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DR IVO COELHO

a tribute to

Phyllis Wallbank

An outstanding educationist

COVER ARTWORK BY WOLFGANG WIDMOSER



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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor
markulyseas@liveencounters.net

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CONTRIBUTORS

DR (FATHER) IVO COELHO
PROFESSOR HOWARD RICHARDS
SUZANNE STONE
KATIE COSTELLO
TINA CLAFFEY
JILL GOCHER
TANG A PAU
DR GRETA SYKES
MIKYOUNG CHA
MARK ULYSEAS

Ivo Coelho, SDB earned a PhD in philosophy at the Gregorian University, Rome, for his work on the hermeneutics of the philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan, SJ (1904-1984). After teaching philosophy in Divyadaan: Salesian Institute of Philosophy, Nashik (India) and holding various offices in his religious congregation, in Nashik, Mumbai and Jerusalem, he is currently based in Rome, where he is in charge of the sector of training and formation for the Salesians of Don Bosco. Besides his interest in Lonergan, he has also edited collections of the essays of the Indologist Richard De Smet, SJ (1916-1997).



DR (FATHER) IVO COELHO

PHYLLIS WALLBANK (1918-2020): REMINISCENCES

Phyllis Wallbank, MBE, was a British educationist, collaborator and friend of Maria Montessori, and founder of the first all-age Montessori school in Great Britain. Born on 1 September 1918, she died at the age of 101 on 9 April 2020.

I first met Phyllis Wallbank in 1999. We were at the Lonergan Workshop in Boston at Fred Lawrence's invitation. I was a first time speaker and quite new to the whole thing, so Fred had the kind thought of bringing together "the members of the British Commonwealth," as he put it. That was how I met Phyllis, David Levy—wonderful combination of British, Jewish and Maritainian^[1]—, Sebastian Moore, and others.

As editor of *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* I was always on the lookout for potential contributors, so I got talking with Phyllis who invited me to visit her in England. So the next time I was going over to the USA—I think it was for a small meeting of young Lonergan scholars convoked by Joe Flanagan in 2001—I stopped in London and spent a few days with Phyllis at Meldrum, her lovely little pink house on Dorney Common, not far from Eton and Windsor Castle. I fell in love with the house: it was beautiful, the bedrooms full of books, and it was absolutely lovely to be able to reach over my head and pull out a history of England to read before falling asleep. And the view from the room was stupendous: it gave over Phyllis' little back garden, with the pond and the three very large goldfish, the trees, the birds that would come to feed, the farms beyond, and the neighbours' houses on either side.

Dr (Father)Ivo Coelho

Phyllis' husband Newell (Rev. Prebendary Newell Eddius Wallbank, 1914-1996, Rector of St Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield, London) had been not only a high Anglican clergyman but also a philosopher and a musician of note. Meldrum, which Phyllis had bought in 1956,^[2] was the house to which she and Newell moved after retirement. Both became involved in different ways in Eton College, with Newell conducting services and Phyllis coaching students and introducing them to her Slough Run.

Other rooms of the house were full of books on philosophy and music. Phyllis' husband Newell (Rev. Prebendary Newell Eddius Wallbank, 1914-1996, Rector of St Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield, London) had been not only a high Anglican clergyman but also a philosopher and a musician of note. Meldrum, which Phyllis had bought in 1956,^[2] was the house to which she and Newell moved after retirement. Both became involved in different ways in Eton College, with Newell conducting services and Phyllis coaching students and introducing them to her Slough Run. She read up on dyslexia, testing children and teaching parents how to help them. At first she went several times a week to Eton College; later, with age, she had them come over to her house where she had built an upstairs study. She also seems to have run a homework club for local children.^[3]

Over the years Phyllis told me about Newell and their long life together. They had three children, Judith, Mark and Benedict. "The story of both their lives of service and their 54 year love story, which began during the bombing of London, would make a great movie," says Patty Price.^[4] Newell's parents were both musicians. His father, Newell Smith Wallbank, was organist at several important churches and a composer of pipe organ music.^[5] Newell read music at Queens' College, Cambridge and in 1936 won a doctorate in music from Trinity College, Dublin. He prepared for Holy Orders at Ripon Hall, Oxford, and was ordained to St Bart's. The Bishop of London, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, thought that Wallbank, at 33, was too young to be appointed to St Bart's, but gave him the appointment anyway when Newell told him of the solemn oath made to his godfather, Canon E.S. Savage, that he would succeed him.

Newell loved St Bart's, a church that had been founded in 1123 by Rahere, court minstrel of Henry I, who had established a fine musical tradition that had continued down the ages. He also became deeply involved in the life of St Bartholomew's Hospital next door, and from 1968 to 1979 was chaplain of the Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor, which used the church as its official chapel. He raised money for the restoration of the church in 1972, and had the patronage transferred to Westminster Abbey. An obituary describes Newell thus: "A quick-witted, good-natured man and a faultless mimic, Wallbank had the style of a layman, not a priest, and it was with some reluctance that he served as rural dean of the City of London from 1958 to 1963."^[6]



Photograph courtesy <https://lonergan.org/2020/04/09/may-our-dear-friend-phyllis-wall-bank-be-welcomed-into-the-feast-of-our-lords-last-supper/>.

“I had an interesting life and I had a wonderful, remarkable husband,” Phyllis said to Patty Price. “I couldn’t have done anything without his love.”^[10] And to me she once said: “What a pity you didn’t get to know him. You would have got along very well.” I treasure Newell’s chalice and paten that Phyllis thought I should have—a little link to someone I never had the fortune of meeting, and who yet is somehow familiar.

Newell was Rector of St Bart’s till his retirement in 1979. Phyllis describes her husband

as being deeply religious, with a sparkling wit: ‘There was a lot of laughter and that always saw us through difficulties. He was one of the best-read people in literature as well as philosophy and had a wonderful library of poetry. He was so brilliant and yet so humble.’ She also said that his love ‘allowed my potential to flower,’ even though their external interests could hardly have been more diverse. In Phyllis’ words, ‘A dating agency would never have put us together! I loved riding and dancing, and he was miserable the one time I got him on a horse, and he couldn’t dance. He was so very knowledgeable about music, whereas I only knew what music I liked. He was so disciplined in his approach to life, and I just lived. Yet our love for each other was our rock.’^[7]

Newell died during a service at St Bart’s in 1996.^[8] Brother Dunstan Robidoux reports a touching memory about Newell’s last moments:

I would like to conclude with my fondest memory of Phyllis Wallbank. It was the last time we visited St Bartholomew’s in the East End, just across the street from St Bart’s Hospital. We were in the old cloister which dates from the twelfth century, and I noticed that Phyllis was dissolving into tears. All the memories of her years there with Newell were coming back. To give her privacy, I quickly absented myself and went to sit by the tomb of Rahere, the canon who had founded St Bart’s in the twelfth century. Phyllis later found me there and, as she sat with me, began to tell me about Newell’s last moments. There had always been an agreement between them that, whenever he was engaged in services, they would never communicate with each other in any way. On that particular morning, they had gone to St Bart’s to participate in a memorial service. Phyllis sat near Rahere’s tomb up at the front. The clergy began to process in and, for the first time ever, Newell greeted Phyllis, waving to her as he came in, and she waved in response.

The clergy processed on in to take their chapter seats, and as the choir intoned ‘I long, O Lord, to go and live in the house of the Lord,’ Newell’s head simply dropped down and rested on his chest as he passed into eternal life. The canons brought Phyllis to where they had laid him, on the top of a large chest outside in the cloister walk. Newell’s eyes were still open, and Phyllis looked into his blue eyes and simply said to him: ‘Thank you for all the wonderful years that we had together.’^[9]

“I had an interesting life and I had a wonderful, remarkable husband,” Phyllis said to Patty Price. “I couldn’t have done anything without his love.”^[10] And to me she once said: “What a pity you didn’t get to know him. You would have got along very well.” I treasure Newell’s chalice and paten that Phyllis thought I should have—a little link to someone I never had the fortune of meeting, and who yet is somehow familiar.

Newell’s death must have left a huge void in Phyllis, and I had the impression that it was to help her out of mourning that Tim Russ introduced her to Lonergan. Canon Timothy Russ was the Catholic parish priest of Our Lady of Peace, Burnham, and came from an old Catholic family. He had inherited the manor house and even a vineyard that gave him 600 bottles of wine every year after sharing with cultivators and wine-makers. When Phyllis first introduced us in 2001, he was parish priest in Great Missenden. Phyllis told me he had a degree in economics, and that he had studied Lonergan’s economics thoroughly. Tony and Cherie Blair, she added, came to mass at his church sometimes (Great Missenden was Cherie Blair’s home town), and Tim would take the chance to introduce some of Lonergan’s economics into his homily, hoping to get it into Tony’s ears. Tim eventually wrote a couple of articles on Lonergan’s economics for *Divyadaan*.^[11]

So Tim Russ was the one who introduced Phyllis to Lonergan, though it might not have been after Newell’s death, but rather “when she came out of the catacombs” after Newell’s retirement. He put Lonergan’s *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* into Phyllis’ hands, though I can’t imagine why, seeing that *Verbum* is not exactly an easy book.^[12] But Phyllis is not the kind to give up easily. She told me she wrote out passages of the book by hand, and she talks about this, in fact, in a lecture at Boston College:

Creativity in education seems to have run in the family. Phyllis' father was an engineer with the London Telephone Company. Her father's father, however, was a headmaster with the distinction of being the first to provide hot meals to poorer students, and to set up London's first technical college where young people could learn trades after work.

Fr. Timothy Russ... to keep me quiet gave me a copy of *Verbum*. Dr. Montessori said to me that she wrote out by hand Dr. Itard and Sequin's books (one of them 600 pages), because it gave you time to really reflect if you wrote it by hand. So I wrote *Verbum* out by hand and translated it into my own language on the other page. I began to understand and I am deeply grateful to Fr. Russ for introducing me to Lonergan.^[13]

I found all this very interesting, because it was exactly what Peter Henrici, dean of philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome, had recommended in his *Practical Guide to Study*.^[14] Writing out a book slows you down, as Phyllis says. It allows the mind to focus properly on the phantasm, and this is important because for us human beings, as Aristotle says and Lonergan repeats, all insight is insight into phantasm.^[15] One of the reasons we fail to understand is simply that we do not give enough attention to the phantasm: we are too much in a hurry.

Phyllis went on eventually to Lonergan's *Insight*,^[16] and over the years brought in insights from Lonergan into her long experience of education and of running a Montessori school called The Gatehouse in the heart of London. She found in Lonergan a philosophy that was consonant with Montessori's educational theory, and was subsequently invited to speak at the Lonergan Workshop at Boston College. In her first talk there, she is wonderfully conscious of her own strengths and limitations:

Looking at you all I think there are two very distinct large groups of people: people who are incredibly knowledgeable about Lonergan—and those like me, who am not. Not a great academic at all, I speak from the heart and from what I do understand, and from my practice of having a school of my own in London, the Gatehouse.^[17]

Over the years, Phyllis published a number of articles on education, several of them, happily, also in *Divyadaan*.^[18] David Fleischacker was the one who took up the way she connected Montessori and Lonergan and worked it into systematic form.^[19]

But let me begin at the beginning. Phyllis Gardner was born 1 September 1918 in London, which made her a hundred years old in 2018 by common reckoning, or well on to a hundred and one by her own reckoning—given that we begin our “time on earth” with conception.

Creativity in education seems to have run in the family. Phyllis' father was an engineer with the London Telephone Company. Her father's father, however, was a headmaster with the distinction of being the first to provide hot meals to poorer students, and to set up London's first technical college where young people could learn trades after work. Phyllis had an older sister and brother. She remembers that as children the two sisters would often play “school.” Both of them, in fact, eventually founded their own schools, Phyllis in England and Beatrice in the United States.

Phyllis must have been a remarkable student. She once showed me a letter from her headmistress at the end of school that began like this: “Phyllis Gardner was a pupil in this school. She was a person of unusual strength of character and unselfish public spirit....” Unfortunately she did not let me copy out the rest.

Her family could not afford a university education, but Phyllis was fortunate to win the single annual scholarship for the Lady Margaret's School in London—‘fortunate’ because the exam papers were destroyed in a fire, so that teachers and headmistress had to select the winner through a series of interviews. Conversation was something Phyllis excelled in, while her writing skills were not exceptional, and she always insisted later that she would never have gotten in but for the fire.^[20] Phyllis flourished at this school which, under its headmistress Moberly Bell, was well ahead of its time, with each class run by an elected students' council that made rules and imposed penalties. Besides, Ms Bell liked to keep her office door always open, and Phyllis benefited enormously from frequent discussions with her.

At age 18 Phyllis began working in the kindergarten of Lady Margaret's as well as at a school in Northwood, while at the same time beginning a three-year part-time Froebel training course.^[21] Later she took a job as a child probation officer for Bucks County Council, and studied child psychology in the evenings at London University.

Fifty-five years ago Phyllis Wallbank organized the International Montessori Association (AMI) conference in London at which Dr Maria Montessori, the famous progenitor of the worldwide Montessori educational movement, made her last speech shortly before her death. It was 1951, the world was recovering from the Second World War and the auditorium in Central London was overflowing.

Here she became great friends with her teacher, the eminent child psychiatrist Kate Friedlander (1902-1949). Kate eventually became godmother to Phyllis' daughter Judith, while Phyllis became guardian of Kate's daughter Sybil (1931-1993) when Kate died in 1949. Kate was the one who connected Phyllis with Montessori:

It was Kate who, when Phyllis expressed frustration at seeing how the disturbed children she came across while working in the juvenile courts failed to flourish under the normal school system, suggested that she went to hear Maria Montessori on her forthcoming visit to Britain, saying that she individualised studies.

It turned out to be a pivotal moment in Phyllis's life and she went on to complete the Montessori course, become a close friend of Maria Montessori herself, start her own initially tiny Montessori school and, at Maria Montessori's request, lecture and examine for her and with her and with her son Mario. She was examiner for both the ordinary and the advanced courses. Phyllis travelled to France, Italy, Holland and Austria examining and lecturing and also lectured extensively for the AMI in London as well as at many other places including Claud Claremont's teacher training college. Both Ted Standing and Claud Claremont were close friends of Phyllis's for the rest of their lives.^[22]

Phyllis eventually became Chairperson of the Montessori Association in England and Vice President of the International Montessori Association. She organized the last International Montessori Congress in 1951 in London, shortly before Montessori's death. Patty Price writes:

Fifty-five years ago Phyllis Wallbank organized the International Montessori Association (AMI) conference in London at which Dr Maria Montessori, the famous progenitor of the worldwide Montessori educational movement, made her last speech shortly before her death. It was 1951, the world was recovering from the Second World War and the auditorium in Central London was overflowing.



Photograph Dr. (Father) Ivo Coelho.

Dunstan Robidoux puts it well: “There seems to be a connatural relation between the sacramentality of Catholic religious practice and the sacramentality found in the theory and practice of Montessori education, according to which apt images fashioned through the arts and the creativity of the human imagination elicit acts of understanding. As taught centuries ago by Aristotle and Aquinas, configurations or forms that are sensed or imagined point to immaterial configurations or forms that can be correlated with these images.”

