anti-communist attack on the young republic. Fourteen nations provided guns, funds and troops to destroy the revolution. The Allied blockade starved Soviet areas, while food was dispatched to areas held by 'the whites'. Pelz (2016, p125) comments: "Thus it could be argued that the Cold War started in 1917, not after WW2."



Dr Greta Sykes

Teffi was hugely popular while living in Russia and had candies and perfume named after her. Both the Tsar and Lenin liked her work. She left Russia via the Crimea and Istanbul to live in Paris from 1922, playing an active role in the literary life of the Russian émigré community. The critic Anastasiya Chebotarevskaya considered her stories in the same league as Anton Chekhov's best stories. Her short stories and poems were published in the USSR during her life-time. One of her best loved short stories while living in exile is called 'Que faire?'



Anti-Soviet tendencies

Researching the subject of Russian revolution or Soviet and communist women writers and poets is a stony path experience at London university libraries, such as Senate House, Warburg Institute, Classics library. Basically very few books in English are available on the subject and little more in German. Additionally the accompanying introductions are invariably despondent about the event:

'Such poets as Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova and others disaffected with the new reality, they were soon living in what Akhmatova called the 'pre-Gutenberg' age. They could no longer publish their own poems and it was dangerous to write them down.' (Chandler, 2015, p XIV).

The current exhibition 'Russian art after the revolution' at the Royal Academy similarly is not sparing with presumptuous comments: In the room 'Fate of the peasants' they claim Stalin had never intended to keep his pledge of giving the peasants land. Bearing in mind the huge scale of the socialist project the Bolsheviks had in mind and the animosity of the surrounding capitalist states and their intervention it is not surprising that much hardship was suffered. Thus we find passionate hope and despair expressed by the women poets included here.



Teffi
[LINK](#)

Teffi (1872 - 1952)

Nadezhda Lokhvitskaya, started calling herself Teffi in 1907 based on the name of a clown she knew, when publishing her one-act play 'The woman question.' She was born in 1872 in St. Petersburg into a family keen on literature and her sisters also wrote poems. She worked for a while for the Bolshevik newspaper 'New Life' in 1905. Maxim Gorky was on the editorial board. While there she met Lenin.

"When I came in, the conversation immediately broke off. Romyantsev introduced me and the newcomer said amiably 'yes, yes I know. Romyantsev did not tell the man's name. Clearly I was expected to know him already. 'Vladimir Ilyich is unhappy with our premises, said Romyantsev. Ah! Vladimir Ilyich! The man himself.'" (Chandler & Jackson, Rasputin, 2016).

The poem 'Lelyanov and the canal' was particularly enjoyed by the tsar who named Teffi as one of his favourite poets.

One day Lelyanov, on his morning stroll
clapped his eyes upon the Catherine canal
and said, a frown upon his face,
you really are a waste of space,
not even a canal, just a disgrace! No one can swim in you,
or sail or drink your water,
in short, you just don't do a thing you ought to.
I'll fill you in, you pitiful canal.
I know I can, and so I shall!
So thought the city chief, his brow now stern,
when out from the canal there swam a germ.
What lunacy, it said infects your brain?
Planner Lelyanov, better think again."

In 1920 Teffi wrote about her visit to meet Tolstoy when she was thirteen years old. She was desperate to meet him and tell him that she should not have made Prince Andrei Bolkonsky fall in love with Natasha. She did not like Natasha. She bought a photo of Tolstoy and asked her governess to walk her to 'a friend's house'. She felt so shy when the great man opened the door that she only managed to stutter "pwease photogwaph" (Chandler & Jackson, Rasputin, 2015).

Tsvetaeva left the Soviet Union in 1922 with her daughter Ariadna and a son and met up with her husband Efron in Berlin. She kept a journal and wrote about her journey: "In the air of the compartment hung only three axe-like words: bourgeois, Junkers, leeches."



Meeting Alexandra Kollontai one day she comments: "When speaking at a women's forum Kollontai began her speech with the words 'I don't know which language to use in order to make myself understood to the bourgeois women here. And there she was on the platform, wearing a magnificent velvet dress with mirror pendant on a gold chain that hung to her knees.'" (Chandler & Jackson, Rasputin, 2016).

Teffi was hugely popular while living in Russia and had candies and perfume named after her. Both the Tsar and Lenin liked her work. She left Russia via the Crimea and Istanbul to live in Paris from 1922, playing an active role in the literary life of the Russian émigré community. The critic Anastasiya Chebotarevskaya considered her stories in the same league as Anton Chekhov's best stories. Her short stories and poems were published in the USSR during her life-time. One of her best loved short stories while living in exile is called 'Que faire?'

"We – les russes, as they call us – live the strangest of lives here... we stick together, for example, not like planets, by mutual attraction, but by a force quite contrary to the laws of physics – mutual repulsion. Every les russes hates all the others – hates them as fervently as the others hate him." (Jackson et al, Subtly worded, 2014).

She died in 1952 in Paris and was buried in the Saint-Genevieve-des-Bois Cemetery in France. Chandler, editor of 'Rasputin' comments (2016, p 9):



Marina Tsvetaeva
[LINK](#)

"She wrote poetry throughout her career and, like several of the greatest Russian prose writers – Alexander Pushkin, Ivan Bunin, Andrei Platonov and Varlam Shalamov – she unobtrusively brings to her prose all that she had learnt as a poet."

Marina Tsvetaeva (1892 - 1941)

Tsvetaeva left the Soviet Union in 1922 with her daughter Ariadna and a son and met up with her husband Efron in Berlin. She kept a journal and wrote about her journey: "In the air of the compartment hung only three axe-like words: bourgeois, Junkers, leeches."

While in Berlin she published the collections *Separation*, *Poems to Blok*, and the poem *The Tsar Maiden*, much of her poetry appeared in Moscow and Berlin. In August 1922, the family moved to Prague. Unable to afford living accommodation in Prague itself, with Efron studying politics and sociology and living in hostels, Tsvetaeva and Ariadna found rooms in a village outside the city. She writes "we are devoured by coal, gas, the milkman, the baker...the only meat we eat is horsemeat". When offered an opportunity to earn money by reading her poetry, she describes having to beg a simple dress from a friend to replace the one she had been living in.

Tsvetaeva began a passionate affair with Konstantin Boleslavovich Rodzevitch, a former military officer, a liaison which became widely known throughout émigré circles. Her break-up with Rodzevitch in 1923 was almost certainly the inspiration for her "Poem of the End" and "The Poem of the Mountain". Throughout this time she maintained her relationship with Efron.

In her biography of Tsvetaeva Schweizer (1993) describes the couple's friendly relations with the Eurasia movement who had an office in Paris. They were a mixture of people, but their left grouping had an interest not just in Russia's historical past but also in the Soviet present. They approved of 'some Soviet writers and some aspects of contemporary Soviet life.' Efron became involved in activities through the Eurasia movement which led to his arrest in Paris.

