

# In A Nutshell

Summer 2003



## You Don't Bring Me Flowers

by Scott Dixon

*"Summer afternoon—  
summer afternoon; to me  
those have always been  
the two most beautiful  
words in the English  
language."*

Henry James

I recently learned a lot about the price street people pay in terms of their personal dignity.

It was a Sunday afternoon, and the rain pounded down heavier than a Keith Moon solo at an old Who concert; severe soaked-sock weather. As I emptied a jar full of loose change, my cat watched impatiently. "Must be seven or eight dollars in here," I said to Smokey, who didn't care. If cats could tap their toes in impatience, she'd be doing it. Smokey wanted some canned cat food, and she wanted it bad. But the cupboard was bare. So, I put on an old dark coat with a big hood, and braved the elements. Because Smokey's tail was swishing back and forth at an increasingly aggressive rate, I didn't even take time to shave.

A block from my West End apartment, there's a little corner store, run by a husband and wife immigrant couple from China. Open 12-14 hours a day, seven days a week, the store doesn't even close on holidays. It's always there. Despite the grind of the long hours, the couple love to laugh. They're always giving me little treats – usually a bite of some exotic new snack food from China. The weather was so grungy, I didn't bother lowering my hood when I walked in the store. I knew where the cat food was, and didn't need perfect vision to find it. Exchanging coins for bills has become a bit of tradition at the store; I do it every few weeks. The pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters made a festive sound as they hit the counter beside the cash register. The mini-monsoon outside kept shoppers away. The store was quiet – except for the noise from the change.

But not for long.

"Is that how much you made today?" someone behind me asked in a voice that wasn't at all solicitous. It was a downright snarl.

"Pardon?" I turned and looked at an older man (I'm 56) who barged past me with a big bouquet of flowers in his manicured hands.

"I don't have time for this crap," he said while placing his flowers on top of my change. The guy had a deep tan he definitely didn't acquire locally. "You bums should get a job."

Because I was unshaven and wearing an old coat, and because I had a pile of loose change, I was now being treated like a bum, a piece of human crap. "I'm in a hurry," he told the woman behind the counter, loudly. "I can't wait for *him*." He pointed at me with disgust. He was white-haired, sharply dressed, distinguished-looking. But, like John F. Kennedy once said of Richard Nixon: no class. The woman picked up his flowers; put them aside, and proceeded to sort and count my coins. She was fast, but not fast enough for Mr. Personality. "I said I'm in a HURRY." He shouted the last word.

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# Canned Heat, Last Refuge of the Rubby-dubs

by Sam Roddan

A Preacher's son has a heavy cross to bear. People are forever noting his quirks. His behaviour patterns are the subject of studies in theological colleges. In the local press, his fall from grace is always good for a headline. In the east end of Vancouver, my father was a rough-and-tumble fighter against the evil-doers and all forms of wickedness. During the early Thirties, he was the undisputed heavyweight champ when it came to battling booze and the bootleggers. His mission church on Hastings Street was a rigorous training camp for idealists, social workers and muscular Christians.

My father's lifestyle conditioned my own self-image. I went through the usual agonies of boyhood as rebel, callow romantic, religious tough guy. Certainly no one dared label me a sissy. Or the boy with a halo.

One of my first chores as a young lad was to pick up the empty canned-heat tins that cluttered the front steps of my father's church on a Sunday morning before the service. I collected the empties in a big coal sack and sold them on the Monday to the local junk man for 10 cents a dozen.

"Pity a man would not thirst after righteousness with the same zeal," my father would say when I gave him the count.

The popular drink of a man down and out in the Thirties was canned heat. A soft, waxy substance which burned with a bright blue flame, Boy Scouts bought it for their cook-outs. But for the rubby-dubs, canned heat was a kind of alcoholic catnip. Rubby-dubs loved it dearly. It was cheap and it did the trick. Most of the rubby-dubs who hung around in the lanes behind my father's church spread the stuff on a hunk of bread and ate it as a sandwich.

Some rubby-dubs preferred to squeeze the canned heat through their handkerchiefs, or a rag, or the toe of an old sock. A few drops of liquid heat mixed with a touch of shaving lotion or a shot of vanilla extract guaranteed oblivion for a whole day. And sometimes for several days, or a week, or frequently, as my father put it, "for eternity".

"Shame on any man," my father said, "for approaching the Great Hereafter without the full use of all his faculties!"

On a typical Sunday morning, particularly in the summer time, I averaged 10 to 12 empty canned heat tins. Most of them were in the lane scattered around the lean-to behind the church.

The lean-to was a shelter my father built to keep the rubby-dubs out of the rain when they had no other place to go. The big overhang from the church eaves gave protection from the rain and snow and, in the summer, from the hot sun.

"Every man needs a refuge from the storms of life," my father said. "A snug harbor from the elements. A place to wait for the tide to change, the clouds to break, the fog to lift. Somewhere to tend his wounds. Or count his blessings."

On a Saturday night, I'd walk down the lane with my father. It was then my father pointed out we must always be ready to extend the right hand of fellowship to any poor souls in the lane, and never pass by on the other side. And, of course, we both must keep an eye peeled for the empty canned heat tins.

My father had sharp eyes for this sort of thing and always spotted them first.

"Look, son! There's one. Into the sack and out of sight with her. Quick!"

Once or twice I complained that my little business with the junk man was going downhill. Wasn't bringing in the nickels and dimes the way it used to in the good old days before the big clean-up started. But my father's point was not to worry about the profit.

"When you are about your Father's Business," he said, "the great rewards are saved for another time and another place."

Then we continued down the lane and hummed Onward Christian Soldiers but we hummed it softly when we came to the lean-to. And we slowed down and listened to the rubby-dubs trying to get comfortable and swearing a little and settling down for their long night.

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*"Canned heat was a kind of alcoholic catnip..."*

Growing up in Canada in the Thirties as a preacher's son taught me many lessons. I discovered life is often bleak, contradictory and topsy-turvy. And there are strange worlds within worlds and great imponderables.

I learned at an early age never to accept the way things are on the surface. And that love and hate can be inextricably entangled in our daily lives. In our household, the gospel of love was law, except for the Catholics, and also for the Baptists who were not to be trusted when the chips were down. The Anglicans, with their fancy ways, were even more suspect.

At our evening meals, we were all expected to pronounce a grace or benediction or offer a prayer at a

nod from the head of the table. I soon learned to pray for the Chinese or the Indians of Grenfell or Labrador, or even the Baptists, with speed, feeling and efficiency.

My father always brought his work home at night, and with him we shared the joys and sorrows of his parish. Consequently, the great ceremonies of birth, death, marriage, christenings and funerals became part of our everyday life.

And out of this family ritual around the table grew the seeds of social concern. A natural affection for the disenfranchised, the dispossessed, the hopeless waifs and strays, the rubby-dubs of our world who could no longer make it on their own.

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*"...I discovered  
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topsy-turvy."*

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"What a devil art thou, Poverty! How many desires—how many aspirations after goodness and truth—how many noble thoughts, loving wishes toward our fellows, beautiful imaginings thou hast crushed under thy heel, without remorse or pause!"

Walt Whitman

# A Greek Tragedy

by Ms. Neide M. Dos Santos

'Take off your hat; my dog hates hats!'

Feeling embarrassed, and carrying my nice black hat on my hand, I followed the Greek woman downstairs. The place was out of maintenance and covered by a cheap fabric, the little hall crowded by old and broken furniture. The smell of the air was a mix of humidity and dog's urine. We hardly could see the three doors of her tenant's rooms.

Always talking too much and vetting the advantages of her house, she opened the door of the room, which was supposed to have a nice view. It was another shock: even a prisoner's room would be more spacious and comfortable. A very small and dirty single bed was placed against the wall; an old and opened bookcase nearby, replaced a night-table. The 'window with a nice view' was nothing more than a little space below the sidewalk; and it had to remain closed, in order to prevent someone from breaking in... finally, a miniscule and broken closet completed the Kafkaesque scene. An infected washroom, just covered by an old and dirty plastic curtain, was close by, the kitchen looking like a continuation.

Keeping my smile, I followed her, 'til the small backyard; no flowers, but garbage everywhere. To come down from my frustration, I began showing interest in her as a human being.

She was an immigrant from Greece, and had been in Canada for thirty years. Her favourite son had passed away before she had left her native country and, until that day, she could not recover herself (now it was clear for me the reason of her troubled behaviour). She was living in that house since then, with another son, whom the dog belonged to, and coming through the kitchen door, I could see lots of pictures of both around the place.

After my promise to give her a phone call later on, she finally let me go. Closing the gate, I still had a look back to that blue and pathetic house, located at the sophisticated Balaclava Street, at Kitsilano Beach. And my imagination flew away: instead of being placed in this area, it should be placed in her village, somewhere in Greece. Mrs. Cassandra, and her dog as well, were perfect characters for a traditional Greek tragedy.

And God gracious, that I was out of it...

# Satya's Soapbox

## "The Grey Zone": A Movie Review

by Satya Devi

*"I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers."*

Kahlil Gibran

Only once in a while there comes a movie that emblazons questions about our very existence, and such is this movie about the Sonderkammandos at Auschwitz during the Holocaust, those Jews who could stay alive a little longer by leading other Jews to the gas chambers and then the dead corpses to the crematorium. Every person in that film asked me a different question about myself and the answers to these questions will certainly determine what will happen to all of us in this century. Staring towards the barbed wire and the crematoria, I doubt if there was much room for philosophy.