Phyllis Wallbank was then the young founder of the Gatehouse Learning Centre Montessori School in East London and was in charge of organizing the entire event, including driving Dr Montessori to the hall.^[23]

Ted Standing wrote in his book *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work*:

The Congress had been a great success. Dr. Montessori had been honoured by a host of outstanding personalities and representatives of many societies—from the Minister of Education down to the (equally important!) tiny children who presented her with a bouquet.... This Congress—arranged by Mrs. Wallbank, a personal friend of Dr. Montessori and Principal of the Gatehouse Montessori School—was a memorable climax to her long and fruitful labours in this country.^[24]

William J. Codd, Professor of Education at Seattle University, said that Wallbank was “the one on whom the robe of Montessori should fall to carry on the living tradition.”²⁵

Phyllis’ association with Montessori led her to the Catholic Church. She felt she could not apply Montessori’s educational methods without the Eucharist. Dunstan Robidoux puts it well: “There seems to be a connatural relation between the sacramentality of Catholic religious practice and the sacramentality found in the theory and practice of Montessori education, according to which apt images fashioned through the arts and the creativity of the human imagination elicit acts of understanding. As taught centuries ago by Aristotle and Aquinas, configurations or forms that are sensed or imagined point to immaterial configurations or forms that can be correlated with these images.”

“Was it easy for you?” I once asked Phyllis. “Not at all,” she replied. “I came kicking and screaming into the Catholic Church.” She found a Jesuit spiritual director who she met in secret, and who advised her to remain an “underground Catholic,” so as not to embarrass and cause problems for Newell. Her husband was, in fact, the only person (outside the Catholic Church) who knew about her conversion.

In her biography of Newell, Phyllis says: “Very gradually I absorbed Catholicism and it became very important to me. I of course discussed this with Newell. As I became more and more to feel at home with the Catholic way, he of course became more angry and upset. I loved him so very much and this distressed us both.” It put a terrible strain on their relationship, especially in the early years. “Our marriage almost broke,” Phyllis said to me. “Newell found it very difficult.” But Phyllis kept her word and remained an “underground Catholic” till after Newell’s retirement. “There is no need... why anyone should ever know about my inner beliefs unless you tell them,” she wrote to her husband. “I should always be completely silent —and yet open to you Newell.”²⁸

I kept returning to the little house on Dorney Common over the years. During my first visit in 2001 I met most of Phyllis’ family. Benedict and Debbie and their children Bartholomew, Augustine and Katie came over to visit Phyllis, and later we went over to the London Eye, where we met other family. There was Mark and Liz and baby James, and Judith Orcutt with her daughter Miriam and Hugo Wolfram. Hugo told me that his late wife Sybil (Kate Friedlander’s daughter) used to be a Fellow and Tutor in philosophy at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Her *Philosophical Logic: An Introduction* (1989) had been very well received.²⁹ Hugo said he also knew G.E.M. Anscombe who he described as “a strange person, one of the headclutchers”—after Wittgenstein who had that habit.³⁰ He did not know that Anscombe had initiated the Virtue Ethics thing, but he had heard of Alasdair Macintyre, and also of Lonergan, of course, thanks to Phyllis.

Judith told me she had been to India, to “Muktananda’s ashram” at Ganeshpuri, a village some 40 miles out of Bombay. She had, in fact, been in Bombay when Phyllis made her trip to Bombay and Delhi with her school children, and visited the Elephanta caves in the Bombay harbour with them.

When in Dorney, Phyllis and I sometimes went for mass at the parish church of Our Lady of Peace in Burnham, though we went once to St Gilbert’s at Eton Wick. Among the parishioners were Peter and Tina Koenig, both artists, with Tina doing portraits and Peter biblical themes.

Phyllis had founded The Gatehouse in 1948. One of the reasons was that she needed the money: with a curate's salary it was difficult to maintain a family. The other was to provide company for her 2 ½ year old daughter Judith, as the City of London had no children in it then.

When I first visited them in 2001, Peter had a vast number of canvasses, but felt somewhat neglected and unrecognized in his own parish. In 2008, instead, I found some of his paintings in Our Lady of Peace. There was the risen Christ with sickle and sheaf in hand (an allusion to Revelation 14:15), the water of life gushing out of his side and flowing into the baptismal font, origin of the Church; the extraordinarily dense Prodigal Son, with its medieval and non-contemporary narrative simultaneity; the quintych of the marriage of Our Lady; the seven sorrows of our Lady; and so on. Peter's colours were vibrant, the lines clear, and he managed to blend a medieval atmosphere with contemporary motifs (modern soldiers, with Christ in shirt sleeves sometimes).

Phyllis kept in touch with a small group of parishioners, but I got the impression that it was not easy with others. Strangely, most knew her for the Slough Run, and hardly anyone knew about her extraordinary contributions in the field of education.

We also went to Oxford. I don't remember much of my first visit to this charming English university town, except that we saw Littlemore, John Henry Newman's place, bought when he had to move out of Oxford after his conversion to Catholicism. After Newman's death, the house became an Almshouse—housing for the very poor—but it has since been repurchased by the Oratory at Birmingham. Littlemore is now managed by a group of nuns belonging to a new institute known as The Work. It has a library containing all of Newman's publications and a good deal on him, with some memorabilia. There is a lovely little chapel where Newman prayed, and where he was received into the Church. There is also Newman's room, very simple. Somehow I felt a resistance to Newman, but also the urge to read more about him. I knew that Lonergan had been influenced by his *Grammar of Assent*, that he had picked up from him a sensitivity to the two kinds of understanding, direct and reflective, which Newman calls 'apprehension' and 'assent,' and also the notion of self-appropriation, the distinction between notional and real apprehension and assent, wisdom and the development of dogma. Newman had found many of these in Aristotle, and Lonergan later discovered them in Thomas, but transposed them from the commonsense genre in which Newman wrote to the world of theory.

We visited Oxford once again in 2008, when Phyllis was 92. She wanted to show me the English countryside and so took side roads, which got us somewhat lost, and we had a bit of an adventure reaching Oxford. We took an Oxford Tour Bus but did not get off anywhere. At the Bodleian I took the chance to enter Blackwell's, a fantastic place with at least four floors of wonderful books. I remember checking to see if they had Lonergan, and finding, not unsurprisingly, that they did not. More surprising was the fact that none of the books on epistemology so much as mentioned insight, though perhaps they did occasionally talk about judgment. Later we went over to Judith and Hugo's house in Oxford.

I think it was on my first trip to Dorney that David Levy dropped in. We came across one of Eric Mascall's books on one of Newell's shelves, probably *Existence and Analogy*, and it was interesting to see Lonergan quoted on the title page, with several other references to Lonergan in the Index. David said he knew the general direction in which Lonergan was heading, because Mascall was Gilsonian, and Gilson's criticism was that Lonergan, like the other Transcendental Thomists, put epistemology first and then metaphysics, and once you began with knowing you could never get to being. I told him what Jean de Marneffe used to say in Pune—that we could not take for granted that we had to be realists. David said that that was what it seemed we all were, that was what the world seemed to be like. But he was an open person. I thought he had the makings of an article, and he said he would write one for the Lonergan Workshop. I said I would love to have it for **Divyadaan** if Fred did not want it, and he seemed happy about that. I think he enjoyed the discussion. We also spoke about the Parsis. I had forgotten he was an expert on that, and that he had said once that that was the religion he most liked, and that it came close to having a sensible idea about the problem of evil.

*

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The school... follows the idea that true learning results from children exploring the world for themselves through play. It allows children to choose when to take their lessons during the week. A child is required to complete a certain number of lessons in Mathematics, English, Art, Geography etc. per week but would be able to decide when to do them. Students also have free lessons where they can choose any subject they like. The balance of subjects is often weighted towards a child's aptitude or current interests. Different abilities/ages of children are taught in the same session, and their teachers 'sign pupils off' for the lessons they have completed.

The school that Phyllis started when her eldest child, Judith, was two and a half, was named The Gatehouse School because it began in the sitting of their home which was The Gatehouse—the tiny rectory of St. Bartholomew's and the oldest house in London. The couple was very poor indeed and subsisted on the miniscule salary that Newell received as curate which was but £150 a year. However, Phyllis managed to pick up some second-hand Montessori materials and bought some cheap bathroom stools which she stripped of their cork and painted and she was all set to go! At the end of each school day everything was tidied away and the room resumed its family character.

As the school enlarged, it went on to occupy the cloister of the church and then moved eventually to Dallington Street in the City once there were eighty pupils. In 1964 the Phyllis Wallbank Educational Trust was formed to ensure that the School and Phyllis's educational philosophy continued in perpetuity. Phyllis managed to find the premises at Bethnal Green which were purchased by the Phyllis Wallbank Educational Trust and in which the Gatehouse School continues to this day. Phyllis ran the Gatehouse School for over thirty years.

A small house in a remote area of Scotland near Elgin was acquired by the school to provide the experience of country life to inner city children. Phyllis used to take groups of children there for two weeks at a time. Once there was a school trip that went much further afield when Phyllis took a small group of pupils, including one autistic child, all the way to India where they visited Delhi, Bombay and Agra, traveling with third class train tickets.³¹

It was in the 1970s that the school moved to Bethnal Green in the East End of London. Phyllis also founded a branch called "The Gateway School" in Great Missenden. This was a boarding and day school that she supervised on weekends. The Gateway School was eventually handed over to the acting head.³² When I visited the school in 2007, it was still run very much along Phyllis' lines, with about 300 children on the rolls.

Some children were watching a documentary on television and were obviously enjoying themselves. Others went in a file to another classroom, but it was really a loose, happy and free file. No one seemed to take any particular notice of the Head Teacher who was showing us around. There was a new room set up for the smallest children. They were all sitting around a table, about twelve of them, with two teachers. The large room was full of corners with different material, which gave me some idea of what The Gatehouse must have been like. The Gateway School keeps children up to 12. They then join some other school.

Phyllis Wallbank retired from the Gatehouse School in 1979. The Phyllis Wallbank Educational Trust had been founded in 1964 to enable purchase of the building at Sewardstone Road, Bethnal Green, and to ensure that Phyllis' educational ideas would survive, as laid out in The Wallbank Plan.³³ "Highlight the good and watch it grow" is something Phyllis learned from Montessori and made one of the chief pillars of her school.

The Gatehouse was the first all-age Montessori school in Great Britain. This meant that there were no traditional classrooms. Instead, there were series of tasks for children to do, as and when they wanted and as many times as they wanted to. There were also teachers who could mark them for it, and that was how they progressed through the school.

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Mrs Wallbank is fascinated by science and reads *New Scientist* each week as well as *Mind Magazine* and *Scientific American* each month. She is particularly interested in the latest research about the brain, the ways in which Montessori methods can help Alzheimer's patients, and other similar philosophies about education such as Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. She recently released a series of DVDs about education and the stages of development of the child, in conjunction with Professor David Fleischacker of St Francis University in Indiana.³⁶

Some older children (14/15-year olds) can then take the amount of each subject they wished to do over the course of each week, resulting in some pupils spending the week doing 'what they want' e.g., Art/Monday, Geography/Tuesday, English/Wednesday, Biology/Thursday and then back to Art/Friday.

After an hour for lunch pupils have an hour to read followed by 'afternoon activities'. These include football, swimming, and visits to museums. The school has also had two ponies, as well as a duck, for the children. It also has an old farm cottage just outside Clochan in Scotland³⁴

One of the features for which the Gatehouse School was known was for integrating children with special needs together with average and brilliant students.

'The very bright and the backward, the handicapped and the normal, play and work happily together,' said Mathew Salisbury in a 1975 BBC radio broadcast about the Gatehouse Learning Centre. 'So it is an organized chaos and it seems to work so very well. The result is not only very happy children but also very successful ones, too.' In fact, one of Mrs. Wallbank's former students was awarded a first prize for the most elegant solution in the Math Olympiad.³⁵

It was the atmosphere of freedom that helped children to develop their natural curiosity in an extraordinary way. Phyllis herself is an embodiment of the way a person can remain young in mind all through life.

You might not think that an 88 year old woman who lives in the countryside of England, across from a cow pasture, would be on the cutting edge of education, but that is exactly the type of vision she articulates. She may no longer drive a car, but she gets on the information super-highway every day from the Mac computer in her living room and she is very much in the 'flat world.' Thanks to the internet, this Montessori pioneer is able to continue to spread her message around the globe....

With her white Bichon dog Sparky at her feet she told me how she would add to the Montessori classroom today's 'keys to the environment,' the phrase coined by Montessori a century ago to describe the skills that a child needs to survive and work in his or her environment. For example, children need more science and work with higher numbers because they will be traveling to space, she said. In her speech in Washington she said that teachers need to tell children about all the questions in science that haven't been answered to get them excited about science, such as black holes, the latest brain research and new forms of transportation such as magnetic thrust technology, for example. Children should 'feel the excitement' of these unanswered questions such as 'What really is Dark Matter which makes up 80% of our universe?'

Through Phyllis Wallbank I have gotten the sense that Montessori education is as much an attitude about learning as it is a pedagogy or approach. At the Gatehouse Learning Centre Wallbank took her students to test drive car simulators at the local library she said. "Today I would take them if possible to fly on a simulator." In fact, when Phyllis Wallbank was 80 years old she took the controls of a Tomahawk aircraft and 'loved' it. With a chuckle she added that she would still like to learn to fly a small helicopter!

Mrs Wallbank is fascinated by science and reads *New Scientist* each week as well as *Mind Magazine* and *Scientific American* each month. She is particularly interested in the latest research about the brain, the ways in which Montessori methods can help Alzheimer's patients, and other similar philosophies about education such as Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. She recently released a series of DVDs about education and the stages of development of the child, in conjunction with Professor David Fleischacker of St Francis University in Indiana.³⁶

Phyllis also wrote a correspondence course for The College of Modern Montessori, which boasts over 10,000 students in over 80 countries.⁴⁰ Oxford, King's College – London, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, Boston College, Seattle University, Purdue University, Columbia University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and Shanghai University are among the institutions where she lectured on education and other topics.⁴¹

Classrooms, Phyllis is convinced, “are fallouts of the Industrial Revolution.” “The parents were busy working, many hours a day, and there was need for children to be looked after. The modern school is an invention for imprisoning children many hours a day inside often dreary buildings.”

Phyllis has been especially attentive to stages of growth, which she regarded as Montessori's chief contribution to education³⁷ : the 0-6 age group, which is the time of the absorbent mind; the 6-12 stage, which is the age of questions, discovery and adventure; the 12-18 phase, which involves the discovery of one's identity; 18-24; the stage of mutual self-mediation, which might be described as the discovery of oneself through the other—persons, society, culture, history, religion. Montessori believed that our sensitivity changed every six years, with three year specific tendencies within each period. Education has to respect these stages of growth, because that was the way people were meant to learn by their Creator.³⁸ The many articles Phyllis contributed to *Divyadaan* talk repeatedly about the stages and how education needs to be conceived around them.³⁹ This is where Phyllis found wonderful support in Lonergan—especially in matters of self-appropriation, taking charge of one's life, and deciding for oneself what one is going to be.

Montessori was convinced that the six-year phases of growth are the same the world over, and this matches well with Lonergan's conviction that certain features of being human are transcultural. In 2007 Phyllis conducted a World Tour at the age of 90 covering Singapore, China, the Philippines, New Zealand, the USA, Israel and Russia, lecturing and sharing her experience of a lifetime spent in applying Montessori. The existence of some 40,000 Montessori schools the world over, and the enthusiastic reception received by Mrs Wallbank, are eloquent witnesses to the validity of Montessori's convictions about the transculturality of certain human factors.