While living in Paris among the emigres Tsvetaeva engaged in intensive correspondence with Rainer Maria Rilke, the German poet. Rilke was a German Orpheus to her. He sent her books from Pasternak who she also corresponded with. In August 1926 Rilke stopped answering her letters. She learnt of his death in December 1926. The following poem was meant as an answer to Rilke's question *what will the room be like when we meet*.



Above the nothingness of two bodies
The ceiling truly sang –
With all the angels voices

After Rilke's death she wrote the following poem for Pasternak:
On the twenty-ninth, on Wednesday, into the mist?
Into the clear? There is no information! –
Not only you and I are orphaned
On this penultimate morning.

She wrote requiem poems for other poets, such as Mayakowsky, Maximilian Voloshin and Nikolai Gronsky. In fact she wrote an open letter to Mayakowsky which caused her to be branded as pro-Soviet by the emigres who started to ostracise her. Any mention of Mayakowsky was a red rag to a bull in the émigré circles in Paris. Two and a half years after his death in April 1930 Tsvetaeva wrote: "Without him the Russian revolution would have suffered a grave loss, just as Mayakowsky would have been the poorer without the revolution".

Tsvetaeva went home to Russia after 17 years abroad and was given accommodation in a writers' community home. People were irritated by her return with her Parisian handbag, scarf, notebooks. They said: The white guard lady has returned. She did not fit in any more, but she also had not fitted in with people in Paris. She was alone. Her work made no impression when she came back. She is so alone here, why did she come back? Her poetry by this time had turned into an aspect of her loneliness, cryptic and dissociated:

My loneliness. Dishwater and tears.
The underside of everything is terror.

She wrote a poem 'To a son' in 1932:

It is neither here nor there
Go my son, to your own country –
To a land where all is topsy-turvy,
Where to go back is to go forward
For you particularly
Who have not seen your Russia my child.

Larissa Reisner was a talented writer, a woman of great personal courage and willpower whose entire life was dedicated to the revolution. She was brought up in a professional family and had an excellent education. She broke away from the established isolation of her class and devoted her energies to the revolution. In the summer of 1918 she was in the Volga region, taking part in the battles of the Civil War. She went on reconnaissance with Red Sailors, secretly entering the city of Kazan, then occupied by White Guards forces.

Irma Kudrova's describes Tsvetaeva in her biography 'Death of a poet' (2004, p216) thus:

"She was brought down not just by political pressure, but by the changes that had overcome Russia in her eighteen-year absence, by intellectual and social isolation, by the squalor and chaos of life in Yelabuga, Kazan province, and by her vexed relationship with her son, whose desire to lead his own life she interpreted as treacherous."

She died through suicide in 1941 after having returned to the Soviet Union in 1939. Her daughter Ariadna Efron wrote a biography of her mother, but it still awaits being translated from the Russian.

Larissa Reisner (1895 – 1926)

Larissa Reisner was a talented writer, a woman of great personal courage and willpower whose entire life was dedicated to the revolution. She was brought up in a professional family and had an excellent education. She broke away from the established isolation of her class and devoted her energies to the revolution. In the summer of 1918 she was in the Volga region, taking part in the battles of the Civil War. She went on reconnaissance with Red Sailors, secretly entering the city of Kazan, then occupied by White Guards forces. She represented the young Soviet Republic at various diplomatic functions held by the King of Afghanistan. She was a commissar of the Naval Headquarters in Moscow. Reisner died at the age of 31 years.



Larissa Reisner
[LINK](#)

Nineteen year old Lusik Lisinova was a student at the university. She was one of the organisers of the Union of Working Youth. She helped to build barricades, tended the wounded and carried messages for the Red Army when she carried out Party assignments among the workers of Moscow. She was killed by counter-revolutionary forces a day before they were crushed in Moscow. Her coffin was carried through the streets on crossed rifles.



'The front', 'The barricades in Hamburg', 'Coal, iron and human beings' were some of the pieces she wrote. In his book 'The young in the revolution' Vladimir Sevruck (1973) describes the lives of a number of young communist writers who were active in the revolution. Some of them lost their lives very early, like Lusik Lisinova. Two of the writers included are women, Reisner being one of them. One of her pieces is called 'The front'.

"They lead hard lives in the crowded dormitories, and the air in the lecture halls is foul and damp, not at all like the air of the old regime students breathed as they walked past the vast sunny corridors of St Petersburg University. These new people, "marching Left", must in the space of several fleeting years absorb the old bourgeois culture and not only digest it, but smelt its best qualities and elements into the new ideological forms; these are the new people of the Workers Faculties, tomorrow's judges, the heirs and successors of this decade."

In the introduction Sevruck includes a speech Lenin delivered at the third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, October 1920, in which Lenin argues:

"One of the greatest evils and misfortune left to us by the old capitalist society is the complete rift between books and practical life, we have had books explaining everything in the best possible manner, yet in most cases these books contained the most pernicious and hypocritical lies, a false description of capitalist society..."

Lusik Lisinova (1898 – 1917)

Nineteen year old Lusik Lisinova was a student at the university. She was one of the organisers of the Union of Working Youth. She helped to build barricades, tended the wounded and carried messages for the Red Army when she carried out Party assignments among the workers of Moscow. She was killed by counter-revolutionary forces a day before they were crushed in Moscow. Her coffin was carried through the streets on crossed rifles. Lisinova, a writer and soldier of the revolution, was buried by the Kremlin Wall in Red Square. On May 9, 1917 she wrote a letter to her sister.

My dearest Anaid,

"I usually write to you in moments of depression, and this is true now, too. However, I have a great source of satisfaction, a remedy which calms me, and that is my work. I am doing a lot of work. I mean in the field of propaganda. When my handiwork helps

to turn raw material into a conscious worker, when I awaken his class-consciousness... then I feel satisfied, then my strength is doubled, then I am alive...How happy I am that my work was of use when we were still underground, and that now I have a certain amount of experience...There is a fierce struggle on against all who are not with us Bolsheviks...I am now off to draw up a list and purchase two libraries for two factories, then I will go home and conduct a class for a group of social-democratic women. Anaid, you cannot imagine what strength, what talent there is among the workers..."

About a dozen letters are included by Vladimir Sevruck in his book *The young in the Revolution*, which came out in 1973.

To Anaid, undated

"...My dearest, will you ever understand my feelings reading this silly letter? These past few days I have been in communion with Nature, and it seems to me that I can enter into the being of every speck of dust, that I understand the life of every blade of grass and know that there is still so much that is mysterious and unknown to me..."

From a letter to her mother, 11.9.1917

"I'm on my way to the canteen for dinner. I have been reading Lilly Browns the Woman question, I don't especially like the book, though it's very impressive, it sent a shiver down your backbone, however, it's very good in spots. If you can come upon Kollontai's The Social Basis of the Woman Question, be sure to read it. When I read it it gave me a great sense of satisfaction... our spirit is militant. The Red Guard is being formed and part of the training is taking place right here in our canteen..."