The Sonderkammandos as individuals were certainly diverse, and that seemed to be where they were the most troublesome because as a group they wanted to survive, but it was only each one taken on his own that had reasons for going on, some to escape and warn others, some to live another day, perhaps to find hope, perhaps for reasons that some of us would not agree with.

When I first read Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*, I was in a Mental Hospital and it was a best seller there. Everyone I knew on that unit had read Frankl and we found something to relate to; some, the hope of a liberation, and some, myself included, who felt we were utterly dispensable and abandoned, as in Sylvia Plath's poem about her despair, "an engine, an engine, chuffing me off like a Jew." I had a psychiatrist who was prone to having questionnaires galore about each of his patients. He told me that one of his questionnaires, to which the response was merely a yes or no, had to be amended because of the question, "were you ever in a Concentration Camp" was overwhelmingly answered with an asterisk and the comment, "it was like a Concentration Camp" penned in. So he had to then include the question, "was it like...?"

The story of "The Grey Zone" is told by a Hungarian Jewish Doctor who had the freedom of movement throughout the camp. There is an uprising planned and the women are hiding ammunition in the corpses that the men pick up in wheelbarrows to take to the crematorium. But even within the camp, there is distrust among the various races of inmates. Word of the uprising gets to the guards and they torture some women to tell where they put the ammunition. The women of that block are rounded up and systematically shot each time one refuses to cooperate with the guards, although very few women are actually involved in the uprising. The women are all in striped uniforms with shaved heads and treated as though they were nonpersons, executed with impersonal disinterest.

There is a moment when a young girl survives the gassing, probably because of a small air pocket made possible by the manner in which the others fell down. The Sonderkammandos take great care to have the doctor revive her and keep her alive, a rose blooming out of the concrete of death. There is also a drunk Nazi wandering around in a stupor and shooting at random. These two aspects of the movie show the great range of contradictions that are displayed.

It is touching to see the end of the movie where the Sonderkammandos are laying next to each other, about to be shot after disabling one crematorium and shooting several Nazis. Two of them start talking about their hometowns and where they might have moved to if they hadn't been deported and say they would have been neighbours, the most alive they were in the entire movie.

I saw this movie alone in a theatre and then a couple months later on video with a friend. At the end of the video, we sat silent for a few moments and then my friend left without saying anything and I returned the video to the store without being able to draw a slick conclusion. I can only offer my silence as witness to something beyond comprehension and explanation, yet I embrace it, and I am humbled. ■

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# Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmár

Can I imagine belonging to a healthy community? An “us” that I would feel truly, deeply and enthusiastically a part of? As soon as I start thinking about this, I can sense that for me, friendship is profoundly linked with the possibility of community. My definition of *friend* includes the minimal requirement of a person who has my best interest close at heart. So, I will be speaking of *elective* community, or perhaps even the community of lovers, rather than *traditional* community, which Blanchot defines as “imposed on us without our having the liberty of choice in the matter: it is *de facto* sociality, or the glorification of the earth, of blood, or even of race.”

Even though I am not religious, I am aware that for me the essence of spiritual experience is to find myself to be a small part of something larger than myself.

Communion, community, co-presence.

When Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (*Matthew 18:20*), he is not promising to be present for an individual. He is sanctioning the spirituality of community. So, a healthy, whole, hail, holy community gathers together in His name. What does that mean? “Jesus saith unto him, I am the

way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (*John 14:6*). How to gather together in the name of “the way, the truth, and the life”? R. D. Laing points out that “John Wycliffe, in the first translation of the Holy Bible into English, termed the Third Person of the Trinity our ‘Healthy Spirit’. This expression today has a much truer and more wholesome ring and resonance to it than ‘The Holy Ghost.’” What is false communion? When even one of us pretends, lies, dissembles, participates in bad faith, what is between us gets poisoned, crucified, and the dance of love turns into the fight of power: domination and submission, persuasion and coercion. I noticed even in myself a paradoxical fascist tendency when after a miraculous moment of spontaneously achieved communion with my wife, I found myself bullying her to go for it again. What we came upon willingly but were surprised by, now I wanted to re-create wilfully, by design.

It is fear and lack of faith that interferes with the play, freedom, and patience that is required for friendship,

love and co-presence. To see the other as a *legitimate* other, in all her unfathomable, infinite otherness, and the willingness to co-exist with her, constitutes love. Marguerite Duras, Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, among others, have started their meditations on community with the limited community of two (lovers, friends, parent/child, patient/therapist).

Why is it more important to listen as a therapist than to speak? Because it is my job as therapist to find the patient, not his, to come to me. I must use every clue to find my way to where the patient is existing, accustom myself to his neck of the woods, and settle down to keep him company. Most people, who come to me for help, come with the pain of isolation, having lost connection with others early in their lives. Most frequently, the cost of connection is loss of authenticity, loss of genuine, autonomous self. The pressure to follow familial or societal scripts precludes the possibility of genuine unfolding of one’s unique self. One can conform or rebel, but one has no time to be who one really is. Between the Scylla of freedom in lonely isolation, and the Charybdis of enslavement in false belonging, many of us get shipwrecked.

The company I keep with those who have gone into hiding must be spacious, allowing and desireless. My task is to welcome the other in her infinite, unfathomable otherness, as she unfolds in her own good time. The empty horror of being with others in prescribed, scripted roles without anyone even noticing that one is essentially missing, is medicalized into *depression*, and the sufferer is forced to take on one more alienated and alienating role, that of being the patient who requires medication for his illness.

Georges Bataille wrote, “my conduct with my friends has its motivations: each being, left to himself, is, I believe, incapable of going to the limits of being.” I need the other to break up the particularity of my particular person, I need to be summoned by the face of the other to be essentially for the other: “If I want my life to have meaning for myself, it must have meaning for someone else.” Laing reminds us, “We are a we. But not because we keep company. But because our boundaries flow in and through one another... *Not*: I think therefore I am, *But*: We are, therefore I am: We are, therefore I think.” Love says, “I could

“...it is my job as a therapist to find the patient, not his, to come to me.”

hurt you, and I won't." Trauma is the absence of love. Without love, there is no community.

Trauma excommunicates. The most devastating effect of trauma is isolation. Jean Améry, a Jew, was caught by the Nazis in 1943, tortured by the SS, survived two years in the concentration camps, then committed suicide in 1978. In 1966, he wrote, "Whoever succumbed to torture can no longer feel at home in the world. The shame of destruction cannot be erased. Trust in the world, which already collapsed in part at the first blow, but in the end, under torture, fully, will not be regained. That one's fellow man was experienced as the antiman remains in the tortured person as accumulated horror. It blocks the view into a world in which the principle of hope rules. One who was martyred is a defenceless prisoner of fear. It is *fear* that henceforth reigns over him. Fear – and also what is called resentments. They remain, and

have scarcely a chance to concentrate into a seething, purifying thirst for revenge."

Shame, fear, despair drive one into silence, isolation, avoidance. Alphonso Lingis writes, "The psychoanalyst is sure that all the rhetoric of the patient's dreams, *actes manqués*, gestures, psychosomatic symptoms, and slips of the tongue are addressed to him as a doctor and father, a representative of the institution and of the established truth... The contemporary enlightenment aims, as Merleau-Ponty wrote, at an enlarged conception of sense, by incorporating the nonsense of the insane, the mystics, the cannibals, and the screams of the torture victims."

Community, interdependence, without love becomes the hell of oppression, hatred and fear. R. D. Laing, in 1987 was hoping for a virus of health to spread in our midst, "health may break out like a plague." The name of that hoped for virus is *love*. ■

# My Experience with Psychosis

by Anonymous

It is hard for me to determine when I started to suffer from the illness known as Psychosis. I would describe it as a small snowball rolling down a hill until eventually it became an avalanche.

I first started experiencing psychiatric problems when I was a teenager. I grew up in a very violent and dysfunctional home. This caused me to live the rest of my teen years with a variety of negative emotions. I felt as though I was in shock.

As I struggled through high school, grades 11 and 12 were the hardest for me. I had no friends. I found myself very anxious and paranoid. I could not talk to anyone. If somebody talked to me, I could not respond. It was as if my mind was blank of everything but paranoid thoughts. The only people I communicated with during this time were my family. Despite my problems, I managed to complete high school. This was bittersweet as I did not attend my graduation ceremony due to the fear that I would be booed mercilessly and have insults shouted at me as I went up to receive my diploma.

After high school, I proceeded into my journey into adulthood. This was very tough for me. I moved around a lot and had a lot of different jobs. I eventually quit every job I had because of paranoia and a very low self esteem. I had to keep working at various jobs as I had rent and bills to pay.

As I progressed through my early 20's, my psychiatric condition was deteriorating. I moved to Vancouver permanently when I was 22. I was constantly working. Constantly changing jobs. I was beginning to experience very cruel symptoms of my illness. I was withdrawing from reality and into delusions. I became very scared and anxious.

I was able to continue work. Despite my illness, I was always a hard worker. The delusions, however, were becoming stronger and I was falling prey to them. I started feeling like everyone was out to get me. I felt people were stalking me, and I thought there was a contract out to have me killed. I thought I was being framed for crimes I did not commit. I constantly felt I was being followed by the police, private investigators, killers, and basically anybody that acted in a way that made me suspicious. I ended up taking a different route home from work every day. However, I felt these people were always one step ahead of me and there was nothing I could do about it. I was very seriously considering buying a gun to protect myself.

Eventually I became encircled by my "enemies" and I did not feel safe anywhere, even in my own home. I was living in a house with my sister and two

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# Unexpected Enlightenment

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

It's really too bad that, rather than polarize over school book sexual identities or gay rights, far more (especially aggressively homophobic) people could not experience what I, a heterosexual male, have experienced and learned about myself in the last couple of years.

