

In A Nutshell

"I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space..."
Wm. Shakespeare

Winter 2006-07

Danger and Opportunity in the Housing Crisis

by Jim Gifford

Mitch Snyder, the angry American advocate of justice for the homeless, died in the early 1990s. He had hung himself, apparently brokenhearted over a failed romance. Indeed!

The real failed romance was that of 'The American Dream'. Society has abdicated its responsibility in assisting its most needy citizens. For many of them, even the basics of nutritional food, decent housing and warm clothing are denied. They just wallow in the quagmire of a growing indifference, and even antipathy, to their fundamental human rights.

United in a common stand against this plague, we could redeem ourselves as a fair and just nation. But a house divided cannot stand. We may crumble under oppression from the greedy few. Perhaps Mitch could see the handwriting on the wall.

Yet, if we are to meet the needs of the down-trodden, our society's irresponsible self-indulgence and procrastination must be transformed into compassionate concern and action. Homelessness and lack of affordable housing are an epidemic that must be addressed.

Persons, many of whom have emotional and mental problems, are existing on the streets, in our parks, under bridges, in dilapidated ruins. They did not choose these circumstances although a few will confide about their freedom from the obligations and restraints of an overly regimented and overly stressed society. Unfortunately for them, cold and wet weather, and spells of painful hunger, are all too common a part of their everyday lives.

Many years ago, I was taking the bus home from the Mental Patients' Association Drop-In Lounge. It was late at night and had begun to snow. At one stop a bedraggled and lonely figure got on, begged permission for a free ride, then sat across from me. It was P. F., an old high school chum. I invited him to stay at my place.

Back at my modest suite, I made a meal while he had a hot shower. Later we talked. Then he slept in my bed while I stayed up reading and writing. In the morning he was on his way. There were others, not so lucky, who had been left out in the freezing cold.

There is another aspect to the plight of the homeless. Remember Burt Bacharach's hit "A House Is Not a Home"? Many in North America exist in houses, not homes. A home is meant to be a sanctuary of love and a place for encouragement and growth. Yet countless adults and children live in dysfunctional environments where wife-beating, child molestation, and addictions, are the order of the day. These are the unspoken homeless.

The House of Parliament, not infrequently, gives their members substantial pay, expense and retirement increases and benefits. With the dangers to society of homelessness, when will the political leaders seize the opportunity to better conditions for its less fortunate constituents? After all, they are "The House".

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Winter 2006-07

The Tennessee Waltz

by Satya Devi

My father always wanted me to sing for him, mostly hymns, but his favourite was The Tennessee Waltz, and I felt a full vocal range soar from higher powers. I was going to sing, forever I was going to sing. I think I could sing before I could talk. A baby sister came along and she was just starting to stand up and take a few steps on her own, with a little help from one of the family. She was just starting to stand up, steadied herself on the radiator, when my voice cracked, I started too high or something—and my father said, that's enough and reached over and picked her up and sat her on his lap—but I was standing freeze-frame, and couldn't breathe or move, nothing was real, and my voice went down in my throat and never came back up again.

Years and years went by and I kept my voice in a lower register and manipulated the language and wrote several books which were really great, they really were, they just weren't for reading so I never wrote them down...and there I stand brushing away the adulation and turning down the Nobel Prize because those bastards won't get out of Afghanistan, I rattle in my X-rays and I remember the night and the Tennessee Waltz.

A Prayer

by Oliver Cross

My body belongs to God
Not me, or psychiatrists
And any long-term effects
of taking psychiatric medications
I trust will heal
In the best way possible.

Amen

The Editorial Board of **In A Nutshell** welcomes letters, articles, and poetry on mental health issues from you, our readers.

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Here, In The City

by Terrence Levesque

Cars were speeding along the street and the buses were covering the town. Construction in the area was going up and daylight was coming down. There were trucks upon the highway and motorcycle cops. The sun was shining with not a cloud in the sky.

I was at my apartment overlooking the road. To the right there was a view of the mountains and a bit of a view of the harbour. It is the middle of summer with very hot weather. This is the here and now, regardless of the time. The ever-changing face of the city is laid out before me. People are attending to business, they have to earn their keep. The young and the restless are with us today.

But what I see is just the outer shell of something more. I may have to post a letter in the mailbox or I may have to go out to the bank. I will have to answer the telephone or play some music on the radio. I will, of course, read the morning newspaper and I may catch the news on television, although I find it very depressing.

These are some of the things I will do as I live each day here in the city. Some people are concerned with philosophy, the arts and sciences, medicine, law and higher education. Some people are not. There are many walks of life. They are all contained here in the city.

Being aware of my surroundings is very important. It brings me out of myself and helps me in not dwelling on old patterns of thought. People I see are moving about, they are working and they are living. If I can relate to my surroundings in the here and now, then I will not be stuck with just a memory of how things used to be.

Of course, there is always the seasons, which are constant and this does not change from year to year. I will think of the holidays on the calendar and will attend to Christmas, New Year's, Easter, Labor Day and Halloween.

There is more to this life than meets the eye. It is a wonder to be alive. As the day draws to an end, the night crowd will appear, and they will be in the bars and the clubs and the restaurants. The city is alive night and day. Thoughts run through my mind about this city and the people in it. I am only one person in a sprawling metropolis. I am taking it all in. I am absorbing all that I can.

This summer was long and hot. I have, however, taken some time to play some chess in the park with my worker. I continue to lose against him, but it is the thrill of the game that counts. He is a very good chess player and could be a rated player.