From a letter written by a member of the Youth league A. Kolpakova, 15.11.1917

"We buried Lusik yesterday...on Red Square. Yesterday was a bright sunny frosty day. Heading the procession was a standard bearer. The district Party banner waved proudly in the wind, its silk shining. Workers of the World Unite. The red cloth beat and flapped in the wind and at times unfurled so triumphantly it sent a shiver down your back, with the band playing a march behind us...it was awesome..." Sevruck, 1973).

In 1914 she met Marina Tsvetaeva and they fell passionately in love. Both wrote poetry about their lesbian love more directly than anyone had done before them.



Sofia Parnok (1885 – 1933)

Sofia Parnok was born in the southern city of Taganrok on the Sea of Azov into a professional family. She studied music in Geneva and law in St. Petersburg, but decided to devote herself to poetry. In 1914 she met Marina Tsvetaeva and they fell passionately in love. Both wrote poetry about their lesbian love more directly than anyone had done before them. She founded a publishing co-operative called the Knot which brought out two of her volumes. The Knot closed down in 1928. She mainly continued to write critical essays and translated poems by Baudelaire and some novels. She died of a heart attack.

The following poems are included in the Penguin book of Russian poetry (Chandler et al, 2015).

For Khodasevich

“They’ve cut a hole in the deep
Dense blue sea of the ice:
A breathing space for big fish and little,
Water for bringers of buckets,
A way out for a weary traveller
If she and life turn out after all
To be travelling different roads
And she has nowhere to go.”

“I pardon all your sins –
But two I can’t abide;
You read poems in silence
And kiss loud.

Sofia Parnok
[LINK](#)

So sin, blossom, be merry –
But take my advice;
A kiss, my darling, is not for the ear,
And music is not for the eyes.”

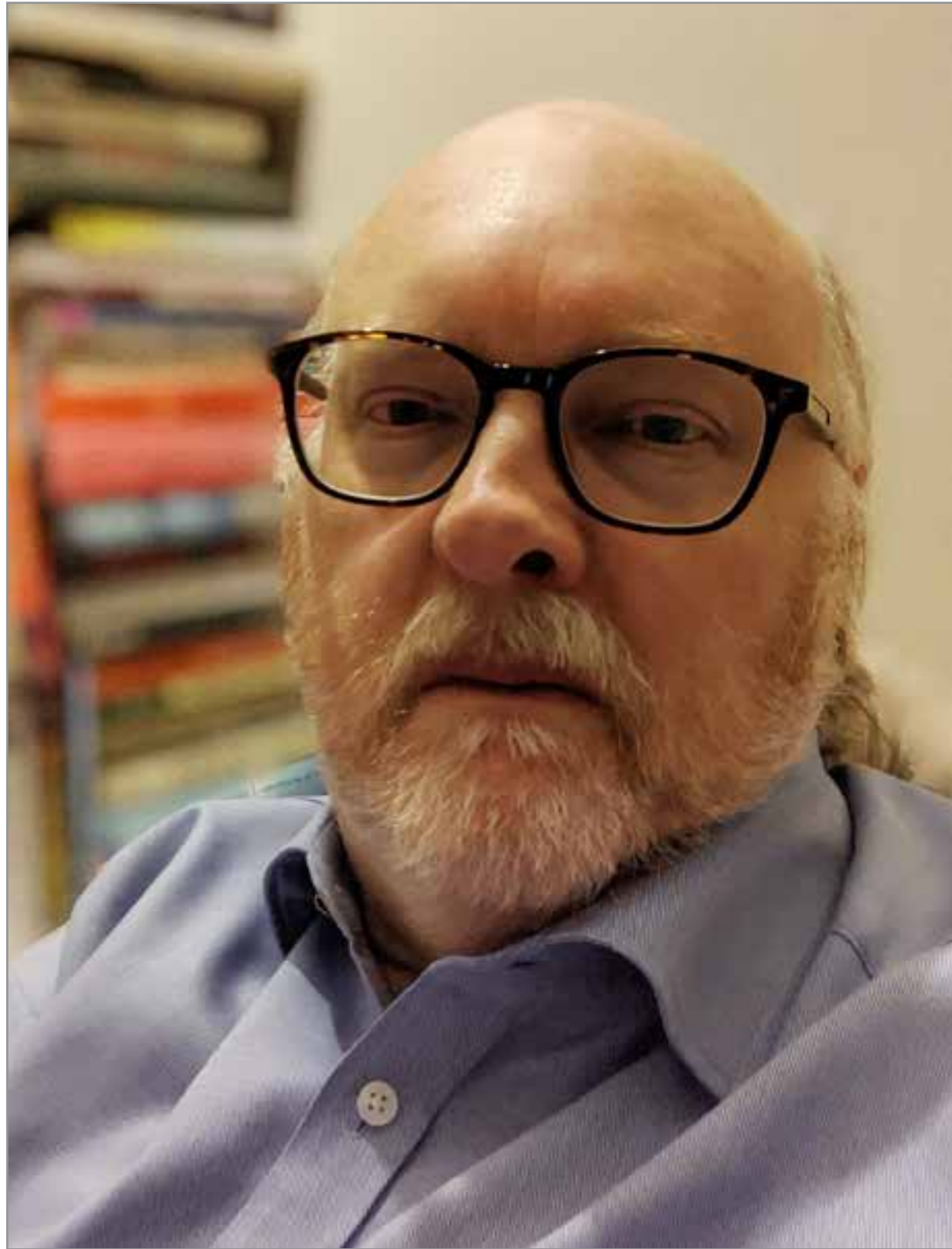


Sophia Parnok (l) and Olga Tsuberbiller (r) [LINK](#)

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David Morgan

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DAVID MORGAN

THE POWER OF THE IMAGINATION

The thirst for knowledge and the love of learning were long much cherished characteristics of poor people in the days before state education became the norm and when opportunities for social advance were strictly limited. (In the British context, which is my focus here, compulsory state education only gained traction towards the end of the Victorian age and university remained the exclusive preserve of the elite until well into the 20th century). Bookishness was especially common among those who felt compelled to do something about their lot by becoming political activists fuelled by idealistic beliefs in the possibility of building a new society that would be founded on fairness and equality to be achieved through the combined actions of the organised labour movement. Raising consciousness through careful reading of good books was regarded as a means of winning their own liberation and that of their fellow workers. Enlightenment would be the first step towards emancipation.

Political parties, as they emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tended to attract to their cause workers who were awakened to the tremendous injustices that pervaded their society and, determined to do something practical about it, they aspired to leadership of their class. Socialists and Communists were often self-taught intellectuals who were thoroughly devoted to learning both as an end in itself and as a means to an end. Books had a highly treasured place in their households. One such typical worker activist and early British Communist, nowadays largely forgotten, was named T A Jackson. He gained quite a substantial following through a regular newspaper column that he produced for the *Daily Worker* and which appeared in the years between the two world wars.