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Patty Price gives us an idea of the kind of atmosphere Phyllis was able to create during these lectures:

Over a half century after her friend and mentor's death, Phyllis Wallbank packed her wheelchair and flew to Washington, D.C. to kick off the city's celebration of the Centenary of Montessori education. Just as it was in 1951 when Dr. Montessori made her final speech, the hall at St. Anselm's Abbey School in NE Washington, D.C. was packed with about 350 people on Saturday morning, 21 October 2006. Phyllis Wallbank's recollections of Dr. Montessori, her explanation of the stages of development and her sense of humor delighted the attendees which included Montessori teachers from as far as two hours away. The lecture was sponsored by an unusual combination of organizations including seven area Montessori schools, the Lonergan Institute for the Good Under Construction at St. Anselm's Abbey and the Phyllis Wallbank Educational Trust in London. In all over 20 different Montessori schools and a quite a few different Montessori training centers sent attendees.⁴²

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I cannot forget the morning walks in Dorney. For many years Phyllis would drive in a little electric buggy every morning to the Thames, which was just down the road from Meldrum. She always carried bread, which she threw first to the crows, and then to the swans that would invariably be there, waiting for her, and then to the rabbits hopping out cautiously from the hedges. It was her way of doing morning prayer. You did not have to chant the psalms or the Canticle of the Creatures: you simply praised God with the swans and ducks and geese and rabbits and yes, even the crows. I fell in love with the English countryside. The Thames and the Eton rowing trench were all utterly beautiful in the morning, and there was a discreet memorial plaque to Newell in a quiet corner of the park. I carry with me memories of quiet walks by myself, with the feeling of wonder tinged with envy at such beauty just a few miles out of London.

Phyllis used to say that England owed much of its beauty to the fact that royalty and aristocracy still owned large tracts of parkland. Phyllis lived her faith simply: the walks, the “resting in the Trinity,” as she put it, the peaceful coexistence with nature and with people, the decision to live by herself, along with great energy and passion about education, but also a deep diffidence that sometimes broke through, a quick temper and a tendency to flare up.

Phyllis used to say that England owed much of its beauty to the fact that royalty and aristocracy still owned large tracts of parkland. Phyllis lived her faith simply: the walks, the “resting in the Trinity,” as she put it, the peaceful coexistence with nature and with people, the decision to live by herself, along with great energy and passion about education, but also a deep diffidence that sometimes broke through, a quick temper and a tendency to flare up. And then there were the friends: Lilian Carpenter⁴³; Lorraine who would come to do the house several times a week; the group that would gather sometimes in Peter and Tina Koenig’s house; Tim Russ, of course. And then there was Slough. Dorney Common is not far from Slough, and Phyllis liked making trips to the town, which she did in her little car as long as she could drive, and then in the bus for seniors that would pass by twice a week or so. Slough is made for seniors and for people who are physically challenged. You can drive into the town, park and get an ‘electric moving chair,’ and simply roll in and out of shops, restaurants, movie theatres and so on. And Slough is utterly cosmopolitan, full of Pakistanis and Indians, with young people looking like they would burst into Hindi, until they opened their mouths and you realized just how completely British they were. Phyllis would often quote the poet John Betjeman (1906-1984) who wrote “Slough,” and say how his daughter apologized for it later:

Come friendly bombs and fall on Slough!
It isn't fit for humans now,
There isn't grass to graze a cow.
Swarm over, Death!

Come, bombs and blow to smithereens
Those air-conditioned, bright canteens,
Tinned fruit, tinned meat, tinned milk, tinned beans,
Tinned minds, tinned breath.

Mess up the mess they call a town –
A house for ninety-seven down
And once a week a half a crown
For twenty years.

And get that man with double chin
Who'll always cheat and always win,
Who washes his repulsive skin
In women's tears:

And smash his desk of polished oak
And smash his hands so used to stroke
And stop his boring dirty joke
And make him yell.

But spare the bald young clerks who add
The profits of the stinking cad;
It's not their fault that they are mad,
They've tasted Hell.

It's not their fault they do not know
The birdsong from the radio,
It's not their fault they often go
To Maidenhead

And talk of sport and makes of cars
In various bogus-Tudor bars
And daren't look up and see the stars
But belch instead.

In labour-saving homes, with care
Their wives frizz out peroxide hair
And dry it in synthetic air
And paint their nails.

Come, friendly bombs and fall on Slough
To get it ready for the plough.
The cabbages are coming now;
The earth exhales.

I must have been at least twice to a Slough Run, at Phyllis' invitation. The idea is simple but wonderful: a table is put out against a wall; people of all faiths and religious persuasions or lack of them come spontaneously with food and drink; people in need help themselves with the utmost dignity. Publicity is by word of mouth, and Phyllis would often tell me that somehow there was never too much and never too little of anything.

And then there is the Slough Run. Phyllis is one of those Christians who simply want to live the gospel as directly as possible. Touched by the homeless and the destitute she met on the London streets, she began the London Run in 1985. Here is her own description of the beginnings:

In the winter of 1984 my sister came over from Switzerland and to treat ourselves, I suggested that we go to London, one evening, to see a musical, which we did.

When we came out of the theatre, into the cold night air, we were very perturbed to see a man lying on the pavement in a cardboard box. It was obvious that he was going to sleep there that night.

I couldn't get him out of my mind and decided to go back up to London to take the man a hot drink and something to eat. My husband wasn't at all keen on the idea thinking it might not be safe but I persuaded him to let me go. Not long after, I went up to London again. Dusk was falling and the evening was cold. Arriving at Embankment, I saw an old woman rummaging in a bin. I had with me a bag of food and my first thought was 'God must have meant me to give her this food' so I approached her... and she ran away!

Undeterred, I went through to Villiers Street, near Charing Cross station, where I saw a man crossing the street whom I instinctively knew was homeless. I went up to him and offered him the bag of food and drink to which he replied 'Thanks be to St. Patrick' and took it with delight.

I told him that I would come again next Monday night and I would bring the same. When next at Church, I told my friend Maura Cooper about it, she said that she would join me and so the Run was born!

The Strand was our first distribution point. We then would drive around the streets of London to find other homeless or people in need. From this, other distribution points were established.⁴⁴

The Slough Run was founded in 1997 and eventually was established as a charity, "The London and Slough Run," for providing non-sectarian friendship, food, drink, blankets, and the like to many homeless people once a week. Phyllis continues:

Thirteen years later and illness meant that it was difficult for me to come up to London. I wanted however to find somewhere else where I might be able to continue on my work. With the help of Dr Douglas Denny, I identified that there was a need for such help in Slough. Thus, in 1997, the Slough Run was established whilst Basil Potter took over the running of the London Run.

Both Runs have flourished because of the fine trustees and helpers that have worked with us over the years. The late Basil Potter was an invaluable and active member and Trustee. The Trust was made financially healthy by the fine Chairmanship of Jim Jacobson. He was followed by the excellent John O'Neill and then, the wonderful Brid Vaughan.

The London and Slough Run is now ecumenical but it would not have continued without our Parish Priest, Father Tim Russ, leaving his Presbytery door open for the parishioners to leave food, drink, clothes and warm covers there.

From the beginning, we have also had a huge amount of support from Sir Eric Anderson, the Provost of Eton, his staff and pupils. Both Runs also owe a great deal to the continuous Trusteeship of Father Sean Healy the Parish Priest, at that time, of Our Lady of Peace.⁴⁵

I must have been at least twice to a Slough Run, at Phyllis' invitation. The idea is simple but wonderful: a table is put out against a wall; people of all faiths and religious persuasions or lack of them come spontaneously with food and drink; people in need help themselves with the utmost dignity. Publicity is by word of mouth, and Phyllis would often tell me that somehow there was never too much and never too little of anything.

Providence works in marvellous ways, and when love is pure, it is wonderful to see what happens. What I was most impressed with was the respect with which everything was done. “We used to have tables and us behind the tables distributing food,” Phyllis said, “but now we just put the tables against the wall, and people come and help themselves. It’s much more dignity that way, and people are free to take home what they need, if there’s some.” It is worth noting the testimony of Brother Dunstan Robidoux:

A highlight of these stays was Monday nights, when we would drive into Slough for the weekly run of taking food, drink, and clothing to homeless persons living in that town about twenty miles west of central London. The object was not so much to provide food and drink as simply to spend time with the persons we found there, talking with them and in a way seeking to establish friendships with them. On these occasions, Phyllis observed and enforced a number of rules: (1) Never have more than five pounds on your person, for in this way one best resists giving out more money than one could really afford. (2) Never wear gloves since, in shaking hands, no distinctions should be observed; one human being directly relates to another. (3) Relate to each other on a first name basis. (4) At Christmas, serve a Christmas meal which discriminates against no one: beer and wine are to be made available to everyone, whether sober or already drunk.⁴⁶

I remember Phyllis would never lock her house when she went out, and not her little car either. She said that only once some young boys had entered the house, but did not do much damage. Her street people loved her too much to rob her, and then she had not much to be robbed anyway. It was for her social work—rather than for her work in education, as Phyllis once said to me, somewhat regretfully—that she was constituted Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by the Queen in 1996, and was awarded the Benemerenti Medal by Pope John Paul II, while also being named Catholic woman of the year.⁴⁷ This honour led to her appointment to the Parliamentary Issues Committee of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, which addresses matters to be discussed at upcoming sessions of Parliament.⁴⁸

Brother Dunstan Robidoux, after hearing her lecture on “Reflections on the Future of Education in Light of Montessori and Lonergan” at the Boston College Lonergan Workshop in 1999, asked her to be one of the honorary trustees of the Lonergan Institute that had been established at St Anselm’s Abbey, Washington DC. Phyllis, in turn, invited Brother Dunstan and Dr David Fleischacker, director of the Institute, to visit her in England. Bro Dunstan writes: “We found, as we had expected, that here was a woman blessed with the friendships of all manner and kinds of persons, from members of the British royal family to persons who lived homelessly on the streets of London.”⁴⁹ Phyllis also invited Brother Dunstan to be a trustee of the Phyllis Wallbank Educational Trust.

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As mentioned already, in her late eighties Phyllis decided she wanted to make a World Tour. She wrote to several friends and acquaintances around the world, offering to lecture on Montessori. She would pay her own way, in exchange for hospitality and a visit to “one important place of cultural interest.” Any fees she might have been paid were to be given to poor children. She visited Israel, China, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.⁵⁰

Sometime before that I had invited Phyllis over to India. She was absolutely enthusiastic. Her earlier trip to India with her school children was something she had never forgotten, with the mandatory visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra. This time she lectured in Mumbai, Nashik and also visited Goa.

When I saw Phyllis again in 2012, she was 93 and in good spirits. With two damaged vertebrae, she still managed to get out of her house every day 5 days a week, taking the Mobility facility to Slough and getting into a three-wheeler that enabled her to move around in the Shopping Centre. With a tremor that did not allow her to cook or even eat by herself, she took advantage of another facility for seniors that allowed her to have someone drop in three times a day to help her eat and do other small things.⁵¹ There were also people who kept dropping in: the faithful Lorraine, young Oliver from down the road who came to take the retriever Boy for a walk, Philip who came to do the garden, and so on.

One of the things she asked me to do was to summarize Lonergan in 20 words “to be put on the net.” I tried: “Lonergan taught us to focus on method rather than directly on content. He insisted that method is teamwork, and that the work be divided not by areas or subjects but functionally, much the way things are done in physics or in the other empirical sciences.”

Phyllis had lost her little dog Sparky in a tragic incident on the Thames, but Oliver’s mother had found her an offer on the net, and so she had Boy, an important and precious member of the house on Boveney Road. In 2014 Phyllis Wallbank broke a hip and had to be placed in Burnham House Care Home, Slough. I visited her there in February 2016 and found her surprisingly alert. One of the things she asked me to do was to summarize Lonergan in 20 words “to be put on the net.” I tried: “Lonergan taught us to focus on method rather than directly on content. He insisted that method is teamwork, and that the work be divided not by areas or subjects but functionally, much the way things are done in physics or in the other empirical sciences.” Phyllis also told me that Timothy Russ had died, and when we checked the net—at her insistence—I found it was true. He was only 69 but had retired from the parish of Great Missenden. The article I found on the net described him as “the confessor of Tony and Cherie Blair” and a Lonergan scholar. It appears he was writing a novel when he died, based on his own family history and the house he inherited from his mother. Phyllis was lucid most of the time, though she did suffer from bouts of impatience because of not being able to get out of bed.

Eventually Phyllis was moved to Franklin House, a nursing home in West Drayton. It was here that she celebrated her 100th birthday on 1 September 2018. “Her memory is not great, but she is pretty healthy considering everything—mentally too,” Judith wrote in January 2017. Phyllis Wallbank died on Holy Thursday, 9 April 2020. None of her family could be with her because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but she passed away peacefully, with the assistance of a priest and the personnel of the nursing home. Always known as Sparrow to her closest friends, she asked for this prayer to be read at her funeral:

The Sparrow’s Prayer

FATHER, before this sparrow’s earthly flight
Ends in the darkness of a winter’s night;
Father, without whose word no sparrow falls,
Hear this, Thy weary sparrow, when she calls.
Mercy, not justice, is her contrite prayer,

Cancel her guilt, and drive away despair;
Speak but the word, and make her spirit whole,
Cleanse the dark places of her heart and soul,
Speak but the word and set her spirit free;
Mercy, not justice, still her constant plea.
So shall Thy sparrow, crumpled wings restored,
Soar like the lark, and glorify her Lord.

