

# Stirrings



A Basilian Peace & Justice Newsletter

Winter 2016

“Look, I am doing something new.  
Now it emerges, can you not see it?”

*Thoughts on Canadian Religious Congress (CRC)  
Workshop in Kingston 25-27 January 2016*

*(Isaiah 43:19)*

By Bob Holmes CSB

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Reflecting for three days on Isaiah's words and the image of the cocoon in which the lowly caterpillar is being transformed into something new, capable of flying off on beautiful wings, 60 members of the CRC Workshop in Kingston explored what it is that God is doing new in our times.

Sue Wilson CSJ helped us explore the stages of the evolution of consciousness, the emerging of more and more complex worldviews – archaic, tribal, warrior, traditional, modern, post-modern, integral – each embedded deep in the consciousness (and unconsciousness) like Russian dolls and each with both gifts and shadows (see *Spiral Dynamics* by Donald Beck). It is not difficult to see the clash of worldviews in Western society today: Traditionalists with their values of group solidarity and the importance of the rule of law versus the Modernists who value freedom of the individual and material prosperity earned by hard work; Modernists with their belief in inevitable progress through external scientific research versus Post-Modernists who question internal filters and lenses and challenge established values.

The Integral stage recognizes the legitimacy and necessity of all the worldviews and pays attention to exploring an underlying unity. It is a process of whole-making, of making conscious both the personal and the collective unconscious within us, and of reconciling the differences seeking a new way forward, a new narrative, a new hope.



My recent experience of this worldview came from a talk by Sami Awad, a Palestinian Christian peacemaker in Bethlehem who founded Holy Land Trust – seeking to build trust in the Holy Land. His peacemaking ministry has evolved from nonviolent public witness (protests and marches) to bringing Israelis and Palestinians together to share their respective narratives – both of which involve the deep-seated trauma of victimization. The mutual sharing and acknowledgement of these narratives is important but it is not enough. There must be a new narrative, a new way forward must emerge. As McLuhan reminds us it is folly “to drive forward looking in the rearview mirror.”

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Stirring: (adjective) exciting, arousing, awakening, animating, quickening

An immersion experience which will deepen your understanding of this conflicted zone and move your heart as we reflect and pray in places where Jesus was born, lived, taught, died and rose



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*Stirrings*

*A Peace & Justice Newsletter  
A project of the Basilian Centre for Peace & Justice*

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Neil Hibberd, Bob Holmes, Leo Reilly, Maurice Restivo



**God Is Doing Something New**

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Just as Isaiah, in the midst of exile and despondency, could see something new emerging in God’s plan for his people, so also today, in a time of economic disparity, climate crisis and militarism, we need to discern with contemplative listening where God is leading us.

The emerging worldview is unifying, whole-making, cosmic and hopeful. It is discovered by a contemplative consciousness. And that is where we find God in this new emergence. Pope Francis tells us that “the world is a sacrament of communion” – a sacred sign of God’s unifying presence and action in our midst. The emerging universe has much to reveal to us about who we are and who God is.

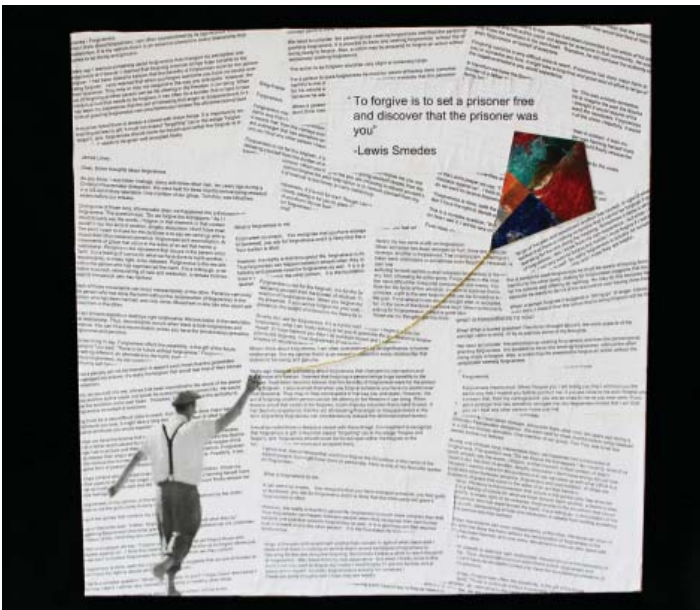
So what are the “take aways” from this workshop? Certainly a new consciousness from which, if attended to, could emerge a re-structuring of social, ecological and ecclesial realities. Seeds have been planted. New shoots need to be tended. We are called to be gardeners. New life is gestating in the womb. We need to be mid-wives. There is a radical transformation happening in the cocoon. We need to be imagining new wings to carry us into the realization of God’s dream for humanity, the earth, the universe.