I am living alone at the moment and I am taking some time to clear my thoughts, to do some reading and to adjust to the new area I am living in.

I do not like to dwell on old problems. Surely they have no relevance in today's time. As the time runs on, many things have been forgotten.

Although I am situated here in the city, my mind is not limited to the daily goings on. I see people in all their humanity. I have explored the depths of the human condition. Each of us finds his own meaning in life. It is a lonely, thankless search.

We will now move into September and the fall. The weather will be cooler. Now is the time and place. Yesterday is gone. I hope I am going down the right road in life, only time will tell. Living here in the city is a wonder to behold. It's quite a life and quite a wonder – and still the time runs on.

I am holding my own in this world. Still lucid and clear thinking. As the days dwindle down to a precious few, I wonder what lies ahead. I am held here in the city. That is not a bad thing. I find this life interesting. It is full of twist and turns. In the days ahead I will try and maintain my sanity and maybe, just maybe, I will be a better man.

"The ever-changing face of the city is laid out before me."

Quote:

"A city must be a place where groups of women and men are seeking and developing the highest things they know."

Margaret Mead

Competition

by Oliver Cross

"When we listen openly, deeply, the way a beautiful piece of music can draw us in... that is healing. In those times, we realize that the fundamental nature of existence is harmless."

—Thomas Moore

The most important things in life cannot be written down. Approach, respect, flow do not translate well onto the written page.

Choreographers have this issue. There have been attempts to document ballet productions for library or historical purposes, with only limited success. Notations of dance movements don't capture enough of the essence—the essential or subtle—aspects of the dance.

Another example: if we approach aboriginal cultures with respect, something can be learned. If not, there is nothing for us there.

If we approach the capacity of living creatures to heal with respect, we may learn something as well.

Our legal system is essentially *thesis-antithesis-synthesis*. In playing our part as citizens, we take only the position of *thesis* or *antithesis*. *Synthesis*, or balance, is out of our hands, left to the judge. Confucius taught that turning to a system of laws rather than protecting the human

relationships involved amounted to evil, to be avoided at all costs if not necessary.

In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert Pirsig wrote, in summary, that we have implicitly inherited a legacy of argument from the ancient Greeks between logicians and rhetorics that the logicians won. Pirsig described logicians as able to make compelling arguments in writing, on paper.

Rhetorics, however, were very impressive in person and consistently won public debates with logicians. This upset the logicians, of course. How did the logicians ultimately win the argument? By waiting until the rhetorics died, taking their writings and constructing logical arguments on paper to show flawed thinking, once and for all. Logic, the logical mind, does not concede death. Today, if we look up the word *logic* in the dictionary we find something about science, analysis, truth. If we look up *rhetoric*, we find something we're told essentially isn't worth listening to.

Music is rhetorical. Dance is rhetorical. Art is rhetorical.

Violence is logical. War is not rhetorical. Logical science is not harmless.

Don't read this—practice. When we move together, it is healing. Like a dance—a step—in harmlessness we don't resist each other. ■

"If we approach the capacity of living creatures to heal with respect, we may learn something as well."

Quote:

"Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is the thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmár

Therapy is about connection. It is about participation in a relationship. Therapy is direct experience. There is labor involved, the birth of new experience often needs a midwife to attend. Expression, birth, movement: from the covert, unseen, unknown to the overt, visible, tangible, palpable; the unspeakable, the unconscious that runs the show outside of awareness begins to speak, becomes conscious, available for thinking, for conscious decision-making. The present moment, the here and now, struggles with memory, hope, and fear; the past wants to present itself, the future is nothing but a big screen for the projections of one's fantasy or imagination; seeds of creation, seeds of destruction.

Therapy is not teaching, it's not a medical intervention, it's not the application of a scientific theory; it's not fixing something that's broken, it's nothing mechanical, it's truly personal. It's not "looking at," it's not about **diagnosis, prognosis, treatment plans**, therapeutic techniques, putting people through regimens because we, the experts, know better what is good for others than they could possibly know themselves. Therapy is like **politics** or **ethics**, a *practical* science according to Aristotle that must be practiced by the seat of one's pants in changing, unfathomable circumstances, moment by moment. It's not like medicine or architecture, which Aristotle classified as *productive* sciences because they use blueprints for what is to be achieved. There is no blueprint for how or who my patient ought to be. It's not like physics or chemistry, the *theoretical* sciences, because looking at another through the lens of any theory would blur the other's distinct, idiosyncratic features. Experiencing the other as one of *those* would perpetuate and add to the other's pain of alienation that might have brought the other into therapy in the first place. The most important question I seem to be asking very frequently is "Under what circumstances would I behave exactly as my patient? What would I have to believe about the world, myself, others, etc. to act as (s)he does?"

People seem to get into trouble, they suffer, and then begin to manifest the plethora of symptoms that

psychiatry pounces upon and drug companies grow rich on, in recognizable, articulable ways. Let me count them:

- (i) Playacting;
- (ii) Believing that habit is reality and that freedom is illusory;
- (iii) Feeling ashamed and shaming others;
- (iv) Not mourning irreparable, irreconcilable, irreversible losses;
- (v) Refusing to see the obvious because what may have to be done is unpleasant (the Good is often not the Pleasant);
- (vi) Mixing up what love is with what desire is;
- (vii) Humoring, placating;
- (viii) Being negligent and/or not caring;
- (ix) Being willful;
- (x) Allowing fear to enter into decision-making;
- (xi) Hoping that there exists a decision without a sacrifice;
- (xii) Refusing or neglecting to cultivate enjoyment.