(Lord Hailsham)

My mind goes back to Phyllis’ morning walks, with the birds and rabbits coming out to greet her, and to her “resting in the Trinity.” And so to *The Sparrow’s Prayer* I want to add *The Windhover*:

I caught this morning morning’s minion, king-
dom of daylight’s dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate’s heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

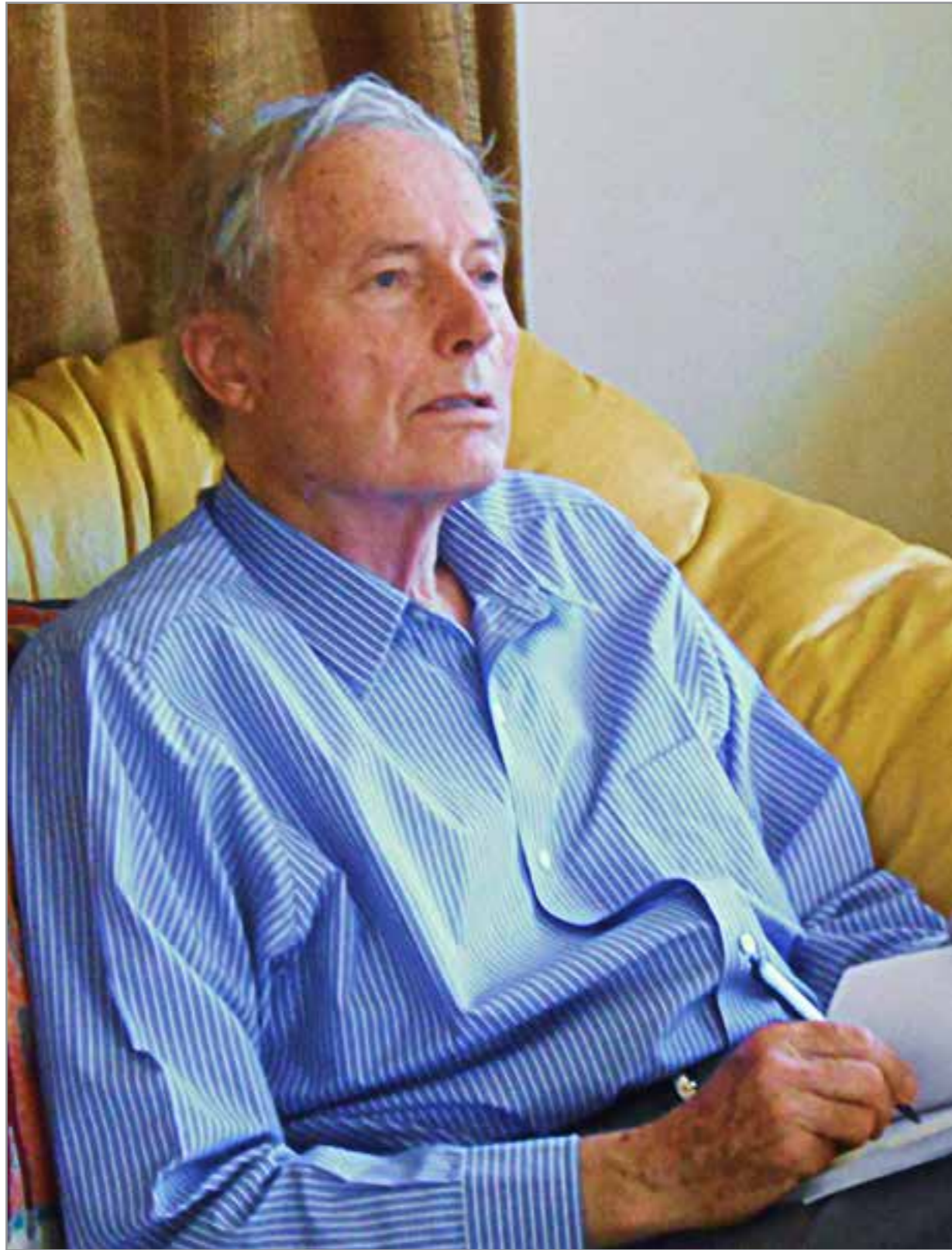
No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

(Gerard Manley Hopkins)

I have no idea whether Phyllis loved Gerard Manley Hopkins, but she surely sensed “the dearest freshness deep down things” and knew “the comfort of the Resurrection.”

1. David Levy tended to follow the neo-Thomism of Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson.
2. Dunstan Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE,” [St Anselm’s Abbey, Washington DC, Newsletter] Advent 2014, http://www.stanselms.org/publications/newsletter_advent_2014.pdf (18.12.2018) 23.
3. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank,” <http://www.pwetrust.org/biography.shtml> (08.11.2018).
4. Patty Hamilton Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 18/2 (2007) 163.
5. “Newell Wallbank,” <https://prabook.com/web/newell.wallbank/2098737> (09.11.2018).
6. Priests and Prelates: The Daily Telegraph Clerical Obituaries, ed. Trevor Beeson (London: Continuum, 2002) 142.
7. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 20.
8. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
9. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 23.
10. Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 163.
11. Timothy Russ, “The Boom and the Slump,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 14/1 (2003) 13-16; and “Rethinking Economics,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 14/2 (2003) 145-150.
12. Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
13. Phyllis Wallbank, “Reflections on the Future of Education in Light of Montessori and Lonergan,” *Lonergan Workshop 15*, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Boston College, 1999) 173.
14. Peter Henrici, *A Practical Guide to Study* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2004) 96.
15. See Aristotle’s *De anima* III, 7, 431b 2. Lonergan cites it on the title page of *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
16. See note 15 above.
17. Phyllis Wallbank, “Reflections on the Future of Education in Light of Montessori and Lonergan” 173.
18. See Bibliography below.
19. See, e.g., David Fleischacker, “Understanding the Four General Sensitive Phases of Human Development from Age 0–24: Maria Montessori, Phyllis Wallbank, and Bernard Lonergan,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 18/2 (2007): 205-222. See also “Natural Education Worldwide,” <http://naturaled.org/category/phyllis-wallbank/> (01.06.2019). Dr Fleischacker is currently Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, University of Mary, Bismarck, North Dakota – USA, and can be considered the foremost authority on the work of Phyllis Wallbank.
20. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 19.
21. Phyllis received a post-graduate diploma in “The Scientific Treatment of Delinquency” from the University of London. See Ivo Coelho, Review of Phyllis Wallbank and David Fleischacker, *Worldwide Natural Education: Three Important Discussion Lectures by Phyllis Wallbank MBE and Dr David Fleischacker* (set of 3 DVDs), *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 18/2 (2007) 231.
22. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.” See “Montessori Memoirs. An interview with Phyllis Wallbank, by her daughter Judith (November 2009),” <http://www.pwetrust.org/montessori.shtml> (08.11.2018). Price says that Phyllis met Montessori “in the early 1940s while she was working with delinquent children as a Children’s Officer in Buckinghamshire, England” and adds: “She and Montessori immediately understood each other, although their conversations had to be translated by Montessori’s son Mario.” (Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 162) In “Montessori and the New Century,” Phyllis says she got to know Montessori “during the last important and productive decade of her life.” Montessori, she says, was a strong willed woman who had fought all her life to follow her own star and was by no means a soft old lady. See *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 14/2 (2003) 135.
23. Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 159.
24. Cited in “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
25. Cited in “Phyllis Wallbank,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllis_Wallbank (18.12.2018).
26. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE,” 21.
27. There are two biographies, or else two versions of the biography, both unpublished: Phyllis Wallbank, *Newell Wallbank and St. Bartholomew the Great. Also the War, A Musical Analysis, Bart’s Maternity 1945, Dorney, Eton Memories and the Gatehouse School*; and Phyllis Wallbank, *Newell Wallbank: The Story of a Bygone Age*.
28. I thank Judith Wolfram for this indication and for filling me in on this delicate moment in Phyllis’ and Newell’s lives.
29. Sybil Misch (1931-1993). One of Hugo and Sybil’s sons, Stephen, is founder and CEO of Wolfram Research and designer of Mathematica and Wolfram Alpha. Hugo and Judith married in 2008. Hugo died in 2015.
30. Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (1919-2001), British analytic philosopher and student of Wittgenstein’s.
31. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
32. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
33. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
34. Gatehouse School at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatehouse_School (01.06.2019).
35. Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 161-162.
36. Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 161-162. The DVDs were released in 2006. See Ivo Coelho, Review of Phyllis Wallbank and David Fleischacker, *Worldwide Natural Education: Three Important Discussion Lectures by Phyllis Wallbank MBE and Dr David Fleischacker*. Disc 1: Ages 0-6. Disc 2; Ages 7-12; Disc 3: Ages 13-18, 2006, in *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 18/2 (2007): 231-233.
37. See Wallbank, “Montessori and the New Century” 137.
38. See Wallbank, “Montessori and the New Century” 136-137.
39. See, for example, Phyllis Wallbank, “The Philosophy of International Education,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 12/2 (2001): 193-209, and “Periods of Sensitivity within Human Lives,” 12/3 (2001): 337-384.
40. “Phyllis Wallbank,” <https://www.montessoriint.com/the-montessori-method/phyllis-wallbank/> (08.11.2018). See also Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 162.
41. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 21. See <http://www.pwetrust.org/lecturehistory.shtml> (01.06.2019) for a more complete list of lecture topics and places.
42. Price, “Phyllis Wallbank carries Montessori’s Torch” 159. See also <http://www.pwetrust.org/lecturehistory.shtml>: “She was always a wonderful and inspirational lecturer. Her daughter, Judith, once took a Montessori course given by Angela Martin (formerly Mother Angela of the Sacred Heart Convent in London) in Vancouver and complimented her on her lecture on ‘The Absorbent Mind’; Angela replied, ‘Ah, but you should have heard your mother lecture on the same topic; her lecture was just wonderful and in a different league from mine.’”
43. Wife of Edward Carpenter, author of *Cantuar: The Archbishops in their Office* (Cassel, 1971; Oxford: Mowbray, 1988). See “Edward Carpenter” at <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/edward-carpenter> (01.06.2019).
44. Phyllis Wallbank, “The history of the London and Slough Run’s beginning,” <https://thelondonandsloughrun.com/about/history/> (11.11.2018). See also: https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/gallery/slough/137558/london-and-slough-run-s-founder-reflects-on-charity-s-history-ahead-of-slough-sleepout-for-the-homeless.html?refresh_ce (11.11.2018).
45. Wallbank, “The history of the London and Slough Run’s beginning.”
46. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 23.
47. “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
48. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 21.
49. Robidoux, “Working with Phyllis Wallbank, MBE” 22.
50. See “Biography of Phyllis Wallbank.”
51. See Steve Doughty and Larisa Brown, “She devoted her life to others. Now, aged 93, this eminent ex teacher faces ruin over £5,000 care bill,” *Daily Mail* (18 February 2012). After reading this piece, an “angel” stepped forward to help. See also “The indomitable Phyllis Wallbank,” at <http://ivocoelho.blogspot.com/2012/06/indomitable-phyllis-wallbank.html>.

Prof. Howard Richards is a member of the TRANSCEND Network for Peace, Development and Environment. He is Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College and he also currently teaches in the University of Cape Town's EMBA programme. He was educated at Redlands High School in California, Yale, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, University of Toronto, Harvard and Oxford. His books include: *The Evaluation of Cultural Action*, a study of an application of Paulo Freire's pedagogical philosophy in rural Chile (London Macmillan 1985); *Letters from Quebec*; *Understanding the Global Economy*; *The Dilemmas of Social Democracies*; *Gandhi and the Future of Economics*; *Rethinking Thinking*; *Unbounded Organizing in Community*; and *The Nurturing of Time Future*. His new book, written with the assistance of Gavin Andersson, *Economic Theory and Community Development: Why Putting Community First Is Essential for our Survival*, is available from the publisher, Dignity Press, and from Amazon and other major booksellers, as a print book and as an eBook. Email: howardrichards8@gmail.com and howardri@earlham.edu



DR HOWARD RICHARDS

THE CRISIS OF CIVILIZATION

Recently the Polish sociologist Krzysztof Wielicki has made a case for regarding the democracies of the world as in a civilizational crisis. Somewhat less recently, Susan Strange of the London School of Economics proposed the idea that in our times a global business civilization shapes both democracies and non-democracies. Below I will suggest (1) that business civilization is in crisis too, and (2) a way forward.

The word "crisis" draws its meaning from medicine. When a patient is in crisis, life and death hang in the balance. When the crisis is over, although the patient may not have recovered yet, the prognosis is that she will recover.

For Wielicki, it is democracy itself whose life-or-death hangs in the balance. Democracy is in crisis because its core values have been betrayed. When, in the USA, Abraham Lincoln spoke of government of the people, by the people, and for the people, or when Franklin Roosevelt spoke of four freedoms, they expressed a democratic ethos where power and prosperity were supposed to be shared. For Wielicki the emblematic case of what he calls "mature capitalism" was Sweden in the first part of the second half of the twentieth century. Today, in Poland, in the USA, in Sweden and in most of the nominally democratic world, mature capitalism—others call it social democracy—is on the ropes. Wielicki writes of poles who are second or even third generation unemployed while others amass wealth not justified by any major contribution to society. The social contract has been breached. The bonds that made democracy sustainable are strained and stressed. As in the case of a patient lying in agony on what may and may not be her death bed, whether democracy will live or die is in doubt.

Dr. Howard Richards

We can justify saying there is now a global business civilization, despite dual civilianship, by attributing a shared common sense, a shared worldview and other attributes that constitute a civilization, to today's global business elite. We can add many of their collaborators in the public sector. We can regard as integral parts of the global business civilization organizations like the OECD, the World Trade Organization and the World Economic Forum.

The word "civilization" since it was coined in the 18th century, has often been a synonym for "culture," as in E.B. Tylor's classic definition of "culture or civilization." "Civilization" tends to be the word chosen when institutions are more complex and on a larger scale. Arnold Toynbee was not alone in resisting the tendency to write history as histories of nation states, and in finding it more meaningful to focus on civilizations built around the common values and practices of populations inhabiting several nation-states. Samuel Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, was not alone in treating "modern western civilization" as common to many nations and as clashing with an Islamic civilization also common to many nations.

Most civilizations have been religious. Max Weber's studies of four of them, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Confucianism, reveal, perhaps somewhat unwittingly, their author's opinion that secular modern western civilization is a superior "more civilized" civilization. I agree with Susan Strange that key components of modern western civilization have morphed into a global business civilization. Many of its participants hold "dual civilizationalship." As businesspeople they are more individualistic. Simultaneously, as Japanese or Arabs or Chinese they are less individualistic.

We can justify saying there is now a global business civilization, despite dual civilianship, by attributing a shared common sense, a shared worldview and other attributes that constitute a civilization, to today's global business elite. We can add many of their collaborators in the public sector. We can regard as integral parts of the global business civilization organizations like the OECD, the World Trade Organization and the World Economic Forum.

Nevertheless, we also need to consider the broader and a few centuries older entity that is called modern western civilization. One of its important characteristics is that its basic norms are rigid. They are so rigid that the emblematic philosopher of western modernity, Immanuel Kant, declared his own neo-Roman jurisprudence and ethics, along with Newtonian mechanics, to be *a priori* truths valid everywhere and always. Thus, a certain version of law makes individualism formal and official. It organizes and authorizes the accumulation of capital that separates the wealthy people from the common people and both from the indigent.

Modern western civilization was and is the general fertile soil where more specific and often more nuanced individualisms, like the viewpoints typical of the Mont Pelerin Society, and of Davos, LSE and Harvard Business School have found inspiration and support. A general occidental modernity underpins the specifics of business civilization.

So, what is mostly established today, and what is most in crisis requiring revisions, has several layers and versions. It is in mega-crisis because over and above its own survival as a civilization, the survival of human beings as a species and of the biosphere is at stake. On its watch the human species has so far not shown itself to be capable of responding effectively to at least three existential crises:

1. The ecological crisis.
2. The crisis of the absence of sufficient numbers of good jobs, providing decent pay, meaningful work, and dignity – an absence with many well-known intolerable consequences.
3. Militarism, understood as a force capable of destroying any and all civilizations. Strategic nuclear weapons are its most extreme expression so far.

The way forward that I suggest is called unbounded organization. (UO) (www.unboundedacademy.org).

I write this while accepting that the UO label is not the only possible label for the realities it identifies. Readers may find that UO describes what they are already doing under a different name.

Unbounded thinking is pathbreaking and innovative. At the same time, it is reconciliatory and peacebuilding. It adapts to new realities. It is about game-changing challenges. It is about game-changing opportunities.

The American Thomas Paine, in his pamphlets *Common Sense and The Crisis*, succinctly expressed the aims of the American revolutionary war and the nation building that followed the war when he wrote, "Our plan is commerce." The USA and other modern republics were not designed to be welfare states. As Joseph Schumpeter wrote when he resigned as finance minister of Austria in 1918, a government with carefully limited powers, relying on taxes for its income, cannot be a sustainable welfare state.