While trying to not come off sounding smugly self-righteous, I must say that I'm not the homophobic person that I always considered myself to be. Indeed, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I wrote anti-homosexual letters-to-the-editor (many of which were published) — and particularly anti-homosexual opinions when it came to that community's politics.

But since the late 1990s or so, I've swung more to the left of the ideological spectrum, especially on fiscal issues involving poverty, although I'm not at all "impoverished."

However, more importantly — while attending a psycho-social rehab clubhouse at which I almost exclusively attend to edit/produce its newsletter and work on personal writing projects — I met a new member, about a dozen years my junior (I'm 34), who's a gay male.

When I initially met this person, he told me he was bi-sexual, for he felt this would be less intense than being right-out gay; though, not long after, I rhetorically asked him, at an appropriate time, "you're gay, aren't you?" Having gotten to know one another fairly well, he answered, "Yeah, I am."

But sadly, on a few occasions, he came to the clubhouse and told me that he was actually not gay and that his homosexuality had been all just some sort of mental phase in which he'd been stuck — usually after hospitalization and/or religious-influence episodes.

This was at a point when we had (at least as far as I'm concerned) become friends. Actually, fairly good friends, especially since he's one of those rarities that, like myself, knows and loves virtually every episode of *The Simpsons*. Furthermore, he was compassionate and simply a nice guy. More so, he and I (let me once again emphasize my heterosexuality) would joke and clown around to often-belly-shaking laughter.

Indeed, though we didn't socialize outside of the clubhouse environment (FYI: and not for reasons of shame), of all of the members at that clubhouse (about 125, in all), it was only his arrival each day that I actually looked forward to with anticipation. In fact, I was disappointed at his non-arrivals.

What's my point in all of this?

Although I occasionally let him know of my both Earthly and spiritual rejection of his sexual orientation and lifestyle, I let him know that he was more than welcome around me, and I'd gladly lend him an ear with his daily problems — even when one of the other clubhouse members (which was fortunately rare) gave him a bit of a hard time (for obvious reasons), including some who'd thump him on his head with a Bible.

Although he knows that I'll always feel repulsed by the gay sexuality and make clear that I strongly believe it's unnatural — even in the eyes of God — *nobody* has the right to give a gay person a hard time simply because of his sexual orientation, let alone physically assault him for it.

Do I simply leave matters at that?

No, I also express my concern to him that he not engage in unsafe sexual practices — for, I'd like to see this guy live a full lifetime, if possible — and to be careful in how he presents himself in external environments, i.e. how not to get stuck in a mortally-dangerous predicament by revealing his sexual orientation in an area where he could get hurt. Unfortunately, I've very rarely seen him these last nine months or so, but I still worry somewhat about him.

In turn, he tells me that, "You're not homophobic, Frank," because I've told him once or twice that I am.

I guess it all depends on how one defines homophobic: If a gay male would come-on to me, I would feel, to say the least, quite uncomfortable; however, would I verbally assault (or even snub) a person because of his homosexuality? No.

It's because of meeting and befriending him that I sincerely cannot see myself, unlike in my fundamentalist-Christian conservative days, ever treating someone like this gay person in any other manner than with humane consideration and respect.

# Man Bites Black Dogs - New Briefs From All Over

Compiled by Scott Dixon

Top model agencies in Scotland have refused to take part in a major campaign to fight the stigma of mental ill-health because they did not want their models to be associated with conditions such as anorexia, schizophrenia and depression.

When agencies were telephoned by organizers of the See Me campaign they declined to help, saying it would not be 'appropriate' for their models to be involved.

Nearly 300,000 mentally ill people are now held in US prisons, often because there is nowhere else for them to go. So serious is the problem that one jail in Los Angeles has become in effect the biggest mental institution in the country.

Twin Towers jail in central Los Angeles, which Los Angeles county sheriff's department calls the biggest

known jail in the world, has become a national symbol of the crisis. Mentally ill prisoners, recognizable by yellow shirts and the letter M on their name tags, make up almost half its intended occupants.

Oregon recently cut off medication for thousands of schizophrenics, manic-depressives and other mentally ill people. A decade ago, Oregon was hailed as a pioneer in health insurance, including prescription drug coverage for the poor as well as for those who make just enough money not to qualify for Medicaid, the federal-state program providing health care for poor people.

Now, about 100,000 poor people are suddenly scrambling for the basic medications. State officials are looking for a way to restore some of the health program. ■

## My Experience with Psychosis

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other roommates. I felt that my roommates and even my family were involved in the growing conspiracies. I was afraid to leave the house because I thought people would be breaking in and leaving some sort of evidence to set me up for a crime. I searched my house everyday looking for this evidence. When I found none, I felt more helpless and that these people were more than one step ahead of me.

During all this time, I always felt there was something wrong with me. I was still reasonable enough to realize that I might be mentally ill. The breaking point came one night as I was taking the bus home from work. I was suspicious of a man who was finally going to do me in. When he got off at the same stop as I did, I became frantic with fear. I ran all the way home and slammed and locked the door behind me. My sister was sitting on the couch and asked me what was wrong. I told her what happened and told her I was scared and needed help.

The next morning, after only a few hours sleep, I decided to call the mental health help line. I tried to explain what was happening to me while all the time I was crying. I was a broken man. The lady on the phone

told me to go to the Vancouver General Hospital Emergency. I decided to do that and left my house for the hospital.

When I got to the hospital and told my story to a psychiatrist, I was committed. I was put on medications and stayed in the hospital for about two months. During my hospitalization, I was still suspicious and paranoid. I gradually came out of the state I was in before I went to the hospital. About a week before I was released, I was referred to a mental health team. This was probably the turning point in my life.

As I became involved with my mental health team, I became more confident in my ability to recover from my illness. My therapists and my psychiatrist were very caring and made me feel like a human being for the first time. I am now 27 years old and have almost fully recovered from my illness. Although I have had a few setbacks in my recovery, I am confident that I can live a normal life and become a productive member of society and my community. ■



# Bookworm

## Wake Up To Your Life:

### Discovering the Buddhist Path of Attention

By Ken McLeod

Harper, San Francisco, 2001

## Reviewed by Andrew Feldmár

To my great sadness and disappointment, I realized that R. D. Laing was right when he informed me that one cannot wake up another. The best one can do, he said, should the other start waking up by some unfathomable miracle, is to stop singing lullabies.

And that is what Ken McLeod does in the book under review. He is "widely respected as an authentic Tibetan Buddhist teacher who has trained for years with renowned teachers, including his Master, Kalu Rinpoche. He directs *Unfettered Mind*, a Buddhist teaching and consulting service in Los Angeles, CA." You can learn more from the very valuable website, [www.unfetteredmind.com](http://www.unfetteredmind.com), where, to enter, you have to click on the following quote: "You live in the illusion and the appearance of things. There is a reality. You are the reality. But you do not know it. If you wake up to that reality, you will know that you are nothing, and, in being nothing, you are everything. That's all."

Suffering and death points to the mystery of life. "To live authentically, we have to stop trying to avoid suffering and death by looking for meaning. We have to enter into the mystery of life itself," warns McLeod. He has an unerring way of pointing to the essence: "If we forget that the purpose of practice is to move out of the reactive patterns that create suffering, we miss the whole point. All the philosophies, world-views, ethical systems, practices, and rituals have only one intention: to wake us up from the sleep in which we dream that we are separate from what we experience."

R. D. Laing, in one of his last published papers, says that "Buddhism is not infected with psychophobia, or anthropophobia, or thanatophobia. Within it blows the fresh free air of *experiential anarchy*." The fear of the mind by the mind (psychophobia), the fear of other people (anthropophobia), and the fear of death (thanatophobia) are absurdities born of ignorance. Here, in the West, our souls, our world of experience, our state of consciousness are policed and judged within

fairly narrow confines. I hear parents tell their children that it is not *appropriate* to cry. Psychiatry is ready and willing to tranquilize, lobotomize, electro-shock, and medicate us into homogenized creatures. The Buddha encouraged us to take our own experience seriously, "Be a lamp unto yourself!" Why not see things as they are, not as we would like them to be. All he learned, he learned from going deep within his own experience. His teaching is for us to do the same, and not follow any other person's teachings. The answer to your questions is within you. Do not try to change yourself, but get to know yourself, love yourself, and then exert effort to create an environment around yourself that compensates for who you are. If you are a fish, get into water...

McLeod writes simply, no jargon, no obscure terminology. By making memorable discriminations (this is NOT that!), he helps us to see more clearly. A *reaction* is NOT a *response*. Suffering comes from emotional reactivity. Patterns of reactivity are little self-sustaining engines that can hijack our lives. In the end, the work of dismantling reactive patterns comes down to one question: "Who is going to live your life — you or your patterns?" Thich Nhat Hahn says, "Practice every day. It will save your life."

The book is not dry at all. It's filled with stories, and quotes from sources as varied as Anaïs Nin, André Gide, Bertolt Brecht, Marcel Proust, Igor Stravinsky, David Bohm, Albert Einstein, and others: *Don't think; just look.* (Wittgenstein) *The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice.* (R. D. Laing) *Nothing is like it seems, but everything is exactly like it is.* (Yogi Berra)

Every chapter starts with a story by Idries Shah about the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin. For instance, Chapter 2, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, has this story: "Nasrudin was sent by the King to investigate the lore of various kinds of Eastern mystical teachers. They all recounted to him tales of the miracles and the sayings of

*the founders and great teachers, all long dead, of their schools. When he returned home, he submitted his report, which contained the single word, 'Carrots.' He was called upon to explain himself. Nasrudin told the King: 'The best part is buried; few know – except the farmer – by the green that there is orange underground; if you don't work for it, it will deteriorate; there are a great many donkeys associated with it.'*"

Gampopa's instructions give you the flavour of many of the instructions in this book. They are simple yet profound:

- Don't invite the future.
- Don't pursue the past.
- Let go of the present.
- Relax right now.