In an essay called “Why the Novel?” that concludes his collected articles, Jackson argues that “for a full life, men need food for their minds as well as their bodies, so too, they need food for their fancy, their sympathy, their power of creative imagination.”

These were the decades of economic depression, mass unemployment, the rise of fascism in Europe and the onset of a calamitous world war. Jackson was fully aware of the political and economic turmoil that was all around him, but he was still convinced that it was vitally important for individuals to find a little time for reading and for acquiring knowledge. He believed that books gave people access to the greatest things in life and that fine writing provided rich food for the mind. Literature possessed the capacity to inspire the imagination which was dulled by repetitive labour and oppressive social conditions.

Jackson was an enthusiastic teacher and took on the task of educating his fellow workers in the classics of English literature fired by his own enthusiasm for reading which he acquired from an early age and his belief that the working people had as much right to culture as the privileged class. Jackson understood the value of reading literature in much the same way that the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold did: Arnold had argued that people should read “the best that has been thought and said” as a means towards their own education and learning.

Each week in his popular newspaper column Jackson would write about one author and introduce their key works to his responsive readership. Jackson was a shrewd critic and by no means biased towards the “proletarian novel” or works of socialist realism; far from it. The authors that Jackson chose would easily have impressed professional literary critics such as the influential Cambridge based, F R Leavis, the founder of the journal, *Scrutiny*, and who was a prominent advocate of what he called the “great tradition” of English literature. In Jackson’s column, readers would be made aware of Jonathan Swift, John Bunyan, Henry Fielding, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Tobias Smollett, Thomas Love Peacock, Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Dickens, the Brontes, Thackeray, Thomas Hardy, Trollope, George Meredith as well as Shakespeare. Jackson wrote as if reading a book was a political act and he urged his readers to demand that the local library stocked the novels that he recommended if they could not afford to buy books for themselves. Jackson offered up a formidable list of authors, several of whom are not very widely read these days.

Jackson’s essays were later collected in a book titled, *Old Friends to Keep*. He regarded authors as “old friends” and was a strong proponent of the reading of literature for its own sake, not simply for the political messages that could be discovered in all good works of fiction. Jackson shared with Leavis an understanding of the true value of literature and its power to influence people’s behaviour, shape attitudes and develop sensibilities.

The great difference between the thinking of Jackson and Leavis was that the latter felt that only a minority of the public would ever be able to fully appreciate the meaning of great literary works, while Jackson believed that they could and should become accessible to everyone with sufficient learning, time and opportunity. Jackson was a believer in awakening the power of the imagination in everyone. Leavis, incidentally, was far from being entirely a conservative in outlook and was, in fact, inspired by the poet and critic Edgell Rickword, who in 1925 had founded a pioneering literary journal called, *The Calendar of Modern Letters*. Like Jackson, Rickword was a Communist. Leavis adapted the title for his own literary journal, *Scrutiny*, established in 1932, from a column of Rickword’s called “Scrutinies” that appeared in the Calendar. Leavis parted company from Rickword and Jackson in political affiliation; they were comrades in the struggle for socialism, while Leavis was a firm advocate of detachment and what he termed “disinterestedness”. Jackson was just as much a believer in the importance of literature as was Leavis; he was simply more optimistic about the possibility of converting the masses to a love of the finer things in life. Jackson’s enthusiasm is infectious and helps sustain hope even in the bleakest of times. We have need of such human qualities today.

In an essay called “Why the Novel?” that concludes his collected articles, Jackson argues that “for a full life, men need food for their minds as well as their bodies, so too, they need food for their fancy, their sympathy, their power of creative imagination.”

He continues,

“It is my conviction, supported by the experience of a life-time, that no class feels so hungry for these as does the wage-worker class – whose circumstances have tended drastically to deny them all power of satisfying this cultural hunger, except in mean and scandalously adulterated ways.”

He concludes that,

“The fight for leisure, and for the facilities which enrich leisure with recreational possibilities, has therefore been an integral part of the programme of working-class struggle from the very beginning.”

In a passionate advocacy of the power and value of literature, Jackson argues that what he describes as “the systematic cultivation of the imagination” is “the most fundamentally revolutionary work that there is to be done.”

The imagination is the ultimate of democratic concepts: we all have access to it given the right education that stimulates our curiosity, encourages us to develop our creative instincts and helps us to realise our full potential as human beings. Computer games, texting and social media are all poor substitutes for the kind of stimulus that is needed to enable the creative human imagination to flourish, as flourish it must.

Jackson's arguments amount to an emphatic repudiation of the concept of the division between "high" and "low" culture or of an elite culture that is far removed from popular culture. He looks forward to a time when there is a quality common culture that can be enjoyed and appreciated by a well-educated public with sufficient free time to make full use of the best that is available to them. It would be a rich common culture and shared experience enjoyed by everyone in a future that has so far remained elusive. Jackson believed that the people had the power to make his dream a reality and that literature would help them to realise how they could achieve it.

The writings of working-class intellectuals such as Jackson are sadly little-known today outside a small circle of enthusiasts. This is our loss because his very simply expressed arguments remain persuasive and he has much to teach us about the value of literature, the role of culture as an essential part of life and, most of all, how the power of the imagination can be stimulated by one's reading. The imagination is the ultimate of democratic concepts: we all have access to it given the right education that stimulates our curiosity, encourages us to develop our creative instincts and helps us to realise our full potential as human beings. Computer games, texting and social media are all poor substitutes for the kind of stimulus that is needed to enable the creative human imagination to flourish, as flourish it must.



Dharma Wheel (Chakra) lit up on the grounds of a temple in Luang Prabang, Laos PDR. This is the wheel of transformation. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

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DR HOWARD RICHARDS

A SIMPLE PATH: TWO NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT PRINCIPLES

Life's (humanity's and the earth's) bottleneck problems can be solved, I dare to suggest, by applying just two general principles. The two can be regarded as principles of unbounded organization. Unbounded organization is the name of a conversation, an academy and a movement (one of many, but not one that duplicates what the others do) devoted to making the impossible possible. It was founded by the South African scholar and activist Gavin Andersson, based on his experience as a community organizer and as an anti-apartheid activist. (See www.unboundedorganization.org) Here I contribute to its conversation the proposal that implementing just two principles will make the impossible possible; namely, a pro-social attitude plus doing what works; or alternatively, a pro-social attitude plus structural understanding. Of course, if thus solving the world's main problems with just two principles makes sense at all, then the two principles could be stated and practiced in many languages, conceived in many theoretical frameworks, etc. A third principle might be: There is no privileged language. Whatever can be said can be said in many ways. Further, if it is true and useful to boil down ethics to just two principles, it must also be true that the two ramify into innumerable practical norms, of which many or most are transient and local. And it does not stop being true – as H.L. Mencken said — that for every complicated problem there is a simple answer and it is wrong.