A game-changing challenge is the impossibility, the literal impossibility, of continuing on the path of economic growth. Continuing to rely on economic growth to provide new employment and new financial resources has become a march toward collective suicide. And yet, it is as if these facts were too big to fit in the human brain. Every day in the press and the media, news about growth is broadcast as if nothing had changed, as if the old world still existed, as if more growth were good news and less growth were bad news. The major global economic think tanks –like the World Bank and the OECD– have all endorsed green growth. But after that they seem to have gone numb, as if they could not process the fact that green growth, to the extent that it might exist, so far has had no measurable impact on measures of environmental damage.

A game-changing opportunity: the world is now awash with enormous quantities of accumulated capital. Most of it cannot find any profitable use in the world economy. We live in what the same Susan Strange who named business civilization named the casino economy. Day after day, of the total amounts of money that crosses borders flowing from one country to another, more than 97% is devoted to speculation. Less than 3% plays a role in the real economy that hires people and produces goods. Much of the speculation is harmful, worse than useless. Massive buying up of real estate, betting that its market value will increase, has driven the prices of homes and the rents of apartments higher and higher, forcing some people into homelessness, and others into debt.

Ever since Adam Smith, economists have been predicting that the days of surplus accumulated capital would come. Now those days have arrived. The existing huge capital surpluses could be used to pay the unemployed and the underemployed to work on saving endangered ecosystems. This is a not-to-be-missed game-changing opportunity.

A bit of history will help us to see how UO contradicts in principle, and corrects in principle, today's status quo that was constructed before any of us were born. Thomas Piketty explains in detail in *Capital and Ideology*, that implementing *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was far from the minds of the men who reorganized France after the revolution of 1789.

The American Thomas Paine, in his pamphlets *Common Sense and The Crisis*, succinctly expressed the aims of the American revolutionary war and the nation building that followed the war when he wrote, "Our plan is commerce." The USA and other modern republics were not designed to be welfare states. As Joseph Schumpeter wrote when he resigned as finance minister of Austria in 1918, a government with carefully limited powers, relying on taxes for its income, cannot be a sustainable welfare state.

UO forgives the past and builds a sustainable future. It proposes collaboration across all sectors for the general good. It practices a care ethic. It calls for mobilizing resources to meet needs in harmony with nature. If it can be called an "error" to prefer one's own economic interests and those of one's class to the good of all and to the long run requirements of physical reality, UO corrects historical "errors" while it rises to a higher ethical level where souls are empowered to forgive the unforgivable.

UO can be described as a direct approach to provisioning and to sustainability. What makes it direct is that it moves directly from identifying needs, to mobilizing resources to meet needs. It minimizes giveaways, for the simple reason that human needs include needs for dignity, respect, self-respect, freedom, and self-realization. But it does bypass the bottlenecks imposed by the common sense of business civilization. The rule that needs will be met only if somebody can find a way to turn needs into profit opportunities has never been strictly enforced. Now that robots are better workers than humans and AI is smarter than humans, it is a good time to repeal it. People are not human resources. The purpose of an economy is to enable people to live better. What else could it be?

A direct approach starts with a point frequently made by Gracia Navarro, a psychologist at the University of Concepcion specializing in the study of moral development and social responsibility. Her flagship point is, "Solidarity is a choice." Each of us can choose to live guided by a care ethic of solidarity. After we make that choice, if we do, we will find it natural to take a direct approach. Do what you can to solve the problem; plant trees, include the excluded, be peace, think, think and then think again.

The history of UO dates to Paulo Freire's methodology for consciousness-raising and literacy training. His friend, colleague and sometime cell mate in prison, Clodomir Santos de Moraes, believed that the peasants of northeast Brazil needed something more than literacy and consciousness: they needed to learn to organize.

Hyman Minsky illuminated negative aspects of today's economic reality, when he wrote, "What cannot be financed, cannot happen." But, of course, every day many things that are not financed do happen. For example, nursing mothers give milk to babies. Minsky's point is that within the bounds of economic rationality anything not financed cannot happen. And what follows from his point is that economic rationality is often dysfunctional. It does not follow, however, that economic rationality is always dysfunctional or that entrepreneurs and managers big and small should change careers and take up dentistry or bartending. Concerning how to separate the wheat from the chaff, on these issues I would recommend the voluminous writings of Peter Drucker (1909-2005).

The history of UO dates to Paulo Freire's methodology for consciousness-raising and literacy training. His friend, colleague and sometime cell mate in prison, Clodomir Santos de Moraes, believed that the peasants of northeast Brazil needed something more than literacy and consciousness: they needed to learn to organize.

De Moraes developed a methodology that facilitated learning organizing by doing organizing. A large group (maybe 300 people) was offered pay for completing a task. It was given all necessary tools and technical advice. But they had to organize themselves. They were given complete freedom to organize in whatever way they thought might work. It usually took several iterations before they succeeded in organizing themselves in a way that accomplished successfully the task at hand.

Moraisian methodologies are now used on three continents. Gavin Andersson, a native of Botswana, first learned how to use them there and in Zimbabwe. His tutors were two Chilean disciples of De Moraes, Isabel and Ivan Labra. Later, in his 2004 doctoral dissertation for the Open University of the UK he elaborated the ethical approach to organization management called UO.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Suzanne Asha Stone, Executive Director. [The International Wildlife Coexistence Network](#) is an inclusive organization of experts in methods and strategies to transform conflicts between people and wildlife into long-term solutions. We mobilize interdisciplinary teams through crowdsourcing to create innovative solutions to chronic or “wicked” problems between people and wildlife. And we work with the community to ensure that these solutions create lasting benefits to both the natural world and the people who live with wildlife. We share our resources and provide widespread support for all who seek to peacefully resolve conflicts with wildlife. Our interdisciplinary teams include scientists, agricultural managers, researchers, ethicists, economists, government specialists, educators, indigenous leaders, technical engineers and more who are helping to create new and sustainable ways to live with wildlife. When possible, we connect our experts with communities that need help transforming wildlife conflicts into non-violent sustainable solutions.

SUZANNE ASHA STONE

OUR SHARED EARTH

Not only human parents love their children. Many animals also share deep bonds with their young. Among the most extraordinary is the protective bond of wolf moms and dads to their pups. Wolf parents will risk their own lives to protect their young from harm. Their young are only born in the springtime, just as bison and elk are birthing their calves and deer their fawns. It is the way of Nature that the youngsters are born when they have time to mature over the summer, so they are large and strong enough to survive the following winter. It is also the way of Nature that the wild herds produce more young than the land can sustain making it easier for wolves to care for their young when food is abundant. As the strongest and fittest survive, they pass on their genes and strengthen the overall long-term health of the herds. And it is the wolf’s role to cull the weak, diseased, injured, and some of the young from the herds. This complex ancient ritual of Spring is deeply woven into the instincts of the wild ones.

Today, our planet is undergoing a dramatic loss of wild flora and fauna. [We are losing species at a faster rate than any other time since humans have walked the earth.](#) And as we study the impacts of losing biodiversity, we are beginning to understand the critical value of wolves, bears, pumas, and other predators. As many indigenous people have known all along, the wolves’ instinctual culling of their prey helps keep both their prey and the habitat around them healthy. Specifically, as wolves test their herds looking for the most vulnerable, they are also moving elk, deer, and bison across their habitat, which prevents them from overgrazing and destroying essential grasses, bushes, and trees. In turn, the plants provide essential habitat for beavers, songbirds, native fish and even help protect the rivers from erosion. It is a check and balance system that has helped sustain these ecosystems over millennia.



Suzanne Asha Stone

Let us take an introspective journey. While the wolf pup, kittens, horse, and other animals are victims of appalling individual abuse that prompts us to donate to NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) to restore animal protection and to speak on their behalf, it is time for us to admit that this action is not enough. Proactive steps must be taken by all of us. Collectively, through complacency and passive behaviors, we as humans are abusing our earth in ways that has the same monstrous result – harm, pain, suffering, and death – for those vulnerable beings that share our planet.



Photo courtesy Suzanne Asha Stone.

Every species has a unique role in Nature to fill that we may not yet even begin to understand. For example, there is still a deep misunderstanding of wolves. To some, they only see a dead elk or deer as fewer to hunt and eat themselves; a lost sheep or cow as something stolen from them personally. They believe that Nature must be managed by humans, or she will “run wild,” which to them is unfathomable. In their world, the wolf is seen as a threat that must be controlled or destroyed. To do otherwise, would be to embrace a position lower on the hierarchical ladder challenging their core beliefs of the authority of Man over Nature. Simply put, wolves are a threat to their right to control Nature. And this belief that controlling Nature gives them control of the world around them helps them maintain a façade that (hu)mans are the center of the universe. It allows them to justify killing wolf pups in dens before their eyes have even opened. To those who love wolves, these trappers and hunters are the actions of monsters. Akin to the monster who throws a box of kittens in a dumpster or starves their horse behind a barbed wire fence while the barn is full of hay.

Confronting the Monster. Not that one. The One in the Mirror

Let us take an introspective journey. While the wolf pup, kittens, horse, and other animals are victims of appalling individual abuse that prompts us to donate to NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) to restore animal protection and to speak on their behalf, it is time for us to admit that this action is not enough. Proactive steps must be taken by all of us. Collectively, through complacency and passive behaviors, we as humans are abusing our earth in ways that has the same monstrous result – harm, pain, suffering, and death – for those vulnerable beings that share our planet.

And we are all complicit. In truth, we too are monsters.

Today, more than one million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction—the highest number ever in human history. In just the last few hundred years, as our population has grown to 8 billion people, we have collectively remade the planet in our own image. [96% of the mammalian biomass on earth is made up of humans and our domestic livestock \(food\). Only 4% of this biomass remaining is comprised of wild mammals](#), and we are losing more every day to habitat destruction and climate alteration, overhunting and poaching, and toxins in the soil, water, and air.

While less than 5% of the world's population, indigenous people protect 80% of global biodiversity and many are risking and some losing their own lives to stand against destruction of rainforests, butterfly habitat, protection of rivers, and more.

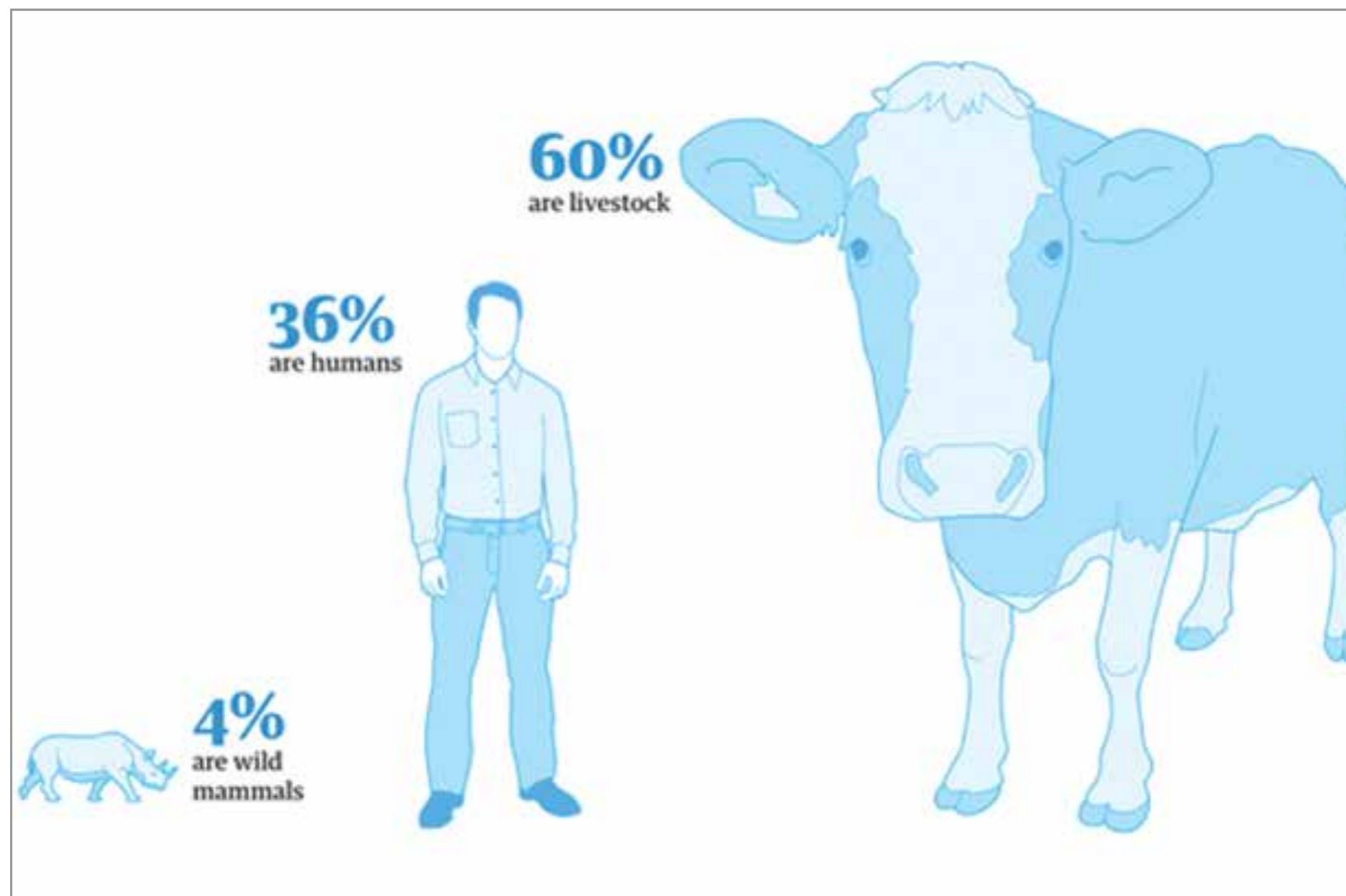


Photo courtesy Guardian Graphics.

Worldwide, insect populations are rapidly declining by 1 – 2% per year due to harmful agricultural practices, climate change, light pollution, deforestation, use of pesticides, pollution, and invasive species. These alarming decreases need urgent solutions as insects are essential to life on earth including human and wildlife food supplies.

In North America alone, **we have lost 3 billion birds** from our wildlife populations since the 1970s. Many for the same reasons that insects are in such sharp decline. **Globally, we have lost two thirds of our wildlife in the last 50 years.** And while humans represent only .01 of all species on earth, **we are responsible for the loss of more than 83% of all wild mammals on earth.**

Gaining the World's Attention

A growing number of scientists, community leaders, and activists now understand that the biodiversity and climate crisis is one major event, threatening all life on earth, and they are desperately trying to gain our attention. It is like all being on a train together and with a few alert passengers who can see there is a bridge out ahead but cannot find a way to break through the cell phones, headphones, political tug of wars, privileged apathy, poverty, viral social media, and other hurdles to get the world's attention before it's too late and we all fall into that abyss together. And they are not the first to see this coming. Indigenous people have been warning us all along about the consequences of choosing not to live in right relations with the Earth. While less than 5% of the world's population, indigenous people protect **80% of global biodiversity** and many are risking and some losing their own lives to stand against destruction of rainforests, butterfly habitat, protection of rivers, and more.

Why are we not listening?

Collectively, we can change tracks. And it is our only logical choice: a healthy planet provides sustainable food, shelter, clothing, and temperatures that support all life. But our old broken systems will not solve these problems. They are the reason that the bridge failed in the first place.

