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November 2013

Free online magazine from village earth

Mark Gelsomino

Librarians Without Borders

in an interview with Mark Ulyseas



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was started in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Civil and human rights activists, animal rights activists, poets, writers, journalists, social workers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

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Live
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"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind." - Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Readers,

This edition covers many burning issues that afflict humanity today. Organisations like Librarians Without Borders are helping bring people together by the free sharing of knowledge. While Human Rights Watch continues to report on atrocities and rights violations across the world. We must continue to support them.

We thank our contributors...

- **Ivo Coelho**, Philosopher and Priest
- **Mahendra Man Singh**, Author
- **Budi Hernawan**, Human Rights Activist
- **Anita Mackay**, Monash University
- **Natalie Wood**, Journalist and Writer
- **Mark Gelsomino**, Librarians Without Borders
- **Terry McDonagh**, Irish Writer, Poet and Playwright
- **Human Rights Watch**
- **Sourav Jourdar**, Photographer
- **Candess M Campbell**, Health

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Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor

Cover design : Mark Ulyseas

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Science, Common Sense and Faith

Ivo Coelho

Coelho earned his PhD in philosophy from the Gregorian University, Rome. He is Reader in Gnoseology and Metaphysics at Divyadaan: Salesian Institute of Philosophy, Nashik, India, and editor of Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education. Born in 1958 at Mumbai, he specialized in the hermeneutical thought of the Canadian philosopher, theologian and economist Bernard Lonergan. He is the author of Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Bernard Lonergan and editor of Brahman and Person: Essays by Richard De Smet. www.divyadaan.in



Forever Incomplete - The Story of Nepal

Mahendra Man Singh

Singh, first time author, commentator on the social and political conditions in Nepal has mostly been in the private sector and currently he is Founding and Managing Director of TMB-Energiotechnik (responsible for Alternate Energy Projects), actively involved in politics and is a known face in the corridors of power—both in the now deposed monarchy and in the Nepali Congress. He writes extensively on socio-political issues of Nepal. His articles have appeared in The Kathmandu Post (English daily), The Commoner, (English daily), The Samachar Patra and Deshanter (Nepali daily). www.sagepub.in



Breaking the silence on Papua

Budi Hernawan

Dr. Budi Hernawan ofm is a part-time researcher at Franciscans International, an international NGO accredited with the United Nations. He is based in Jayapura, Geneva and New York. This article solely expresses his personal opinion.



Women in Australian prisons...

Anita Mackay, Monash University

Anita is a PhD scholar at Monash University and a former visitor to the Centre for International Justice and Governance. Anita's thesis compares prisons operating under a human rights framework with prisons operating according to restorative justice principles. She is conducting this research under the supervision of Associate Professor Bronwyn Naylor and Dr Julie Debeljak. Anita is also employed as a research assistant on an ARC grant about the application of human rights legislation in closed environments. First published in [Regarding Rights](#)



Why Most Jews Still Stand Alone

Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month prior to outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She remained in regional Jewish journalism for over 20 years, leaving full-time writing to help run a family business and then completed a range of general office work. Wood and her husband, Brian Fink emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and live in Karmiel, Galilee where she continues to work, concentrating on creative writing. She features in *Smith Magazine's* new *Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and contributes to *Technorati*, *Blogcritics* and *Live Encounters* magazine. Her stories - [Website](#) and journalism - [Website](#)



Librarians without Borders

Mark Gelsomino

Gelsomino currently sits as the Co-Executive Director of Librarians Without Borders and has been active in the group since 2010. Through his work with LWB, he has had the opportunity to travel to Guatemala on several occasions and support literacy initiatives all over the world. Gelsomino also works as the Planning Librarian for the Ottawa Public Library in Canada's national capital. He is currently working on creating a media and technology workspace that will act as a local hub for technological learning and innovation. www.LibrariansWithoutBorders.org



In a Doll's House

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published seven poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection *Ripple Effect* due for publication in May/June 2013, Arlen House; next children's story, *Michel the Merman*, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ) to be published in September 2013. He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. www.terry-mcdonagh.com



South Africa: Archbishop Dr. Thabo Makgoba Condemns Anti-LGBTI Violence

Human Rights Watch Press Release

Human Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world. We stand with victims and activists to prevent discrimination, to uphold political freedom, to protect people from inhumane conduct in wartime, and to bring offenders to justice. We investigate and expose human rights violations and hold abusers accountable. <http://www.hrw.org>



Photo Gallery - Durga Puja

Sourav Jourdar

Since 2008, Jourdar, 27, has been working as a photographer for the North Bengal Bureau of The Statesman. A self taught photographer, he is convinced that photography is the only profession in the world that would never become boring. Sourav continues to capture for posterity moments of life... large and small, bitter and sweet. In addition to working as a photographer he looks after his ailing mother. Email: jash.jourdar@gmail.com



Energy Medicine: Kinesiology and Muscle Testing

Candess M Campbell

Candess M. Campbell, PhD is an internationally known Intuitive Life Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Seminar leader, Hypnotherapist and Author. She specializes in assisting others to gain their own personal power and to live a life of abundance, happiness and joy. Early 2012 she will be releasing her book *12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine*. www.12weekstoselfhealing.com



Ivo Coelho - Philosopher, Priest and Rector of Ratisbonne Monastery, Jerusalem, writes an exclusive for Live Encounters.

Science, Common sense and Faith

I am tempted to say that the topic of science and faith, or science and religion, is “an easy one.” I know there have been dreadful to do’s on the point: the Galileo case and the Darwin thing come obviously to mind.

I am also aware that, while most people are by now quite reconciled to the point that Galileo was making, and while Pope John Paul II also tendered a sort of apology for the case, evolution is still a sticking point for many – despite the fact that the same pope also made significant openings on this topic.

The relationship between science and faith is not necessarily a Christian issue. It is, to the best of my knowledge, equally relevant to religions like Judaism and Islam. I am not quite sure how it would work out within the context of Hinduism or Buddhism, these being religions of a significantly different kind. And then heliocentrism and evolution are not the only topics in this area, but they are the ones that come most readily to mind, and, at least to my mind, the attitude one takes towards them is quite symptomatic or, better, representative of the attitude one takes on the issue of the relationship between science and faith in general.



From a common sense point of view, even after we have thoroughly accepted Galileo, it still appears as if it is the sun that rises every morning. And here I love the distinction Lonergan makes between description and explanation. From a descriptive point of view, he says, it is true to say that the sun rises. From an explanatory point of view, however, things are quite different, and we have to admit that it is the earth that moves round the sun. Galileo had the signal merit of initiating, while not being fully aware of what he was doing, the shift from description to explanation. That shift is, to my mind, absolutely vital.

My conviction is that we are dealing with two quite different fields when we talk about science and faith, or science and religion. Methodologically speaking, empirical science is governed by what Bernard Lonergan calls a canon of selection: only theories, laws, hypotheses that involve sensible consequences qualify as scientific.

The major point is that theories, laws, hypotheses that do not admit of sensible consequences are not therefore ruled out of court as nonsensical, meaningless, irrelevant or stupid. What follows from the canon of selection is merely that they do not qualify as belonging to the natural sciences.

The case of Galileo is complex also because it involves conflict not merely between science and faith, but also between science and common sense.

From a common sense point of view, even after we have thoroughly accepted Galileo, it still appears as if it is the sun that rises every morning. And here I love the distinction Lonergan makes between description and explanation. From a descriptive point of view, he says, it is true to say that the sun rises. From an explanatory point of view, however, things are quite different, and we have to admit that it is the earth that moves round the sun. Galileo had the signal merit of initiating, while not being fully aware of what he was doing, the shift from description to explanation. That shift is, to my mind, absolutely vital.

I enjoy asking my students as they are seated comfortably in class whether, at the given moment, we are at rest or in motion. Most jump at the obvious answer: we are at rest. But it takes only a moment to realize that, if we believe all that we have been taught, we are in motion: we believe that the earth is in motion, and that it is in fact hurtling at breakneck speed through space, while at the same time turning around on its axis.

Things become even more complicated when we realize that the entire planetary system is itself in motion, spiralling towards some point and perhaps expanding ever 'outward,' whatever that might mean. So here we are, hurtling through space, and yet, for all practical purposes, completely at rest.

So what's the story? Are we moving or are we at rest? And so we come to tiny realizations of what Newton might have meant when he talked about inertia: the same laws hold whether a body is moving or at rest, provided the motion is uniform. I love inertia: it is because of inertia that I am able to eat in a moving train or plane, otherwise you can imagine your coffee remaining back while you move forward....

Lonergan puts it elegantly: there is a lack of intelligibility in uniform motion. That same lack of intelligibility is what is probably at the bottom of Einstein's paradoxes. I am far from claiming that I understand anything of what Einstein was saying, but I do remember reading about one of his thought experiments that ran like this: Imagine you are in a spaceship in uniform motion. That spaceship has only one window, and through that window you can see another spaceship, also moving at the same speed and in uniform motion. There is nothing else that you can see, no other points of reference. And then you ask yourself: are you moving or are you at rest? And you realize: does it matter?

I hope all this is not baffling, but the point is that there is something peculiar about uniform motion. Despite what Aristotle thought, uniform motion does not have to be explained, it has no cause. It is only acceleration – and by acceleration I mean here simply 'change of motion' – that calls for explanation.