This list is nowhere near complete; the above are just a dozen instances, examples of what leads us into distress, despair, and malaise. David Smail, a British psychologist, asks, "What's the most one human being can do for another?" His answer is very modest, but seems to me accurate. We can provide shelter. We can help de-mystify what's what. We can encourage. And that's it. Let me expand a little on each of the three acts that I can help another with. I believe that a lot of suffering is caused by homelessness. If I don't have shelter, I cannot relax. I am probably in survival mode, fearful and exhausted. Some are homeless even though they have an address that they call home. A teenage girl whose father periodically rapes her has no home, even though she lives in the family home. She needs a safe shelter just to gather herself enough, to thaw out of her frozen terror, even to begin to tell me her story. At first my consulting room has to be that

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*"There is no
blueprint for
how or who my
patient ought to
be"*

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temporary asylum. Her story might be confused, riddled with guilt and shame. She may try to tell me "what happened," and feel terrible about herself. I can help her de-mystify the situation by exploring who did what to whom, what is coercion, powerlessness, responsibility, abandonment, isolation, etc. And then I could encourage her, hearten her, support her, and empower her until she realizes that now she has a genuine choice, whereas up until now she really didn't. I could encourage her to flee, help her find a place and keep her whereabouts secret from her family. And whether at this point she needs to take up therapy, or karate, or both, that would be her choice.

I think that most therapists, who work according to a theory, a system, or a school, especially conventional psychiatrists, are criminally intolerant of doubt. Their inability to tolerate uncertainty betrays their own thinking and their patients. It has been suggested that societies get the doctors they deserve. The majority wants to maintain the illusion of there being experts who know. It is frightening to wake up to childhood's end, and realize that none of us know very much at all, but we can keep each other company while searching for the good life.

The question "What to do when you don't know what to do?" is very rarely permitted in so-called professional circles. Another troublesome question is "How to live your life sanely (archaic meaning: *in good health*) when you are caught up in collective madness?" Finding a good therapist is at times the entry point to a collective, a community of people who take themselves, each other, and the world we live in seriously. I began my work with R. D. Laing in 1974, he died in 1989, but even now, in 2006, I am still sustained by the community that organized itself around him.

Many find sanity in various Buddhist communities. Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim, now dead, started one

in the Black Forest in Austria that is still thriving. I have always found his words sheltering, de-mystifying and encouraging. In **The Way of Transformation** he writes, "The man who, being really on the Way, falls upon hard times in the world will not, as a consequence, turn to that friend who offers him refuge and comfort and encourages his old self to survive. Rather, he will seek out someone who will faithfully and inexorably help him risk himself, so that he may endure the suffering and pass courageously through it, thus making of it a 'raft that leads to the far shore.' Only to the extent that man exposes himself over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible arise within him. In this lies the dignity of daring. Thus, the aim of practice is not to develop an attitude which allows a man to acquire a state of harmony and

"...practice should enable him to let himself be assaulted, perturbed, moved, insulted, broken and battered..."

peace wherein nothing can ever trouble him. On the contrary, practice should teach him to let himself be assaulted, perturbed, moved, insulted, broken and battered — that is to say, it should enable him to dare to let go his futile hankering after harmony, surcease of pain, and a comfortable life in order that he may discover, in doing battle with the forces that oppose him, that which awaits him beyond the world of opposites. The first necessity is that we should have the courage to face life, and to encounter all that is most perilous in the world. When this is possible, meditation itself becomes a means by which we accept and welcome

the demons which arise from the unconscious — a process very different from the practice of concentration on some object as a protection against such forces. Only if we venture repeatedly through zones of annihilation can our contact with Divine Being, which is beyond annihilation, become firm and stable. The more a man learns whole-heartedly to confront the world that threatens him with isolation, the more are the depths of the Ground of Being revealed and the possibilities of new life and Becoming opened."

The dignity of daring, the courage to face life, zones of annihilation — this is what therapy is about. ■

Quote:

"Face the fearful with no fear, and its fearfulness disappears."

Chinese proverb

13 of Life's Great-While Sometimes Simultaneously Lousy and Bitter-Ironies

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

1) Be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it: -Sometimes, something we're convinced would be the best for us, or would be the best of luck, is actually the worst for us, indeed the worst of luck. And, of course, the reverse is just as true. (Thus, the profoundly insightful adage, "Thank God for unanswered prayers".) Therefore, we must always (at least try our very best to) keep in mind that the "terrible misfortune" we received from Fate when we slipped on the proverbial banana and broke our leg, forcing us to stay in bed for a month, actually prevented our premature death by keeping us out of the work office on the day that an earthquake brought the building crumbling down; or the lottery jackpot we missed because we stopped buying our regular-number lottery ticket just a week prior to the draw spared us from a life of "loved-ones" turning into despisers of our very existence. Undoubtedly, we should utilize this proverbial cloud's silver lining whenever we feel that "things could not go any worse". Though admittedly it often can be a lot easier said than done-a fact I know for myself

2) The worst of enemies can become the best of friends, and (unfortunately) vice versa:

-Although it's obviously fictitious, the morally-profound movie *Enemy Mine* nonetheless has a plausible theme: the two main characters-the alien Drac named Jeriba "Jerry" Shigan (Louis Gosset Jr.), and its human adversary, Willis Davidge (Dennis Quaid)-who are war-time adversaries, get to know each other while stranded on a hostile-environment planet and eventually become the closest of not just allies, but of friends. Indeed, the movie viewer need only note one character's tears when the other was about to go out on his own. (An absolutely incredible, heart-warming movie and story!) -However, sometimes a person that we may have once regarded as a good friend can end up being an enemy. Furthermore, as the ironic adage "with friends like that, who needs enemies?" states, we may find that we should keep that friend-turned-enemy as a "friend" basically for political reasons/interests.