The 16 students who are fighting the State of Montana in court over climate impacts are symbolic of the youth around the world raising awareness and demanding change. They are not telling us how to fix the problems, that is our responsibility, but they are rightfully demanding that those of us from prior generations help them before they inherit a mess so broken that it cannot be fixed. They can see that the bridge is out and their shared fate of enduring avoidable suffering, epic droughts and flooding, and loss of food and shelter for billions is on their direct path. As adults, we need to support and empower them and elevate their voices.



The loss of biodiversity is unprecedented, accelerating, and yet, we still have a choice Photo courtesy Suzanne Asha Stone.

We need new sustainable systems not only for humanity's way of life but also for protecting our planet's precious biodiversity. These systems must be nature-based solutions that allow humanity to work with Nature instead of working against her. And, as communities embrace the concepts of re-wilding and restoring native ecosystems, learning how to coexist with nature will be the key to avoiding the mistakes of our past and healing our future. In working with Nature instead of against her, we benefit in so many ways from clean water and safe food supplies to resilient ecosystems that support both local wildlife and local communities. It is a win for biodiversity and for generations to come.

Youth Action

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What can we all do? Some suggestions from people around the world:

Grow a pollinator plant or a whole garden – Avoid driving in wildlife habitat at night when possible – Slow down when driving in wildlife habitat – Ride a bike for local travel – Adopt or have fewer or no kids – Reduce or avoid using chemicals like pesticides and toxic fertilizers – Buy organic produce or grow your own – Help build or care for a community garden – Purchase clothing and items made of natural and sustainable materials and avoid microplastics – Turn off or reduce use of outdoor lights at night – Eat less or no red meat, especially sourced from suppliers who buy their meat from producers who kill wolves, bears, coyotes on public lands instead of protecting livestock using nonlethal coexistence methods.

Like the wolf that is so deeply committed to protecting its young, we are the guardians of all youth in our respective communities. The choices we make today will not impact us as deeply as they affect the youth who follow us. We owe it to them to help them build a better world than the one we have made. This is our opportunity to restore our right relations with the Earth and create a richly and sustainably abundant new world. Why would we accept anything less?



Photo courtesy Suzanne Asha Stone.

– Replace your grass lawn with micro clover or other pollinator friendly ground cover
– Reduce, reuse, recycle, and restore – Avoid supporting harmful industries in your investments – Spend time in Nature, even if it's just 10 minutes a day looking at the sky – and more. Add your suggestions to the comments.

You can also [Take the Citizen of the Earth Pledge](#) or write your own!

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“The eyes of the future are looking back at us, and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with hands clasped that we might act with restraint, that we might leave room for the life that is destined to come. To protect what is wild is to protect what is gentle. Perhaps the wilderness we fear is the pause between our own heartbeats, the silent space that says we live only by grace. Wilderness lives by this same grace. Wild mercy is in our hands.”

– Terry Tempest Williams

Katie Costello was born and raised in Hubbard, Ohio, USA. Her greatest passion in life has always been to help animals. She is lucky enough to be a licensed veterinary technician and owner of *The Canine Campus Training and Wellness Center* and *The Canine Campus Bed and Biscuit Inn*, where she helps animals through behavior work, does training of all types including aggression, fear, and service dog work. A vegetarian since she was 6 years old and a vegan for the last 15 years, she currently has 7 dogs, 5 cats, 7 chickens, 3 roosters, 1 very special turkey and 2 farm pigs that are amongst her dearest friends. She is founder of 2 non-profit organizations, K-9's for Compassion (Co-founded with her father), a therapy animal group and *The Together 3 Journey*, a service dog organization. She has been on the board of many animal organizations throughout her life, including *Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary* and C.H.A.I.N. (Community Helping Animals In Need) and SVBT (Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians) She enjoys freelance writing about (mostly) animals for different magazines, with her favorite being *Live Encounters!*
<https://thecaninecampustraining.com/>

KATIE COSTELLO

BEAUTIES OF BOSNIA

Photo Feature

As a girl growing up in the 80's the mere name of Bosnia caused me to shudder. Every night our American TVs were filled with the war going on in Bosnia, the burning of Sarajevo, the endless land mines left behind making it nearly impossible to navigate. The absolutely horrific human crimes that went on during that war. When I learned that there were wild horses in Bosnia, though, I knew I had to go. In April we went to Livno, Bosnia in Herzegovina and met with the wonderful owners of Livno Wild Horses Adventure Tours. To say this was one of the best days of my life would be an understatement. Our guides took us to the top of the Cincar mountains, the plateau Kruzi are home to more than 800 horses. Truly, heaven on earth.

The history isn't incredibly old. Within my lifetime, as people were fleeing from their homes due to the war, they took their horses to the top of the mountain in hopes that they would survive the conflict. And survive they have! These beautifully majestic animals have a way of seeping into your soul. Because they were working horses, they have draft stock in them. I love wild (feral) horses more than anything-and these horses were different than many of the others I have seen. The stark contrast of those mountains made it a beautiful scenery, where their food was plentiful with the many open plateaus. They are very substantial horses. They were displaying and speaking with their body language to one another, and many different behaviors were offered.

At the end of this amazing day, our friends had prepared us an authentic vegan meal...as if seeing those horses weren't enough! I can be so fussy with food, and had already started to think up the excuses that I would use as to why I couldn't eat the food...however, everything was absolutely delicious. It was amazing. I recommend this outfit if you are EVER near Bosnia. They were top notch! After our meal it was time to part ways. My only wish was that we had more than 1 day with them.



Katie Costello



01

02















Tina Claffey is an award-winning Irish nature photographer and author of 'Tapestry of Light-Ireland's bogs & wetlands as never seen before' in 2017, and 'Portal-Otherworldly Wonders of Ireland's Bogs, Wetlands and Eskers' in 2022. Her observations and unique perspective through her macro lens of the flora and fauna of the raised bogs and wet woodlands of the Irish midlands are celebrated in her work. She has exhibited in group shows in the US, Botswana, Zambia and has had solo exhibitions throughout Ireland. Her work is part of many art collections, permanent exhibitions, including the permanent collection at Áras an Uachtaráin, home of the Irish President. She has presented her work on many worldwide online platforms including the Wildlife Habitat Council Online Conference in the US and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) to promote the importance of the Irish bog wilderness. Find out more about Tina's work and order her new book 'Portal' here: <https://www.tinaclaffey.com/>

TINA CLAFFEY

WINGED WONDERS OF IRELAND'S BOGS & WETLANDS *Photo Feature*

I love to get 'lost' in the bogs, eskers and wetlands of Ireland with my macro lens throughout the seasons. The macro lens allows me to capture what cannot be seen by the naked eye, and capture scenes that defy our sense of reality, glimpses of other miniature worlds that co-exist with us.

I am fascinated by the otherworldly winged creatures that I encounter on my explorations. Long before dinosaurs walked the earth, there were dragonflies in the sky. They were some of the first winged insects to evolve, around 300 million years ago. Back then oxygen levels were much higher, allowing giant dragonflies to evolve, with wingspans like eagles. They are fearsome predators of flying insects like midges, mosquitos and other small bugs. However, most of their lives are lived underwater as nymphs!

All dragonfly and damselfly nymphs have six legs and wing-sheaths and live underwater. They also have a hinged jaw that can shoot out in an instant to catch prey. Many are green or brown, so they are camouflaged from predators. Once nymphs are fully grown, they crawl out of the water and shed one final time, emerging from their 'exuvia' and take to the skies.

Our beautiful butterfly species are also spectacular, their wonderful patterned wings with tiny colourful scales like nature's embroidery. And of course, our wonderful mysterious moths, so many variations from micro to large winged, some species flying by day, and many by night. Their transformations from wondrous caterpillar to moths and butterflies always a joy to observe. Both butterflies and moths are valuable pollinators, supporting the health of this precious ecosystem.

Tina Claffey



Burnet Companion Moth



Green Lacewing



Common Hawker Dragonfly Exuvia + Adult.



Marsch Fritillary



Common Blue Butterfly



Mating Blue Tailed Damselflies



Micro Moth *Crambus Lithoniellus*



Puss Moth Caterpillar



Six Spot Burnet Moth Caterpillar

Jill Gocher, a Bali based international photographer, has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Kris and many more. Her books – Asia's legendary Hotels, Periplus, Bali- Island of Light – Marshall Cavendish, Indonesia – Islands of the Imagination. Periplus, Australia – the land down under – Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia – the last paradise – Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali. Photojournalist + Media Consultant, AmazonPage: www.amazon.com/author/jillgocher instagram [jillgocher](https://www.instagram.com/jillgocher)



JILL GOCHER

MOROCCO MOSAIC

Photo Feature

Morocco is such a vast and diverse country it's difficult to encapsulate in just a few photos. From the chilly ruggedness of the High Atlas to the vast expanses of the Sahara, cosmopolitan Tangier and bustling Marrakech, to the long littoral facing the Atlantic, it's physically stunning but through the whole country there exists a thread of essential Moroccan flavour.

What I attempt to do here is to impart the feeling of this strange and somewhat mysterious country. It is a place where things are hidden and only slowly revealed. The women hide behind veils. The exteriors of the dwellings are plain, even drab, yet the interiors can contain great riches and richness. Narrow alleyways that twist and turn through the various medina or marketplace confuse reveal surprises at every turn – confusing to the unaccustomed visitor.

The light and shade, the history and architecture, and most of all, the warmth of the people reveal themselves slowly.

Ancient trade routes passed through the sub-Saharan, where long trains of laden camels would bring valuable treasures to distant markets. While these trade routes are no longer, they leave a legacy of enigmatic buildings and scattered oases. Caravanserais would accommodate these camel trains overnight, while their leaders would catch up on local gossip, chatting over endless cups of the ubiquitous mint tea. Today we are left with the memories, while bustling Marrakech entertains a new kind of visitor.

Jill Gocher



01. Old fortresses and caravanserai stand proudly on the remnants of what was once part of a major trade route through Southern Morocco. In the distance loom the peaks of the Anti Atlas mountain range.



02. Intricate mosaic work is a Moroccan trademark. It lends a visual richness to every surface and while the exteriors are often plain, the interiors are a delight.



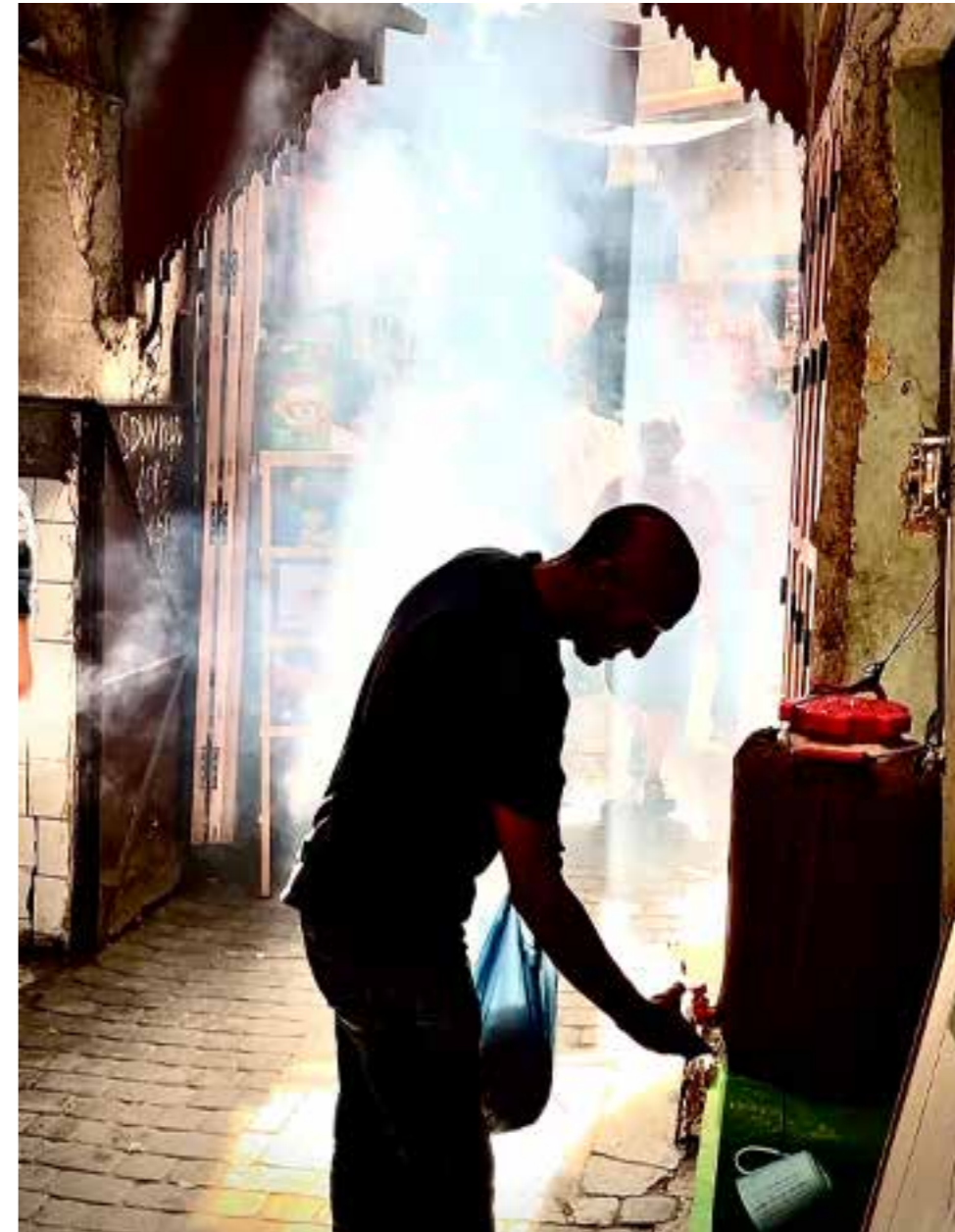
03. A tiled table, a glass of Moroccan coffee sitting in the souk – what a delightful way to while away the hours.



04. The cigarette seller. This lovely old man would sit at his post every day, waiting for business. But give him a hello and a little recognition and he would come alive, blossoming into a sweet shy being. How hard his life has been we can only imagine, but his resilience is an inspiration.



05. In this almost deserted souk of the south, it is mostly only ghosts that remain. only a few of these ancient towns have inhabitants. Here we visited a jewellery seller, hidden behind many twisting and covered alleyways, giving an impression of bygone days. Light and shade gave life with a series of cunningly placed lightwells incorporated into the architecture of the rather dark buildings.



06. Smoke from the grillade seller adds a romantic screen to this busy alleyway in the main Souk of Fez. Silhouetted against the high midday sun, this man avails himself to a glass of refreshing water from the cooler – a gesture of hospitality in many older cultures.