Lonergan puts it elegantly: there is a lack of intelligibility in uniform motion. That same lack of intelligibility is what is probably at the bottom of Einstein's paradoxes. I am far from claiming that I understand anything of what Einstein was saying, but I do remember reading about one of his thought experiments that ran like this: Imagine you are in a spaceship in uniform motion. That spaceship has only one window, and through that window you can see another spaceship, also moving at the same speed and in uniform motion. There is nothing else that you can see, no other points of reference. And then you ask yourself: are you moving or are you at rest? And you realize: does it matter?

I can't resist another example, and this one is about gravity. There was this young student called Tony who believed that the earth was round, but he thought it was round like a dish. One day one of his companions pointed out to him that the earth was round not like a dish but like a football. So Tony took that in, and adjusted his images, and things were okay, till one day his friend realized that he thought the earth was round like the inside of the football: sky above, land below, a bit curved here and there, but manageable all the same.

So Tony had to be told that the earth was round not like the inside of a football but like the outside of a football. And then the problems began: if the earth is round like the outside of a football, the people on the top of the football are fine, but what about people at the bottom? Do they fall off? Or, if they don't, how it is that that don't? We are back again at the viewpoint of description and the viewpoint of explanation. From a descriptive viewpoint, we have all of Tony's problems about gravity and more.

From an explanatory viewpoint, things are far more complicated, but that complexity has to be faced if it is true that the earth is round like the outside of a football and if people in Australia don't keep falling off. Once again, one begins to get a glimmer of light when one suspects once again that up and down are perhaps – merely relative.

The conflict between science and common sense has not perhaps been in the spotlight as much as the conflict between science and religion, but I do believe that the two conflicts are related, and that attaining a glimmer of light in one area tends to at least clear the ground for comprehension in the other.

The empirical sciences, to my mind, deal with questions of the immanent intelligibility of the universe. They do not deal with the question of ultimate intelligibility, which is really the question of God. And even when they seem to raise questions of efficient causality, as in the case of scientific cosmologies that ask about the origins of the universe and go on to speak of Big Bangs and singularities and oscillating universes and continuous creation, they are by their very canons restricted to the realm of the sensible.

The Galileo conflict was handled when the churches realized that God might not have intended the scriptures to be repositories of any and every kind of wisdom. The God who revealed the scriptures also is the creator and origin of human reason and it stands to reason that there should not be any ultimate conflict between the one and the other. The Second Vatican Council put it thus: the purpose of the scriptures is to teach truths concerning salvation – and not, therefore, to take over the role of the empirical sciences.

On the other hand, the empirical sciences deal with what Lonergan calls ‘immanent intelligibility,’ which is what Aristotle used to call the ‘formal cause,’ whereas faith and religion are concerned with ultimate intelligibility which at least in some way overlaps with the question of efficient causality.

Understanding the intelligibility of a circle does not mean one has answered questions in the area of efficient causality. Answering the question, ‘What is a circle?’ does not constitute an answer to the question, ‘Who drew this particular circle?’ Much less does it make the latter question irrelevant, insignificant, meaningless or nonsensical.

The empirical sciences, to my mind, deal with questions of the immanent intelligibility of the universe. They do not deal with the question of ultimate intelligibility, which is really the question of God. And even when they seem to raise questions of efficient causality, as in the case of scientific cosmologies that ask about the origins of the universe and go on to speak of Big Bangs and singularities and oscillating universes and continuous creation, they are by their very canons restricted to the realm of the sensible.

In other words, there is no way that empirical science can make the shift into metaphysics without violating its own canons. This is not to say that there are no scientists that attempt this shift. There are. But it has to be recognized that they are making category mistakes, if you want to be polite, or simply indulging in illegitimate crossovers. They allow, in other words, their reputations as scientists to wash over into claims that are, properly speaking, beyond the domain of science.

So to my mind, neither the Big Bang Theory nor the Oscillating Universe theory nor the Continuous Creation theory have anything to say one way or another about the metaphysical or the religious doctrine of creation.

And even if, as Stephen Hawking tells us, the universe is proved to be eternal, the metaphysical question of creation does not cease to be relevant – as even a glance at Thomas Aquinas might have shown the

Without wanting to defend all of Darwin, it would appear to me that there is overwhelming evidence for an evolutionary world view. And whether the world manifests an evolution, or whether instead, in a most unlikely scenario, it emerges all ready made and static (and this very way of talking is problematic), all this has simply nothing to do one way or other with creation – because evolution is a scientific hypothesis, and being a scientific hypothesis, it deals once again with immanent intelligibility, and neither raises nor answers nor in any way rules out of court the question of ultimate intelligibility: why is there something rather than nothing.

great scientist. Aquinas long ago said that, even if the universe was eternal in time, we would still have to ask the question, why is there this universe rather than nothing. The question of creation, in other words, is quite a different cup of tea.

Similar thoughts about evolution: Without wanting to defend all of Darwin, it would appear to me that there is overwhelming evidence for an evolutionary world view. And whether the world manifests an evolution, or whether instead, in a most unlikely scenario, it emerges all ready made and static (and this very way of talking is problematic), all this has simply nothing to do one way or other with creation – because evolution is a scientific hypothesis, and being a scientific hypothesis, it deals once again with immanent intelligibility, and neither raises nor answers nor in any way rules out of court the question of ultimate intelligibility: why is there something rather than nothing. On this topic, one of the most neglected intellectual contributions is that of Lonergan who, in the early chapters of his little book [Insight](#), presents a devastatingly beautiful explanation, on cognitional rather than sense-empirical grounds, of an evolutionary worldview, which he calls the worldview of emergent probability. Required reading on this topic, to my mind, and well worth the time and energy.

Science and religion have been involved in celebrated conflicts which have in the end contributed importantly to clarifying the methods and limits of each, leaving each, hopefully, wiser and more serene. Or at least that is what I feel.



Mahendra Man Singh
author of
Forever Incomplete - The Story of Nepal
speaks to Mark Ulyseas

Why did you write this book and what do you hope to achieve with it?

Writing the book is my way of answering the many questions my children asked of me. On a wider scale, it is also to inform the younger generation in Nepal and around the world about Nepal.

The older generation may have read the works of Perceval Landon – early 20th century or even those of Daniel Wright, Hamilton and Kirkpatrick – 19th & late 18th century. There is another of the 1960s by Rose & Joshi. The latest is by Whelpton preceded by those of Jonathan Gregson and others instigated by the ‘royal tragedy’. I have listed these titles and more, in the Bibliography.

While all these works are scholarly and informative in their own way, the travails endured by the people of Nepal through their long history to develop, preserve and foster their existential ethos and particularly their journey to human rights and democracy has been told only intermittently and I feel, only in passing.

To my knowledge, no other book in English describes in as much detail this long journey as I have done in Chapters IV, V, VI and VII.

The reader I hope will receive more information from my book and therefore be able to understand and appreciate the people of Nepal better. I have tried to present history in a more reader-friendly style unlike the dry & dusty styles of the past.

Published by Sage Publications

The ill-informed in India will say rather wistfully that Nepal is an 'integral part' of India. It is like saying Alaska is an integral part of Canada and Canada of USA or Mexico of USA. China has never said Nepal is an 'appendage/ integral part' of China. Identity is defined by geography, history, culture, language and icons. Nepal has this -distinctly and in full measure. All this is dealt with in the book. I leave it to the reader to discover and understand.

What impact did the 2001 'royal tragedy' have on the people?

I have written, rather briefly, about the feelings of the people in 'Epilogue'. At the personal level, my brain did not function for 15 days. Call it shock, horror, disbelief and finally, coming to terms with it very, very sadly. It must have been the same for many people. As I heard about it later on, a woman in the rural area went insane with grief.

From monarchy to democracy Nepal has come a long way. Please comment.

It is actually like this: Monarchy – Rana Oligarchy – Democracy – Monarchy – Constitutional Monarchy & Multiparty Democracy. My book deals with the above transitions.

Is Nepal an appendage to India or does it have a distinct identity? And if so, how does one define this identity?

A country, a nation of people with at least 5000 years of history will definitely have a distinct identity. Granted that our neighbors India and China have longer histories –about 6000 years at least but the distinct identity of Nepal was recognized. Imperial China and Imperial Britain recognized this. The Republic of India did so in 1950.