3) Many people are 'educated' to the point of narrow-minded ignorance: -The well-"educated" are (choose to

be?) blind to the irony that science is somewhat like a religion, a faith. For, we, society as a whole, will usually believe in some "research finding" or "fact" because some people in long, white lab coats "found" it to be true; and when we read/hear that some "scientific fact" is indeed outdated or false, we will usually-willingly

consume the new "facts" as gospel truth. After all, it's science, so it should/must be true-right?

-If God was to descend to Earth from Heaven in supernatural glory, many well-"educated" skeptics would claim, and many would truly believe, that some very-talented illusionist (perhaps David Copperfield) must be pulling some sort of stunt. How would these skeptics know that it was but a stunt? "Because, we have no tangible proof that God exists." Apparently, no explanation, scientific or otherwise, would ever be sufficient for some well-"educated" people (or "experts") to even consider that the supernatural indeed occurs every day on Earth. It seems that there's always an available "logical explanation" to explain away every supernatural occurrence. Also, it seems that many people can be willfully blind. It's as though as long as the skeptic disbelieves some concept/possibility, somehow it does not exist on a subconscious level, anyway)-i.e., "If I don't 'know' of it or see it, it's not really there".

-According to one Internet website, "Magician James 'The Amazing' Randi has created a foundation that offers more than 1,100,000\$ [sic] to anyone who can demonstrate a paranormal phenomenon in a scientific test. Isn't it amazing that certain people are absolutely convinced that they have supernatural powers but that none of them seems interested in collecting such an amount of money? Food for thought ..." According to another website, ". Despite attempts by various [supernatural-feat-claiming] individuals, the prize has yet to be awarded." However, what is conveniently ignored by the skeptics is the fact that "The Amazing" Randi can completely avoid having to pay up by simply remaining "unconvinced" and/or by concocting some (even specious) "explanation".

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Freedom Song

by reinhart

i sing the song of love and light
i sing throughout the starry night
when all the world is poised to fight
my song of harmony takes flight

my song ascends on paper wings
to which the word of freedom clings
as the bells of peace and mercy ring
the whispering wind this song will sing

i sing the soul alive contrite
the fire in the heart alight
the prophet's message from the height
and justice for the poor set right

i sing the artistry of life
the duty of the man, the wife
i renounce the worldwide cause of strife
i lay down the gun, the sword, the knife

freedom is the premier right
ordained by god to the israelite
and from thence to everyman in sight
until none the other would slight

there's food enough for everyone
and land enough for every son
if every border be undone
and the war against possessions won

now i'm well aware that it sounds trite
when I sing about the poor man's plight
and the third world's sad recurring blight
and our culpability kept hid from sight

i sing the masterpiece of truth
the painting, the poem or the proof
mathematics and perspectives of life's eternal youth
the etiquette and formulas of the uncouth

i sing theories of time and light
the physics of flying a string or a kite
the context of space either curved or not quite
and the colours 'tween nothing, black and white

there's beauty here and everywhere
if one might see past worldly cares
conquer each mountain step by stair
and know that true wealth is but to share

i sing what is and what never should be
what could and what should make us free
i sing of love 'tween all of you and me
and a portrait of how some day might be

i take my place in the jailhouse choir
in society's vise and the rich man's plier
which have crucified every would-be messiah
and i sing of the lions, the cross and the fire

and still i sing of paradise on earth
where no amount of gold is worth
a sick child starving since its day of birth
while the fool and his money lives in the house of mirth

so i sing the song of love and light
i sing throughout the starry night
when all the world is poised to fight
my song of harmony takes flight

my song ascends on paper wings
to which the word of freedom clings
as the bells of peace and mercy ring
the whispering wind this song will sing

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4) Humanity puts so much of ourselves into the (imminently) finite material world, while we place/invest so very little (if any at all) planning, energy, concern and reverence into-and apparently so inadequately value-the infinite, that which indeed should count the very most in our meager Earthly existence: -"I don't wanna go to Heaven; I wanna go to the bank and cash the goddamn [\$4,000,000] cheque!": Oda Mae Brown (Whoopi Goldberg) to Sam Wheat (Patrick Swayze), in the 1990 hit movie Ghost

5) Too frequently, those who are in need the most receive the least-and vice versa (only in fairy tales does justice always, or usually, prevail): -This fact has troubled many authors throughout history. A person can note one of the most profound works of Victorian-era fiction, A Christmas Carol (a.k.a. Scrooge), written on the topic of this social injustice, penned by Charles Dickens. One haunting scene (at least for me), is that of Jacob Marley's ghost showing a filthy-rich-thought-miserly Ebenezer Scrooge how the spirits of men who were very wealthy in life try in vain to throw their non-physical-realm money at a living (i.e., physical-realm) woman huddled in the snowy night against a wooden fence with her baby. But, of course, it is eternally all in vain-they had their chance to do much good with their wealth when they were alive.

