

**Beyond Our Nuclear Entanglement:
Love, Nuclear Pain and the Whole Damn Thing**

Baden Offord

“How the very spark that marks us as a species, our thoughts, our imagination, our language, our toolmaking, our ability to set ourselves apart from nature and bend it to our will — those very things also give us the capacity for unmatched destruction.” - Barack Obama¹

“The capacity for planetary suicide, once acquired, cannot but introduce irreversible changes to the psychological, social, and ethical life.”
- Ashis Nandy²

“It’s like the place has just been bombed into oblivion.”
- Julia Gillard³

“Peace is not obtained by a treaty, just as love is not conquered by decree.”
- Raimon Panikkar⁴

You are part of a nuclear algorithm like everyone else born after the Second World War. In the year of your birth, 1958, as your eyes are opening into the world, Australia's first nuclear research station - the High Flux Australian Reactor - begins its operation at Lucas Heights, in Sydney's south, not far from where you will practise abseiling as a teenager, on sandstone cliffs near Woronora Weir. Later in that same year you entered the world, a nuclear plume folds off from the third Maralinga bomb. Code-named Kite, this three-kiloton bomb was dropped into the Australian outback and part of its strontium-90 cloud drifts across the landscape, southwards to cover the city of Adelaide. The effects on the Indigenous people at Maralinga remain hidden from public knowledge. You are in a world that has precariously adopted nuclear weapons to manage its co-existence, psycho-pathologically instituting and “sustaining a culture of necrophilia.”⁵

Global historian Yuval Noah Harari has noted that the “Algorithm is arguably the single most important concept in our world,”⁶ and defines the way *Homo sapiens* have brought order in to their lives and domination of the planet. In our age, the toolkit of nuclear capability and technical prowess have become perverse ingredients for peace-makers and nationalist advocates alike, forged through a world war into a cold war and then into various posturing ideological positions by a methodology of deterrence and brutish dominion over mortality through the ultimate hand of horror. A few months after your fourth birthday in 1962, the algorithm of the Cold War produces one of the moments closest to full-scale nuclear war: between the United States and the USSR. Known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, this 13 days conjured a spectral haunting that has cast its long shadow over humanity's future ever since and has become a template of how peace comes to be produced over a precipice of total destruction.

The collective lived experience of nuclearism per se, however, has become domesticated in human consciousness since World War II, through a mix of imagination, myth and fantasy, amnesia and opacity. You watch the popular children's animation series *Astro Boy*, for example, which appeared on Australia television from 1965-71, (and later in the 1980s), mesmerising a generation into the illusion and falsehood of the nuclear promise through its hero of the same name. The lyrics openly embrace the nuclear world and its implicit ties to violence and destruction⁷:

*Astro Boy bombs away,
On your mission today,
Here's the countdown,
And the blastoff,
Everything is go Astro Boy!*

*Astro Boy, as you fly,
Strange new worlds you will spy,
Atom celled, jet propelled,
Fighting monsters high in the sky!*

Popular culture imagined the nuclear age and its pathological interest in destruction and mortality for you, turning the spread of radioactive materials into songs, like the Beatles' "Yellow Submarine" released in 1966. Or Nitin Sawhney's "Broken Skin" in 1999, which laments India's nuclear "coming of age". As the lyrics go:

*Today at 15.45 hours
India conducted 3 underground nuclear tests
In the Bogram Range
Hope falls softly from your hands
Dreams burn deep beneath the land
Time casts shadows overall
Sweating fever, rain or river
Brushing winds beneath your call
Broken skin, distant fear
Shattered worlds of endless tears.⁸*

Other songs include David Bowie's "New Killer Star" in 2003. Although we have lived through the nuclear age, courtesy of an insidious techno-military-industrial concordance that has veiled nuclear reality, it has been our inability to make sense of our psychopathological obsession with nuclear weapons that characterises our behaviour. But more than anything, the nuclear algorithm has produced three things: a psychological paralysis or numbing; a collective amnesia about colonisation and its effects on indigenous peoples; and an opacity to the global environmental contamination that has occurred through the spread of radioactive materials through the air, land and sea.