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## What is Forgiveness to You?

The graphic above is the creation of Quinn Macpherson, a student in Waterloo, Ontario. She sent the email request above to family and friends and pasted their responses into the beautiful work of reflective art.

### *The response of James Loney to Quinn's request*

Okay. Some thoughts about forgiveness.

As you know, I was taken hostage, along with three other men, ten years ago during a Christian Peacemaker delegation. We were held for three months before being released in a US-led military operation. One member of our group, Tom Fox, was killed two weeks before our release.

During one of those long, interminable days, we happened into a discussion of forgiveness. The question was, "Do we forgive the kidnappers." As I recall it, none of us could actually say the words, I forgive, in that moment, in that context – at least I couldn't – but that is kind of another, lengthy discussion I don't have energy for just now.

The point I want to make for this purpose is to say we came up with what I think is a crucial distinction between penance, forgiveness and reconciliation. All three are movements of grace that occur in the wake of an act that

Hello,

I recently read a book in my english class called *The Sunflower*, it takes place during WWII and is a true story experienced by the author. The author, Simon Wiesenthal, was a Jew in a concentration camp who was asked by a dying member of the S.S for forgiveness of all his sins and misjudgment. Simon feeling as though he could not represent the entire Jewish community left the man's bedside without saying a word.

I have written this email wondering if you might answer the question, "What is forgiveness to you?" by writing a short paragraph or letter with your own opinion. I am doing a project about forgiveness and would appreciate any thoughts you might like to share.

Thanks for your time,  
Quinn

harms a relationship.

Penance is the movement that occurs in the person who has done the harm. It is a feeling of sorrow for what we have done to harm another, a desire to take responsibility, to make right, to be released.

Forgiveness is the movement that occurs within the person who has experienced the harm. It is a letting go, a renunciation of the desire to punish, relinquishing of hate and retribution, a release from holding something against the person who has harmed.

Each of these movements can occur independently of the other. Penance can occur in the person who has done the harm without the reciprocation of forgiveness in the person who has been harmed, and vice versa. Movement in one can also assist with movement in the other.

An act of harm distorts or destroys right relationship. Reconciliation is the restoration of that relationship. Thus, reconciliation occurs when there is both forgiveness and penance. You can't have reconciliation unless you have the simultaneous presence of forgiveness and penance.

The last thing I'll say: Forgiveness offers the possibility, is the gift of the future. Desmond Tutu said, "There is no future without forgiveness." Forgiveness is the path to something different, an alternative to the harm, hate, destruction, killing of the past. Without forgiveness, we are condemned to an eternal cycle of retribution, or the simmering self-hatred that goes along with being a victim.

James



# Thoughts on the Planet and the Cities

By Leo Reilly CSB

## Summoning All Christians

It is a surprise for some Catholics, used to the official emphasis on sexual matters such as birth control, divorce, and gay marriage to find Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* calling for more attention to environmental issues, the plight of the poor and the economic system that fails to take better care of our sister, the earth, and its inhabitants.

The scientists and engineers have now made renewable energy cheaper than fossil fuel or atomic energy so that energy from the sun, the source of all our lives, continues to be available for a decent life at the human scale of home, family and friends for all people on earth.



## The Terrors of High Rise Living

Marshall McLuhan in 1961 was condemning condominium high-rise living not because of the danger of fire or enemy planes but as a form of self-entombment. By putting themselves into the equivalent of cemetery crypts, individuals and families bought into an advertising image of human life which separated them from others to the point of death.

Just as the motor car had created suburbs into which people could only abide fleetingly as neighbours, so the high rise was another example of machine-age technology that destroyed the human scale of livable communities, where neighbours were for life, services were available within easy walking distance, and people could grow old knowing that an abundance of caring was available. High-rise livers, to compensate, needed enough extra funds for vacations on beaches where they could occasionally imitate the lives of poor people on separate beaches nearby.