6) Many of the most religious ("spiritual") people are the least humane, while many of the most atheistic/non-religious/non-"spiritual" people are the most humane; and some of the most "civil" nations/societies have been known to behave the most immorally and brutally toward other nations and their populaces:

7) It takes real courage to-without any fear-back down from a confrontation, both verbal and violent:

8) Two of this planet's worst abusers of women-India and Pakistan-are two of the virtually historically non-existent few nations that have ever elected a woman to the highest office:

9) Hateful sentiments toward others (not translated into physical or verbal assault) only hurt the haters: -Since most (perhaps even the vast majority of all) hatred is not physically realized here in the "civilized" world, it's really the hater who suffers (and sometimes debilitatingly so) because of the hatred with which he/she struggles. (It's actually quite poetic.) One only needs to experience the (sincere/true) forgiveness of someone against whom one has carried a grudge for

some time (sometimes for many excruciating years)-and especially the (some would describe it as being almost supernatural) release of emotional baggage that accompanies that forgiveness-to fully comprehend just how, in a universal-law sense, unnatural and wrong hatred really is. Mind you, one should not consider hatred and anger synonymously; good/positive can come from constructively-directed and -utilized anger. One is not necessarily hating a gratuitously- and miserly-rich person when one feels anger towards the rich person-anger felt over the very-potential good that can come out from that gratuitous wealth but is unnecessarily not being at all realized.

10) The peaceful conduct/co-operation of 100 percent of the world's populace is required to ensure/maintain 100 percent global stability, 100 percent of the time; meanwhile, it can take but one person to cause the disintegration of global stability and then catastrophe-e.g., the lone assassin that alone triggered the expanding domino effect that eventually resulted in the brutal First World War. Thus, we have the power of the vicious few-or the one-over the peace-loving countless many:

11) Conceiving offspring by choice is the most selfish of (non-criminal) human acts, while decently and competently rearing/raising offspring (with all the accompanying worry and heartache) is the most selfless of human acts:

-After all, no one decides one day that, "I think I'll do a potential human being a favour and conceive him/her."

12) Although every passing second is, once gone, never to be repeated-lost forever-we (especially as bored, restless youth) so often let it pass, wasted, only too anxious for it to become "killed time":

-As a great example, there's the episode of the animated Beavis and Butthead characters waiting for about a half-dozen hours to come and go, as they just sit there on the couch, until some trivial, lame and totally-unproductive TV show (perhaps even a regressive program) they wish to consume finally arrives. (Literally every few seconds, Beavis asks Butthead, "what time is it" (indeed anxiety-inducing),

13) When told that you can receive something "absolutely free!", one should always inquire as to how much it will cost.

www.mentalhealthconsumer.net/FrankGStierlejr

The Simpsons: Morality from the 'Immoral' & Truth from the 'Absurd'

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

Simpsonic / Simpsonian adj. The ridiculously or bizarrely entertaining, humorous or hilarious.

Contrary to the perceptions of many television viewers, Matt Groening's The Simpsons—a PG/14+/PGv/TVG/TVPGD rated (depending on the episode content and national origin of transmission) animation about a hilariously idiotic father (Homer Simpson), a ridiculously big-blue-haired mother (Marge), a contemptuous and very mischievous son (Bart), a very intelligent and humanitarian daughter (Lisa), and a soother-addicted infant girl (Maggie)—is one of the most moral and enlightening animated programs on modern TV, especially when considering the typically-socially-liberal audience for whom the show is generally produced. In this satirical cartoon, intended for consumers with an adequately-mature mind (which admittedly can be subjective terminology and point-of-reference), The Simpsons mocks the imbecilic, hypocritical, callous and even mean-spirited attitudes of much of American society, including those of elements within entrenched, established religions and public institutions (e.g. political office and the justice system). Yes, without doubt, the show can get overly bizarre and/or quite crude in its humour: A very-good example is the episode in which the Simpson family go to Japan, and Homer relieves his bowels into a hotel-washroom toilet bowl with a built-in camera at the very bottom; and meanwhile, his family incidentally (though very briefly) catch the grotesque action on a video screen in another room. Another worthy example is the annual Simpsons Halloween Specials, in which the viewer can see, among many other things, the attack of a mysterious gas that turns people inside out, with the odd

globes of blood splattering, for effect. Nevertheless, it can justifiably be said that such a sacrifice—i.e. having to watch a very-few potentially crude and somewhat disturbing Simpsons scenes—is worth it, since the show in return mostly procures heart-lightening laughter.

*“... the show
parodies virtually
every aspect of
society”*

Of course, with the prevalence of moral relativism in contemporary society, how does a person define “moral”? As a point of reference for this essay's thesis, let “moral” be defined as thus: To not practice greed, selfishness or the exploitation of others; to hold respect for all life and the planet on which that life exists; to feel and show consideration and compassion toward all life; to do one's

very best to not feel ill will nor practice ill deeds toward others; to practice what's obviously in all children's best interests; to treat all beings equally and fairly, and—most importantly—to avoid (to the very best of one's ability) causing pointless, gratuitous suffering. Those who consume The Simpsons episodes as frequently and enthusiastically as I, will likely, if they are objectively truthful, attest to the fact that the show parodies virtually all aspects of society. For the very most part, the show does not shield any proverbial sacred cow; rather, it exposes, ridicules and publicly re-examines basically all aspects, good and bad, of society.

Of course, the acts of societal idiocies and hypocrisies which The Simpsons mocks are too plentiful to include in this essay in their entirety.

www.mentalhealthconsumer.net/FrankGSterleJr

Quote:

“But the divinest poem, or the life of a great man, is the severest satire.... The greater the genius, the keener the edge of the satire.”