You are steered towards overwhelming and inexplicable pain when you consider the nuclear entanglement that the species *Homo sapiens* finds itself in. This is because the fact of living in the nuclear age presents an existential, aesthetic, ethical and psychological challenge that defines human consciousness. Although an immanent

threat and ever-present danger to the very existence of the human species, living with the possibility of nuclear war has infiltrated into the matrix of modernity so profoundly as to paralyse our mind-set to adequately respond. We have chosen to ignore the facts at the heart of the nuclear program with its dangerous algorithm; we have chosen to live with the capacity and possibility of a collective, pervasive and even planetary-scale suicide; and the techno-industrial-national powers that claim there is “no immediate danger” *ad infinitum*.⁹

This has led to one of the key logics of modernity’s insanity. As Harari writes “Nuclear weapons have turned war between superpowers into a mad act of collective suicide, and therefore forced the most powerful nations on earth to find alternative and peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.”¹⁰ This is the nuclear algorithm at work, a methodology of madness. In revisiting Jacques Derrida in “No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)”¹¹ who described nuclear war as a “non-event”, it is clear that the pathology of the “non-event” remains as active as ever even in the time of Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un with their stychomythic nuclear posturing.

The question of our times is whether we have an equal or more compelling capacity and willingness to end this impoverished but ever-present logic of pain and uncertainty. How to not simply bring about disarmament, but to go beyond this politically charged, as well as mythological and psychological nuclear algorithm? How to find love amidst the nuclear entanglement; the antidote to this entanglement? Is it possible to end the pathology of power that exists with nuclear capacity? Sadly, the last lines of Nitin Sawhney’s “Broken Skin” underscore this entanglement:

*Just 5 miles from India’s nuclear test site
Children play in the shade of the village water tank
Here in the Rajasthan desert people say
They’re proud their country showed their nuclear capability.*¹²

As an activist scholar working in the fields of human rights and cultural studies, responding to the nuclear algorithm is an imperative. Your politics, ethics and scholarship are indivisible in this cause. An acute sense of care for the world, informed by pacifist and non-violent, de-colonialist approaches to knowledge and practice, pervades your concern. You are aware that there are other ways of knowing than those you are familiar and credentialed with. You are aware that you are complicit in the prisons that you choose to live inside¹³, and that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. You use your scholarship to shake up the world from its paralysis, abjection and amnesia; to unsettle the epistemic and structural violence that is ubiquitous to neoliberalism and its machinery; to create dialogic and learning spaces for the work of critical human rights and critical justice to take place. All this, and to enable an ethics of intervention through understanding what is at the very heart of the critical human rights impulse, creating a “dialogue for being, because I am not without the other.”¹⁴

Furthermore, as a critical human rights advocate living in a nuclear armed world, your challenge is to reconceptualise the human community as Ashis Nandy has argued, to see how we can learn to co-exist with others in conviviality and also learn to co-survive

with the non-human, even to flourish. A dialogue for being requires a leap into a human rights frame that includes a deep ecological dimension, where the planet itself is inherently involved as a participant in its future. This requires scholarship that “thinks like a mountain”.¹⁵ A critical human rights approach understands that it cannot be simply human-centric. It requires a nuanced and arresting clarity to present perspectives on co-existence and co-survival that are from human and non-human viewpoints.¹⁶