One of the thousands of ways to state the first of the two principles was pioneered by Chile's national Santo, Saint Alberto Hurtado: *having a pro-social (and pro-earth) attitude*. (The days are past when a principle must be a sentence in the declarative or imperative mood. Nowadays a principle can be an attitude.) In an essay in social pedagogy addressed to educators and parents, this great twentieth century saint wrote, 'A great principle well understood is the foundation of a moral doctrine and it will allow those who assimilate it to solve the difficulties that arise, or at least -if the problem is very complicated- it will form a state of mind in it that will prepare it to receive the solution; it will give them a spontaneous sympathy for the truth, a connaturality with the good that will dispose them to embrace it, create in them an attitude of soul that is much more important than science itself.



Dr Howard Richards

I would add (in company with many others): a pro-social attitude is part of what it means to be mentally healthy. A person with an anti-social attitude, or an indifferent person who does not care, is abnormal, i.e. sick.

‘When this attitude exists, the discussion is greatly facilitated, the truth penetrates smoothly, the resistances soften or fall apart.

‘That is why before beginning to study the problems and before talking about reforms and achievements, it is necessary to create in the soul a social attitude, an attitude that is the vital assimilation of the great principle of fraternal love.’

Unpacking Hurtado’s principle, a little: Any problem, including the bottleneck problems like global warming, homelessness, unemployment, racism, poverty and war, are likely to be solved if people and organizations align across sectors for the common good. (This is Gavin Andersson’s original definition of unbounded organization.) They will align for the sake of *life* (or as Erik Erikson puts it, for the sake of *vitality*) if all concerned really want to solve the problems. If everybody on earth really, *sincerely*, with all their hearts and souls, with all their minds, with their lives their *fortunes* and their sacred honours, *wanted* to reverse climate change, then we would (I claim) be half way (but only half way) to reversing climate change. Unpacking a little more: having a pro-social attitude is (as Hurtado held) part, indeed the most important part, of what it means to be well-educated. Aristotle elaborated on this point; A well-educated person finds pleasure in virtue; a badly-educated person finds pleasure in vice.

I would add (in company with many others): a pro-social attitude is part of what it means to be mentally healthy. A person with an anti-social attitude, or an indifferent person who does not care, is abnormal, i.e. sick. (Here the word abnormal is used in a standard medical way that has been carefully elaborated by Georges Canguilhem; I comment on Canguilhem’s concepts of health and normality in my article on moral and ethical realism in the current issue of the *Journal of Critical Realism*.)

Before going on to state the second principle --needed to get the rest of the way there -- let me specify that it is impossible fully to apply the first principle and then go on to implement the second. When being a good person leads to questioning the powers that be, social systems resist ethical enlightenment. Upton Sinclair expressed one facet of its resistance when he wrote: ‘Nothing prevents a man from understanding more than his salary depending on *not understanding*.’ Although the educational pessimism of Bourdieu and Passeron is not (in my view) entirely right, it is not entirely wrong.

The populist measures taken by left-leaning governments to achieve full employment and build a welfare state did not work. Echoing his intellectual allies Karl Popper and Friedrich von Hayek, and also echoing innumerable editorials in the mainstream press, Friedman provided empirical evidence that their unintended consequences were inflation and unemployment.

Pierre Bourdieu and Alphonse Passeron argued that every educational system is based on a principle that is not truly scientific but is an *arbitraire culturel* designed to preserve the *pouvoir en place*. Dysfunctional systems reproduce themselves with dysfunctional educations. They resist the changes at the levels of psychology, therapy, spirituality, religion, science, philosophy and education that -- if they were implemented-- would lead toward the adaptive social structures that -- if they could be brought into existence— would solve the bottleneck problems. Progress has to be stepwise. Pro-social education is both cause and effect of social changes that move in the direction of taking *homo sapiens* off the endangered species list.

The other principle is *do what works*. Adding the second principle to the first makes my philosophy true by definition. If we do what works, the problems are solved. If the problems are not solved, then whatever we did, we did not do what works. (I claim that the truth of this general idea survives adding the qualifications that would be needed to state it precisely.) My philosophy can still be called trivial, or called an abstraction that is useless in the real world, but it cannot be called false.

Let me give an example to show that (like the natural science definition that proves that an atom with four protons is carbon) *do what works* is an ethical philosophy truth-by-definition abstraction useful in the real world and is not trivial. Consider a central point the American neoliberal economist Milton Friedman made in his 1976 Nobel Lecture. The populist measures taken by left-leaning governments to achieve full employment and build a welfare state did not work. Echoing his intellectual allies Karl Popper and Friedrich von Hayek, and also echoing innumerable editorials in the mainstream press, Friedman provided empirical evidence that their unintended consequences were inflation and unemployment.

Innumerable editorials in the same vein have made ‘populist’ a pejorative term. ‘Populist’ names politicians who are, or are alleged to be, irresponsible and less than honest. To get votes they promise people things they want (like pensions and health care) when they know, or should know, that they cannot keep their promises. If they are elected, their government will not be able to raise the money to pay for implementing their programme. The editorials regularly conclude with lines like, ‘inevitably, it is the poor who will suffer the most.’ Similarly, detractors of Pope Francis have been known to call His Holiness ‘a populist Pope.’

Do what works. For a realist, to make a pragmatic compromise is not to betray one's ideals. *Pragmatic compromise is the ideal.* Remembering the sabbath and keeping it holy is an ideal, but if a child or an ox falls in a ditch on the sabbath, the higher ideal is compromise for the sake of what Saint Alberto called the great principle of fraternal love.

Do what works is a right-wing principle. When Margaret Thatcher opens her purse, takes out a copy of *The Fatal Conceit* by Friedrich von Hayek and proclaims "This is what we believe!" she is saying: We do what works. Labour does what does not work. History and logic prove it.

Treating *do what works* as a basic philosophical principle is a way to recommend do what works as a *common normative framework* shared by right, left and centre. It is a way to avoid what Lewis Coser called absolute conflict. In absolute conflict conversation is useless. The opposed parties cannot reason together because they start from incompatible premises. An important example today is the land issue in South Africa. A political party called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) advocates nationalizing land owned by whites without compensation, and then letting it out on long term leases to farmers. (This system would somewhat resemble traditional African customs that regarded the land as belonging to the ancestors, and administered for the benefit of all by the Chief who would periodically redistribute working rights to the land among appropriate persons who would farm it.) The EFF starts from the premise that the whites took the land from the blacks by force and they should give it back. Today they live in poverty, unemployed or paid starvation wages in their own country that yesterday was stolen from them. The white farmers start from the premise that nobody now living is to blame for what their ancestors did hundreds of years ago (and what blacks did to other blacks in tribal wars before the whites arrived). They themselves bought their land with their own money from willing sellers, and they worked hard all their lives to improve it to make it more productive. And today, unlike 1648 when the Dutch began their conquest of South Africa, respect for property is a universal human right. It is a right that was solemnly guaranteed in the transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994. Incompatible premises. Absolute conflict. Violence.