Even pithier are the instructions for presence from the mahamudra tradition:

- No distraction.
- No control.
- No work.

Meditation comes down to one key principle:

- Return to what is already there and rest.

McLeod guides you through many meditations, contemplations, and commentaries, each described in detail and made accessible. Sharon Szberg, author of *Lovingkindness* and *A Heart as Wide as the World*, praises *Wake Up to Your Life*: "When the Buddha sent his first students out to instruct others, he told them to teach in the local idiom. Ken McLeod takes this advice to heart, taking ancient teachings and meaningfully translating them for us, in our time."

This book could save your life...

# The Supreme Being and The Supreme Becoming

by D. Paul Strashok

I remember a time in the early 1980s when I was walking along the streets of Edmonton, near the University of Alberta. A question came to my mind – "Is God ambitious?" Immediately, my mind recoiled at the thought of an ambitious God and I thought "No, of course not!" My conception of God at that time was that He was so far beyond the mortal realm that mere mortal traits, such as ambition could not be imputed unto Him. Now, many years later, I reconsider that question and, it seems, I come up with a totally different answer.

We assume, of course that The Supreme Being is complete within Himself and does not need anything or anyone outside of His own Godhead and Deity to supplement an already perfect Consciousness. Yet, behold the wonders He has done and accomplished.

When we look around us at the natural world (which I believe is a created world) there is an awesome display of a multitude of life-forms in the living world, and also an abundant diversity in the non-animate world. When we behold the starry heavens at night or the vast expanse of the sky by day, we are only capturing a small fraction of the created universe and all that God has done. Even our own physical bodies are a wonderful testimony to a great Creator.

The Almighty, as revealed in the Christian Sacred Scriptures is known as The I Am That I Am. I have heard this translated to and referred to as "The Self-Existent One of the First Cause". This truly

describes the Almighty in the nature of His being and pre-existence. Yet out of this Being there has come a Great Becoming, which is evident in the universe all around us. The Almighty was not content to remain only in His Being, but has set in course a wonderful causation that results in His Becoming, thereby increasing and enlarging His own Divine Nature.

When I think of an ambitious God, I don't mean an ambition in terms only of self-interest, but rather a setting forth of a plan and purpose that far exceeds the puny, limited plans of mere mankind.

According to the revelation of Scripture, the Almighty is both transcendent and immanent. As the Creator God, He is far above, beyond and apart from His creation. But as the Redeemer God, He has chosen to enter into and reveal Himself to His creation. One of the names of Jesus is Emmanuel or "God with us". Through the First-born Son of God, the Almighty is enacting a chain of events that will lead to the glorification of many "Children of God".

Now I look back on the question "Is God ambitious?" and I realize that I am not dealing with only a Transcendent Supreme Being, but also a Supreme Becoming that is intimately involved with His creation and that, through a working with humanity, the whole of created things will be transformed and affected. So, in a way God is very ambitious, much more ambitious and creative than any person can reflect in a small, limited, human way.

# “Sugar”

by Oliver Cross

Untrustworthy people  
are to me,  
as refined sugar  
in to my mouth.

I  
don't  
want  
“cavities.”

Where  
and how  
do I  
“brush?”

I want a cure for “cavities,”  
but  
I want to prevent them  
even more.

And I really can  
with  
knowledge – education  
and diligent practice.

# Lukewarm Life

by Peter Dander

I like my showers hot  
Hot so that sweat mingles with the spray  
And runs down my body covering me  
Bathing me in heat

The heat is wonderful magic  
It soothes me, cleanses me  
Puts me in a daze, a pure fire  
That consumes my filth

If I don't have heat, then I want cold  
Frigid like ice permeating my being  
Until my joints freeze and my skin turns blue  
Then I would know that I had been cold  
If my body froze so that it could not move  
Breathe, eat, smell or do anything  
That makes life a pleasure

But you don't need to be cold or hot  
You enjoy your lukewarm life

Not too much heat, not too much cold  
Just enough for you to be comfortable  
And not have to change

So then because you are neither cold nor hot  
I will spue you out of my mouth.

# Mentor

by D. Paul Strashok

Of the theory of over-soul  
I have heard and then denied  
that there was any such reality,  
still from the truth I did not hide.

For over-soul was only a shadow  
of something greater, more dear-  
The care of a loving Father  
reaching down, touching here,  
in the midst of all earthly turmoil,  
the storm and the strife,  
not the power of psychic manipulation,  
but the strength of an endless life;  
not a seeking without knowing,  
a reaching out, casting dreams against the void,  
but a discovery of Other,  
an infusion with His living Word.

So, now who is my Mentor,  
my Counsellor in the night?  
Who girds me for battle;  
who arms me for the fight?  
It is not my vain self  
higher or lower, not just me.  
It is the centre of all Creation,  
the Father of Eternity.  
And if I lie spent and helpless  
then there's only self to blame,  
for His power is endless  
and He saves from all shame.  
But if I turn and call once more  
on the Father above,  
I'll be raised from my misery  
and know the power of pure Love.

# On Mentoring: A Talk to Peer Support Worker Trainees

by Jim Gifford

Mentoring is a special, unique and highly-evolved form of communication when two persons accept a partnership in dialogue. It can be a communion of souls when certain skills are practiced - such as give and take, openness, lack of judgment, and listening.

The two people must be empathic and caring in manner, without the need to manipulate, control or score points. In our hectic and hurried world, we have to be prepared to slow down and share the 'silence' between individuals. Actress and comedian, Lily Tomlin, once advised that we 'listen with an intensity that most people save for talking.' Do not interrupt, jump in, or overlap. Listen compassionately and deeply; allowing for a time of reflection.

On my table is a round rock with the word 'listen' engraved on it in a black ink. A gift; it was the opening instruction written in 'The Rule Of Benedict' and has been the guidepost for European monasteries for a millennium. To me, silence means a state of being beyond the mind-chatter of this day and age.

When meeting with your client, and fellow mentor, show up and be present. As the title of a book by Sixties spiritual guru Ram Dass so poignantly says, "Be Here Now." Pay attention to what has heart and meaning for you - both in *your* head, and that of your partner.

One of my favourite definitions of humility applies to the mentoring process. To paraphrase, it is 'zeroing in and focusing on, to the exclusion of

everything and everyone else, the person with whom you are talking; and respecting them as the most important person in your life at that moment.'

Understand when you are expressing your thoughts that they are opinions, relative ideas, filtered through your cultural background (families, friends, schools, media.) Do not hold assumptions saying, "I've got to be right." They are not truths just because you espouse them. Say your point of view and be sensitive in accepting diverse perspectives. When expressing a personal idea or opinion, as it is an idea that you own, it is important to express it from an "I" viewpoint. Remember, like anything in life done well, conversation may aspire to and become an art form.

Allow me to talk about you - the Ex-Mental Patient, Mental Health Consumer or Recovery Survivor - as a Peer Support Worker Trainee. It has been wisely said, "Show me your stripes, and I'll listen to what you have got to say." Each of you has the gift of experience-knowing well from the inside-out the trials and tribulations with which your prospective clients are struggling. Your credentials will come as much from having once been in your client's shoes as anything you will learn in this course. Your potential has brought you to this transitional place in a process of growth.

In conclusion, there is a saying that luck happens when experience and opportunity come together. You are lucky people, indeed! ■

"We are all adult learners. Most of us have learned a good deal more out of school than in it. We have learned from our families, our work, our friends. We have learned from problems resolved and tasks achieved but also from mistakes confronted and illusions unmasked. . . . Some of what we have learned is trivial: some has changed our lives forever."

Laurent A. Daloz

# A Day in the Life and Times

by Reinhart

In the morning I took my dog for a walk in the park. The air was fresh, the flowers were blooming and the trees were thriving. The fragrance of blossoms was carried on the wind. The dog lifted his leg and urinated on a tree. Feeling the call of nature, I followed his example. A police officer happened to appear and arrested me for indecent exposure. I said, well what about the dog? Are you gonna arrest him as well? The copper said, no. I said, why not? He told me that justice is blind. I said, exactly what the hell does that mean? He scratched his head for a bit, and then said, I dunno. I said, well, is it supposed to be a good thing? He scratched some more, and said, I dunno.

They brought me up on charges and I appeared before the judge. The court bailiff came and told me to put my right hand upon the Bible. (My guess would be the Authorized King James Version.) The bailiff then said to me, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you G-d. I took the book, turned to page 713, and quoted James 5:12. The judge looked in my direction and told me he was holding me in contempt of court. I didn't really understand what he meant by that, so I told him the feeling was mutual. The judge then said that he wanted to sentence me to five years. He sure was pissed off when the jury found me not guilty by reason of the fact that they hadn't had a really good laugh in quite a while. As I left the courthouse, a newspaper reporter shoved a microphone at me and said, how does it feel to be a free man? I said, I dunno.