Ultimately, you realise that your struggle is not confined to declarations, treaties, legislation, and law, though they have their role. It must go further to produce “creative intellectual exchange that might release new ethical energies for mutually assured survival.”¹⁷ Taking an anti-nuclear stance and enabling a post nuclear activism demands a revolution within the field of human rights work. Recognising the entanglement of nuclearism with the Anthropocene, for one thing, requires a profound shift in focus from the human-centric to a more-than-human co-survival. It also requires a fundamental shift in understanding our human culture, in which the very epistemic and rational acts of sundering from co-survival with the planet and environment takes place. In the end, you realise, as Raimon Panikkar has articulated, “it is not realistic to toil for peace if we do not proceed to a disarmament of the bellicose culture in which we live.”¹⁸ Or, as Geshe Lakhdor suggests, there must be “inner disarmament for external disarmament.”¹⁹ In this sense, it is within the cultural arena, our human society, where the entanglement of subjective meaning making, nature and politics occurs, that we need to disarm.

It is 1982, and you are reading Jonathan Schell’s *The Fate of the Earth* on a Sydney bus. Sleeping has not been easy over the past few nights as you reluctantly but compulsively read about the consequences of nuclear war. For some critics, Schell’s account is high polemic, but for you it is more like Rabindranath Tagore: it expresses the suffering we make for ourselves. What you find noteworthy is that although Schell’s scenario of widespread destruction of the planet through nuclear weaponry, of immeasurable harm to the bio-sphere through radiation is powerfully laid out, the horror and scale of nuclear obliteration also seems surreal and far away as the bus makes its way through the suburban streets.

A few years later, you read a statement from an interview with Paul Tibbets, the pilot of “Enola Gay”, the plane that bombed Hiroshima. He says, “The morality of dropping that bomb was not my business.”²⁰ This abstraction from moral responsibility – the denial of the implications on human life and the consequences of engagement through the machinery of war – together with the sweeping amnesia that came afterwards from thinking about the bombing of Hiroshima, are what make you become an environmental and human rights activist. You realise that what makes the nuclear algorithm work involves a politically engineered and deeply embedded insecurity based recipe to elide the nuclear threat from everyday life. The spectre of nuclear obliteration, like the idea of human rights, can appear abstract and distant, not our everyday business. You realise that within this recipe is the creation of a moral tyranny of distance, an abnegation of myself *with* the other. One of modernity’s greatest and earliest achievements was the mediation of the self with the world. How this became a project assisted and shaped through the military-industrial-technological-capitalist complex is fraught and hard to untangle. But as a critical human rights scholar, you have come to see through that complex, and you put energies into challenging that tyranny of distance, to activate a

politics, ethics and scholarship that recognises the other as integral to yourself. Ultimately, even, to see that the other is also within.²¹

The nuclear algorithm came about in the conjuncture of warring nation states, the ascent of science, ideological contest, capitalism and the global impact of industrialisation. And central to how these broad and systemic changes happened was the colonial mindset that had pervaded the world over several centuries. The project of Empire that grew out of European expansion across the globe was fashioned through an epistemic and structural violence that involved substantive pillaging and hoarding of resources alongside extreme exploitation and various forms of genocide. The destructive modes of knowledge that informed colonialism depended on the elision, extermination or subjugation of peoples, particularly of the Indigenous. A sundering of extant cultures through eugenics and science.

Colonial outreach and domination has also intrinsically depended on supplanting Indigenous ways of knowing, resulting in systemic practices of dehumanisation through the denial of community. Implicit in this was the spreading of industrialisation coeval with the rapid rise of technology and military force. The effects of these developments culminated in the creation of nuclear weapons, marked as such by dismemberment of the human from the environment. The nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the pinnacle of peace making made through civilizational terror. The “awe and shock” of the nuclear weapon has censored the gaze on what happened beneath the mushroom clouds at the level of the street and everyday. Similarly, the same gaze has been averted in contemporary colonial settler societies, such as the United States and Australia, in which there is collective amnesia about the erasure of the other through colonial conquest, epistemic and cultural genocide. A letter to the editor in *The Australian* captures this culture of impunity²² well:

Where would the Aborigines be today if no one had colonised this continent? The answer would be, where they were thousands of years ago. There would be no housing, no food from the supermarket, no education and no medical attention. We should be proud of what this nation has achieved in just over 200 years.²³