Henry David Thoreau

Bookworm

Lust

By Michael Eigen

Wesleyan University Press,
Middletown, CT, 2006

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmár

Lust is defined as “the strong physical desire to have sex with somebody, usually without associated feelings of love or affection,” or “great eagerness or enthusiasm for something.” Lust is also counted as one of the seven deadly sins. When you look at the list of sins (greed, anger, pride, gluttony, sloth, envy, and lust) you might wonder why this list omits jealousy, cruelty, hypocrisy, self-righteousness, or avarice, just to name a few other vices. What is the difference between vice and sin? What is evil, and is it possible to be more or less evil? Or is evil categorical, binary, on-off? The philosopher Simon Blackburn in his book (*Lust*, Oxford U. Press, 2004) conceives of lust as a virtue. He defines lust as “the enthusiastic desire, the desire that infuses the body, for sexual activity and its pleasures for their own sake.” Blackburn wants to rescue lust “from the denunciations of old men of the deserts, to deliver it from the pallid and envious confessor and the stocks and pillories of the Puritans, to drag it from the category of sin to that of virtue.” Lust, as perhaps even greed and gluttony, can also be life-affirming, invigorating, fun. David Hume (Blackburn’s favorite philosopher) saw lust not only as a sensual delight but also “a joy of the mind.”

I think that the original root meaning of *sin* is enlightening. It was an old archery term, designating by how much and in which direction an arrow had missed its target. With us, living creatures, the target is some biological, life enhancing *optimum*. Not too much (no maxima), not too little (no minima). Without desire, life could not continue. Too much ruthless desire would be devastatingly destructive. The seven deadly sins indicate excesses that are annihilating.

Another way to think is to realize that sin has to do with being out of control. The master archer who hits the bull’s eye every time is in control. Eigen

writes, “Lust, as something out of control, disregards the rights of others. It is sin as trespass, as violation.” Or, still another way to think, is that perhaps being out of control is a lie. The truth is that one may not care. *Accidie* (from the Greek *a + kedos* = without care) was the name of a small devil that whispered in people’s ear, “Why bother?” There is a carelessness implied in all of the above listed sins. It could be carelessness that makes one miss the target, not necessarily lack of talent or ability. Now when someone deliberately aims in the wrong direction, 180 degrees opposite to where the target is, for instance, we are justified in speaking of *evil*.

“With us, living creatures, the target is some biological, life enhancing optimum.”

Eigen’s style in this book is quite disjointed, he writes as the spirit moves him. Aphorisms abound. Note, “Trauma maims and kills but also ignites inspired living.” Or, “Where drive is, hallucination is. A sexual psyche, a hallucinatory psyche. Lust, then, is on the side of hallucination and turns reality into dream. It is not just sex we want, but hallucinated sex.” Or, “It is not our desire for mastery that is the great secret but our desire for anonymity.” Or, “We are confused because we are afraid to stand up and be counted, to be someone, afraid to form. Afraid to enter the sphere of the rival, where adults compete and play. Afraid to be real.” Or, “To be aggressive without injury – one of the great benefits of sex.” Or, “To be counted also means to count, to be worth something.”

D. H. Lawrence wasn’t alone when he declared that desire is sacred. He noted that desire comes from the same mysterious and holy source as that Life Energy that lives you. You don’t live, you wouldn’t know how to; it could be said that you don’t live yourself; you are being lived by a greater intelligence that animates and forms and maintains the matter you are composed of. It is this Life Force that lives you that is the author of your desires, so it is blasphemous to

ignore or suppress this sacred yearning that manifests in your awareness as desire. Eigen refers to William Blake, who wrote in a similar vein.

Blake is quoted:

"The lust of the goat is the bounty of God."

"The nakedness of woman is the work of God."

"Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth."

"Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires."

"Energy is Eternal Delight."

Eigen writes, "In vision he [Blake] sided with lust's bounties. Joy was central. He was joyful on his death bed. He loathed those who tyrannized freedom of spirit. The sense and feel of lust, transmuted through imaginative vision, connected with his intuition of primal energy enlivening body and soul. Lust links with spirit.... Lust is spirit incarnate. Spirit radiates lust's flashes." In Hinduism, all life, all pulsation in creation throbs with the mighty declaration of the bi-une truth of Shiva-Shakti, the eternal He and the eternal She at play in manifestation, joined in eternal intercourse.

Alphonso Lingis (*Excesses*, State U. of N. Y. Press, 1983) thinks that sex is not primarily reproductive, it isn't about "filling that hole with a man." Lingis elaborates, "An erection, it is true, that delivers the baby, but the fun is not in that. Libidinally, an erection extends the surface. And, of course, hardens it, concentrates the tension, for the voluptuous release. Opening up your labia, letting the vaginal fluids run, that of course, delivers the egg. But the orgasms extend the surface. When you get laid you get laid out. The Möbius strip coils on itself, but it is still all surface, inner face or outer face, it is all equivalent. The tensions dance. Ephemeral subjectivities, brief egos, throb and get consumed down there, in the flows."

From the illusion of being skin-encapsulated egos we reach out through touching surfaces towards a larger "us." Lust is the hunger for flowing into and through each other, the yearning for participating in something greater than ourselves.

The shortcut to communion is fusion. When lust gets paired with power, nothing but grief and pain gets

generated. "Let the two of us be one, and let that one be me!" – is the offer of the bully that you if you accept, you will be annihilated. When lust gets paired with the heart, with love and care, then the world lights up, colors abound and you can feel connected without having to pay the price of submission, without loss of freedom.