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Lord Hansard's deposition to the United Kingdom Parliament on 22 June/2006 also helps. *"...Nepal, far from being a faraway country at the edge of global affairs is in fact at the centre of the emerging new world pattern between the awakening giant economies of rising Asia."*

I like to describe my country as:

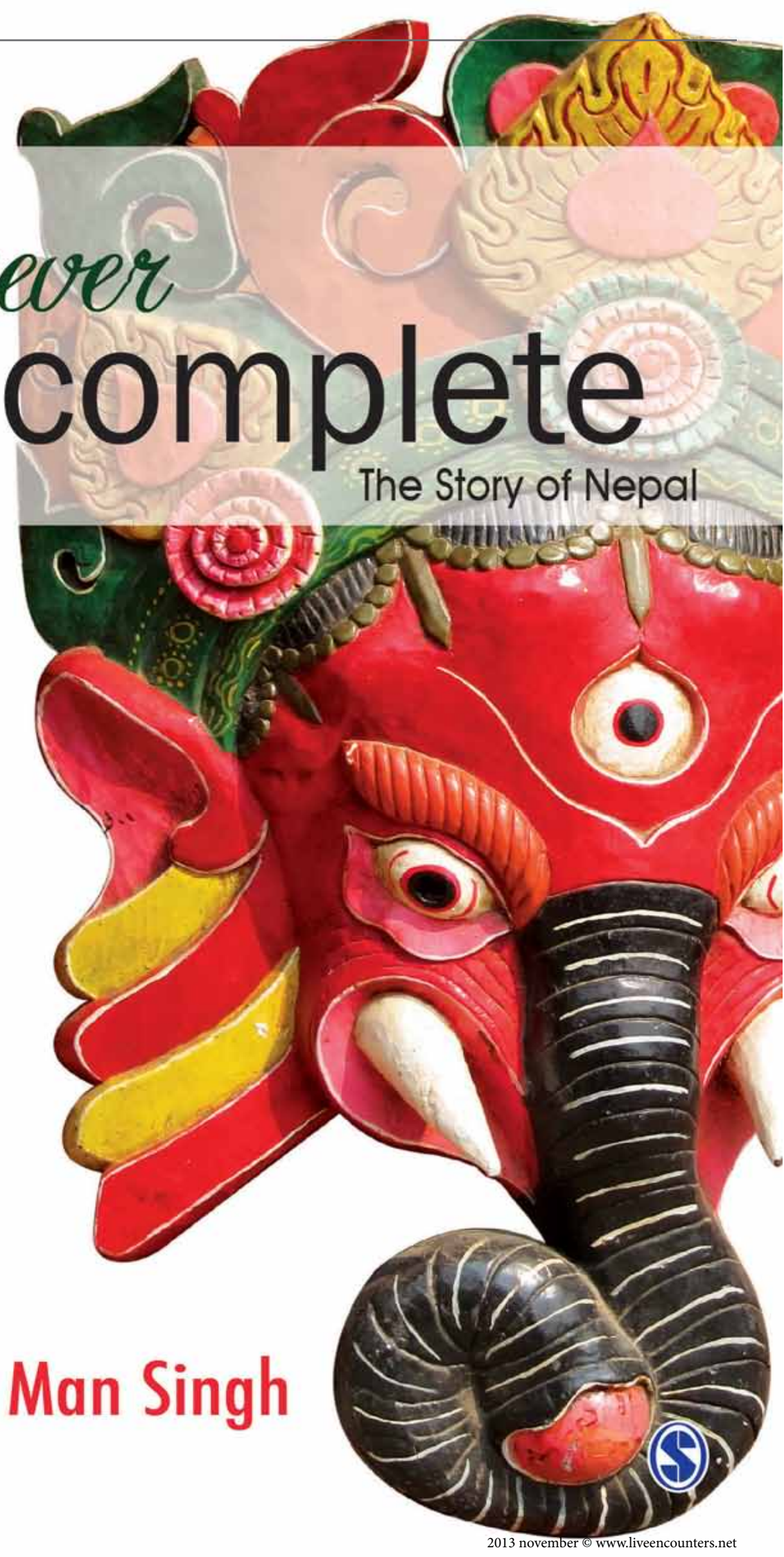
*"A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky"*

This is from Shelly and distinct enough I think. On a lighter note, because of our geographical location, sometimes I think the Nepali is like that little drummer boy of Gunter Grass banging his tin drum as he marches along the narrow lane in between tall buildings.

Forever Incomplete

The Story of Nepal

Mahendra Man Singh



The Nepali people were made to take and so took two steps - republicanism and federalism. They are now wandering about. This happened because the Maoist, supported by our very friendly neighbor India, went on a rampage declaring 'total change' as their mission and killing 16000 innocent people and displacing over a hundred thousand people in the process. So you can surmise the socio-economic impact.

Who are the Gorkhas and are they different from other Nepalis? Could you give us an overview?

Gorkha is the name of a district in west Nepal. It was a petty kingdom that expanded aggressively and eventually led to the formation of a unified Kingdom of Nepal. It was and is peopled by various ethnic groups as is the entire country of Nepal. Chapter I describes this. The British referred to these soldierly people as the 'Gurkhas' after their contact in the war of 1814-1816 and later on during the two world wars when the 'Gurkha' fought alongside the Allies. Over a dozen received the Victoria Cross and their bravery and valour became well known. This has been a matter of pride for all Nepalis. I have talked about this in Chapters II & III. The 'Gorkhas' are not different from the Nepalis. They are Nepalis.

In the politico-socio-economic scenario, where is Nepal heading today? What has been the socio-economic influence of the Maoists?

There is an appropriate Urdu sayari (couplet) that indicates where Nepal is heading. I have translated.

*"But two steps, did I take in jest
And my life, I have spent in quest."*

The Nepali people were made to take and so took two steps - republicanism and federalism. They are now wandering about. This happened because the Maoist, supported by our very friendly neighbor India, went on a rampage declaring 'total change' as their mission and killing 16000 innocent people and displacing over a hundred thousand people in the process. So you can surmise the socio-economic impact. I have not written about/ on the Maoist in my book as there are many volumes written on/about them by more knowledgeable people and also because these are current events. However, none including India can explain satisfactorily why a system of 'Constitutional Monarchy and Multiparty Democracy' with a constitution that also enshrines sovereign rights of the people, a bicameral parliament and human rights was attacked upon and pushed aside. Dr. Man Mohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, while addressing Parliament had said "*There cannot be any root, trunk or branch of any cause that justifies the killing of innocent civilians.*" The two steps taken in jest i.e. without knowledge have in essence clouded the politico-socio-economic scenario.

Could you give us a glimpse into your life and works?

I am married and we- Kamala and myself, have three daughters. I have always been in the private sector. My forte has been starting/ doing something different, something as yet untried, something new. The book is an example. However, please do not ask me to walk on my head or even do a headstand the Yoga way. Not really my cup of tea! Kamala is a Yoga Instructor and coaches many students-local and foreign. The Bolshoi ballet in Moscow was absolutely fascinating. Have also been around the Schenzen countries.

...none including India can explain satisfactorily why a system of 'Constitutional Monarchy and Multiparty Democracy' with a constitution that also enshrines sovereign rights of the people, a bicameral parliament and human rights was attacked upon and pushed aside.

Fish & Chips, the original, in the UK tasted good and the castles quite impressive. When I deplaned in Dundee, Scotland, my impression was "So foul and fair a weather I have never seen." Touring the vast Forbidden City in Beijing was, believe me, quite exhausting but very, very impressive. The Taj Mahal in India is indeed a wonder. Will be going to Singapore again end October.

Some of my happiest moments are when I am flat on my back reading a book. Nevertheless, it was only after my eldest daughter introduced me to Indian/Urdu 'Gahzals' i.e. poems/songs that I discovered how ignorant I was. My second daughter gifted me a collection of Shayars i.e. couplets of Mirza Ghalib - English translations. My favourite pastime is trying to improve upon the translations.

I have been an intermittent commentator from the eighties on the socio-politico-economic aspects of Nepal.

I do not write profusely. My last writings have been book reviews – Jinnah/ Partition and prior to that of Sugata Saurav, the English translation of the life of Buddha. Simply love to listen to Blues on a cloudy and rainy day. Heavy Metal etc. is rather noisy. The Saxophone soothes. Classical music- Indian and European is enchanting. Sufi songs are so touching! Mithila paintings precede Picasso by hundreds of years. Our own Tantric paintings have all the elements – impressionism, surrealism, realism. This is but natural for a nation of people with at least five thousand years of history.

What are you working on now?

At present, I am in the process of establishing a grid connected Biomass Power Plant, of 720Kwe installed capacity. The plant site is in Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. Power supplied by the plant will replace to some extent diesel generators now being used and will reduce pollution in and around Lumbini, a World Heritage Site. The beauty of this project is that agro-forest residues which were heretofore unutilized by the local community will be utilized for the generation of electricity. Hence the rural community – women in particular, will have a source of incremental income through the sale of biomass to the plant. This makes it a 'Community Friendly' power plant.

The technology used – gasification, ensures that no noxious fumes are emitted. This makes it an 'Environment Friendly' power plant. It fulfills the 3 Es – Energy, Environment, Economy i.e. generation of energy in an environment friendly manner with economic benefits. My project, Narayani-Shanker Biomass Power Plant (NS-BPP), is in many ways something new in Nepal. I am going to Singapore to make a presentation to the Asian Development Bank. Project Consultants are ABETS/CGPL Indian Institute of Science (IISc.)Bangalore, India.



Breaking the silence on Papua

Last week the UN fora in Geneva and New York broke the silence on Papua. During the 24th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the International Coalition for Papua (ICP) marked the session by revealing systematic efforts endorsed by the Indonesian government to isolate Papua from international scrutiny. As an attempt to break the silence surrounding this issue, the ICP released its third annual report highlighting the worsening conditions of human rights in Papua.

In a similar vein, the Vanuatu Prime Minister Moana Carcasses Kalosil spoke up during the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, raising the issue of the neglected Papua with the Assembly. In light of the Syrian humanitarian crisis, he requested that the UNGA appoint a Special Representative to investigate the situation of human rights in Papua. Vanuatu is no stranger to the Papuan cause. On the contrary, it is the driving force of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)'s sympathy towards Papua.