You are eating breakfast and watching the morning news, reflecting on the ongoing manifestation of entangled amnesia, colonisation and the nuclear algorithm. On the television the President of the United States, Donald Trump, has just told North Korea that the United States will bring “fire and fury” to its shores, invoking the American gift to the 20th century, the nuclear bomb. Guam, a small group of islands in the Pacific, has become once again the target of North Korea’s nuclear ambition and its wild attempt to take on the world’s most militarily and industrialised power. Trump stares down the world with his finger on the buttons. You wonder, is Trump the ultimate predator, the result of neoliberalism, a logical consequence of the *Homo sapiens*’ dominance of the world, an embodied convergence of sociopathic, capitalist and techno creation? Harari’s sober assessment of human history appears to provide an answer. “Most top predators of the planet are majestic creatures. Millions of years of domination have filled them with self-confidence. Sapiens by contrast is more like a banana republic dictator.”²⁴

Armed through the great scientific venture, instrumentalised by the military-industrial complex, sustained through the violence of rationality, religion and nationalism, the nuclear threat is an immediate, ever-present danger to human existence.

The portent and presence of the nuclear algorithm has also been concomitant with the formation of international human rights principles and values. Both were children of the two world wars of the first half of the twentieth century and both were the outcome of imperatives that were fused through rationality, nationalism and existential debates on the axiology of existence. They also shared the same DNA derived from European Enlightenment ideals that placed the human project of liberalism and scientific exploration at the centre of that co-existence: ideals driven by the concepts of progress, freedom, tolerance and equality. The filament that held this precarious DNA together was the nation state, the embodiment of modernity. Reflecting on this devilish precarity, Hannah Arendt wrote “The modern age is not the same as the modern world. Scientifically, the modern age which began in the seventeenth century came to an end at the beginning of the twentieth century; politically, the modern world, in which we live today, was born with the first atomic explosions.”²⁵

You find out quite quickly that you can become lost in Tokyo very easily. A gift a friend gave to you when you lived in the world’s largest metropolis is a compass. She said this would be useful to navigate the mega train stations like Shinjuku or Shibuya. Although there are signs in English such as East Exit and North Exit, she warned you that the sheer scale of these mega stations could often be overwhelming. The scale of these stations, as mazes of Tokyo, is an existential marvel. The city has survived cataclysmic disasters such as the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 and the US fire bombing in 1945. The latter destroyed much of the city and killed more people than either atomic bomb. The way this giant urban organism of over 32 million has developed out of swamps and fires as well as the oppressive regimes of tradition and culture, is formidable. Its indomitable existence is intimately connected to its vulnerability.

Since July 1945 there have been 2,055 nuclear tests that have been carried out throughout the world. But Japan is humanity’s atomic *ground zero*, existentially, epistemologically and ontologically. It is the only country in the world where people have experienced the full unimaginable horror of nuclear obliteration, where the absolute reality of vulnerability in everyday life has been wrought through quintessential weapons of mass destruction. The erasure of much of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 has become part of the great unconscious thread of humanity’s failure to co-exist without terror.

The Japanese, however, do not merely live with the spectre of being ground zero. This chain of islands is one of the most seismically unstable regions in the world, which experience 20% of the world’s earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater on the Richter scale. On any given day there are roughly 1,000 tremors that can be felt. This remarkable physical vulnerability, together with the philosophical traditions of Shinto and Buddhism that focus on ideas of impermanence, characterise Japanese culture.

You reflect that impermanence is a fact of *Homo sapiens*.