For Blake, "everything that lives is Holy." He wrote, "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age."

*"Lust is the
hunger for flow-
ing into and
through each
other..."*

The first Kinsey Report was published just three years after the end of World War II, in 1948. Kinsey shocked the country by claiming that 95 percent of American men were engaged in some form of illegal sexual conduct, that most married people had had premarital sex, that the majority of men went to prostitutes, that homosexuality was common, and that adultery was common. He reported, though

that the average time from entry of penis into, and exit from, vagina, in the act of committing sexual intercourse of the average American male was an average of around two and a half minutes. What kind of hypocrisy is revealed in these findings, assuming that they can be believed? Couples collide and bounce apart for fear of prolonged intimacy? Orgasm can be thought of as the collapse of desire: the first orgasm punctuates the end of the sexual encounter? There is so much we do not know, there are so many secrets surrounding lust...

R. D. Laing wrote, "In the *I Ching*, Trigram 61, *Inner Truth*, the commentary cautions against dependence on *inner accord* with one's beloved. Dependence upon *inner accord* jeopardizes *inner truth*." The *accord* is only genuine if it is spacious enough for the legitimacy of two truths.

The complexities, contradictions and subtleties surrounding lust are well illustrated by this entry in Eigen's thought-provoking book:

"Lust obliterates the face.

Lust awakens the face.

Face encircles lust, horizons within horizons."

Websites of Interest to Consumers/Survivors/Ex-Mental Patients

(This list is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive, and has left out many well-known sites that are widely available and easily accessible from local directories. — B.F.)

Organizations (General)

www.mind.org.uk www.power2u.org www.mhselfhelp.org www.wnusp.org www.tao.ca/~pact
www.u-kan.co.uk www.mentalhealth.com www.icspp.org www.oikos.org www.icomm.ca/csinfo
www.aapd-dc.org www.mindfreedom.org www.geocities.com www.mdri.org www.breggin.com
www.cvdinfobase.ca/mh-atlas/ www.szasz.com www.antipsychiatry.org www.peoplewho.org
www.walnet.org/llf www.mentalhealth.org.uk www.fsu.edu/~trauma/ip.html www.radpsynet.org
www.contac.org www.buildfreedom.com/ft/psychiatric_survivors.htm www.samhsa.gov
www.nucknfuts.com/index.php www.cam.org www.lino.com/~raiddat <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipsychiatry> <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~nstaman/alternatives/OVNVinternational.htm>

Advocacy and Activism

www.mental-health-matters.com/activist.html www.m-power.org www.narpa.org
www.protectionandadvocacy.com www.cchr.org www.popan.org.uk www.advocatweb.com
www.gamian-europe.com www.hri.ca www.hrweb.org www.iahf.com www.benzo.org.uk/prawi.htm
<http://members.aol.com/jimhofw/jimho.htm>

Alternatives

www.talkingcure.com/index.asp www.alternativementalhealth.com www.medsfree.com www.mosher-oteria.com
www.transtherapy.org www.patchadams.org www.healthfreedommovement.com
www.weglaufhaus.de www.elcollie.com www.stopshrinks.org www.lstpm.org
www.emotiosinbalance.com www.the-bright-side.org/site/thebrightside/ www.doctoryourself.com
www.emotionsanonymous.org www.projectresilience.com www.bu.edu/cpr/tr/alternative/
www.religiousfreedom.org www.wildestcolts.com <http://stopbadtherapy.com> http://nht_amh11.blogspot.com <http://essence-euro.org/iasp/> <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/erthworks/nonmain.htm>

Drug Information

www.larsmartensson.com www.drugs-and-medications.com www.drugawareness.org
www.outlookcities.com/psych/ www.canadiandimension.mb.ca/v35/v35_5ab.htm#three www.nmsis.org
www.antidepressantsfacts.com www.socialaudit.org.uk/1.4.html www.chemsense.com
www.prozactruth.com www.quitpaxil.org www.talkingcure.com/archive/drugs.htm www.truehope.com
www.astrocyte-design.com/pseudoscience/index.html <http://members.fortunecity.com/siriusw/Biochemical-Imbalance.htm> <http://groups.msn.com/SIDEEFFECTS> www.benzo.org.uk

Children & Youth

www.voice4kids.org www.aspire.us www.hearmyvoice.org www.ritalindeath.com www.p-a-r.org
www.adhdfraud.org

Tardive Dyskinesia/Dystonia

www.power2u.org/selfhlep/tardive.html www.wemove.org www.dystonia-support.org www.dystonia-foundation.org
www.iatrogenic.org/index.html www.breggin.com/tardivedysk.html
www.caromont.org/16036.cfm www.emedicine.com/neuro/topic362.htm www.drugdigest.org/DD/Articles/News/0,10141,513136,00.html www.psyweb.com/Diction/tardived.html www.thebody.com/pinf/phenos.html
www.reglan-lawsuit.com www.ninds.nih.gov/healthandmedical/disorders/tardivedoc.htm www.easyweb.easynet.co.uk/simplpsych/tardive.html

Electroshock

www.ect.org www.banshock.org www.idiom.com/~drjohn/review.html <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmj:326/7403/1363>

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 (2005 - 06) of the [Directory](#) is now available for \$20.00 for individuals or \$25.00 for professional organizations (order forms available at www.selfhelpresource.bc.ca). SHRA is located at Suite 306 - 1212 West Broadway, Van. B.C. V6H 3V1. Tel: 604- 733-6186. Fax: 604- 730-1015.