Do what works. For a realist, to make a pragmatic compromise is not to betray one's ideals. *Pragmatic compromise is the ideal.* Remembering the sabbath and keeping it holy is an ideal, but if a child or an ox falls in a ditch on the sabbath, the higher ideal is compromise for the sake of what Saint Alberto called the great principle of fraternal love. (Luke 14:5) (The graduate student later to be a saint, Alberto Hurtado, argued in his doctoral thesis at Louvain University that the educational philosophy of the pragmatic philosopher John Dewey was compatible with Christian ethics and social teachings.)

But what if there is an ideal that should never be compromised, like *do not torture*. (an ideal that is in fact routinely violated, and is no doubt being violated somewhere at this very moment as we speak).

Another of humanity's bottleneck problems is mass unemployment. It can be lumped together with poorly paid, precarious and miserable employment. Together they make joining the advancing juggernaut of the culture of drugs and gangs for many people young and old by far the more attractive option. But the solution to this problem is not pleasing investors to 'create jobs' at all costs, come what may.

Then my principle *do what works* is still true by definition because here by definition avoiding torture is a universal aim and therefore a criterion for distinguishing what works from what does not. A law enforcement method that achieves its aims only by torture cannot properly be said to *work*, as a business plan cannot be properly be said *to work* if it generates profits at the cost of exploiting workers, deceiving consumers, poisoning the environment, evading taxes and cheating creditors.

Most importantly, taking *doing what works* as a common premise leads to (that is to say, using appropriate educational methods it can be a starting point that leads to) *structural understanding*.

To move solutions to humanity's bottleneck problems out of the category of the impossible and into the category of the possible, structural understanding is the second most important educational outcome, second only to a *pro-social attitude*. Let me give an example to illustrate why:

Another of humanity's bottleneck problems is mass unemployment. It can be lumped together with poorly paid, precarious and miserable employment. Together they make joining the advancing juggernaut of the culture of drugs and gangs for many people young and old by far the more attractive option. But the solution to this problem is not pleasing investors to 'create jobs' at all costs, come what may. To make this point one can concede to Friedman that social democratic policies led to stagflation and therefore did not work; but then add that a system that fails to provide pensions, health care, clean air, a sustainable biosphere, and good employment does not work either. *The real solutions, the solutions that really work, must be ones that free humanity from the necessity to please investors at all costs, come what may.* Structural solutions.

We can restate the second of the two principles as: *structural understanding*. Then *do what works* would be reframed as a privileged common normative framework. It is privileged because it is a starting point that leads to structural understanding. In Paulo Freire's terms it is a bisagra, a hinge. In Roy Bhaskar's terms it is a transcendental argument: it is a transcendental argument because it proves the necessity of an economy of solidarity starting from a premise that people who initially disagree with you accept. Structural understanding makes it possible to see that solidarity really works, while individualism (what André Orléan calls *séparation marchande* and E.F. Schumacher called 'institutionalized irresponsibility') at the end of the day does not work

Solidarity is similar to Austrian liberalism because its foundations are ethical; but different from Austrian liberalism (sometimes called libertarianism) because its ethical foundations are different. Both realize that a social structure is, after all, an ethics. Structure is about norms and roles, rules and rights. For Austrian ultra-liberals like von Hayek and von Mises the heart of ethics and the heart of structure is the same heart. It is found in contract rules and property rights.

An economy of solidarity (taken as a generic name for a loose coalition of many progressive tendencies today whose adherents would voluntarily accept the label) advocates an ethic, namely solidarity. Its ethics is neatly expressed by the founder of permaculture, Bill Mollison, as:

1. Love the land.
2. Love the people.
3. Share the surplus.

Solidarity is similar to Austrian liberalism because its foundations are ethical; but different from Austrian liberalism (sometimes called libertarianism) because its ethical foundations are different. Both realize that a social structure is, after all, an ethics. Structure is about norms and roles, rules and rights. For Austrian ultra-liberals like von Hayek and von Mises the heart of ethics and the heart of structure is the same heart. It is found in contract rules and property rights.

If we start from *do what works* we can have a conversation. Instead of simply saying you see it your way, I see it mine, we can treat each other as persons of good will and look at the evidence together. We can have what Linda Hartling calls a *dignilogue*, dialogue with dignity. (Linda Hartling is one of the psychologists –the other was Evelin Lindner—who founded Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, www.humiliationstudies.org)

Shortly before Milton Friedman argued that social democracy did not work *because* it tried to create full employment and a welfare state, Jurgen Habermas in *The Legitimation Crisis* gave different explanations of why social democracy does not work. The modern state (he had in mind states at least somewhat similar to Germany, his own) is overburdened and overwhelmed. It has to attract investment, which implies spending money on infrastructure, security, subsidies and education while keeping taxes on the investing class low. It is pledged to make into realities the social human rights promised the masses during and after World War II, such as employment, housing, health, and pensions. Its constitutional frame is one of limited government, defined by private law. The bulk of society's wealth is beyond the government's reach, beyond its power to tax. In modernity the market is the primary institution; the government is secondary. Markets govern states more than states govern markets. Making matters still worse, the system-world (the world of business and government) is dominating the life-world (the world of families and personal relationships). But it is in the life-world where persons are formed. The former cannot function without the latter's human values.

Mother Teresa titled her autobiography *A Simple Path* to make the point that anybody could do what she did. I would suggest, similarly, that anybody can follow these two simple principles; PRACTICE A PRO-SOCIAL ATTITUDE and DO WHAT WORKS,

Habermas is one of many to include in a bibliography of authors to read to learn structural understanding. *He helps his readers to see both why the world as it is is not the world as it has to be, and also why Friedman in his Nobel Lecture was telling the truth about the world as it is. Trying to create full employment and welfare for all within the constraints of the now-dominant structures, built on the now-dominant values, really is impossible.* Unbounded organization is a conversation, an academy and a movement devoted to making the impossible possible. It has emerged from theory, but it has also emerged from practical experience, for example from community organizing in the town of Bokfontein that has made Bokfontein immune from waves of communal violence that have periodically swept over similar South African towns. That experience will be described in a forthcoming book from Dignity Press by me with the assistance of Gavin Andersson. Those seeking more detail on how general ideas like those above have practical applications might be interested in the two appendices to my older (2004) *Understanding the Global Economy* (with a Preface by Betty Reardon). It is available free in PDF on the Internet. One appendix is about ending war. The other (which has been published in *Acorn, The Journal of the Gandhi-King Society*) is about ending poverty.