Rather than the traditional emphasis that the Catholic Church alone is right on matters of faith and morals and that others have to agree, the Pope is willing to look at what all groups have to contribute to the good of the planet.

He summons the world's four major Christian groups – the Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, the Pentecostals, the mainline Protestants and Anglicans as well as the Catholic Church - to join with the Pope, in this year of Mercy, to hasten the conversion of the earth to renewable energy in the face of the non-renewable interests who

despite the 2015 Paris climate accord have so far failed to take any responsibility for ongoing loss and damage to the planet.

The famous economist, Barbara Ward saw the loss of human scale in the 1950s and predicted that we would spend the twenty-first century tearing down the tall buildings.

A temporary solution might be to combine the high-rises with the unlivable suburbs. Toronto, for example, still has many livable neighbourhoods while its neighbour, Scarborough, which looks so orderly and well-preserved on the outside, is basically unlivable, a product of machine-age auto-makers, construction companies, and policy makers, who failed to consider how young people could become employable, be able to pay for public transportation and live to have decent families of their own.

While avoiding such mistakes in the future, we could redirect the 2200 condos currently scheduled for Toronto to each of the cantons of Scarborough, each of the areas bounded by relatively uncrossable autobahns. The high-rises would have within walking distance all the services needed for a neighbourhood including services for the youth who have been reduced to violence and drug trafficking through civic neglect.

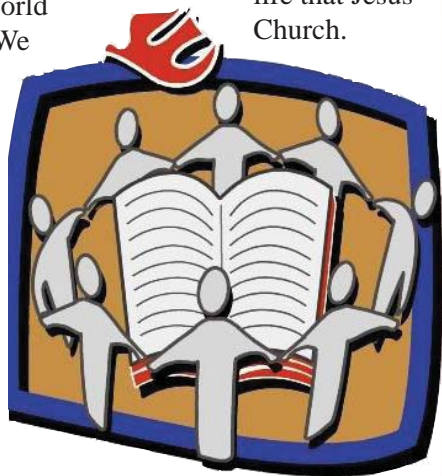
# Becoming Church and Christian Community

By Larry Carney

Somehow, in our human understanding of things we keep encountering a conflict between our limited human concepts and the vast totality of the real world that we encounter. We experience an intellectual contact that is somehow precise, and yet fuzzy and unclear in another way. Perhaps this is God's way of teaching us: What He knows determines what is reality; what we know is determined by what is real. For God it is active, and for us it is passive. He is God, and we are not God. He spoke and our world came into existence. We encounter it a little bit at a time, and digest it like the food we eat. I need to keep eating and so does everyone else; the picture becomes even more clear when we all cooperate and share the insights we have received. There is always a mysterious separation between the cold ideas in our head and the warm experience of being together and sharing them. I consider those times to be "peak experiences."

Perhaps the most significant one for me was on a college retreat weekend in the 60's. I felt I was going more as an outside observer, looking for new ideas for our high school retreats. (They had become too much a part of the regular school routine and outlook for me; we were in many ways "policing" the students – not a great ideal for conversion!) Fr. Ed Brennan told the forty on retreat at the start that we were going to put our Christianity to a living test. We would share

ideas, but more – we would share meals and games, laughs and tears, and especially prayer – and basically try to live as a Christian family for the weekend. We would try to really love one another. That is the Christian life that Jesus intended for His Church.



I soon found myself swallowed up and immersed in the spirit of the weekend. At the Sunday night closing everyone gave witness to a profoundly different outlook on life and Christianity. Perhaps one girl summed it up best; before she had regularly led

the way in discussions with her girl friends in college, and usually as a leader in gripes and complaints. Now she wanted to be a leader, but as a promoter of "Good News" (Gospel), trying to make things better in every way she could. I think we all felt the same way.