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. Web: 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/Richmond Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups including a Women's Circle. Their address is #201 - 1300 Richards St., Vancouver, B.C., V6B 3G8 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."

Websites of Interest to Consumers/Survivors/Ex-Mental Patients (continued from previous page)

Forced Treatment

www.freedom-center.org www.namisc.org/newsletters/August01/MindAid.htm www.hri/doccentre/docs/gosden.shtml www.garynull.com/issues/Psych/Index.htm www.psychlaws.org www.kqed.org/w/hope/involuntarytreatment.html

Mental Health Law

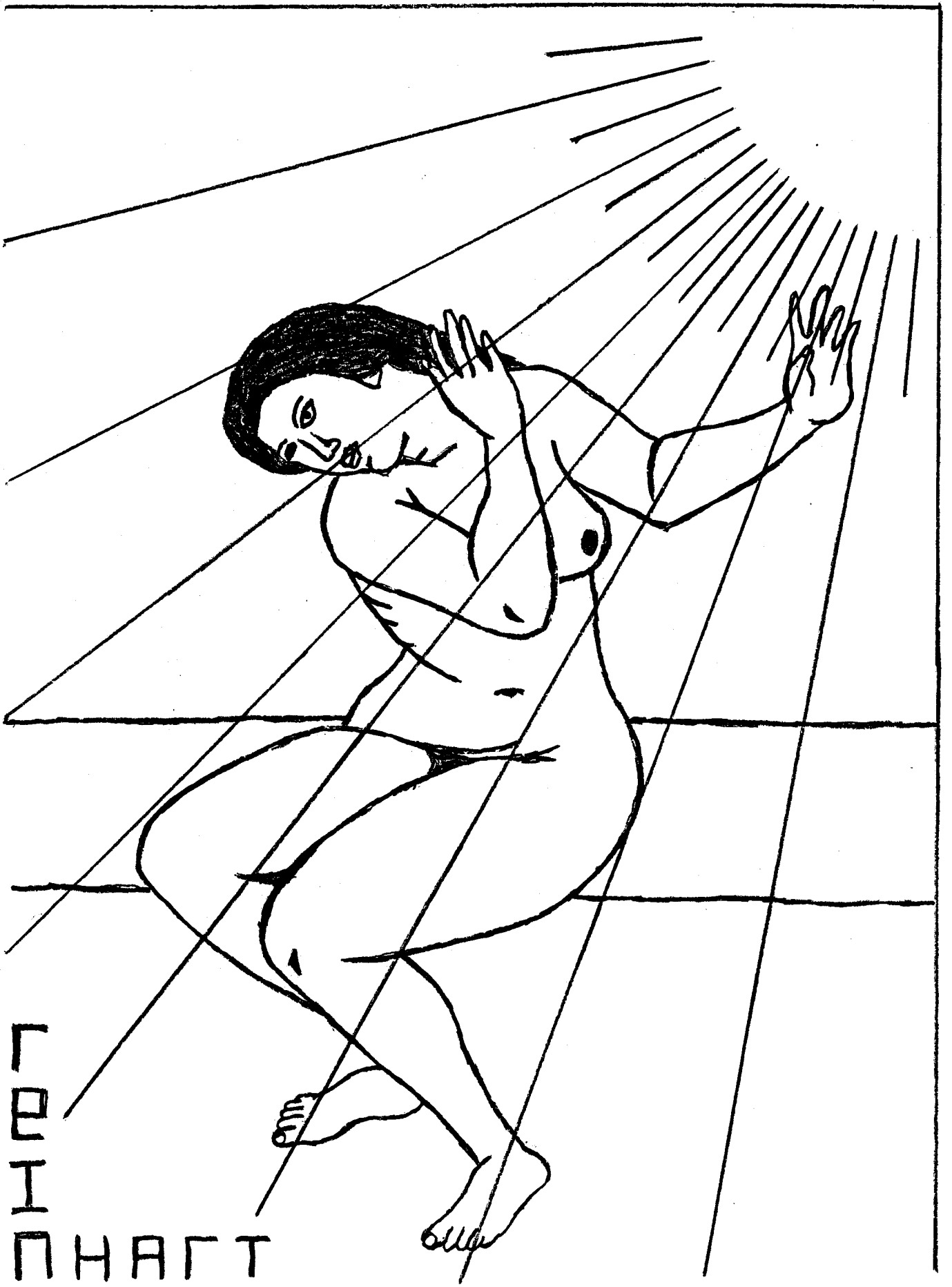
www.bazelon.org www.ac.wvu.edu/~knecht/law.htm www.psych.org/public_info/insanity.cfm www.forensic-psych.com/pubs/pubADment.html www.psychlaws.org www.imhl.com www.ialmh.org www.justiceseekers.com www.safe-trak.com/main/competencyl.htm www.abanet.org/disability/sites.html www.experts.com www.expertpages.com/psychiatry-psychology.htm www.psych.org/advocacy-policy/leg_res/apa_testimony/testimonysub-crimeposted91800.cfm www.ilppp.virginia.edu/ www.law.cornell.edu/topics/mental_health.html www.helpforparents.net/LegalResources/1LegalResources.htm

History of Mental Health Care

www.psychiatricurvivorsarchives.com www.webcom.com/thrive/schizo/kdarch.html www.cwu.edu/~warren/addenda.html www.epub.org.br/cm/n02/historia/psicocirg_i.htm

Online Publications

www.mentalmagazine.co.uk <http://members.aol.com/asylumpub> <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~expert/psychnews/>



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