You are seated with your Japanese colleague at a child's table, which is low to the ground. It was the last table available in the restaurant just outside the campus where you both worked. Komaba campus was part of "Todai" as the elite University of Tokyo was known more familiarly. It was just after half past one in the afternoon of 11 March 2011. You were chatting as you waited for your bento box lunches to come. Suddenly, as if an invisible presence entered the room and mesmerised the diners all at once, people stopped eating and looked at their phones with a well-known glance at the screen. The room swayed, and following a pause, everyone returned to eating and talking, but alert. Then the room was filled with waves of increasing strength. The lights moved, the walls seem to sigh. One minute passed as if an hour long and phones began to ding continuously. The diners began to stop eating altogether and a quiet came upon the restaurant except for the phones and the walls rattling. People whispered to each other. Then the entire room began to shake and people moved under their tables quickly. But, your colleague and you had nowhere to go, so you left the restaurant for the safety of the street. Suddenly the world was completely unknown to you; the earth was moving and shaking and as you stood in the street, you watched the buildings around you sway, telegraph poles bend, and the cars on the road were lifted here and there as if surfing on waves made of tar. Two minutes, three minutes, four minutes passed. Your colleague exclaimed to you, in a serious tone and with a sense of incredulity, "This is the BIG one!" Five minutes passed. Would this end? The ground was not reliable and you struggled to stand.

Is this the precipice of imminent death, you wondered? Where was this headed? What was the immediate danger? Glass falling from the building? A gas pipe exploding? Six minutes passed. The earth sighed as a stillness finally came.

Six minutes and twenty seconds, the second longest recorded earthquake known, the Great East Tohoku Earthquake of 2011.

According to theories of cosmopolitanism and human rights discourse, we live in a world of strangers and alien things, and life consists in orienting ourselves towards the meaning of encounters with the other. Indeed, we find ourselves subjectively constructed through and by those other to ourselves. As Emmanuel Levinas has pointed out, these strangers and alien things or elements are not negations of our self, but intrinsic to our story, to how we are in the world, and importantly, how we are in the world of the other.

The notion of the face-to-face encounter, central to the major contributions that Levinas has made in his writing on ethics and responsibility, is a core consideration in human rights discourse. To understand how others see us, to explore the implications of how we relate to the other, through communication and language, are critical aspects of activating a human rights consciousness. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has observed "Indeed, human rights, viewed at the universal level, bring us face-to-face with the most challenging dialectical conflict ever: between 'identity' and 'otherness', between the 'myself' and 'others'. They teach us in a direct, straightforward manner that we are at the same time identical and different."²⁶

With thousands of others, you stand watching the large screens at Shibuya Station. It was now a couple of hours since the earthquake and you are experiencing a series of aftershocks. In eerie collective silence you watch live footage of a 15-metre tsunami as it hits the north-eastern coast of Honshu. In the following days you live with a new reality as the aftermath of the tsunami has caused a catastrophe at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, just two hours from Tokyo.

You learn later that Mr Naoto Kan, Prime Minister at the time, was facing a critical decision. “We were right on the verge,” he said. “Within the first 100 hours of the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, three of the reactors had experienced melt-downs. Three of the reactors also experienced hydrogen explosions. If this situation had exacerbated any further we would have been faced with the situation of having to evacuate Tokyo.”²⁷ You were not aware of this in that first week during the aftermath.

You were also not aware that there was uranium from Australia's Ranger uranium mine²⁸ in the Fukushima nuclear reactors. You and your partner take iodine pills. You search for bottled water, which has become scarce as people worry about radiation. You select food carefully. Suddenly, you are conscious of radiation in the atmosphere. In the following week as you make your way to Kyoto, you witness more pregnant women than you have ever seen, fleeing the radiation danger of Tokyo. You reflect on former Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, who, when visiting the site of Minami Sanriku, a fishing town that was completely devastated by the tsunami, remarked, “It's like the place has just been bombed into oblivion.”²⁹

Somewhere between your birth into the nuclear algorithm and US President Obama's historic visit to Hiroshima in 2016 where he stated the world needs a “moral revolution”, you lived for several years in the south of India in the gracious Tamil city of Madras (now Chennai). When you reflect on it now, you understand, not for the first time, that the experience completely changes your life's settings and shakes the nuclear and colonised order of the universe you have come to know. You enter into the everyday Indian life of Tamil Nadu, a state of some 60 million people, with wonder. Here is a landscape where being vegetarian is the norm, and flesh eaters must find places that say “non-veg”. You realise how your tree of knowledge has been developed through different efforts to live on the planet. You slowly come to realise how the window you see through, your mind, has been shaped by specific frontiers and languages. You see that there are other windows into the world.