All of these efforts deserve our attention since for more than half a century Papua has attracted minimal attention from the outside world. The situation in Papua exemplifies common features of a sub-national conflict. Papua has a long history of a low-level armed conflict. It is situated on the periphery of economic and political decision-making processes although its natural resources significantly contribute to the national economy. Such an area is also inhabited by an ethnic minority who experience discrimination from their respective government.

Governments in the context of sub-national conflicts in Asia and the Pacific, like Indonesia, are generally heavy-handed. They are more than capable of isolating the conflicts from international attention and treating them as their own internal affairs in order to prevent any international criticisms. They have the power not only to convince, but more importantly, to stop the outside world engaging with what they claim to be 'internal affairs.' It is uncommon for outsiders to want to risk their bilateral relations with these governments. Given these characteristics, a sub-national conflict like Papua remains under-represented at both national and international levels.

Why does Indonesia silence Papua? There remains a strong belief among many Indonesian state officials that giving any political concessions to Papua could repeat the mistake of the former East Timor: separation from Indonesia. As a postcolonial state, the imagined political entity of Indonesia is constructed from former Dutch colonies. It stretches from Sabang to Merauke. The preservation of this construct has become the state ideology which shapes the Indonesian government policy towards Papua. It does not allow any discussion on the political dimension of Papuan issues. Papua is final or NKRI, *harga mati* (the Unitary State of Indonesia is nonnegotiable). As a result any who questions the history of the incorporation of Papua into Indonesia is considered as a separatist.

This dogmatic approach does not allow for any political discussion with Papuans. As a result, the Indonesian government is very reluctant to address the historical injustices of Papua. Instead it relies heavily on an economic development-based approach to respond to Papuan conflicts. The underlying logic of this approach is that improving the welfare standard of Papuans will satisfy their basic needs and eventually address the conflicts. The assumption tends to reduce all human needs into the single dimension of economic needs, whereas the Papuan conflicts largely derive from historical injustices. The latter remain neglected and cannot be adequately addressed simply by promoting economic development. They belong to the political domain and require a political decision.

What can be done to break the silence on Papua? There has to be a robust web of networks of resistance which is capable of confronting the history of impunity. The resistance should consolidate actions in different domains: local, national and international in order to win support from these three different audiences. Throughout the years various actors have made an effort to bring Papua's troubles to light. The Papuan Churches and NGOs play a key role in exposing the hidden history of impunity in Papua. They work closely with international solidarity networks that amplify the Papuan voices for a broader audience. They managed to secure international attention from the UN human rights monitors. Two UN Special Rapporteurs were invited by the Indonesian government to visit Papua in 2007.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression's recent plan to visit Papua, however, was delayed. At the last minute, Jakarta did not issue permission for him to visit Papua. This decision was not unprecedented. Previously the International Red Cross had been ordered by Jakarta to leave Papua. Similarly, the contracts of certain international charity organisations with Jakarta were not renewed. In parallel, the national parliament passed legislation that tends to encourage the military to come back to day-to-day politics. These all are challenges that confront Papua.

It is the time for the international community to join the Vanuatu Prime Minister's call for an independent investigation to be conducted into Papua's situation. The world must act to establish the truth of the state of human rights in Papua. This truth will hopefully lead to justice.



Women in Australian prisons and why they need human rights protections

First published in [Regarding Rights](#)

The ACT Human Rights Commission is currently conducting an [audit and review](#) of the treatment of women in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). This raises the broader question of “what human rights do women in Australian prisons have?”^[1] It is a particularly important question given the growth in the female prison population nationally. The Australian Bureau of Statistics [reported on 6 December 2012](#) that “the number of female prisoners has increased at a rate 21 times higher than the number of male prisoners since 2011.”^[2]

The overrepresentation of Indigenous women in prisons is particularly stark. The [Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse](#) has noted that:

Indigenous women’s imprisonment rate for the March 2012 quarter was 380 per 100,000, 16.5 times that of the general female population; this is a higher degree of overrepresentation than for Indigenous men (13.4 times). In addition, although Indigenous women’s imprisonment rate was lower than for Indigenous men, they accounted for a higher proportion of their respective prison population (35% vs 26%).

I start this post with an overview of the characteristics of the female prison population in Australia before examining what human rights women in prison have. Given that there is no human rights legislation in most of the Australian states and territories (only the ACT and Victoria have such legislation) the focus will be on why human rights protection is needed for women in prison.

Women in Australian prisons

Women currently comprise approximately [7%](#) of the Australian prison population.

Women tend to commit types of criminal offences that mean they are of less danger to other members of the community than men. For example, the [Victorian Sentencing Council](#) provides the following breakdown of gender differences in sentencing:

Men predominate in offences such as assault (11.8% of men versus 7.5% of women), sex offences (18.5% versus 3.5%) and unlawful entry with intent (burglary) (11.0% versus 6.0%), while women most commonly appear in prison with property offences (including theft) (21% of women versus 6.1% of men) and deception offences (10.0% versus 3.1%).

Women are also predominantly sentenced to imprisonment for shorter periods of time than men. The [median sentence](#) length for women is 24 months compared to 42 months for men. In relation to Indigenous women, it has been [observed](#) that “Indigenous women serve shorter sentences, meaning they are imprisoned for very minor offences—such as driving infringements and non-payment of fines” (3).

Women in prisons are a particularly vulnerable group. For example, it has been [estimated](#) that between 57 – 90% of women in prison have been victims of childhood sexual abuse. Furthermore, [87% of women in Victorian prisons](#) have been victims of sexual, physical or emotional abuse prior to their incarceration.

Women in prison also exhibit high rates of mental illness. The [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) has found that 43% of women report a history of mental health problems upon entry into prison and 51% report a high level of psychological distress. This may be compared to 37% and 39% of male prison entrants respectively, and psychological distress levels in the general population of 13% for women and 9% for men. These statistics are quite concerning given that the [World Health Organisation](#) has recognised that the nature of imprisonment is likely to worsen people’s mental health if they have problems upon entry, or cause mental health problems in some people who are healthy upon entry. This is due to factors such as the disciplinary regime, lack of choice about activities and the people that they spend time with, and limited communication with family (especially children) and friends. The result is high levels of violence, aggression, self-harm and suicide.

In addition to the mental health implications of imprisonment, it is also very disruptive to peoples’ lives. It has been argued that for women this disruption is disproportionate, given the nature of the offences they have committed and the minimal danger they are likely to pose to the community. The [Victorian Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee](#) has argued that “[t]he impacts of short sentences for women are arguably disproportionate to the crimes committed; for example, they can lead to women’s children entering state care, the loss of housing, income and all personal possessions” (29). This is particularly the case given that the majority of women sentenced to imprisonment are the primary caregivers for dependent children. On average, [two-thirds](#) of women in prison are primary caregivers. This figure is higher for Indigenous women, for example it was recently found to be

As the female imprisonment rate continues to rise, there are some difficult questions that we need to ask ourselves as a society about whether the danger posed to the community by the types of offences typically committed by women justifies these results for the women and children concerned (not to mention the burden placed on those caring for children while their mothers are incarcerated).

80% in Victoria. Research has found that “when mothers are incarcerated it is typically maternal grandmothers and other kin, not children’s fathers, who step up to care for them if they are not fostered out”.

The **impact** on children of having their mother sentenced to imprisonment includes problems for their “physical, behavioural, emotional, social and academic development”; “social isolation/withdrawal, social stigma and a range of strong emotions such as grief and loss, depression and shame are also common” (75).

As the female imprisonment rate continues to rise, there are some difficult questions that we need to ask ourselves as a society about whether the danger posed to the community by the types of offences typically committed by women justifies these results for the women and children concerned (not to mention the burden placed on those caring for children while their mothers are incarcerated).

What human rights do women in Australian prisons currently have?

Given that the female imprisonment rate is continuing to grow, it is important to consider what human rights women in prison have currently. Australia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which contains a number of provisions relevant to people in prisons. These include:

1. Article 7, which provides that “[n]o one shall be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”;
2. Article 10(1), which provides that “[a]ll persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person”; and
3. Article 10(3), which provides that “[t]he penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation”.

International human rights law also provides that people in prison retain all their rights other than the right to liberty. This principle is found in the United Nations General Assembly’s “Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners” (**Principle 5**). This means that people in prison retain their right to life, personal security, privacy, the right to equality and not to be discriminated against, as well as other rights.

The human rights of women in the majority of Australian prisons are not protected by domestic legislation. However, in light of the characteristics of the Australian female prison population outlined above, and the nature of the prison environment, it is arguable that human right protections are particularly important for women in prison.

Despite Australia being a party to the ICCPR, it does not form part of Australian law except to the extent it has been enacted in domestic legislation. There are no legislative protections for the human rights of imprisoned people at the national level. There is the **Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia** (2004), but these are not enforceable.^[3] Furthermore, most states and territories (which are responsible for prison administration, rather than the Federal government) have not enacted domestic legislation to protect the human rights contained in the ICCPR. The only two that have done so are the ACT (**Human Rights Act 2004**) and Victoria (**Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**), and neither have included a provision that has the effect of Article 10(3) of the ICCPR.