A few years later I had a somewhat similar experience; this time it developed gradually over weeks, even years. Bob Holmes and Paul Rybicki invited a group of us Basilians (mostly a younger group) to their home on Shrove Tuesday for a "pre-lent" meal. There they had started a different family, a home for foster kids. It was a great get-together, but ended in a serious discussion of community life. We all thought it would be great "for us" to live together as one community...we each also thought the ideal place was where each of us lived at the time. We prayed for a while, then agreed to come back the following week to pray and discuss the idea some more. We shared the Scriptures for the coming Sunday. We

shared ideas on community living. We prayed out loud spontaneously asking for guidance and discernment. What we did not do was agree to live in one house as Basilians. But we got valuable insights for our Sunday homilies...and we gradually became a small Basilian community within the larger Basilian community. We became a Basilian prayer group that met each week, each week at a different Basilian house. The numbers coming kept growing. Our group met and shared together for years afterwards.

Sometimes we all concelebrated a community Mass together. We shared Eucharist, but I think even more we became Eucharist. We became spiritual nourishment for each other. We had a new awakening, a new sharing of what it means to be "Church." In our little ways we tried to bring the experience and realization back to our different apostolates. Something had changed – from a cold impersonal ideal to a lived, warm and more enjoyable experience of the Christian life. We had become more "Church." I think that's the Christian objective that God wants for all of us. We have to keep discovering His ways of passing on this basic message.

*Larry is a former Basilian who now lives in Clifford, Ontario.*





## On the Road to Jericho

By Art Blomme

***“Collective Punishment! It seems more like Ethnic Cleansing.” I retorted. A discussion ensued on the appropriate use of these terms to describe what I had just witnessed.***

We were getting a lay of the land in East Jerusalem after arriving the evening before. Already the extreme injustice that Palestinians faced was apparent. We were a solidarity pilgrimage traveling on the ancient road to Jericho, when it came to an abrupt end.

In front of us was a 40 foot wall dividing Palestinian Jerusalem from the rest of Palestine. Seeing it for the first time I thought the wall was profoundly preposterous. It was built mostly on Palestinian territory, cutting off Jerusalem Palestinians on one side of the wall from Jerusalem Palestinians on the other side. It definitely impeded travel from Jerusalem to Jericho unless you were an Israeli national. The Israeli’s had a modern highway quickly taking them from West Jerusalem to Jericho but Palestinian’s were not allowed to use this road.

To get to the other side of the wall we had to travel several kilometers along the wall through traffic congestion. This time our wait at the checkpoint to gain passage through the gate was relatively not long. At other times our wait was much longer and because we were tourists, we were not subjected to the search and seizure procedures experienced by the Palestinians. One of our guides conjectured that the primary objective of Israeli authorities was stealing Palestinian resources. He said that time was our most valuable resource. For a Palestinian to travel to Jericho from East Jerusalem it could

take all day. For an Israeli, the trip could be accomplished in less than an hour.

Once we were through the checkpoint the obstructions continued. The main thoroughfare was newly barricaded with huge concrete blocks allowing for only pedestrian traffic. Our guide, Chaska, a young activist from the Israeli Committee Against Home

Demolitions (ICAHD), described the barricade as a collective punishment for Palestinian protests earlier in the month. Collective Punishment?

Earlier in the morning we were on a lookout overlooking Palestinian East Jerusalem with the exclusive high-rise development of Israeli West Jerusalem off to the left and the walls of Old Jerusalem in the background. We learned that Palestinians were routinely denied building permits; hence the partially constructed building structures of East Jerusalem.

Demolition orders were often issued to Palestinians who improved their dwellings without obtaining building permits. In contrast our guide pointed out the beginnings of Israeli

settlements erected illegally on occupied Palestinian land; ignored by authorities. The Israeli settlers proceed audaciously with no fear of sanctions.

Black water tanks surrounded with haphazard wiring proliferate on the roofs of Palestinian homes testifying to the poor water and electrical services provided. The municipal tax dollars only go to providing vital water and electrical infrastructure for West Jerusalem and the illegal Israeli settlements. Consequently the Palestinians have learned the necessity of putting water tanks on their roofs. Both water

and electrical services can be shut off at any moment for weeks on end by the Israeli authorities.

The border between East and West Jerusalem set up by the 1967 Armistice is routinely overrun by Israel as they daily assimilate more of the best Palestinian lands. The wall built to separate Israel from the West bank is built almost in its entirety on Palestinian Land. In spite of the 1967 border the Wall encroaches on the West Bank so to include all of Jerusalem on the Israeli side of the wall. It splits the Palestinian Community of Jerusalem in two, dividing families and neighbourhoods. Palestinians not born in Jerusalem cannot reside in or even visit Jerusalem without a permit.