One of your friends at the time was Achyut Patwardhan (1905–1992) who was one of India's famous freedom fighters. You were fortunate to know him. In 1932 his serious interest in politics saw him enter into the Independence Movement and he became a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi as well as a leading Congress Party member. Infused with socialist ideology, Patwardhan eventually quit Congress to form the Socialist Party of India. Until Independence he was involved in many sustained underground activities against colonial rule and for a decade he was in and out of prison. The esteem in which he was held was apparent when he was asked to consider taking up

the position of President in post-colonial India. However, the bombing of Hiroshima led Patwardhan to consider the futility of politics and of any ideology. The use of nuclear weapons changed his regard for politics fundamentally and like Ashis Nandy, he realised that the potential for planetary suicide had “irreversible changes to the psychological, social, and ethical life.”³⁰

As a consequence, following the thoughts of his friend, the Indian philosopher J. Krishnamurti, his conception of revolution as an outward, political event changed entirely towards a position that the only worthwhile revolution was psychological, ecological and ethical. From 1950 until his death Patwardhan worked to bring change through education. His principled exposure consisted of enquiring into the source of human suffering, which for him lay in the brain of the *Homo sapiens*. Patwardhan’s commitment to equality and freedom, which had been central to his quest for an independent India, remained unchanged throughout his later life, but his regard for the value of political and legal architecture in bringing about realistic and actual amelioration of the human condition waned. His activism radically transformed from an outward focused to a wholistic approach to peace and resolution of conflict based on awareness, dialogue, and loving-kindness. Patwardhan would say that this is where human rights begin, where they are activated, in the relationship between *self* and *other*. This was, for him, the clearest path of disentanglement from the nuclear algorithm.

Ashis Nandy concludes in his essay “Beyond the Nuclear Age”, that “The future, I like to believe, belongs not to those who struggle to give technological teeth to our genocidal mentality, but to those who hone the tools of conviviality.”³¹ This future is the work of all critical human rights activists, where human rights bring us face to face with the everyday moral and ethical questions of co-existence and co-survival. You are born into the nuclear algorithm to unmake it.

Notes

¹ Text of President Obama’s Speech in Hiroshima, Japan, *NY Times*, 27 May 2016.

² Ashis Nandy. *Time Treks*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black: 2007, p. 79.

³ Julia Gillard, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-04-23/gillard-sees-tsunami-devastation-first-hand/2604050>

⁴ Raimon Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament*, <http://www.raimon-panikkar.org/spagnolo/XXXV-2-Cultural-Disarmament.html>

⁵ Ashis Nandy. *Op.cit.*, p. 83.

⁶ Yuval Noah Harari. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. London: Harvill Secker, p. 83.

⁷ 1960's B&W Series Opening Lyrics, <http://www.astroboy-online.com/lyrics.php>, Accessed 1 July 2017.

⁸ Nitin Sawhney and Yoosuf, Hussain Seyed. ‘Broken Skin’ lyrics, Universal Music Publishing Group, 1999.

⁹ This is an allusion to the remarkable work of the anti-nuclear North American nun, Rosalie Bertell, who penned *No Immediate Danger: Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth*. London: The Women’s Press, 1985.

¹⁰ Yuval Noah Harari. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. *Op.cit.*, p. 15.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida,. 1984. No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives). *Diacritics* [Online] 14(2).20-31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464756> (12 December 2012).