Thus, the human rights of women in the majority of Australian prisons are not protected by domestic legislation. However, in light of the characteristics of the Australian female prison population outlined above, and the nature of the prison environment, it is arguable that human right protections are particularly important for women in prison. I discuss key examples of where these protections are required in the next section.

What human rights protections are needed?

There are a number of human rights concerns raised by the imprisonment of women that are equally important, so the following list should not be seen as one that is ranked by level of importance. It is also not an exhaustive overview, and instead offers examples.

Strip searching is a common occurrence in prison. It is used to find contraband items, such as drugs. Being subject to a strip search is a traumatising experience for anybody, but it is particularly so for the high percentage of women in prison who have previously been victims of sexual abuse/assault. It has been **described** as “sexual assault by the State”. Under the provisions of the ICCPR the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and the right to be treated with “humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person” both require that strip searching be used minimally, if at all.

It has **recently** emerged that there has been widespread sexual assault of women in the Brisbane Women’s Correctional Centre by a prison officer. This clearly involves a criminal offence, but it also violates the right to personal security as provided for by international human rights law.

Many women wish to use their time in prison to further their skills through education, work or both. This improves their chances of being able to support themselves and their children following their release, and decreases the chances of recidivism. Educational programs and work opportunities are often not provided to women in prison to the same extent as they are for men because of the small number of women imprisoned.

What human rights protections are needed? (Contd...)

Treatment for mental illness is a priority for women in prison given the high percentage with mental health problems. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health, Mr Anand Grover, visited Australia in 2009 and **found** that mental health services in prisons were inadequate for the high percentage of people with mental illnesses there. Under international human rights law people in prison have the right to “the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,”^[4] and are also entitled to health services of an equivalent level to services provided in the community.

The majority of women in prison are mothers and it is important for both the women and their children, as well as for other family members, that they have continuing contact during their incarceration. **Research** has found that the availability of visits impacts on the quality of women’s ongoing relationships with their children following their release. Because there are fewer women’s prisons they are often located in remote areas, making it difficult for family members and carers of children to visit. The remoteness of these prisons can also separate Indigenous women from their communities and country. Human rights law provides for the protection of the family, and so supports ongoing contact. Additionally, Indigenous women in prison have the right to enjoy their culture with members of their community (under Article 27 of the ICCPR).

Many women wish to use their time in prison to further their skills through education, work or both. This improves their chances of being able to support themselves and their children following their release, and decreases the chances of recidivism. Educational programs and work opportunities are often not provided to women in prison to the same extent as they are for men because of the small number of women imprisoned. As noted above, the goal of imprisonment under the ICCPR is rehabilitation, which requires that education and vocational training be made available. The right to equality before the law and not to be discriminated against requires that such programs be made available equally to men and women in prison.

Conclusion

Nelson Mandela observed that “no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones”.^[5] The concerns raised by the treatment of women in Australian prisons, in light of the statistics highlighted in this post, include:

Human rights law is certainly not a panacea for the harm caused by imprisonment of this segment of the population, and it would be preferable to consider alternatives to imprisonment. However, if as a society we are going to continue to imprison women at ever increasing rates, they are clearly a group that needs access to protections. Human rights law offers one such protective mechanism.

- being subject to conditions that are likely to worsen their mental health (especially in light of the mental health issues they face upon imprisonment, their history of abuse and victimisation, and being subjected to strip searching and some cases sexual assault while in prison);
- being separated from their dependent children and other family members, which is in the majority of cases harmful to both the mother and her children, and of particular significance to the high percentage of Indigenous women in the Australian prison population who are often being imprisoned long distances from their country and communities; and
- not being provided with adequate mental health services, education and vocational training aimed at rehabilitation.

Human rights law is certainly not a panacea for the harm caused by imprisonment of this segment of the population, and it would be preferable to consider alternatives to imprisonment. However, if as a society we are going to continue to imprison women at ever increasing rates, they are clearly a group that needs access to protections. Human rights law offers one such protective mechanism.

^[1] This post draws substantially on the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law submission to the ACT Human Rights Commission which was prepared by Associate Professor Bronwyn Naylor and Anita Mackay.

^[2] Note that the ACT provides an exception to this trend as the number of females in prison has remained fairly stable. For example, in 2010 there were 15 women imprisoned in the ACT, whereas during the March quarter of 2013 there were 13 – Australian Bureau of Statistics, Corrective Services, Australia, March 2013 (13 June 2013) 14.

^[3] The preface states that the guidelines “constitute outcomes or goals to be achieved by correctional services rather than a set of absolute standards or laws to be enforced” (3).

^[4] Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Australia is a signatory.

^[5] Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela (Back Bay Books, 1995).



L to R : Ed Miliband and his father, the late Ralph Miliband

Why Most Jews Still Stand Alone

It was back to business as usual in Israel after an unusually early month of Jewish New Year celebrations. The main story for news outlets during the week ending Friday 04 October was at the United Nations' General Assembly where Premier Benjamin Netanyahu warned that "Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone", he maintained. Hot on his heels was Finance Minister Yair Lapid, who first remonstrated with young Israelis for moving to Berlin for economic reasons and then reminded delegates at a conference in Budapest that "antisemitism has reared its ugly head in Hungary again ... we cannot discard it, we cannot let it grow. Hatred", he said, "is not disappearing".

Most striking was that both men veered from their main subjects to speak with quiet eloquence about their forebears' courageous escapes from anti-Jewish oppression. While Lapid recalled that in 1945 his late father Tommy had avoided being murdered with thousands of other Jews on the banks of the River Danube, Netanyahu related how in the 19th century, his grandfather had made his way to Palestine from Europe after being beaten and left for dead by anti-Jewish hoodlums.

Meanwhile in the UK., it became clear that while Labour Party leader, Ed Miliband lives as a 'non-Jewish' Jew, his own filial affections run as deeply devout as those of Lapid and Netanyahu. But it became obvious also, that some family allegiances may be misconstrued as disloyalty to Britain. For quite suddenly, the Israeli politicians' remarks became a stark backdrop to one of the nastiest pieces of journalism I have seen in a British newspaper for some years: Even as they spoke, readers of the Daily Mail were being treated to a series of features about Ed's father, Ralph which were vicious enough to be roundly condemned even by the Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron and his Liberal-Democrat deputy, Nick Clegg.

Ralph Miliband was a Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe who fled to Britain and served in the Royal Navy. He was also an atheist and a Marxist socialist. But everyone who spoke out against the Mail's campaign to destroy his son's credibility as Labour leader by impugning Ralph's loyalty to Britain, agreed that it went far beyond the bounds of common decency. If the allegations had not been so wickedly untrue they would hardly have been worthy of reply.

However matters became worse. Those with long memories recalled the Mail's brief pre-war flirtation with Fascism. Then its wholly independent sister newspaper, the Mail On Sunday also played dirty. A reporter covertly attended a private memorial service at Guy's Hospital, London for Mr Miliband's uncle, Professor Harry Keen, in order to speak to relatives about the on-going controversy.



Like most people, I am furious about the Mail's behaviour – both for personal and professional reasons. First it has further discredited an industry still suffering as a result of the News International phone hacking scandal. But my **personal reason** is partly because, as I have outlined previously, a couple of my relatives enjoyed a warm acquaintance with Miliband Senior, Professor Eric Hobsbawm and their circle. One of them however, Professor Avrom Saltman, was strictly Orthodox and eccentrically, his expertise was not Marxism but Medieval Christianity!

Yet there's much more. Many Jewish people agree that the Mail's actions were not anti-Jewish. But others, including The Guardian newspaper's Jonathan Freedland and me, believe that an unpleasant odour lingers there.

My contention is thus: If the Mail did not intend to pander to anti-Jewish feeling, it has done so unintentionally as the Miliband fracas is just the latest in a list of recent stories which have fed traditional prejudices about Jewish wealth, power, influence and prestige. I have decided not mention them individually or to name the people who featured in them here.

Let us reflect merely "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" and say that the Mail's initial story was written by a Jew, not only because probably he was well apprised of Miliband's background but almost certainly to deflect accusations of anti-Jewish sentiment. I suggest the same could be said of those Jews who write for Israel's chief enemies in the British media – The Independent and indeed, The Guardian.

Much of this is a matter of personal opinion and perception – just like the continuing arguments about the use of the word "Yid" or attitudes towards antisemitic figures in great literature. It's a matter of tone and context: What is painfully objectionable to an individual on a particular occasion may barely register with another sometime else.

No matter. I am convinced that the Mail's tirade against the late Ralph Miliband is part of a growing, sickening trend in British society, bred partly by poverty, which in turn causes envy and fear. I am glad I need bear it no longer.

LWB is an organization that was formed in February 2005 by a group of socially-minded librarians who wanted to address the vast information resource inequity existing between different regions of the world. The vision is to build sustainable libraries and support their custodians and advocates — librarians.

Today, Librarians Without Borders is an action-oriented non-profit powered by student committees at six universities in Canada and a volunteer Executive Team and Board of Directors.