07. A Tangier bakery where the elegant stance of this traditionally garbed customer just personifies this elegant city.



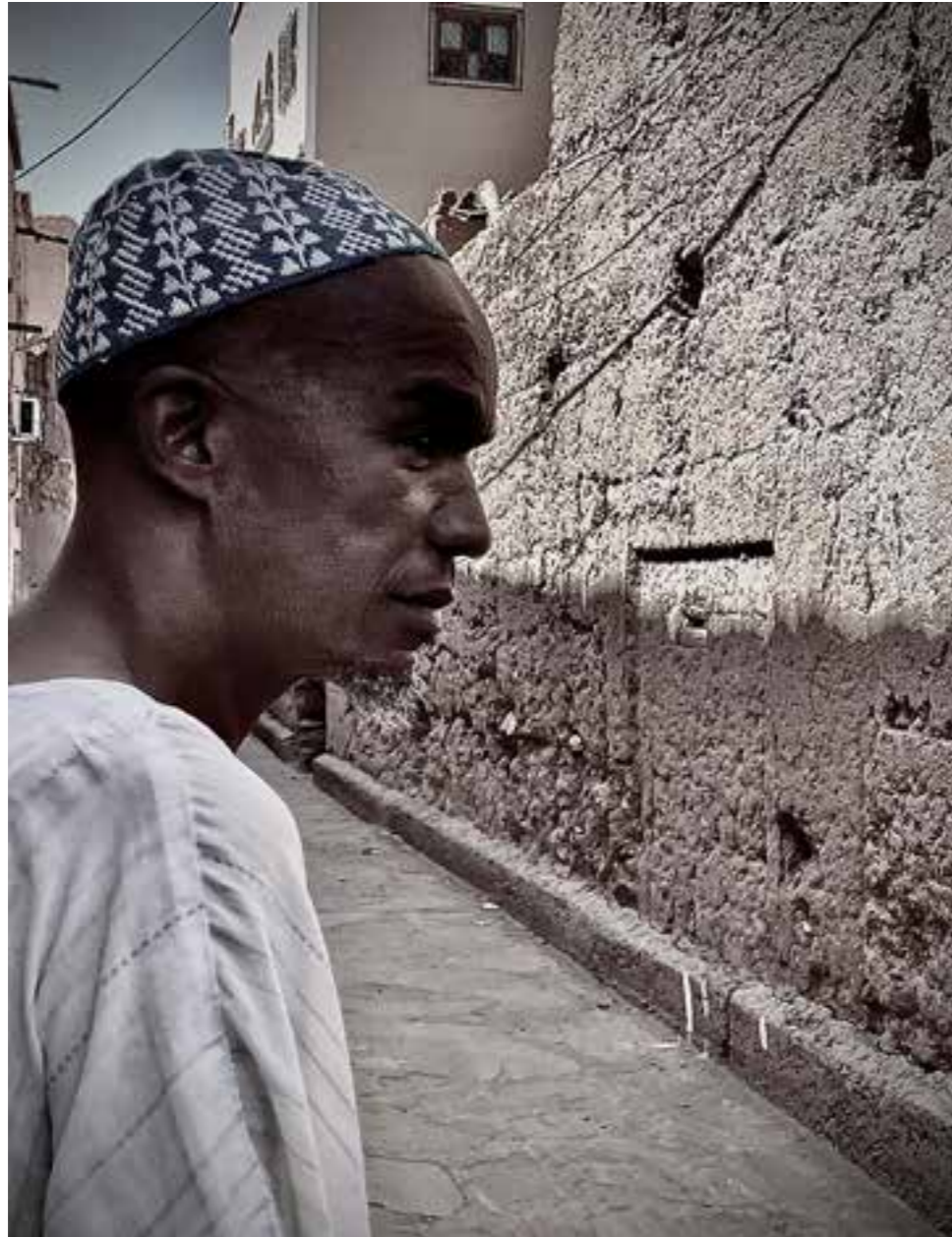
08. A little encouragement and this traditionally garbed woman managed to act up (discretely) for the camera. A little lift of her veil, a little smile and she is picture perfect.



09. The warren of tunnels and covered walkways in the Main souk of Fez remains a mystery for visitors who usually manage to get lost without a guide. Twisting and turning with no visible landmarks can prove to be very confusing to the visitor. But for those who have been accustomed to these walkways since birth, they know all the ins and outs like the back of their hand.



10. The shadow of a palm against a high mud wall, a woman garbed traditionally, marks a typical scene in the ancient seaport of Essouira. Once the centre of a brisk and brutal slave trade, it is now the centre for tourists from around the world where giant seagulls and a lively fish market, make it a paradise for lovers of seafood.



11. South Morocco provides many incredible glimpses into a past where camel trains laden with spices, silks, gold and ivory, passed through to their last stop between China and Europe. Traversing North Africa, through the sub-Saharan caravans stopped in these walled fortresses on the way to their final destination.



12. The cold stone walls of some of the old fortified walls of Essaouira give credence to its rather dramatic history. If one let one's imagination run riot, there is no telling how many ghosts would be revived. For some of us those ghosts seem to live in the very walls of the well fortified bastions, although now they are more likely to house tourist shops.

Tang A Pau is a professional photographer living in Saigon. He has 15 years of experience. He is a volunteer photographer with ICF Asia (International Crane Foundation) and of some National Parks in Vietnam. Tang's stories are usually about the natural beauty of places, and species at risk, and encourage environmental awareness. He hopes through his experience and photographs he can highlight all the great benefits that Nature has to offer in Vietnam. Publications: 2021 - Co-author, *Birds of Vietnam*. Co-author, *Atlas of Cattien National Park*.

Special thanks to Nguyen Thuy Hoa, Head of VOV International Cooperation Department, Hanoi, for making this happen.

TANG A PAU

WILD VIETNAM

Photo Feature

The following images are but a few of wild Vietnam. A country that is home to 962 species of birds.

This is truly the natural heritage of this country that was once decimated by war.

Nature has slowly returned in all her glory.

Come, experience wild Vietnam with Tang.



Tang A Pau



Purple Sunbird



Mrs. Gould's Sunbird



Nuthatch



Hooded Pitta



Emerald Dove



Orange Necked Partridge



Woolly-necked Stork



Paradise Flycatcher

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.
<https://www.gretasykes.com/>

An episode from my next novel 'Saints and sinners in a cyclical time'

DR GRETA SYKES

THE DAY I MET THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

I woke up. The linens around me were soaked. My eyes were glued together with something so I could hardly open them. When I raised my head I felt dizzy and sick. I crawled under the duvet and tried to breathe calmly. It was impossible. I could hear my heart racing as if in an attack of fever that seemed to explode my brain.

I got up to make a cup of tea. It was not long before I felt dizzy again. I grabbed the hot cup quickly and made my way back to bed. I began to realise I had a fever. It was not just my imagination. I had caught something like cold. I fell asleep soon after drinking tea and began dreaming. I was in a foreign land. A desert land rich in plants and fertile soil. A woman was walking towards me dressed in silks of the richest kind, ornamented with flowers and birds. Her dark hair was fastened high up on her head and she looked at me with huge dark brown eyes and an encouraging twinkle playing around her mouth. She spoke to me, asking me to join her on a visit to a king in a nearby country. When I agreed, she led me to a palace where guides and servants were waiting with a caravan of camels laden richly with goods. She ushered me to sit on one of the camels and she climbed up to sit in front of me. She evidently wanted entertainment. Why she had chosen me I cannot fathom.



Dr Greta Sykes

'I am Makeda, the queen of Sheba of the Sabaeen people. I hate travelling just with men which is how it usually ends up, because the women always find more work to do and they'd rather stay at home. I feel lonely with just men. So I want you to come with me. We are going to leave my country Saba today to visit king Solomon. He is not far away but it will take us a couple of days on our camels. He has written beautiful love songs. I want to bring him presents to thank him for his songs.'

Who was I to object to such an adventure, especially as I was wrapped up in the cocoon of my feverish sleep. The camels started rocking from side to side. The saddle fitted two and I held on to Sheba, as she told me people called her. Behind us trotted a long caravan of camels laden with wonderful presents. Sheba told me, ' We are bringing him more precious goods than anyone has ever brought him. We have gold, precious stones, spices. Myrrh is my favourite,' she added and then quietly whispering,

'It has powerful erotic forces. I shall introduce it to him! '

I could only marvel at my vivid dream. I saw myself on the camel's soft, furry back swaying, wrapped in a colourful cloth, Sheba in front of me telling me fantastic tales from her life.

'You probably don't know this, but we have an ancient culture in my country dating back thousands of years. We became rich trading in goods that are becoming more sought after as more people began to build their own kingdoms. Solomon is one of them. These were nomadic shepherds until recently. He is one of the best. He writes poetry which I find very seductive. I have decided to pay him a visit. I think I have fallen in love with him because of his poems. I must see him. I am telling you this in confidence. It is not for the public. Am officially on a trade mission. We are a trading people who have links across the Arab world. Solomon has become our new trading partner. I am going to overwhelm him with beautiful things.'

I did not notice when we arrived at king Solomon's palace or what happened to me, who brought me into the palace and put me to bed on soft pillows and wrapped me in woollen cloths. I cannot recollect how long I slept in my fever or who looked after me.

I know I had hot teas and flat bread and fruit stood next to me. I hardly touched it. Days must have gone by. The scent of Jasmine and the song of exotic birds stay in my mind. I was brought to wake up when Sheba wanted to go home and we both sat on the same camel as on the way out. She raved about Solomon and told me what a wonderful lover he had been.

He had covered her with kisses and with petals of roses. He had recited her favourite poem. Again and Again. It went like this.

I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride.
I have gathered my myrrh and my spices.
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey.
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Eat, Oh friends, and drink freely, Oh beloved.
I sleep but my heart is wide awake.
A sound, my beloved, is knocking.
Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove,
My flawless one. My head is drenched with dew,
My hair with the dampness of the night.

Sheba repeated the poem to the rhythm of the camel's footsteps. It was hypnotising. I felt the intensity of her physical lust for Solomon and fervent love for the poem permeate my body like a drug. We both felt an intense lust riding in the night on the camel. We rode for days and nights. We avoided the hottest part of the day, because I could not cope with it. I was still weak and needed constant liquid and small bites to eat to keep alive. I was even tied to Sheba's back to stop me falling off. She kept up a constant flow of stories about her intimate life with Solomon.

'We had a beautiful meal that night after I asked him a number of riddles which he answered correctly. He swore that he would not do me any harm, and I swore in return that I would not steal from him. The meals had been spicy, and I woke up thirsty at night and went to drink some water. When Solomon appeared, he reminded me of my oath. I said: "Ignore your oath, just let me drink water."

That same night, Solomon had a dream about the sun rising over Israel, but being mistreated and despised by the Jews, the sun moved to shine over Ethiopia and Rome. Solomon gave me a ring as a token of faith. We shared some riddles: 'Without movement while living, it moves when its head is cut off', and "Produced from the ground, man produces it, while its food is the fruit of the ground". The answer to the former is, "a tree, which, when its top is removed, can be made into a moving ship"; the answer to the latter is, "a wick".

Then she told me that she was pregnant with Solomon's child. She frolicked about it and announced that the birth could be soon after we got back. After our return I was put immediately back into a darkened room with lotus flowers and the sound of running water from a fountain. A young girl kept a flow of drinks and fruit coming to my divan table next to me. As I began to recuperate, I was allowed out into the gardens of her palace. I marvelled at the exotic flowers, the cacti and fine trees and waterways that were looked after by her many gardeners. One day she stepped out with a small bundle of a human being in her arms, looking full of joy. She had given birth to a boy.

'I am calling him Menilek or 'son of the wise man'. Zadok the priest will anoint him and give his blessing,' she added. That evening we both celebrated her beautiful son and my recovery. We had a rich menu served in the garden on a long table that was covered with fine linen cloth and laid with golden bowls and beakers made of pure gold. In front of us was rich variety of food, salads, bread of different sorts, falafels, all manner of meats cooked in spicy sauces or skewered and roasted over a fire. We had wine and drank and toasted each other. I began to remember where I had been before I met Makeda. I realised the dream and the illness had mixed up everything. I had to start from the beginning. So, I told Makeda the following story,

'I was born into fire and flames that tore into the sky and brought down lumps of meteors and burning spears from the heavens from far away. I flew out of my mother's womb like a bird escapes out of a nest when the crows come to hack it to death. Luckily, I had wings. I did not fall. I sailed with the other birds that were escaping from the meteors and we settled on meadows near the sea, a swamp with juicy green grass and hiding places. I grew up among the geese that had come with me. To be honest I don't know if I was born by a goose or by a human.'



King Solomon and Queen of Sheba circa CE 1280, Cologne Cathedral, Germany.

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



MIKYOUNG CHA

ARMENIA - SYMPHONY OF THE STONES

Photo Feature

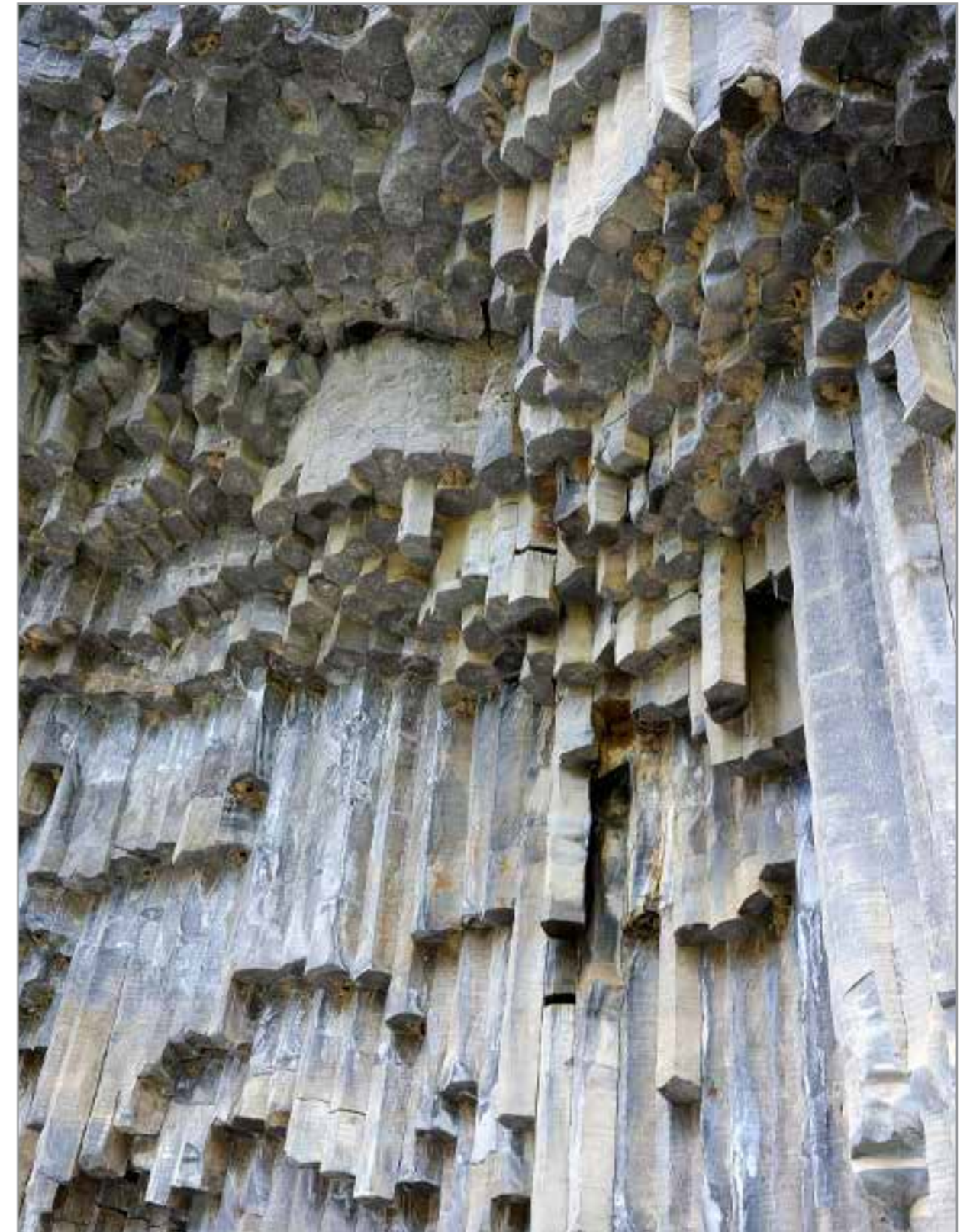
In the Highlands of West Asia lies the land-locked country of Armenia. It is amongst the earliest Christian civilisations.