Now, to top this all off, I find that Palestinian lives are made more difficult by blockading the roads they require for commerce and work. The explanation offered for this obstruction is the collective punishment due because some people of the community protest peacefully the unjust conditions being imposed upon them. Looking over what I had learned that morning I concluded this isn’t collective punishment, this is ethnic cleansing.

Of course I was speaking about the overall process of Israeli expansion in Jerusalem and not the specific act of blockading the road

but the ensuing discussion was enlightening.

Our guide explained that we cannot use a volatile term like ethnic cleansing frivolously. It loses its poignancy if it is used too widely, she scolded. She insisted that it should only be used in cases like that of the Bedouins in the south of Israel and in the instance of the 1948 Israeli invasion and occupation of Palestine under Ben Gurion.

*Art is from Toronto and was a member of the Basilian Peace & Justice Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in December 2015.*



# Five Brilliant Things about Judaism that Jews (and others) sometimes forget

By Robert A. H. Cohen

## 1. Strangers

What kind of theology and communal politics would you expect to emerge from a people enslaved for centuries? You'd think an outlook based on a need for constant vigilance and communal strength would have dominated that people's development.

But it didn't happen. [God] tells them this: "You shall love the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Empathy and altruism towards the most marginalised and vulnerable, epitomised biblically by "the stranger," "the widow," and "the orphan" become foundational to the creation of the God-centred just society that the Hebrews are called to create.

I sometimes think we have lost sight of the "big picture" for Judaism. Our 21st century 'communal theology,' as acted out in the public sphere, has become one of victimhood and defensiveness. Jewish history provides an explanation for why that has happened. But it's a poor substitute for a brilliant, galvanising and inspiring religious vision.

## 2. Love

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

Some like to claim that all of this profound concern only applies to Jews in relation to other Jews. To me that makes no sense. And what an impoverished religion Judaism would be if it were true.

If we are all made in the image of God, then that spark of holiness that rests within each of us must extend our morality beyond the family, or the tribe or the nation.

In the first century CE, Rabbi Hillel was challenged to sum up the entire Torah (while standing on one leg). He managed to not only keep his balance but say something brilliantly quotable and universally true: "That which is hateful to you, do not unto another: This is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary, now go and study."



## 3. Trouble Makers

But there's one group of people within Jewish tradition who turned self-criticism into outstanding poetic wisdom. [The Hebrew Prophets] are the guardians of our heritage and values, and as a result, the sternest of our internal critics. They call out the iniquity of our own leaders, they condemn legalised injustice and pour out their wrath against the exploitation of the most vulnerable.

Just like in the time of the ancient Prophets, internal Jewish critics today are not popular and are condemned and sidelined as 'self-hating' or at best misguided trouble makers.

But we need them more than ever.

I would include in this category Marc Ellis author of *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, the Chicago Rabbi, Brant Rosen, and my fellow Patheos writer Mark Braverman. For

good measure, I'll also include the tens of thousands of individuals supporting Jewish Voice for Peace.

More brilliant trouble makers, please!

## 4. Jonah

I'm a big fan of the Book of Jonah. And not because of the giant fish that usually gets all of the attention. It's a prophetic story that illustrates that God's love and concern encompasses all of His creation, even the sworn enemies of the Jewish People. It demonstrates that anyone can find forgiveness and redemption in the eyes of God, a God who much prefers forgiveness to punishment.

## 5. Rabbis

The development of Judaism did not end with the book of Malachi, the final text of the library we call the Hebrew Bible. The genius of rabbinic Judaism was, and still is, twofold.

First it made Judaism globally portable. The rabbis replaced the holiness of land with the sanctity of time. They took our focus from one Temple to many synagogues. And they exchanged spiritual commitment through animal sacrifice with spiritual commitment through prayer and righteous acts.

Secondly, the rabbis made our ancient scripture holy and unchangeable but without putting a stop on interpretation and evolving application. Revelation may only happen once but interpretation goes on forever. God is constant but the world keeps turning.

What's brilliant about our rabbis is that they taught us how to live among the nations and adapt to changing circumstances. It's what's kept Judaism alive and vibrant, timeless and modern.