Mark Gelsomino Co-Executive Director **Librarians Without Borders**

interview with Mark Ulyseas



When people think of poverty, what typically comes to mind? It's commonly accepted that a lack of money, shortages of food, or lack of access to comfortable lodging and health care are things that typify poverty. There are plenty of fantastic organizations that address these important issues, but we often overlook the one thread that crosses into all these sectors – information poverty. That's where it all starts. Without the proper education and access to information resources, it's impossible to get yourself out from underneath these other pressures.

Could you give us an overview of the organisation, its operations in the home country and elsewhere across the world?

Librarians Without Borders was formed in 2005 at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. The founding members were a group of socially-minded librarians who wanted to address the information resource inequities that exist between different areas of the world. Our vision is to build sustainable libraries across the world and to support their most ardent defenders – librarians.

From that small initial group, we've grown into an international non-profit organization with over 1400 members worldwide. We're supported by student committees at six universities in Canada, an all-volunteer Executive Team of professional librarians and a Board comprised of notable figures in the literacy community.

When people think of poverty, what typically comes to mind? It's commonly accepted that a lack of money, shortages of food, or lack of access to comfortable lodging and health care are things that typify poverty. There are plenty of fantastic organizations that address these important issues, but we often overlook the one thread that crosses into all these sectors – information poverty. That's where it all starts. Without the proper education and access to information resources, it's impossible to get yourself out from underneath these other pressures. Education is the key to more gainful employment, increasing food production, building better houses and obtaining health care services. Whether they advertise it or not, any group that's in the non-profit game is in the business of information sharing.

Libraries have the fundamental role as defenders of intellectual freedom and providers of equal access to information. Information wants to be free and we provide access regardless of cultural background, language, geography or religion. Our largest program right now is a partnership with the **Miguel Angel Asturias Academy in Quetzaltanango, Guatemala**. We're proud to be entering the fifth year of our partnership. Asturias is a private, non-profit Kindergarten to Grade 12 school that provides subsidized education to kids who may not otherwise be in school. The Academy's director, **Jorge Chojolan**, opened the school in 1994 to address many of the same imbalances LWB was designed to combat. Schools, education and libraries are natural friends. Over the years, we've helped Asturias build their library from a box of books in Jorge's office to a fully functioning library space with over 3000 titles.

We've also been supplying our expertise to another literacy based non-profit called **Librii**. Their

We have some general rules regarding book donations though. If a book isn't something you'd feel comfortable giving your own child, it shouldn't be something you'd feel good about giving to someone else's kid. That's our way of making sure everything we supply is of good quality. Kids in developing areas deserve our best efforts, and that means helping them access material that is just as good as the stuff we read to our own kids.

vision is to build vibrant community information hubs across Africa. They build low-cost, pre-fabricated spaces that can be easily installed, even in remote communities. Right now, **Librii** is ramping up to their first library installation on Accra, Ghana. Once that initial library has been piloted, and all the kinks are worked out, we hope to help them replicate that model in other African cities.

We have loads of other projects on the go as well, mostly centred around our local student committees. It's easy to assume that talking about “developing areas” automatically means what is often referred to as Third World nations. “Third World” is a term I personally avoid, as it creates the erroneous generalization that people are better or worse off, depending on where they were born. It also ignores the fact that, even in the richest nations, there are always people in need.

Our student groups support causes ranging from Aboriginal libraries in Kettle & Stony Point, Ontario to women's shelters in Montreal, Quebec. The ability to communicate remotely has allowed our students to go even further afield. Our Ottawa, Ontario committee has recently provided encyclopedias to the **Keiskamma Trust**, a school just outside of Hamburg, South Africa. Other student groups are looking at starting projects in places like Pakistan and Cambodia. **The “without borders” moniker means exactly that – there's always someone in every corner of the globe who can benefit from better access to information.**

How are you funded?

Our organization is primarily funded by individual member donations and small fund raisers. We offer online donations on our website that members of the public are free to use at their leisure. Those donations are a great supplement to our funding and can go a long way towards helping us enhance the services we can offer.

We can also accept general donations of in-kind materials and services. It's not uncommon for Canadian or American schools to offer gently used computers, laptops or printers. As you can imagine, shipping larger ticket items such as electronics can be a challenge, but there are definitely places that can use them. Finding homes for books in good condition is never a problem. We have some general rules regarding book donations though. If a book isn't something you'd feel comfortable giving your own child, it shouldn't be something you'd feel good about giving to someone else's kid. That's our way of making sure everything we supply is of good quality. Kids in developing areas deserve our best efforts, and that means helping them access material that is just as good as the stuff we read to our own kids.



L to R : Guatemala Project Lead Carmen Ho and Program Manager Carolyn Doi show off books donated to the Asturias Academy. Mr. Jorge Chojolan, Director of the Migeual Angel Asturias Academy in Quetzatanango, Guatemala.

Our group is supported by local committees located at graduate schools in six Canadian cities. Throughout the academic year, these committees work very hard to develop their own local projects and to contribute to the work of the international organization. As stereotypical as this may sound, bake sales and university students are a winning combination. Put baked goods in front of library students and you've got a guaranteed hit. It may not seem like a lot, but if a bake sale raises two or three hundred dollars, that amount can go pretty far in developing nations. Spent wisely, we can get a lot of mileage out that capital. It's no lie when people say every little bit helps. If you can provide \$20 worth of support to someone who may only make \$2 or so a day, you've just made a big difference in their lives. Student associations and universities have also been good to us. These sorts of groups are very invested in making sure their students do well, as their successes reflect on the school's reputation. LWB offers our student members opportunities to engage in projects and work-studies that they wouldn't normally have access to. Schools like to help, especially if our activities tie into their curriculum.

We've recently begun delving into the world of sponsorships. At this point LWB has a very well developed social network and a recognizable brand in the library community. We're finding an increasing number of small businesses, book vendors or similar ventures who see the benefits of doing something positive with their profits. They can help better the quality of people's lives and make their companies look good in the process. We've had great success partnering with Auryn, a group that publishes interactive children's stories for the iPad. Publishers and vendors like **Saunders Book Company**, **Crabtree Books** and **Tinlids** have donated funds, as well as books and school supplies.

These donations are greatly appreciated and go a long way towards fulfilling our goals. As is the case with most non-profit endeavours, the people who need our services far outnumber the people we can actually help. Anything that comes in helps us increase our capacity to spread literacy around the globe.

What parameters are used in the selection of books? Is it based on specific age groups, cultural profiles, language or religion?

Collection development and book selection are particular specialties of LWB. We don't always have staff located in the countries we support and travel to partner libraries isn't an everyday occurrence. With recent advances in online communications platforms and easy access to online purchases, remote work has become easier than ever. We've taken full advantage of this when it comes to helping our partners select material.



L to R : Grade Six Children at the Asturias Academy display a cartoon poster designed to teach them how a lending library works. Story time in the Asturias Academy Library. Pics courtesy of Librarians Without Borders

The first and most important criteria for selecting material are the user's needs. If you're not selecting the types of books your users tell you they want, you're doing them a disservice. The first step is always a feedback cycle. That may take the form of a user needs assessment, a set of surveys and interviews or some other way to get inside the heads of the people who will be reading those books.

The specific parameters vary from community to community. They all have their own unique needs. Age is one of the primary indicators and how to purchase. There's an extra level of responsibility when you're purchasing for younger children. The books have to be well written and compelling to kids, but also age appropriate. Cultural profiles and language are also extremely important.

I've dealt with libraries supporting **First Nations** in Canada, indigenous **Maya** groups in Guatemala and community centres in Tanzania. They have a lot more in common than you may think. **The Narnia and Hunger Game** series are hugely popular in Guatemala right now. Aboriginal teens in northern Canada love *Twilight*, just the same as teens almost anywhere else. Kids in Tanzania love reading **Diary of a Wimpy Kid**. That tells me that people have the same hopes, dreams and desires regardless of their backgrounds. That being said, people have their own home grown heroes and traditional stories as well.

We can't just flood other people's libraries with popular North American authors. Central and South America has an amazing tradition of mythological storytelling. There are African oral histories that date back untold generations. Those local stories have to take their place alongside everything else.

As information professionals, we have a level of expertise in the best practices of book selection. The library users however, are the foremost experts in their own experiences and desires. We see the selection process as a meeting of two groups of experts. These two groups work collaboratively to come up with the best possible list of titles.

Have there been instances when a book has been withdrawn because a particular 'group' has objected to its contents?

To the best of my knowledge, neither LWB nor any of our partner libraries has ever been subjected to any overt political pressure to remove a title from our collections. Most of the libraries we support are small and many cater specifically to children and youth. LWB has always been very careful to choose literacy material that fosters a love of reading without promoting particular religions or political ideologies.

There are large numbers of libraries in places like Africa and Central America in desperate need of books. They may not have the luxury of being able to turn away donations, or their staff may not be trained to distinguish between good material and bad. Unfortunately, there are fringe religious or political groups that are willing to take advantage of this. The donations they offer libraries are presented as benign, but are sometimes just thinly veiled recruiting material. It's unfortunate, but it's a reality for libraries in the developing world.

Have there been instances when a book has been withdrawn because a particular 'group' has objected to its contents? (Contd/-)

That being said, in some areas of the world the simple act of reading is revolutionary. In Guatemala for instance, it's not uncommon for families to subsist in the equivalent of \$1-3 American per day. There can be a great deal of pressure for kids to leave school at a young age in order to help support their families. School can often be seen as a negative, as it removes a breadwinner from contributing to the household income.