After the courthouse, I went straight home to my beloved. My darling wife greeted me with open arms. We embraced and kissed. I said, it's good to be home. She brushed the hair off my forehead and said, I love you. I suddenly noticed that she was wearing make-up and mascara and a really hot, low-cut, red dress. She said, well? I thought that I detected a hint of something in her tone. Was she pissed about something? I said well what? She looked at me askance and then said, I said that I loved you. I said, ah... oh, OH: oh yeah, I love you too honey. She was still a little pissed, but I kissed her anyway. Then she said, make mad love to me. I said, well, ok... I put on my rubber Sigmund Freud mask, took off all her clothes and laid her on the couch. (We practiced therapy for an hour.) Afterward, I

hung out in my underwear and lit up a smoke. She lounged comfortably on the couch wearing nothing but her slip. I said to her, do you feel better now? She said, I dunno.

I went to the store to buy some food. As I was walking down the aisles a strange thought occurred to me. I saw a grocery clerk stocking the shelves with new products. He was calmly going about his task as if it was business as usual. But I think that I had accidentally stumbled upon a national grocery conspiracy. I accosted the stock boy in the produce section (he was holding an English cucumber), and I said to him, when does the store go 'round and change the price tags? I said, you know, every time I come to this store, or any other mind you, I notice that the prices are different. I told him further my main point. I said to him that I never see, or otherwise detect, anybody change the price tags. So I said to him, when do you guys change the prices? He said, I dunno. I suspect that he was lying. He just didn't want me to find out when and how they increase the prices. It's all part of the conspiracy. But, I dunno.

I got me the notion to go to church, to go to confession and to confess my sins before G-d and the preacher. I stepped into a small wooden booth with a priest behind a very small wooden screen. I could smell the sweet cedar wood, and the incense and candles from the church proper. I said to the priest, I'm not really sure what the proper procedure is here. He said, well ok, have you committed fornication. I said, well, not as often as I'd like. He said to me, fornication is a sin. I said, why? He said, because G-d says so. I said why does G-d say fornication is a sin? He put his hand to his chin for a minute, and then he said, I dunno.

I went to the library to bring back a book. The librarian told me that the book was twenty years overdue. She said, you owe us five thousand dollars. I said, you're joking. Not at all, she said. I said to her, well, how much would I have to pay if I had lost the book. She said, twenty dollars, the price of the book. I

(Continued on next page)

said to her, well, give me the book and I'll give you twenty dollars, and we'll just say that the book was lost. She said, I can't do that. I said, why not? She said, because the book is not lost – it's right here. I said to her, well, give me the book, or let me take it out again, and I'll come back tomorrow and say that I lost it. She said, no, I can't do that. I said, why not? She said, because you can't take out the book again until after you've paid all the overdue charges. I said to her, does this make sense to you? She said, I dunno. I said, this is lunacy, how can you charge me five thousand dollars for a twenty dollar book? She said, I dunno. I said to her, tell you what, I'll buy the book from you. I'll give you fifty bucks, that's more than twice the value of the book. She said, I can't do that. I said why not? She said, I dunno. I turned to leave – without paying the overdue charges. She said, where are you going. I said, I dunno.

I went back to the grocery store. Just to check up on them, so to speak. My mission was espionage. My camouflage was shopping. My strategy was to pretend to be shopping, while in fact I was conducting my investigations. I performed some reconnaissance and discovered that all the cashiers were women. I asked one of them why that was so. She said, I dunno. I assumed it was all part of the conspiracy. I also discovered a giant Chinese grapefruit, the size of a ten-pin bowling ball. I wondered what the hell the Chinese are putting in their manure, so to speak. Of course, I dunno.

In the afternoon I decided to go to the peace rally. Thousands of people were protesting the latest war. A lot of them were carrying signs like, "Make Love, Not War", and, "Peace Now", and, "No Blood For Oil", and, "War Is No Solution". The protesters were chanting and singing and speechifying and marching. The protesters started leaning a bit against the police lines and barriers. They started pushing a bit against the police lines. More people kept coming to the protest. The crowds swelled. The pushing grew a bit harder. The cops started raising their voices, shouting, telling the crowds to back off. The cops started pushing back. Then the cops started shooting people in the eyes and faces with pepper spray. People were weeping, rubbing their eyes, bent over, screeching, shouting and stumbling around blindly. They made easy targets for the cops, who beat them mercilessly with their sticks. The rest of the protesters, those who could still see, pushed even more and harder. All the police batons came out

and were employed in the melee. Then the policemen's plastic shields were employed in the pushing. Teargas was fired. More and more people started being hit by the policemen's night sticks. Protesters were being pushed to the ground and stepped on by the cops. Many of the people were bleeding from being hit by the police batons. The protesters in the front lines started trying to seriously assault the cops. The cops retaliated with even greater force. Fists were flying, boots were kicking, the protest signs were wielded as clubs, bludgeons and poking weapons. People were scratching, biting, pulling hair and farting. The rally disintegrated into chaos, and then turned into a complete, full-scale riot. The riot squad moved in and took over. They came marching in, goose-stepping, beating their plastic shields with their batons. They would have made any Roman Centurion, or fascist proud. Another troupe on horseback pushed the crowds back with their huge, trained beasts. Eventually, the protesters were stunned, disoriented, overwhelmed and overpowered. In confusion, they started running and fleeing in all directions, trying to avoid the destruction and mayhem and bedlam and chaos and madness. They tried to dodge, jump over or circumvent the stinging teargas, the broken glass, the baton wielding, trigger-happy cops, the flailing limbs and swinging fists, the sticks, rocks, Molotov cocktails, burning gas fires, screaming people running amok and steaming piles of horseshit. I looked at my right hand man beside me. And he looked at me. Both of us with disbelief. I said to him, this is one hell of a peace rally. He said to me, yeah, it's a regular fucking war zone. I said, I might appreciate the irony of that if it weren't so fucking brutal and tragic. He said, how did this all start? I said, I dunno, maybe push comes to shove. He said, who pushed first? I said, I dunno, does it really matter? He said, I dunno.

Fortunately for me, I had managed to slip away before the very end of the violence, before things got utterly and totally out of control. I watched how it all turned out on the eleven o'clock, evening news. My wife, who had been in the kitchen, came out into the living room and watched the second half of the television broadcast with me. Neither of us spoke. Then, after the newscast had ended, she said to me, what was the protest all about? I scratched my head a bit, and then said, I dunno. ■

"That most ingenious paradox!  
We've quips and quibbles heard in flocks,  
But none to beat that paradox!"  
Sir William Schwenck Gilbert

# Straight & Narrow? Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate

(InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400,  
Downers Grove, IL 60515, 1995, 240 pages.  
www.ivpress.com / Ph. 630-734-4014 / Fax: 630-734-4200)

By Thomas E. Schmidt

Review Essay by Byron Fraser

## Introductory Quotes

"I have read almost every Christian book on homosexuality written during the past twenty years. This title [Straight & Narrow?] stands head and shoulders above all others."

—Bob Davies, Executive Director, Exodus International.

"Straight & Narrow? is without question the premier interdisciplinary resource for thinking Christians grappling with the perplexing moral status of homosexual behavior."

—Stanton L. Jones, Chairman, Dept. of Psychology, Wheaton College.

"...a large component of homosexual activists applaud biologic causation theories for their effect on public opinion but are philosophically committed to personal choice as opposed to any deterministic theory, biologic or environmental. Consider, for example, the perspective of Darrel Yates Rist [in "Are Homosexuals Born That Way?", The Nation, Oct. 19, 1992], cofounder of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation:

"In the summer of 1991, the journal Science reported anatomical differences between the brains of homosexual and heterosexual men. The euphoric media—those great purveyors of cultural myths—drove the story wildly....Reporters seized triumphantly on the renewed presumption that we humans are not responsible for our sexual choices any more than for whatever else we choose to do, that we are chromosomally driven to everything....But [LeVay's work—which has not been replicated and appears to have incorporated serious methodological flaws, not to mention suspect findings.—B.F.], like all such research, is a futile attempt to convince people who intuitively know better that under no circumstances can their children be lured by queer ideas if the urge is not embedded in their brains from birth....

In the end, science may well discover some way to describe the intricate play of genes and environment that entices any of us to make the subtle choices throughout our lives that lead us to our particular expressions, sexual or otherwise, in a conformity-

laden culture. Fine. Ultimately, though, it seems to me cowardly to abnegate our individual responsibility for the construction of sexual desires. Rather, refusing the expedient lie and insisting on the right to fulfill ourselves affectionately—in whatever direction our needs compel us, however contrary to the social norm they may be—is both honest and courageous, an act of utter freedom."

—quoted at p. 141 of Straight & Narrow?

"Archaeological studies confirm that the ancient world knew of homosexual desire and practice, even if the concept of a psychological orientation was not present. Many different types of homosexual behavior were flagrantly practiced. In light of that truth, it is striking that every time homosexual acts are mentioned in the Scriptures, they are condemned. Make no mistake: the biblical witness against homosexual behavior can be neutralized only by either grossly misinterpreting the Bible or moving away from a high view of Scripture.

...The core of the traditional Christian position on homosexual practice is...the entire Christian vision of sexuality....this vision,...to live by a higher standard.

...if we do not understand ourselves first as divine handiwork created in God's image, and understand God's creational intent in his works, everything else will be distorted.... We must remember ...that the Fall twists and ruins everything, but does not destroy the imprint of creation....

The heart of Christian sexual morality is this: God made sexual union for a purpose—the uniting of husband and wife into one flesh in marriage....

...God is the Maker, the One who sets the design...., God never promised to be fair by mere human standards. We are saved by grace, but in the race that Paul talks about, the race to press on to the high calling of Christ, some of us start further...from the ideal. But that does not make the goals that God ordains illegitimate or nonbinding...."

—Stanton L. Jones, The Gay Debate, pp. 9-10, 12 & 16.