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First published in Live Encounters Magazine September 2019



WATER DROPS

ARTWORK BY
WOLFGANG WIDMOSER

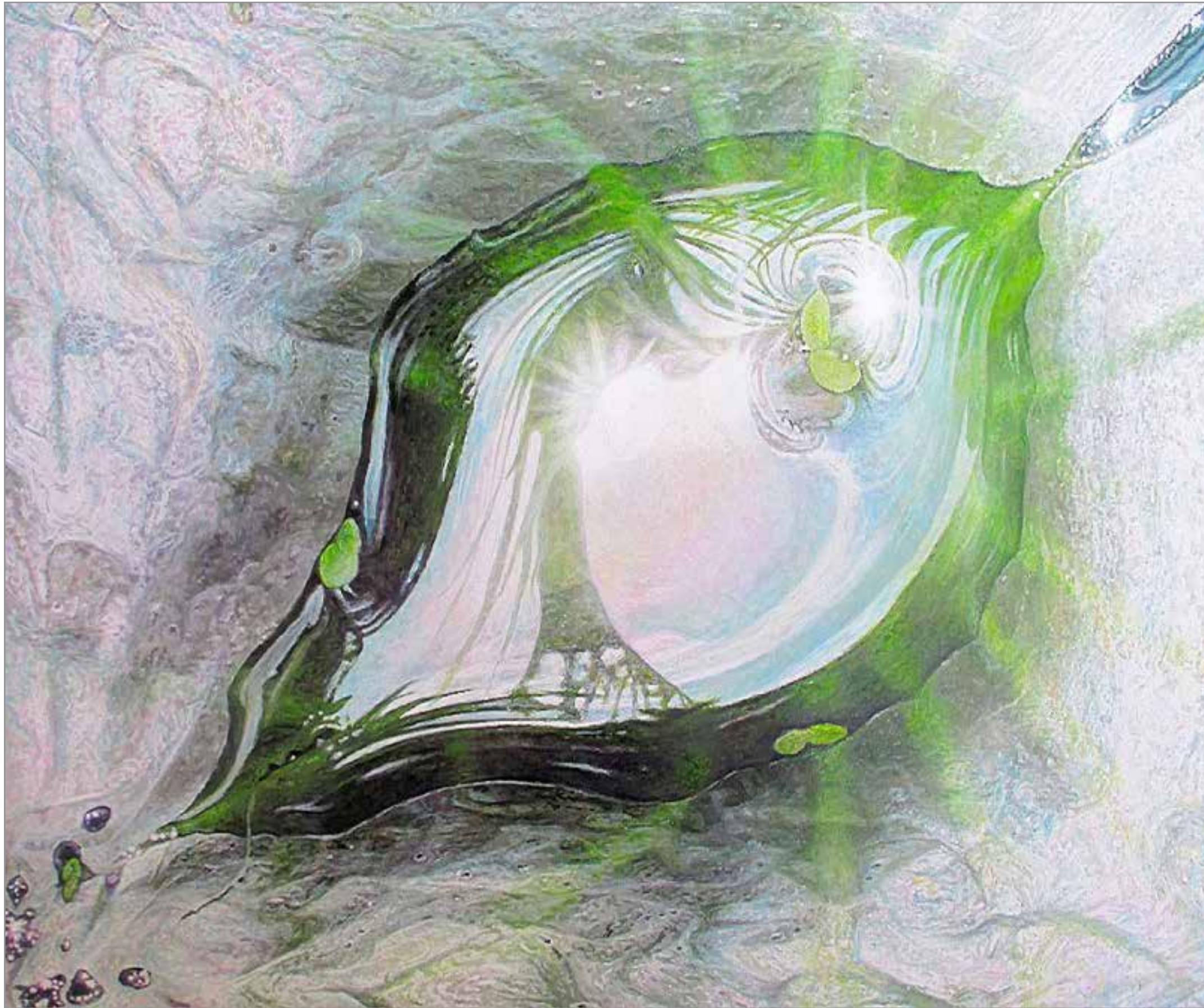
This selection of artwork reflects the delicate brush strokes of Wolfgang that bring to life water drops. The form, colour and reflections present the viewer with a glimpse into a world of surrealism where the water drop is a life form, existing in the aura of Nature in all its splendour.



Drop - oil on canvas 155x125cm



Drop collecting earth - oil on canvas 155x125cm



Drop in Paris - oil on canvas 150x180cm



Waterdop - oil on canvas 155x125cm



Waterdrops on leaf - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Wet leaf - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Wet leaf at noon - oil on canvas 180x150cm



Wet leaf on a sunny day - oil on canvas 180x150cm

Vũ Tuấn Hưng was a professional photographer and tour guide based in Hồ Chí Minh city. He was a tour guide for mainly German speaking tourists. His photographs feature in numerous publications across the world.

First published in Live Encounters Magazine May 2019

He tragically passed away in 2021.



VIETNAM PERSPECTIVES
TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
VŨ TUẤN HƯNG

This feature showcases a Vietnam many overlook when visiting this country. The enchanting rural aspects mesmerise all who encounter its sheer natural beauty. The numerous ethnic groups, colours of spring, terraced rice fields, white-sand beaches and azure seas await your presence. Perhaps in the near future you will visit this fascinating country .



Woman of the H'Mong tribe. 80 years old. She lives in a H'Mong village in Đồng Văn province, Hà Giang, north Vietnam.



Vietnamese girls gather lotus during YEN Spring, Hương Pagoda, Perfume Temple Complex, 50 km far from Hanoi.



Mù Cang Chải , Yên Bái Provinc, famous for terraced rice fields of the H'Mong tribe. Situated close to the Vietnam-China border.



Sisters, M'Nông tribe, one of 54 minorities of Vietnam. They live mainly in the Đắk Lắk province of the highlands of middle Vietnam.



Ban Gioc Waterfall is one of Vietnam's most impressive natural sights. Located in the northeastern province of Cao Bang, the falls are 30 metres high and 300 metres across, making Ban Gioc the widest (but not the highest) waterfall in the country .



Women preparing bamboo sticks for the production of the famous Vietnamese bamboo blinds. Suburbs of Hanoi.



Girl of the H'Mong tribe. Lai Châu province, north of Hanoi.



Lãng Cô village, white-sand Lãng Cô Beach, near the Hải Vân Pass between Huế and Đà Nẵng.



Hạ Long Bay.

Prof(Dr.)Debarati Halder is presently working in Parul Institute of Law, Parul university, Gujarat, India as a Full Professor. She is the Honorary managing director of Centre for Cyber Victim Counselling (CCVC) (www.cybervictims.org), an online not for profit organization and a think-tank meant for helping and counselling the victims of internet and digital communication crime victims. Dr. Halder had won two awards in 2019 for her work on cyber laws, gender rights, Therapeutic Jurisprudence, criminal laws and creating awareness on cybercrimes against women. Dr. Debarati Halder, also works closely with intermediaries like Facebook etc, government stakeholders like National Commission for women and has also assisted UNICEF India in creating child online safety related materials including Child Online Protection in India (https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/UNI-CEF-Child-Protection-Online-India-pub_doc115-1.pdf). Dr. Debarati Halder is also the founding secretary of South Asian Society of Criminology and Victimology (SASCV)(www.SASCV.org). She is also a member of Board of trustees of International society of Therapeutic Jurisprudence (<https://www.intltj.com/>). Dr. Halder is an independent legal researcher. She has authored and edited several books which are published by Sage Publications and Routledge and written numerous research articles published in different national and international scholarly journals including Scopus listed journals. Her latest books published in 2021 are "Advancement of Human Rights in India" (Published by Sage Publications) "Cyber Victimology: Decoding cybercrime victimization" by Routledge Taylor & Francis group. More about her and her publications may be found @<https://internetlegalstudies.com/about-me/>

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Advancement of Human Rights in India: Contemporary and emerging challenges - published by SAGE
<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/asi/advancement-of-human-rights-in-india/book278483>



Prof (Dr.)Debarati Halder



Asst Professor of Law Shrut Brahmbhatt, LL.M.