Perhaps one of the most stunning natural monuments in Armenia is the Symphony of the Stones. It can be found in the province of Kotayk. The natural formation of volcanic rock that appear to be defying gravity in massive symmetric hexagon and pentagon columns.

This formation is also called 'Basalt Organ Pipes'.

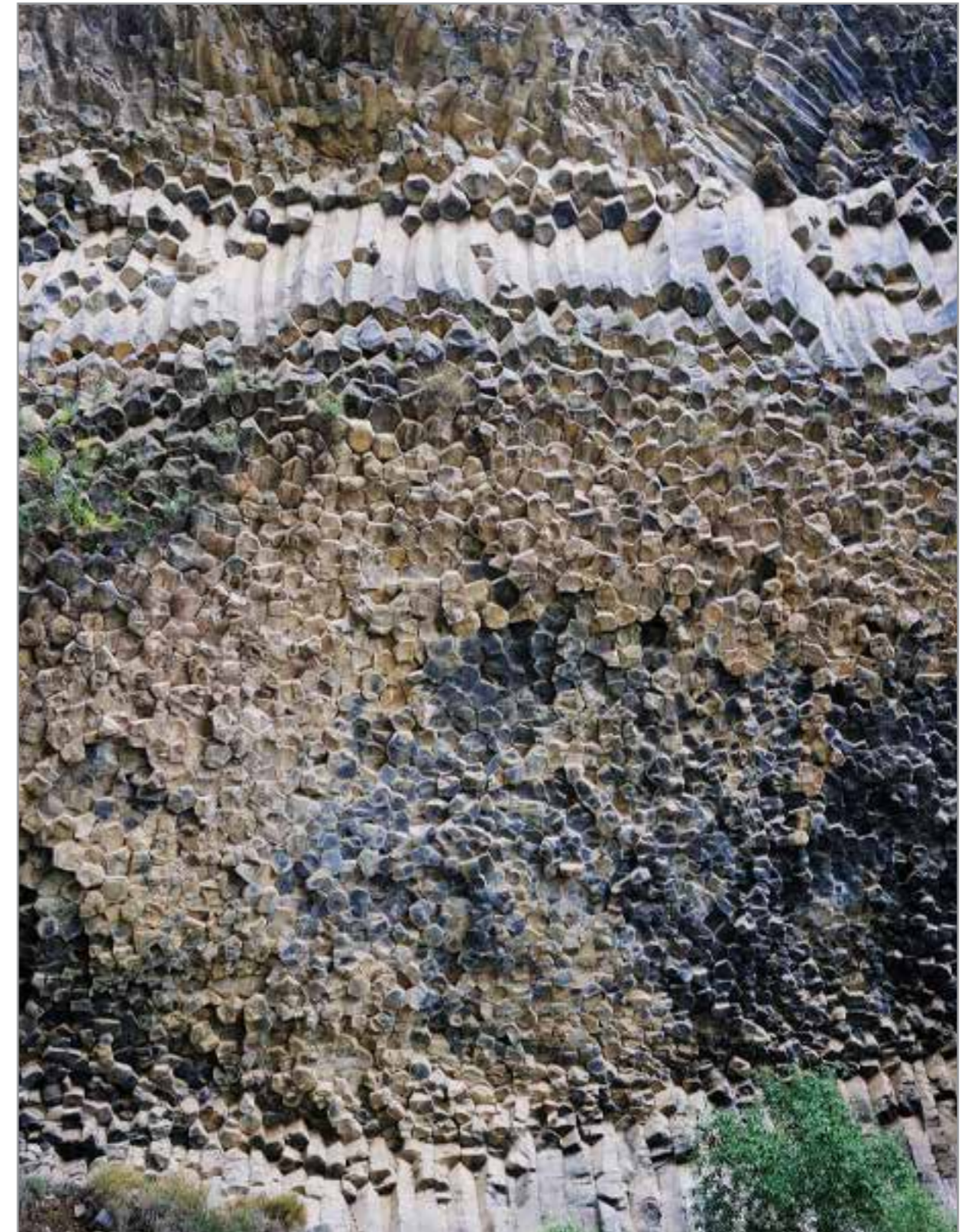
These photographs are but a mere glimpse of this truly ancient Christian land.

Mikyoung Cha



Symphony of the Stones - 1

Symphony of the Stones - 2



Symphony of the Stones - 3

Symphony of the Stones - 4



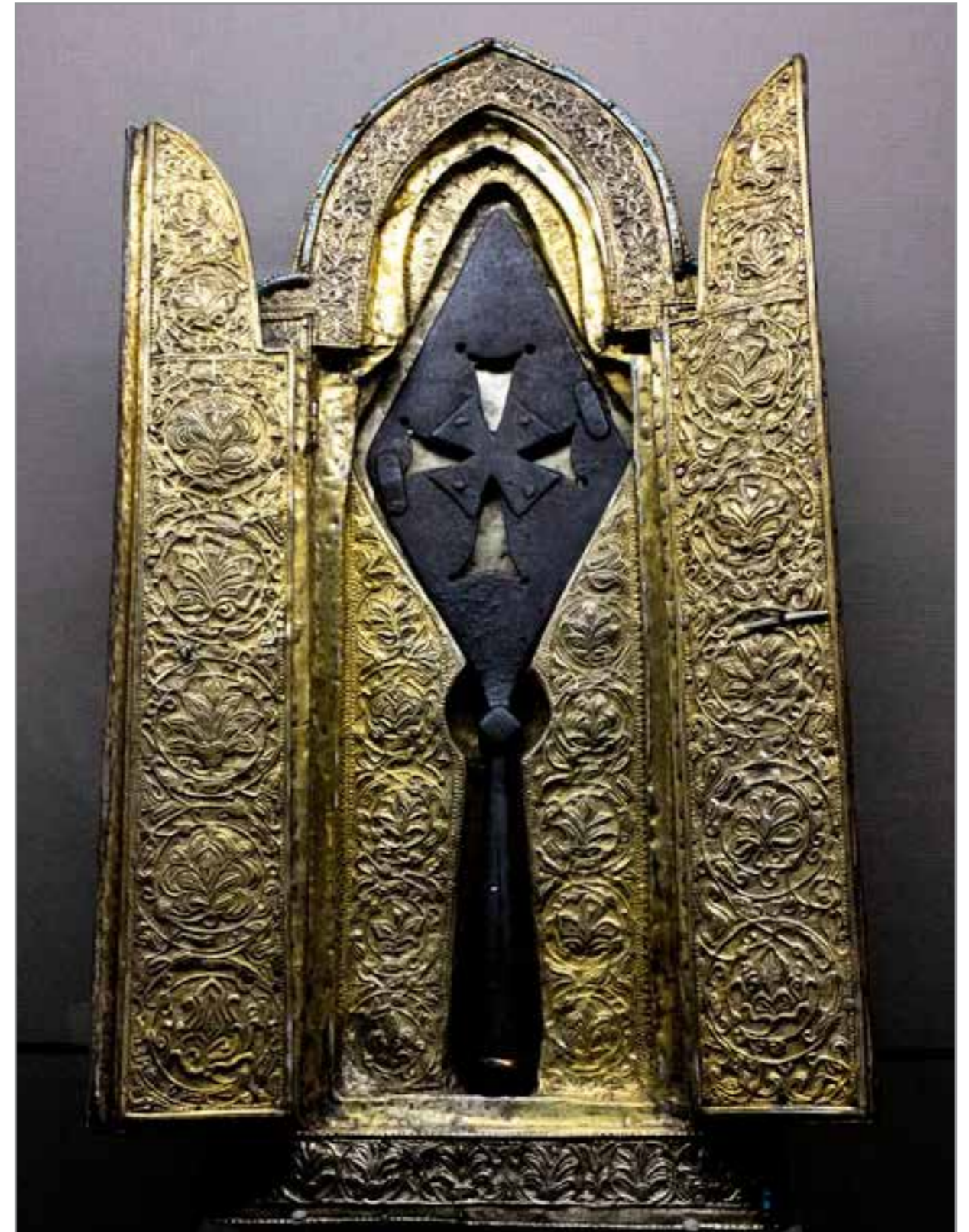
Symphony of the Stones - 5



Symphony of the Stones - 6



According to an inscription in one of the churches, the monastery of Sevanavank was founded in 874 by Princess Mariam, the daughter of Ashot I (who became a king a decade later). At the time, Armenia was still struggling to free itself from Arab rule.* (wikipedia)



One of the numerous Holy relics of the Armenian Church is the Holy Lance (Geghard), which is also used to bless and consecrate the Holy Chrism (Muron) of the Armenian Church. The Holy Geghard is the tip of the spear which the Roman soldier used to pierce our Lord Jesus Christ, while he hung on the cross.



Mount Ararat forms a near-quadripoint between Turkey, **Armenia**, Iran, and the Nakhchivan exclave of Azerbaijan. The two Ararats are known as Mother and Child in Turkish lore and extend over about 25 miles. Most Armenians revere Mount Ararat as the Mother of the World and other Christians, as well as many Moslems, believe it is the site where Noah's ark came to rest after the Great Flood and humanity began again.



The red poppy from the Armenian highlands is the natural symbol of the Armenian Genocide that occurred on May 27, 2014, which was the systematic destruction of the Armenian people and their identity in the Ottoman Empire during World War I.



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'* 269 publications (till July 2023). 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-publisher-editor-of-live-encounters-magazines/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Ulyseas/e/B01FUUQVBG>



MARK ULYSEAS

THANK YOU DR. JOSEPH GOEBBELS

US AND THEM, NATIONALISM AND THE HERD

“Europe is a garden. We have built a garden. Everything works. It is the best combination of political freedom, economic prosperity and social cohesion that the humankind has been able to build – the three things together,” Borrell said during the event.

“The rest of the world,” he went on, “is not exactly a garden. Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden.”

Josep Borrell, European Union's foreign policy chief (<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/10/19/josep-borrell-apologises-for-controversial-garden-vs-jungle-metaphor-but-stands-his-ground>)

When confronted with this distasteful statement, Borrell replied,

“Europe had managed to replace centuries of war with lasting peace, cooperation and the rule of law, while other countries outside the continent, such as Russia, were resorting to “force, intimidation and blackmail to get their way.”

Collage by Mark Ulyseas.

Perhaps the learned gentleman is suffering from amnesia. Europe has raped, rampaged, murdered, looted, colonised countries 'outside the garden'. The oft repeated slogan of 'International Rules Based Order' is in sharp contrast to the West forcing Ukraine to discard the 2014 Minsk Treaty, thus leading to the bloody ongoing war.

The murderous invasion of Iraq by USA/Britain that led to the destruction of an ancient country along with the slaughter of nearly a million Arab Muslims is forgotten. Meanwhile, the ICC (International Criminal Court) has been quick to issue an Interpol Warrant for the arrest of the Russian President Vladimir Putin. The war criminals Bush and Blair who had ordered the invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria among others have been overlooked. Their (USA/UK/Australia etc.) politicians and armies have granted themselves automatic immunity against prosecution. Murder and mayhem being their divine right.

But why are we not surprised. After all, wasn't Europe the birthplace of Nazism?

Dr. Joseph Goebbels has left an indelible mark on the western psyche. The potency of flag waving and nationalism has been expertly used by governments to 'mind-bend and corral the multitude'. For flag and country is, perhaps, the greatest fraud committed by politicians in democracies.

Us and Them. Nationalism and the Herd.

What makes people behave like lobotomized folk when they rally around the flag of their country?

And when one adds religion, then country and religion become two sides of a coin – A potent amalgamation of delusions that is highly contagious.

We have lost our ability to reason in a crisis and instead resort to mindless chanting of slogans while waving our blood stained flags. Is this self-induced brainwashing alienating us from life itself, from the natural order of things, and driving us against the force of Nature onward to our extinction?

Those possessing the power to herd people together like cattle have successfully created their own niches in the form of countries, countries that barricade themselves with borders, checkpoints and religion. These powerful people project an illusion of greatness, while in fact they have feet of clay.

But their mesmerized followers choose to ignore the obvious and prefer to accept the standard fare dished out by spin doctors whose sole objective is to turn the populace into dumbed down citizens with a herd mentality. They are winning. Look around and witness the controlled order in the chaos amidst the inhumanity and the rising tide of frenzied flag waving.

Why do we need to respect a flag and national anthem? And why does disrespect translate into one being called a traitor? Should such indignation in fact be directed at growing poverty, homelessness, physical/mental/sexual abuse, lack of education and rape of the environment? Or, are these man-made afflictions unimportant when it comes to flag and country? And does religion override these festering sores of humanity?

The theme song of nationalism, often spiced by religion, has morphed into a catchy advertising jingle. The brand name, colour coding and strategic media placing has colonised the sub-consciousness of the herd...a herd that is proliferating at an alarming rate. Often the herd is frightened into stampeding, destroying everything in its path. The mechanism used to frighten the herd is a non-existent internal or external threat often engineered for profit at the expense of innocent lives and the truth.

The warped understanding of the term our values is used as a weapon to drive out or destroy those who are alien to it and therefore viewed as a threat.

It matters little if the concerned herd has invaded, occupied and turned another's land into their own grazing ground.

It matters little if a herd descends on a land and displaces those living upon it for centuries, citing excerpts from a book as proof of previous ownership.

It matters little if a herd creates its own grazing ground and builds borders and hoists its flag...dividing a land in a bloody encounter, displacing millions and creating a permanent state of hostilities with another herd.

It matters little if the history of a herd has been creatively reinvented by self-appointed guardians with the sole intention of developing an exceptional brand of nationality.

It matters little if a herd anoints the founders of their herd as Founding Fathers. As if these 'Fathers' were the ones that fathered the herd.

It matters little if members of a herd commit mass murder on behalf of the herd for it is good to kill and/or die with honour not protecting one's country but annexing others or simply destroying the homes of innocent people for land and/or natural resources and/or for political purposes.

It matters little if the national anthem is sung with great pride above the cries of squabbling vultures feeding off corpses on a battlefield or those who are starving to death in the herd.

However, what does matter is the sanitised history of the herd, its religion and our way of life (whatever this means).

The rest is unimportant; like the sanctity of life, preservation of Nature and the adherence to one's Faith of peace, love, charity and forgiveness.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore,

“But now, where the spirit of the Western nationalism prevails, the whole people is being taught from boyhood to foster hatreds and ambitions by all kinds of means—by the manufacture of half-truths and untruths in history, by persistent misrepresentation of other races and the culture of unfavourable sentiments towards them, by setting up memorials of events, very often false, which for the sake of humanity should be speedily forgotten, thus continually brewing evil menace towards neighbours and nations other than their own. This is poisoning the very fountain-head of humanity. It is discrediting the ideals, which were born of the lives of men who were our greatest and best. It is holding up gigantic selfishness as the one universal religion for all nations of the world.”

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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Live encounters

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JULY 2023

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