## "The Culture of Tolerance

How did the shift occur from morality to rights, and why has it proven persuasive? In the broadest terms, we might consider developments in Western and especially American culture. Begin with the affirmation that all people are created equal, and continue with the principle



that the state should not rule in matters of personal conscience. Implication: the state should protect privacy. But then— and here's the rub —gradually remove the notion of a universal standard by which to evaluate behavior (the Judeo-Christian tradition), and people are left to evaluate their own behavior, which is all equally moral because it is all equally legal. The flip side of this is that it becomes immoral— and it could actually become illegal —to express intolerance, and the definition of intolerance could extend to any challenge to a legally protected behavior or opinion.

The confusion between what is legal and what is moral, and the emergence of tolerance as the supreme virtue, stands behind most of the important issues being debated today....”

— Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?*, Ch. 2: “What All The Fuss Is About”, pp. 25-26.

“Christ was our perfect model of love and compassion, and we have much to learn from his love for sinners and participation in their lives. But he didn't just ooze warm fuzzies: Christ also had the gall to tell others how to live their lives, to insist that his truth was the only truth and to claim that he alone was the way to God. In short, Jesus was what many people today would call a narrow-minded bigot.

And we, the church, have been entrusted with proclaiming the message that we have received from him. When we do, we risk being called rigid and narrow-minded. We must face the reality that Christianity ‘discriminates’.

— Stanton L. Jones, *The Gay Debate*, pp. 23-24.

I'm not a Christian or a homosexual so you can all take a deep breath, relax, and rest assured that you're not going to get any sermon from me on either side of this one. What is my “angle”, in raising this “hot topic”, then, anyhow? Well, there are quite a number of unresolved questions I've personally had around this whole general area of interest for quite some time, more than any one particular “burning issue” concern I felt needed to be addressed, and I'm sure this is true for a great many readers of this journal. I lacked clarity, comprehensive information and understanding about this entire subject-matter so, when I saw Thomas E. Schmidt's highly-recommended book promising some authoritative answers to help “sort things out”, I welcomed the opportunity to give it a read. I've traveled to Christian authors in the past for profitable, outside-the-liberal-media-mainstream, instruction around a number of perplexing societal questions (for whatever reason, it seems to me that they are often offering some of the most poignant, seriously reflective, articulate and thorough/ contextually-informed commentary available— enlightening perspectives you just can't find anywhere else) and *Straight & Narrow* certainly does not disappoint in this regard. So my purpose here is to hopefully be of some service by sharing with you some of these exploratory findings as well as throwing my usual philosophical 2 or 3 cents worth (invoking Schopenhauer's “On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason” might, however, be overdoing things— ya think?!) into this

theological/sociological fray.

There is, of course, the well-known correlation between mental health problems— including, not insignificantly, the whole dual-diagnosis area (the statistics on which I will be relating presently) —and homosexual behavior: the fact that “there is overwhelming evidence that certain mental disorders occur with much higher frequency among homosexuals” (p. 113)— something readily apparent to anyone who has ever been anywhere proximate to this field, either in a work capacity or amongst the patient population/ex-mental patient “community”, etc. But another prevalent correlation (though undoubtedly not as statistically significant) is this whole related overlap between mental/spiritual “confusion” about homosexuality and what traditional and more modern (even “post-modern”) Christian theology has to say to us by way of ethical guidance here. On the surface, then, while the focus of Schmidt's book is not, as he says, primarily on “the debate between Christians and secularists about homosexuality, but [on] the debate between Christians and Christians about homosexuality” (p. 28), the resolution of this debate really does have virtually universal implications. And many of these touch on matters which are prominent/omnipresent in the mental health field, not merely in some abstract sense, but in concrete terms, on a “real world” day-to-day basis.

I should “confess”, too, that while not out to make converts one way or the other, I do bring a good deal of personal “baggage” to this issue which it is probably appropriate to “get out of the way” right off the top, before moving along to the specifics of the book. Anecdotal highlighting of this sort, I've often found, speaks most directly to others shared sense of the timely import of one's topic and helps ground the discussion in a meaningful commonality of experience. How I first twigged to the fact that there was this whole other pertinent and, more or less newly-emergent, dimension to my/our traditional understanding of the Gay/Lesbian Lib scene may be illustrative in this respect.

A little over a year ago I was astounded when a vaguely Left-leaning ex-mental patient and Christian friend of mine, operating on his superficial knowledge about me being somewhat well-known as a “Right Wing” Libertarian (and, I guess, automatically assuming that that was just a euphemism for “a warmed-over conservative who wants to smoke dope” [a rather commonplace misapprehension]— and that I must be, ipso facto, homophobic, like almost every other conservative he had ever known), accused me of harboring prejudice against “sodomites”. Now, no fault on this individual for not knowing what a libertarian is, but this was something of a wake-up call/culture shock “sign of the times” for me and more than a little ironic on at least two counts. First of all, as anyone the least bit familiar with the history of the modern-day libertarian movement (1) will attest, most political conservatives and/or “culturally conservative” Christians have continually castigated and rejected libertarians— and their main ideological positions —virtually from day one of the movement's inception, on the

grounds that they are really all libertines (which, granted, was not such an off-base stereotypical characterization back in the late 60s/early 70s, but nowadays is completely outmoded as any sort of—even remotely accurate—generalization). Secondly (and, again, what this person could not be expected to know), the libertarian movement has been virtually top-heavy with a profusion of gay activists and intellectuals scattered throughout our ranks, at every level, for years—and no one thinks anything of it! It's never been "an issue". I personally, for instance, worked closely, during the late 70s/early 80s with The MacKay Society, named for John Henry MacKay ("Germany's Poet-Anarchist", novelist, biographer of Max Stirner (2), and major homosexual rights representative around the turn of the century)—donating many thousands of dollars towards translation and publication projects—without ever even giving a second-thought to the fact that MacKay was gay, as were most of the people associated with that particular subset of the movement. (I could go on with numerous other examples like this.) So coming from this particular "cultural milieu" background where gays and straights just totally "got along" in basic good-humored harmony, working elbow-to-elbow in "The Cause", thinking that illiberal views about sexuality were all pretty much "a thing of the past"—at least within our circles—I was, as I say, now stunned at this Christian (an avowed Fundamentalist, no less) seemingly wanting to put me in the "homophobe" box. Was all of my youthful Christian Conservative-bashing coming back to haunt me in this perverse form, or what? Something which had previously escaped my attention was definitely amiss with where I had presumed we, as a society, were at culturally; I was beginning to feel empathy with my life-long arch-enemies (for God's sake?! If I could be wrongly accused and borne such false witness against around the whole Gay/Lesbian Lib thing carried to absurd extremes ("gone mad"?), might this not be true of them too? So you can see why I was pretty ripe for hearing Schmid's main theme when his book came across my path not long after this.

On a more personal note, a very close relative of mine from the previous ("W.W.2-era", for lack of a better term) generation, who was orphaned at age 10, had the experience of being "farmed out" (by his sisters) to the neighborhood "artistic" (a photographer) bachelor-guy who "took an interest in him" and was thought by all and sundry to be a "healthy (substitute-father) male influence" in his life; he taught him things, took him to conventions and on camping trips, etc. (a "pillar of the community" who was known to do this sort of thing, regularly, for other needy youth, too). Of course, you know where this is going: he was also a pedophile who molested my relative at puberty causing no end of future-life sexual identity "confusion". (Incredibly, when I visited the small-town scene where this all happened, some 30 or so years later, I witnessed this self-same individual [the pedophile]—guess what?—taking two local fatherless boys "camping". He hadn't been turned in yet; nothing had changed!) On top of this, this same relative was sexually assaulted by some oversize bullyboy homo-

sexual in the showers during basic training—a not uncommon experience in military settings in those, or any other, times—but this was something which, if it happened to you, the unwritten rule stipulated that you "never talked about". This and other cumulative wartime experiences plunged him into pretty severe alcoholism immediately post-war and landed him on Montreal's skid-row in pretty dire condition until "rescued" by another relative who helped him to "straighten up and fly right". Needless to say, though, he was seriously psychologically marred-for-life by all this and the cycle of abuse did not end there, but continued to severely impact my family with extremely deleterious results. Has this made me "homophobic"? I would have to say, in all honesty: "not in the least". But, when I see the statistics on recurring patterns of behavior like this, I have to think that there is legitimate cause for social concern—as, it seems, only the straight Christian community still has the gumption to publicly point out—and that such concern doesn't automatically qualify one as "a bigot".