DEBARATI HALDER & SHRUT BRAHMBHATT

ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA: CONTEMPORARY AND EMERGING CHALLENGES BEYOND TOKENISM

India had been one of the prime colonies of different colonial rulers, especially United Kingdom and had seen huge abuse of Human Rights. The criminal procedural laws including the Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act and later the Criminal Procedure Code had clear reflection of the colonial rules which would suppress the general rights of human beings for the gain of the colonial rulers. The procedural laws survived in the post independent modern India with major reforms. But they could not completely shred off the colonial flavor. This reflected in several statutes in India which restricted certain kinds of speech and expression against the government in India, denied basic human rights of survival to the forest dwellers etc. From 1970 onwards India witnessed expansion of the Human Right Jurisprudence with judges like Justices Krishna Iyer, P.N. Bhagawati etc, who started to expand the meaning of Human Rights through public interest litigations. There was tremendous expansion of the scope of women's rights, child rights, equality rights, right to privacy, right to access consular services when detained in foreign countries, rights related to food and food grain etc. By the millennium, India became one of the few countries in the world to accept the right to gender orientation, change gender and get a new identity within the meaning of transgenders. The Human Rights explosion included same sex marriages. However, this does not mean that India could achieve the panacea for human right violations.

One of the key discussions that this section has is about marital rape in India. Considering the fact that this may be in a grey area in the Indian Criminal law jurisprudence, we can not neglect the plight of victim women who may have to remain silent victims for years to come due to lack of any specific laws on this very delicate issue.

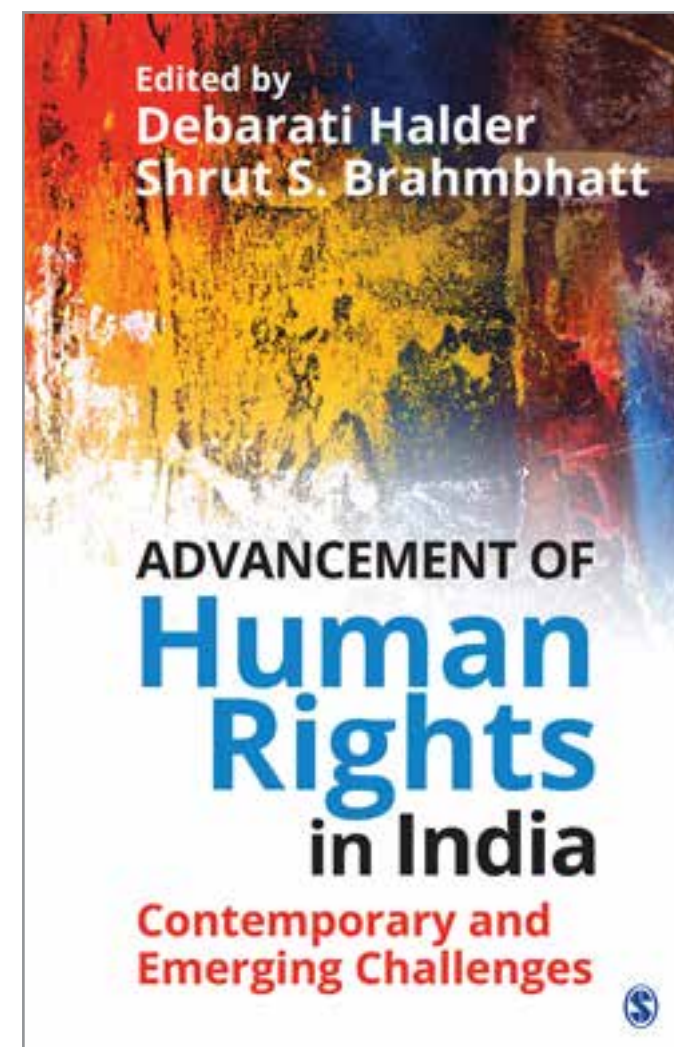
The book is divided into three sections addressing three different kinds of Human Rights issues and challenges.

The first section deals with gender justice and human rights. This includes discussions on rights of disabled women, issues of forced sterilization of differently abled women, contemporary rights of the sex workers, their children to live with dignity in India defying all social barriers etc. This section also covers discussions on rights of the transgender people from extremely challenging perspectives. One of the key discussions that this section has is about marital rape in India. Considering the fact that this may be in a grey area in the Indian Criminal law jurisprudence, we can not neglect the plight of victim women who may have to remain silent victims for years to come due to lack of any specific laws on this very delicate issue.

The second section is dedicated for the discussion on child rights. Even though the modern law makers in India had taken efforts to restrict several types of child right abuse including child labor, child sexual exploitation etc. and had emphasized on introducing and execution of positive laws including right to education, care and protection orphaned, abandoned children and children living in conflict zones, right to rehabilitation of children through child friendly correctional administration system by ratifying key Child Right Conventions created by international organizations, there exists several issues challenging proper execution of child right related laws for the benefit of children in India. Child marriages are still prevalent in India defying the prohibitory laws. Children from socio-economically backward regions still can not access basic education and they may be forced to work for feeding the families at tender age. The second section of the book discusses on all these issues and offers suggestions to overcome such challenges.

The third section of the book discusses the contemporary issues of human rights. This includes discussions on surrogacy including commercial surrogacy, rights and challenges of transgender people in the contemporary time, issues related to paternity leave and equal responsibility of parents for upbringing of children, right food security and using the forest for livelihood by indigenous people in India, general rights to food and issues of food security in India, Human Right violation of civilians in the Jammu Kashmir region, corporate social responsibility and right to consular assistance and issues related human right violation of detained individuals by foreign countries etc.

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It is observed that during the Covid 19 pandemic people at large have encountered several kinds of human right violations. Women and children, senior citizens, people from socio-economically backward classes had been the worst victims.

Several individuals had to suffer due to denial of medical assistance. There had been heart wrenching pictures of children who may had become orphaned due to Covid 19. Several children had no access to education as schools remained closed for a long time and these children could not access digital communication technology for accessing classrooms etc.

This book covers such issues of human right violations which were visible during the entire period of Covid 19 lockdown in 2020.

Book available at :
<https://www.amazon.com/Advancement-Human-Rights-India-Contemporary/dp/9353887852>

2010 - 2021



Live encounters

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