Many families have to choose between the potential long term gains of education and the more immediate needs of feeding their families. This can be particularly pronounced when it comes to young girls. Childrearing and sibling care often falls upon them. When you're struggling to support your family it's an all hands on deck situation. Investing time into reading is a luxury some people find difficult to afford.

In some cases, we encounter the opposite issue. Instead of seeing libraries pressured to remove material, we see a trend towards groups attempting to pressure libraries into accepting material that may not be appropriate. There are large numbers of libraries in places like Africa and Central America in desperate need of books. They may not have the luxury of being able to turn away donations, or their staff may not be trained to distinguish between good material and bad. Unfortunately, there are fringe religious or political groups that are willing to take advantage of this. The donations they offer libraries are presented as benign, but are sometimes just thinly veiled recruiting material. It's unfortunate, but it's a reality for libraries in the developing world.

As much as possible, LWB strives to fill our partner libraries with material that is not only culturally appropriate but helps readers develop critical thinking skills. Knowledge and education is the best defence against misinformation.

We supply the experts with backgrounds in developing collections, in assessing user needs and in sourcing materials. That expert advice is packaged and presented to a partner library, but we're always careful to spread the decision making power as evenly as possible. We support and advise, but at the end of the day the libraries we help don't really belong to us. They belong to the people and the communities who use them. The final decisions on what sorts of books they want in their facilities belongs to them. We like to give them the tools to make those decisions wisely.



Guatemala Project Lead Laura George attends a celebratory dinner with members of LWB and Asturias Academy staff. Pics courtesy of Librarians Without Borders

What are your plans for 2014?

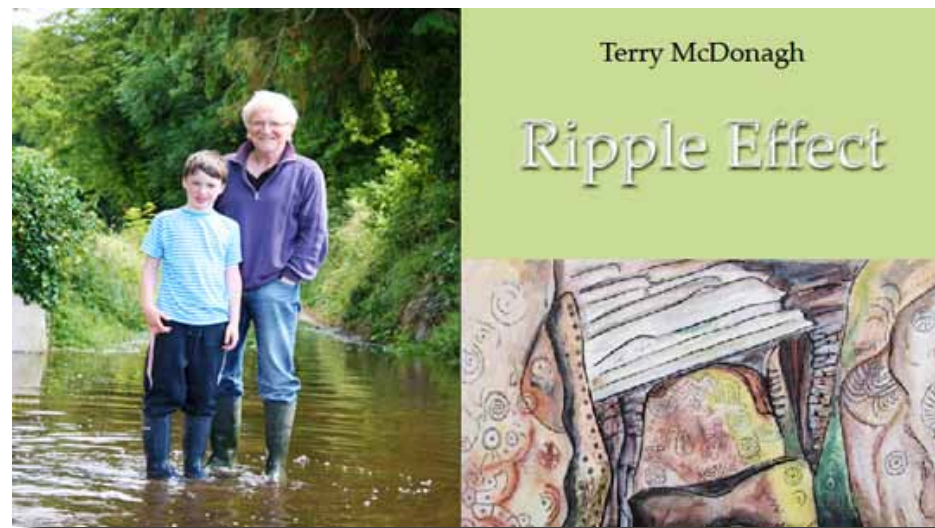
We fully expect 2014 to be a growth year for our organization. We're now entering the fifth year of our partnership with the Asturias Academy. At this point we're more than partners. We've become close friends with many of the staff and families. We make a yearly trip to Asturias and that will continue. We've recently made friends with another Guatemalan non-profit, Limitless Horizons Ixil. They support a very similar library just a few hours drive from Asturias. We're also developing smaller projects in Cambodia, Pakistan and South Africa.

What is your message for the readers of Live Encounters?

If I could leave your readers with one message it would be to just do one thing that benefits someone else. I sometimes encounter people who don't have the time, or just feel that their contributions won't matter. They couldn't be more wrong. A lot of the kids we deal with have never owned a book or had the opportunity to experience the pride of ownership that comes with caring for one.

Giving one book to one child can open the door to a whole new world of possibilities.





This poem, **In a Doll's House**, was written in Hamburg and it is included in my latest collection, **Ripple Effect**.

In it I have tried to convey our attachments to unimportant experiences we might have considered important at one time – but in the end we must confront ourselves and our helplessness in the face of passing time.

We spend our time trying to conform, fit in, and to making others conform to our definition of how things ought to be.

Why?

In a Doll's House

Day after day, year in year out, life after life,
you and I sit like puppets, or stand at the horizon
unable to trust our wings.

We make low, uneasy sounds behind frosted glass
or we toy with balloons
hoping to find a second wind.

Former lovers saunter along the street below
like links in a chain of empty cups –
like glitzy eyes dancing in tandem.

I had a full pipe and swagger then, but we grew
weary searching for each other in sweat shops,
data banks, meditation classes and crossfire.

You used to be a good kisser. I had my newspaper
in my tweed pocket. We were a repeat performance
turning left, left, left, left, left – only left.

My car was bigger than yours. You were
more brunette; better on the phone to
Indian summer resorts – things like that.

We've moved on to become decorations in an
earthenware pot – a place where
birds of prey can't stop laughing, and when you

think that – in our day – The Beatles sang
love, love, love,
love is all you need...love is all you need.

In a doll's house next door, a healthy boy
is getting singing lessons
to make him more tenor, to make him more base,

to suppress his love
of singing songs,
to make him one of us.



South Africa: Archbishop Condemns Anti-LGBTI Violence

Statement in Video Challenges African Leaders

Press release October 21, 2013 [Human Rights Watch](#)

(Banjul) – Southern Africa’s Anglican archbishop calls for an end to violence and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, in a [video](#) Human Rights Watch released today. The remarks by the **Most Revd Dr. Thabo Makgoba**, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of Southern Africa, challenge arguments put forward by several African governments that culture, tradition, and religion justify the marginalization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people.

“Don’t fear,” Archbishop Makgoba says in his message. “You’ve been given this task of helping the rest of humanity to realize that we are called to respect and we are called to honor each other. People may come and say this is un-African, and I’m saying love cuts across culture.”

Human Rights Watch interviewed the archbishop for the video as part of an effort to highlight supportive voices for the LGBTI movement in Africa. Makgoba’s statement reinforces the persistent efforts of his predecessor, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, to combat homophobia and transphobia in Africa and around the world, Human Rights Watch said. Tutu has spoken out against a number of laws and practices that violate the rights of LGBTI people, including [Uganda’s](#) proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill and [Burundi’s](#) criminalization of same-sex conduct in 2009.

“When you violate somebody on the basis of difference you’re not only violating them but you are demeaning yourself,” Makgoba says in the video. He exhorts leaders to take up their “moral responsibility to stop the violence against people who are different.”

Makgoba’s statement was released amid high levels of violence against LGBTI people in Africa. In Cameroon, Eric Ohena Lembembe, a gay activist, was [murdered](#) in July 2013, but government officials have [refused](#) to acknowledge that his murder might be a hate crime. In [South Africa](#), lesbian and bisexual women and non-gender-conforming people face endemic rape and assault; the killing of Duduzile Zozo in July is the most recently reported example of such targeted violence.

“Archbishop Makgoba’s statement should serve as a call to national, religious, and cultural leaders across Africa who support the rights of LGBTI people to speak out publicly,” said [Graeme Reid](#), LGBT Rights director. “And the archbishop’s message of respect for everyone’s rights should challenge leaders who have opposed the rights of LGBTI people to reconsider their positions.”

DURGA PUJA

Although observed throughout the country in its different manifestations, **Durga Puja** is the mother of all festivals in the State of West Bengal... spanning over five days in keeping with the almanac.

According to the Hindu faith, the authentic worship '**Basanti Durga Puja**' is observed in late spring between March and April in limited areas. The popular form '**Sharadiya Durga Puja**' is celebrated in autumn between September and October.

The puja (worship) signifies Goddess Durga's, who is believed to be Himalaya's daughter and the spouse of Lord Shiva, sojourn to her father's place with her four children. Goddess Durga is synonymous with good prevailing over evil and oppression.

Once a household ritual, Durga Puja has evolved into a community affair and takes the shape of a protracted jamboree in West Bengal. Puja budgets can run anywhere between US\$ 5,000 to upwards of US \$100,000 attracting corporate involvement and showcasing exquisite art forms and illuminations.



Sourav Jourdar, Photographer, Siliguri, West Bengal, India.
www.facebook.com/sourav.jourdar

Artist putting the finishing touches to a Durga idol.



Artist working on an idol of Durga.





Goddess Durga in all her splendour





Pandals of Bengal. Pandals are fabricated temporary structures used for religious functions. In this case it houses the Durga idol.





Exquisitely made pandal with coir and bamboo, rising three storeys high



Each pandal has a theme. This one is on corruption.



Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine: Integrate and Receive

Where Does My Energy Go?

Do you notice you are tired in the morning when you first awake? Do you have a difficult time concentrating? Where does your energy go? I love the work of Caroline Myss—especially her image of the hundred circuits of energy we are given each day. In a course called Medical Intuition Training that she taught in April of 2004, she described these energy circuits as your power or your Spirit. She had us imagine one hundred circuits coming out from the top of our heads. She then asked us to follow the circuits to see where they were going. We imagined that 20% of the circuits were in the future, as people thought about what they were going to do later in the day; 40% in the past, connected to a childhood wound; and 30% in present time, leaving 10% unaccounted for.