Finally, by way of clearing the deck and honestly "putting all of my (personal) cards on the table", I should add that I certainly engaged in my share of decadence and/or quasi-"sinful" recreational debauchery (though nothing amounting to consciously-willed moral turpitude, I think I can safely say), like most of my generational compatriots, during my not atypical "misspent youth"—or "innocence of becoming" (in Nietzsche's apt coinage)—phase. So I hardly feel myself to be in any position to get moralistic about anyone else's wrong turns (if such they be) while, at the same time, having a very good experiential "feel" for the importance of ethical guidelines and positive environmental influences, of the sort Christians tend to emphasize in the area of sexual relations, and which were largely absent from my formative years. On the other hand, it also seems to have been my fate to have grown up surrounded by "sinners"—the worst "pathologically sexually deviant" of whom seem to have had the most extensive Christian theological indoctrination during childhood and adolescence (the "Aleister Crowley Syndrome"), a pretty commonplace observation and happenstance. And, of course, having spent time in regular and psychiatric prison, I am not at all unfamiliar with the Fundamentalist Christian gay bashers' necessary complement or, only pseudo-"oppositional", Other/Worse-Half: the coercive "institutional variety" "Christian" homosexuals/pedophiles (some would say the worst sort of "perverts"). These types can often quote the Bible backwards and forwards with every manner of base and/or lewd doubletalk innuendo implied/threatened. (I well-remember when I was first accosted by one of this ilk—an inmate trustee—who came on with a "meaningful": "It's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, but every word that comes out of it" [Matthew 15:11], e.g.) And they try to resolve their continuously conflictive/precarious sense of self-worth by rationalizing their sadomasochistic sexual orientation as "doing God's work" or fulfilling the Patriarchal Dominance (3) mandate-for-vengeance so endemic to the God of the Old Testament ("this world"?). In their view,

“destroying the ‘worlds’” (Ending “The Times”) of— or “killing” (homosexually “crucifying” [“breaking the bones” of, as they say]) —new “Christs” (“fresh fish”), as a physically invasive violation prelude to/correlate of/the psychically invasive violation deemed necessary for their desired level of Group-Mind Subsumption (“receiving” the “‘resurrected’ Christ”— again, in their “twisted” terms), is seen as more or less justified service to (Big Mother) Jehovah. And this makes them feel “virtuous”, in their way— that is, gives momentary relief from the never-ending cycle of weighty/depressive other-(and self)-imposed guilt-inducement inherent in the systemic framework of “double bind” (4) logic they have bought into and been convinced, at a deep level, that there is “No Exit” from (“Nobody gets in ‘alive’”? [with apologies to Jim Morrison]). Sounds pretty “sick”, you say, but, while it’s not news that many orthodox Christians see AIDS as fulfillment of the literal truth of their God’s prophecy/power, it’s also true that most fully sanction routine homosexual abuse, in prisons and other state institutions, as God’s “just deserts” and/or “perfectly just” retribution against anyone who has broken “the law” (read: not conformed to their God’s Domestication Agenda). In sum, I am not naïve about why so many people see most Christian talk about “compassion” vis-à-vis homosexuals as one big hypocritical façade.

Let’s turn, now, more directly to the text. I must say, first of all, that this is a superbly well-organized book which also manages to pull off that delicate balancing act between concise layman-accessible readability and eminently scholarly demonstrative mastery of— and reference to —all the most relevant source materials. This is achieved largely by putting some 38 pages of comprehensive and very helpful notes (almost 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the book) all at the back, leaving the main body of continuous prose clear to reflect a fine “essentialist” distillation. The arguments are tightly reasoned, with skillful marshalling of supporting empirical datum, under efficient digestible subheaded segments. And the style is lively, with a generous sprinkling of memorable creative turns-of-phrase— even not a few “quotable quote” one-line “zingers” —throughout. Pretty first-class writing— and thinking —all in all. Nor does the fact that the publication date is 1995 imply that the main thesis and research has, in any way, been substantially superceded, or might be standing in need of revision/updating: it’s just as timely now as it was then. In short, I have no reservations about saying that Professor Schmidt (a Cambridge Ph.D. who specializes in teaching New Testament ethics at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California) has done one hell of a job here; and it’s easy to see why this work has been so widely acclaimed by top-notch theological authorities as well as a broad spectrum of noted lay community leaders. I would just like to proceed, then, in the space remaining, by selectively highlighting some of the material covered under the book’s 8 Chapter Headings to give the interested reader a brief introductory “feel” for the scope of the subject-matter treated therein.

#### Chapter 1: “About Me, About You”

Schmidt begins with a very constructive call for some sensitive appreciation of the complexity of this subject-matter as well as emphasizing the need for a personalist-type, “experiential” approach: homosexuality “with a human face”, as it were— so that the persons involved are not lost sight of, nor hated/condemned, in some rationalistic/moralistic arguments-strictly-from-verse abstractionism. And, of course, he is only too aware of the liability of the Fundamentalist Christians’ approach whereby, as he says elsewhere (p. 128), “the substance of their message is all too often lost in an abrasive style that makes it seem that they revel in displaying the sinfulness of others. They also tend to undermine the general truth of their claims by focusing on sensational examples rather than thorough research”. I think this is a justified reproach— but, as he also points out, the “you can’t demonize those who show a human face” principle can and should cut both ways. That is to say, (as illustrated by my personal anecdote above), in the current cultural atmosphere, there is ample unthinking knee-jerk bigotry on both sides of this question; and:

“Although I see my primary responsibility to encourage deeper understanding and sensitivity among morally conservative Christians, I hope that I serve another purpose for those who disagree with my conclusions— that is, to demonstrate the possibility of disagreement without stupidity, without hatred, without slogans. Argue with me, but do not put me in a box, do not make a caricature of me in order to dismiss my conclusions. Allow me a face.” (p. 16)

His orientation is quite candidly that of evangelical affirmation as distinct from fundamentalist exclusion and, though his central purpose is not to proselytize in any sectarian manner, he does have a few instructive guidelines to share about this for novices. Essentially, as he says, “First, evangelicalism affirms the centrality of Jesus”— but the focus is mainly on the message in the WAY of Jesus; or, as the pop colloquial saying has it, more on “walking the walk, than talking the talk”, so to speak. One of the best succinct expressions I’ve ever seen of this perspective (and again, for information purposes only; I’m not “pushing this line”), as I have come to understand it— and if I may be permitted this brief interlocution —was from Nietzsche:

“In the entire psychology of the ‘Gospel’ the concept guilt and punishment is lacking; likewise the concept reward. ‘Sin’, every kind of distancing relationship between God and man, is abolished— precisely this is the ‘glad tidings’. Blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to any conditions: it is the only reality— the rest is signs for speaking of it...

The consequence of such a condition projects itself into a new practice, the true evagelic practice. It is not a ‘belief’ which distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts, he is distinguished by a different mode of acting. Neither by words nor in his heart does he resist the man who does him evil....He is not angry

with anyone, does not disdain anyone....

The life of the redeemer was nothing else than this practice— his death was nothing else....He no longer required any formulas, any rites for communicating with God— not even prayer. He has settled his accounts with the whole Jewish penance-and-reconciliation doctrine; he knows that it is through the practice of one's life that one feels 'divine', 'blessed', 'evangelic', at all times a 'child of God'. It is not 'penance', not 'prayer for forgiveness' which leads to God: evangelic practice alone leads to God, it is God!— What was abolished with the Evangel was the Judaism of the concepts 'sin', 'forgiveness of sin', 'faith', 'redemption by faith'— the whole of Jewish ecclesiastical teaching was denied in the 'glad tidings'.

The profound instinct for how one would have to live in order to feel oneself 'in Heaven', to feel oneself 'eternal', while in every other condition one by no means feels oneself 'in Heaven': this alone is the psychological reality of 'redemption'.— A new way of living, not a new belief..." (The Anti-Christ, Sec. 33)

## Chapter 2: "What All the Fuss Is About"

In this chapter, Schmidt outlines the context of the current debate: how the movement for homosexual civil rights has spilled over into a fairly substantial number of Christian homosexual writers and activists calling for pretty much wholesale "revisionist" reinterpretation of all the Scriptural passages dealing with this. He references and restates these arguments— in detail and, I think, fairly —as a prelude to his analytical critique in subsequent chapters. And he makes the point— vitally important from a discriminating ethicist's point of view—that, in contradistinction to the categories where analogies about "prejudice" properly apply (e.g., race and gender), homosexuality is not something you are but something you do. That is, in his opinion, it is an artificial "identity" which has resulted from sequential choices— and, therefore, having no inherent necessity, should not (on other grounds, which he gets to) be granted "acceptability". My only major objection here would be that it is probably more on the order of something which is done to you (psychical and/or physical imposition by an adult upon a vulnerable and defenseless child, for the most part) than something you do. Granted, after you're "oriented", the identity is progressively reinforced behaviorally until it comes to seem like "who one is"— and it is important to emphasize that there is also the choice-element as a "way out"—but the overwhelming evidence, it seems to me, is that the way in was, almost invariably, by means of the sorts of "forced choices" that (Christian psychologist) Dr. Ty C. Colbert so ably elucidates (5).

As to why the whole "homosexuality-&-prejudice" issue still seems to be so much "with us", when everyone over 30 had assumed this was pretty much a "been there, done that" thing, I believe there are at least two main explanatory factors:

1) A lot of what "the fuss" continues to be about is the ever-present quest for a suitable class of victims for the fulfillment of the pseudo-self-esteem needs of the "I'm more liberal than thou" crowd— the egalitarians desperately seeking non-equality (via the latest cheap

mass-consciousness and media-marketed interpersonal quick- "virtue"-fix lever). In other words: Even though I'm a vicious, mean-spirited, conniving/competitive/exploitative (— you fill in the blanks —) person in most aspects of my life, at least I have empathy with gays/minorities/animals— etc., etc., etc.,...you name it —(aren't I a wonderful person— really?).

2) The generational overlapping corollary of this last is, of course, that every younger crowd must have their moral righteousness "thing" via which to carve-out/define some separate/distinguishing "ethical space" from the preceding generation— to make them feel "special" and through which to flex their "unique"-genius will-to-power muscles for a while, until they grow-down and learn worse. With my generation it was "rad" politics which went cyclically out-of-vogue and, with the current younger generation, it was the embrace of homosexual "freedom" as its chic-cause. This probably added a much longer life-span to this movement than it intrinsically merited, but nevertheless served their ulterior needs.

## Notes

1) It is not my intention here to espouse or advertise libertarian ideology, however, for those with any interest in following up on this point, see the comprehensive recent history: Bringing The Market Back In: The Political Revitalization of Market Liberalism (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1997) by John L. Kelly. An earlier very good overview is Liberalism at Wit's End: The Libertarian Revolt against the Modern State (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984) by Stephen L. Newman. On early movement history, see: Radical Libertarianism: A Right Wing Alternative (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970) and, for one of the best General Reference Bibliographies covering the entire spectrum of anarchist thought— as well as chapters on both Right and Left Libertarianism —: The American as Anarchist: Reflections on Indigenous Radicalism (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978) by David DeLeon, pp. 196-235.