¹² Nitin Sawhney and Yoosuf, Hussain Seyed. *Op.cit.*, 1999.

¹³ This phrase is borrowed from Doris Lessing. *Prisons we choose to live inside*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1987.

¹⁴ Raimon Panikkar, *Op.cit.*,

¹⁵ Deborah Bird Rose. 'Slowly ~ writing into the Anthropocene,' *TEXT* Special Issue 20: Writing Creates Ecology and Ecology Creates Writing 1 (eds.), Martin Harrison, Deborah Bird Rose, Lorraine Shannon and Kim Satchell, October 2013, pp. 1-14, p. 2.

¹⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Humanities in the Anthropocene: The Crisis of an Enduring Kantian Fable,' *New Literary History*, Volume 47, Numbers 2 & 3, Spring & Summer 2016, pp. 377-397.

¹⁷ Ashis Nandy. *Op,cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁸ Raimon Panikkar, *Op.cit.*

¹⁹ Geshe Lhakdor 'Inner Disarmament for External Disarmament.' Southern Cross University: Lismore, 2014. Video. Geshe Lhakdor is Director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

²⁰ Paul Tibbets, Interview. <http://www.atomicheritage.org/article/manhattan-project-veterans-bombing-hiroshima>, 1989.

²¹ This idea comes from Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1996.

²² Ashis Nandy. Foreword. In Baden Offord, Erika Kerruish, Rob Garbutt and Adele Wessell and Kirsten Pavlovic, *Inside Australian Culture: Legacies of Enlightenment Values*. London: Anthem Press, 2015.

²³ Letter to the Editor. Lesley Beckhouse, Queanbeyan, NSW, *The Australian*, 25 August 2017.

²⁴ Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. New York: Harper, 2015, pp. 12-13.

²⁵ Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*. New York: Doubleday, 1958. Print, p. 7.

²⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali. 1994, 'Human rights: the common language of humanity. Opening statement of the united Nations Secretary-General,' *World Conference on Human Rights*, (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information), pp.5–21, p. 7.

²⁷ Naoto Kan. <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/japans-former-pm-tells-of-tokyo-evacuation-risk-after-fukushima-20140827-1097na.html>

²⁸ It's worth noting that the Ranger and Jabiluka are adjacent uranium mine sites – and are on the traditional lands of the Mirarr people – surrounded by 20,000 hectares of the Kakadu National Park in Australia's Northern Territory. At the Madjedbebe site currently within the confines of the Jabiluka uranium mining lease, are 11,000 Indigenous artefacts – accurately dating Indigenous habitation to be potentially as old as 80,000 years. This site is being carefully explored through a unique and benchmark-setting agreement between the researchers and the Mirarr, who retained total control over the dig and the artefacts. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/jul/19/dig-finds-evidence-of-aboriginal-habitation-up-to-80000-years-ago>

²⁹ Julia Gillard, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-04-23/gillard-sees-tsunami-devastation-first-hand/2604050>

³⁰ Ashis Nandy. *Op,cit.*, p. 79.

³¹ Ashis Nandy. *Op,cit.*, p. 91.

Bio:

Baden Offord holds the Haruhisa Handa Chair of Human Rights and is Professor of Cultural Studies and Human Rights. He took up the position as Director of the Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University in January 2015. Baden's signature approach to research is through self-reflexive, interdisciplinary and empirical research into cultural, social and activist aspects of human rights. Under the rubric he conceived of 'activating human rights' he convened landmark international conferences in 2003 and 2008, endorsed by Desmond Tutu. His publications include the co-edited books *Activating Human Rights* (with Elizabeth Porter 2006), *Activating Human Rights Education: Innovation, Exploration, Transformation* (with Christopher Newell, 2008), and *Activating Human Rights and Peace: Theories, Practices, Contexts* (with Bee Chen Goh and Rob Garbutt 2012). He has held positions at Southern Cross University, The University of Tokyo and The University of Barcelona. He is a Contributing Editor to the *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*.