When your energy is not in present time, you don't have the energy to fuel your body-mind. To be able to heal your body, you need to have a large percentage of your energy in the present. This explains partially why some people are able to heal themselves quickly and others are not. In previous articles in this series you have received several tools to bring your energy back.

Body Work

In the field of integrative medicine, there are many helpful modalities and healing tools. I particularly like Reiki. The knowledge that an unseen energy flows through all living things and is connected directly to the quality of health has been part of the wisdom of many cultures since ancient times and discussed at length in this writing. We have seen how the existence of this life force energy has been verified by recent scientific experiments, and medical doctors are considering the role it plays in the functioning of the immune system and the healing process.

Reiki is a form of laying on of hands healing. Its origins have been traced to Tibet. The word Reiki is made of two Japanese words—Rei, which refers to God's Wisdom or the Higher Power, and Ki, which is life force energy. So Reiki is actually life force energy. In China, this energy is called chi or qi; it is known as prana in India, mana in Hawaii, and orenda in Native American cultures. Another name for this energy is aura, which is the electrical force field that surrounds the physical body.

Healing Touch is another energy therapy you may be interested in receiving or learning. It helps to balance your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Like Reiki, Healing Touch works with your energy field to support your natural ability to heal.

Reiki is used to apply life force energy to relieve pain, promote the healing process, revitalize, regenerate, and calm. It differs somewhat from touch healing in that the position of the hands over (or on) the body aligns more closely with the chakras.

Disease begins first on a non-physical level and then manifests on the physical level. Reiki will stimulate the aura and heal at that level. Lack of vitality is the cause of dis-ease in the non-physical, and Reiki stimulates the life force energy in the aura, giving the body more energy and vitality as well. Reiki eases trauma and shock, reduces stress and pain, and keeps tissue damage to a minimum. Your body holds the cellular memory of perfect health within. Reiki assists the body in remembering this perfect health. It is especially helpful for renewal when you find yourself too busy and working without rest. It is a technique for stress reduction and relaxation that allows everyone to tap into an unlimited supply of life force energy to improve health and enhance the quality of life.

Healing Touch

Healing Touch is another energy therapy you may be interested in receiving or learning. It helps to balance your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Like Reiki, Healing Touch works with your energy field to support your natural ability to heal. Founded in 1989 by Janet Mentgen, an RN, Healing Touch was used as a continuing education program for nurses. Today it is used widely in hospitals and other medical settings. You may find many of the massage therapists in your area are also Healing Touch practitioners.

After a car accident in 2006 in which I was rear-ended, I went to a massage therapist friend for treatment. She used Healing Touch on me, and I could immediately feel the energy shift and release. I was impressed. It took the kinks out of my muscles quickly, and I felt like myself again.

Massage Therapy

Many massage therapists will use different techniques to augment their practice, such as hot rock massage and massage with therapeutic oils, but massage alone is very beneficial. It can be a great preventative measure in addition to helping with pain relief. We addressed chi deficiency earlier, and massage can be helpful for this lack of energy. Also, the joints become less elastic as you age, and massage can help keep your muscles, joints, and ligaments more supple.

When I hurt my shoulder in London schlepping my bags around in and out of the Tube, a massage therapist was extremely helpful in releasing the pain and tension in the muscle, as well as teaching me how to employ a pillow while sleeping so the arm could be elevated a little and not strained as I slept. Massage is also very nurturing. If you live alone or don't receive touch, massage is a blessing.

Many massage therapists will use different techniques to augment their practice, such as hot rock massage and massage with therapeutic oils, but massage alone is very beneficial. It can be a great preventative measure in addition to helping with pain relief.

Electromagnetic Protection

According to the online dictionary found at [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com), electro pollution is defined as:

Nonionizing electromagnetic radiation propagated through the atmosphere by broadcast towers, radar installations, and microwave appliances, and the magnetic fields surrounding electrical appliances and power lines, which is believed to have polluting effects on people and the environment; also called electromagnetic smog.

In Week Ten, we discussed your biofield. Although there is much controversy over what will or will not help protect us from electromagnetic pollution, much of what I have read concludes that there is indeed a problem. Earlier I shared the story of how wearing a pendant helped me to quickly recover my energy and health. My understanding is that the vibrations coming from cell phones, televisions, microwaves, and other items that are plugged into the electrical system are man-made waves, not natural to the environment and not natural to the environment of the human energy field or biofield. The BioPro (now Gia Wellness) pendant supports my body's own self-healing ability by changing the vibration of the electropollution into a wave against which my body can defend itself. There are many studies that support this claim, and I encourage you to decide for yourself. You can learn more at <http://candess.inspiredwellness411.com>, use your newfound skill of kinesiology, your intuition, or find a combination of the three that works for you. If you decide to use products to protect you from the electromagnetic pollution, there are even more sources that you can find on the Internet.

If you choose not to explore this option, but do believe that electromagnetic pollution is dangerous, here are some things you can do:

1. If you have an electric clock or radio next to your head when you sleep, either get a battery clock or move the clock as far from your sleeping space as you can.
2. Unplug anything that you are not using.
3. If you do not want to unplug items, it is helpful to get power strips so you can plug several items into one strip and turn them all off at once. This works well with computers and printers.
4. If you use a microwave, stand several feet away from the microwave when you are using it.
5. Use land phones when possible, and do not let children use your cell phone.
6. Use headphones rather than Bluetooth earpieces.

The simplest and most productive way to feel good naturally is to meditate in the morning and early evening. Morning is also a good time to stretch, play, move your body, and check in with your body. Experience the outdoors as often as possible, and become conscious of your surroundings.

Manifesting

What you focus on increases. This is a large part of manifesting. Use the following simple steps to bring what you truly desire into your life:

1. Imagine the END result.
2. Clearly IDENTIFY what you want. Write it down.
3. ENVISION what it is that you are manifesting. Use all of your senses.
4. Be RECEPTIVE. Maintain your desires, but be unattached to the specifics of the outcome.
5. Practice an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE! Be generous with others.
6. RELEASE any fears or doubts regarding your deserving this manifestation.
7. RECEIVE what comes your way. Be aware of what is coming and be careful not to block the gifts of the Universe.

Overall Health

You have been given a lot of information in this series on [12 Weeks to Self-Healing: Transforming Pain through Energy Medicine](#) and if you have it, in the book. I hope that you are able to reread sections and practice the tools and exercises so that they become daily habits in your life. In summary, ultimately, you create your health by your choices. The external world, including your body, acts as a mirror reflecting your inner beliefs and expectations. Your doing, thinking, and feeling affect all aspects of your physiology, which results in good health or disease, as well as happiness or depression.

The simplest and most productive way to feel good naturally is to meditate in the morning and early evening. Morning is also a good time to stretch, play, move your body, and check in with your body. Experience the outdoors as often as possible, and become conscious of your surroundings. Eat healthy food that is not processed, and eat the largest meal in the middle of the day. Avoid alcohol and other drugs, including sugar. Drink eight glasses of un-chlorinated water daily.

Experience and express your feelings. Take time to understand what you are feeling and the origin of the feeling. See a counselor or a body worker to help you release your feelings. Relax before bed with a book, bath, or some light organizing. Be positive in your thoughts, and allow yourself to belong, to be loving and forgiving, and to experience yourself in a process of health and healing. Take responsibility for your own health. And, I would like to add, be grateful!

The whole process of self-healing involves becoming conscious and activating your own life force energy and directing it consciously. Have fun with this. Use the tools that you find to be the most helpful and share them with friends.

Tools and Exercises

1. Ground yourself, close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Take a moment to imagine you have 100 circuits of energy emanating from the top of your head. See where your energy is going. You can do this by seeing what memories and feelings surface. Do a timed writing for twenty minutes to get more information.
2. Assess your home for electropollution. Research on the Internet what is said to be harmful, and take some precautions by investing in protective products or using the ideas I gave you in this week.
3. Make an appointment for Reiki, Healing Touch, massage, or another nurturing experience. If you do this kind of work as well, do not trade sessions. Allow yourself to receive.
4. Go to your local independent bookstore and spend some time looking through the books. Allow your intuition to take you to the book that will be activating for you.

The whole process of self-healing involves becoming conscious and activating your own life force energy and directing it consciously. Have fun with this. Use the tools that you find to be the most helpful and share them with friends. If you need more support, this audio program will assist you through the process. [12 Weeks Self-Healing Audio Course](#).

There are a couple of points I have not yet made, but I find them to be very important. The first is to be sure to forgive yourself for anything you may be holding without letting go. Forgive others as well, because as we hold resentments of the past, the resentments hold us much tighter. The second is a word I have learned to love as I embrace it. The word is surrender. The more I have learned to surrender my will to God, the Universe, the Divine ... the simpler my life has become.

When you understand that you are not alone, that there is a part of you that is much wiser and much more capable, it becomes easier to let go and trust that your own Higher Self, your Inner Guide, the Holy Spirit will create for you in a manner beyond what you could imagine yourself.

“Doctor, I’d like a bottle of placebo please.”

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