2) The brilliant libertarian author of The Ego and His Own (1844) who Marx and Engels considered to be the "most dangerous and the most effective philosophical critic of socialism". See especially, R.W.K. Paterson, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Chapter 5: "Stirner and the Origins of Marxism", p. 107.

3) That both civilizations and religions ("godforms") alternate historically between periodic phases of patriarchal and matriarchal dominance, or that Judeo-Christianity represents a phase of Matriarchal Rebellion— in particular against the preceding Egyptian Patriarchy (as noted Egyptologist, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, says in The Temple In Man [Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1977, p. 68]: "When speaking of Pharaonic Egypt,...this was the patriarchal epoch, the source.") —is not, for me, controversial. This has been observed by authorities on anthropology and mythology too numerous to mention here. For the notion that Judeo-Christianity (not exclusively by any means, but typically) represents merely one possible stage in the sociobiology of transpersonal consciousness evolution, I am indebted to Tim Leary's seminal essay, "The Eight Crafts of God: Towards an Experiential Science of Religion", first

delivered as an address to the American Psychological Association in 1963 (see Chapter 8 of Changing My Mind Among Others: Lifetime writings, selected and introduced by the author [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1982. pp. 87-110]) wherein this developmental level was first described under subheading 4, "Ethics: God the Moralist". This basic schema for his Periodic Table of Neurological Evolution or Successive Stages of Consciousness Circuitry was subsequently amplified extensively with detailed revisions in many book-length versions (notably: Exo-Psychology [1977], NeuroPolitics: The Sociobiology of Human Metamorphosis [1977], and Info-Psychology [1987])— and is most ably elucidated in Robert Anton Wilson's Prometheus Rising (Phoenix, AZ: Falcon Press, 1983); see especially Chapter 8: "The 'Moral' Socio-Sexual Circuit", pp. 101-124. For some very astute commentary on the political-economic and cultural aspects of contemporary American society as reflecting matriarchal dominance, in contrast to other societies and historical times, see "The Great Women's Lib Issue: Setting It Straight" by Murray N. Rothbard in Egalitarianism As A Revolt Against Nature and other Essays (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1974). It should additionally be noted that whether or not any particular official or "unofficial" theological "governing body" is actually made up of males or females is largely irrelevant to its gender-specific dominant values-orientation.

4) For a fairly extensive explication of "double bind" theory see: Man and Woman, War and Peace: The Strategist's Companion (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) by Anthony Wilden; also: Double Bind: The Foundation of the Communicational Approach to the Family (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1976), ed. by C.E. Sluzki and D.C. Ransom. Here is a brief relevant excerpt from Wilden (pp. 13-14):

"... Gregory Bateson and his colleagues discovered the 'paradoxical injunction' in the 1950s in pathological communication in the family, where some family members, usually the parents, unconsciously collaborate in driving another family member crazy— and come to depend for their own relationship on the presence of their 'mad or bad' victim-cum-scapegoat.

[...]

The communications therapists called these paradoxes 'double binds',...

In an ordinary contradiction, verbal, logical, or otherwise, it is possible to make a stable decision in favor of one aspect or another. The same is true of a distinction...and an opposition....But a paradox is a question that requires two simultaneous answers. A two-way double bind is an either/or message in which each alternative excludes the other (in analytic logic). But it is coded in such a way that the either/or relation of exclusion demands to be read as a both-and relation of inclusion at the same time. Hence the paradox. And so long as we accept the context of the coding and constraints that create the paradox, there is no way out of it." (emphasis mine— B.F.)

Transposing to the context of typical Christian duplicity around the homosexuality issue, we can restate their main operative "paradoxical injunction" as: "Love your fellow man (man-kind is 'bad' and needs to be woman-ized/domesticated for the 'good' of all), but hate homosexuals"— and see the clear implications in light of the main Scriptural passage (Romans 1: 24-28) dealing with this:

"Therefore [because of idolatry] God gave them up in the  
(Byron Fraser's Review Essay will be continued in the next issue)

lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves,

Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions [pathos atimia]. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural,

And in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind and to things that should not be done." (emphasis mine— B.F.)

Note here, especially, the internally consistent vengeful/destructive Matriarchal Dominance Domestication Agenda's ("Jehovah's") logic— implicit in all received formalized Christianity —: because you don't worship our godform (read also: sexually love/marry us women [fulfill your heterosexual "duties"]), therefore, we will make you (our God will make you) morally degraded (homosexual) and variously physically unclean ("impurity": akatharsia in the Greek)— that is, try to "produce" pathos — "pathology" —and, therefore, "sickness" of mind and body. If these are not "produced", by the Judeo-Christian logic, then their deity suffers lese majesty. Hence, following the classic formulation: "What The Thinker thinks, The Prover proves" (Chapter 1 in R.A. Wilson, op. cit., note 2), it is virtually incumbent on the still-believing, but wayward, Christian "sinner" to produce such behavior as a dutiful affirmation of the "only 2 choices" reality-map he/she has been (usually) browbeaten into, almost from birth. And one can see clearly that the Biblical authors were well-aware of their attempted built-in Original Trip-Down Premise here ("And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge [they couldn't escape our logical trap]", etc.) They're basically saying: Go ahead and try to defy our ideological system's dominance; once you've "bought it"— at a deep level — you'll just be screwed-down every time you try to: you'll prove our "case"!

Further illustrative of this two-part Manicheanist logic of actually advocating and wanting to "produce" sexual perversion (or "inversion", as the Catholics term it) to prop up their matriarchal godform's rule/dominance, is the typical aforementioned "Christian" homosexual abuser, (usually originally "womanized" by similar abuse), who thinks— at some fundamental level —that he is getting back at the (bad) man who "did it to him" (all men— the "nature" of men", in fact) by perpetuating such behavior— without seeing that it was the excess of woman that was the Original Problem. So, until he can challenge the Contextual Frame of this shared operative premise (that only man, and not woman, is innately bad/ "evil" and needs to be "womanized" for the good of all) he cannot escape the Biblical wheel-of-prophecy/closed system/ "good"-needs- "evil" times-machine/cycle of abuse. Is it any wonder that "penal colonies" and penitentiaries are also called "houses of 'correction'" (of error against a Matriarchal [God's] Domestication Agenda— and that of its "chosen" [that is, elect] representatives' Rule, of course!)— or that the modern-day synonym for criminology, as an academic discipline, is unabashedly (and unashamedly!) the study of: "deviance"?!

5) Broken Brains or Wounded Hearts: What Causes Mental Illness (Santa Ana, CA: Kevco Publishing, 1996).

# Bulletin Board

The Self-Help Resource Association of B.C. (SHRA) conducts regular Facilitator Training Workshops for Self-Help and Mutual Aid Support Groups. They also publish a quarterly newsletter and the Directory of Self-Help/Support Groups in Greater Vancouver with approximately 600 listings, many of them dealing with mental health. The latest edition (2003-2004) of the Directory is now available for \$12.00 or \$10.00 at the office if you drop by and pick it up. SHRA is located at Suite 306 – 1212 West Broadway, Van. B.C. V6H 3V1. Tel: 604-733-6186. Fax: 604-730-1015. [www.vcn.bc.ca/shra](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/shra)

The Alternative & Integrative Medical Society (AIMS) at UBC publishes the free AIMS Wellness Directory: Lower Mainland Guide to Complementary Health. It contains approximately 250 paid and many unpaid listings dealing with a broad spectrum of mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of healing. For a Directory and/or more info. about the Society, phone 604-822-7604. Fax: 604-822-2495. E-mail [info@aims.ubc.ca](mailto:info@aims.ubc.ca). Web: [www.aims.ubc.ca](http://www.aims.ubc.ca). AIMS, University of British Columbia, Box 81 – 6138 SUB Boulevard, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z1. Office: B80A Woodward Building, UBC.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective has peer counselling and makes referrals to support services, groups, and does advocacy work in health care reform. Their address is #1 - 175 E. 15th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5T 2P6. Info. by phoning 604-732-5262.

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups including a Women's Circle. Their address is #109 - 96 E. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5T 4N9 and the Co-ordinator of the Network may be reached at 604-733-5570.

Named after Vincent van Gough's homeopathic doctor, Paul Gachet, Gallery Gachet works to provide a safe, borderless place of artistic expression. It strives to be a place of healing and a center of artistic excellence. Founded in 1994 we provide opportunities to exhibit, perform, publish and sell work and to offer a place for support and community. We aim to use the canvas of the outside world to educate and demystify the public on issues related to mental health and abuse.

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Public Resource Centre in the Areas of Mental Health, Wellness and Mental Illness. Books, videos, journals on loan for 2 weeks. Working and reading space, and internet access computers available.

Open: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Location: CMHA (Vancouver-Burnaby), 175 West Broadway Phone: 604-872-4902, Ext. 236 (Alan)

\* Our newsletter 'All About Us' is created by Resource Centre volunteers and staff.

The University of Ottawa in cooperation with Our Voice present Alternatives Site  
<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~nstaman/alternatives/>

\*Our Voice is a publication containing viewpoints of the psychiatrized since 1987.

The CIF sponsored Tardive Dyskinesia Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 2:00 pm at the Self-Help Resource Association, #306 - 1212 W. Broadway. Call 604-733-6186 for more information.

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