So that's my list of Jewish brilliance. If we lose sight of this stuff, I'm quite certain we are done for...and deservedly so.

*Robert is a Jew living in the UK whose blogs may be found on Micah's Paradigm Shift. This blog was edited for length.*



## Justice Does Not Allow of Artifice, Only Truth

By Neil Hibberd CSB

*The Revenant* is a film of American frontier days presenting deprivation, harsh survival, fur trading, conflict with Native Americans (some



few are, "The Good Kind") and replete with violence, punctuated by beautiful, nature scenes and attention-alerting strains from violas, as another body-eviscerating, spirit-crushing, episode impends. Leo DiCaprio doesn't so much, 'act' as 'react'. His First Nation's wife is slaughtered; he is torn apart by a huge bear, throttled, and tossed about, almost killed, feigning death to escape; he is betrayed by a fellow fur trapper; his young son is murdered; his horse gallops madly over a steep cliff; he survives a night in the warmth of the horse's belly; his betrayer attacks, narrowly failing to stab him to death. All the while, Leonardo is racked with constant, painful gaspings, hollow eyes and the pain-shivering, brave chin of a champion avenger. Mirror to real life of the time? Vengeance triumphs. Violence basks and baits us under cover of nature's scenic glory.



*Spotlight* is a Boston paper's investigative team. It is an account of the discovery and public revealing of

Catholic clergy abuse, and the cover-up by clerical administrators, abetted by lay church zealots. It's an okay film. Unfortunately, it suffers from a conflict involving its purpose, whether to try to outdo the Oscar winning, "All the President's Men," as best newspaper reporting movie, celebrating the determined task of the newspaper team to track down the elusive story, despite frustrating obstacles, misguided and blatant, obfuscations by Church hierarchy, or, is it to display the truth and exhibit the awfulness of the shameful abuse? There's a struggle going on which leads to a mixed focus. Some fine acting bolsters this movie. It's weak on portraying the victims as real people and not caricatures, perpetrators also. The real "spotlight" is the newspeople's valiant, triumphant doggedness. The scandal is minimized, useful only to give scope, sparkle and energy to the reporters' credit.

*The Big Short* is an unusually successful blend of American, biographical, comedy-drama. It's based on a non-fiction book about the 2007-2008 financial crisis brought on by the pumped-up housing market and the credit bubble ("subprimes") and the performances of chief actors, both the wicked and those slightly better. The basic mechanics of the disaster are imperfectly laid out. The underlying duplicity, greed, and ruthlessness of the main manipulators are shocking, crying out for condemnation and punishment. This movie exposes the grand financial chicanery of what actually happened in reality. The scope of it astounds and enrages. Performances are uniformly solid; perhaps Christian Bale's might have been toned down a volt or two, but, he is fun to watch. This film demonstrates what movies can do extremely well; no other medium can both expose and entertain as successfully, as this one does.



*The Danish Girl* is based upon the story of the first male-to-female surgical intervention, in Denmark, in the 1920's. Unfortunately it does little to shed light on the plight of people who struggle with gender identity and who seek opposite sex assignation. The husband and wife, artists in Copenhagen, have, in the first of the movie, a most appealing and attractive relationship, including fun and friendship, shared artistic talent, and a seemingly satisfying, married, sexual compatibility. This introduction is quite charming, and puzzling, in light of ensuing developments. By chance, Gerda asks her husband, Elnar, to pose in place of a missing woman model. After a series of supposed 'pranks' in which Elnar "goes out" as a woman, he discovers a desire, not only to dress as a woman, but to become one, to the point at which he seeks the assistance of an early sex-change, surgeon. Elnar/Lily dies after the first part of the procedure. Eddie Redmayne, Best Actor Oscar winner, plays Elnar/Lily. His performance is admirable, but, ultimately, unconvincing. His more-mysterious-than-the-Mona-Lisa-smile, coquettish, awkward, verges on bizarre. Alicia Vikander is wonderful as Elnar/Lily's faithful wife. A grim, desperate sadness perdures.



See two other very good movies, which do credit to the art, *Room* and *Brooklyn*. Their 'designer' artifice does justice to the medium. Real stories of human passion and love. There's a lovely kind of justice to their design and depiction.