

## **Nonkilling Arts RC (NKARC) Letter: April 2015**

Dear NKARC members and friends,

Reconciliation is an important aspect of Nonkilling. Stop Killing, Start Talking. It requires utmost honesty in owning the best and the worst in us. Just came across an insightful verse by **Irish poet W.B. Yeats, the recipient of 1923 Nobel Prize of Literature. In his poem, "Remorse for Intemperate" published in his collection, The Winding Star , reflecting upon himself and his fellow countrymen's inability to be civil, writes:**

*"Out of Ireland have we come  
Great hatred, little room,  
Maimed us at the start.  
I carry from my mother's womb  
A fanatic heart."*

This W.B Yeats poem would resonate in many places where conflict reigns today. It is easier to comment critically about the others, but takes a lot of courage and integrity to point finger at your own in hope for transformative change.

Having spent most of this winter in Ireland and having travelled between Canada and Ireland over many decades, it has been interesting to observe evolution of peace process in Northern Ireland over the past two decades. It has taken its time and toll, but despite imperfections of the process, peace is slowly getting entrenched. Nobody could ever imagine the two arch enemies Catholic IRA rep Martin McInnis and UDA Protestant leader Ian Paisley sitting over beer addressing each other as best friends or the N.Ireland's Ulster Parliament Stormont run by a coalition of five political parties. If once arch enemies the fanatic Catholics and the Protestants both Christians, can reconcile in N. Ireland, how about reconciliation between Shias and Sunnis in burying their 1200 yr old animosity or Israelis and Palestinians hatred of six decades getting overturned? The Irish Peace Process may be a model to be examined to review how insurmountable obstacles since its initiation in the early 1990s were overcome. For an overview, those interested can surf the internet to check out Irish Peace Process on Wikipedia.

As NKARC letter is mainly about the Arts, you will see in this issue a sprinkling of related Irish expressions of nonkilling arts linked to Reconciliation: a play, an imaginative art installation, and an innovative approach to tourism in Belfast. Both politics and arts in this case show that unlike violence, potential of nonkilling creativity is infinite. Arts enables enlightenment helping truth to shine in dark places where it has tendency to become fuzzier and overlooked.

**PLAY:**

'Everything Between Us' by David Ireland is a new play set in Belfast on the first day of a Truth and Reconciliation process involving its two protagonists - two Protestant sisters one for the reconciliation and the other not wanting it to happen, bringing out monsters we nurture within us. American author Timothy Beal in his book Religion and its Monsters quoted in the play program notes that a monster exemplifies "the outside that has gotten inside, the beyond the pale that, much to our horror has gotten into that pale". Perhaps we all live with such deeply buried monsters in us. The play provides an insightful assessment of how difficult such a process might be - asking us to remove our entrenched hateful negativity. Aren't all lives equal in value? When it has been put to the playwright Ireland that his plays are violent and extreme, he has replied that so, historically is, Belfast.

For more about the play, click on the link:

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/review-everything-between-us-1.2108315>

### **CINEMA:**

Over the past few months, I received a couple of contributions about the Hollywood film, The American Sniper followed by a NY Times article on a soldier and his profession that requires killing, however both the movie and the article wavered from addressing the basic question of war as a means to resolve conflicts and in building a just society etc. The new film SELMA is without hype about soldiering, it deals with questions faced by nonkilling movements. It is not a not a biopic on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but a detailed case study of one particular march involving nonviolent struggle for voting rights of Afro-Americans in the South of that time. It meticulously shows how a nonviolent approach can be successful if well planned with integrity and commitment to the principles of nonkilling. What does nonviolent leadership entail as well as the challenges for those who choose that path. An authentic nonkilling film. For more on the film, click on following links:

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/why-young-black-americans-need-to-see-the-selma-movie-1.2072408>

and

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/selma-review-a-film-fuelled-by-impressive-reservoirs-of-righteous-anger-1.2092520>

### **DANCE:**

Bob Koehler in his column reviews the dance and music performance of Alvin American Dance Theatre company taking us to the origins and transformative power of Gospel spiritual music as a response to pain and hurt caused by oppression of American slavery.

He writes: "A huge hunger, a wanting, a hope stirred in the cage inside my breast. "Appreciating" a "performance" wasn't enough. Oh God. This great inner wanting yearned for a freedom we don't much talk about these days, in our relative affluence and comfort, but the music and the movement of the Alvin Ailey American

Dance Theater, with its roots in Africa, in Gospel revival — in growing up black in America — went so much deeper than that. I didn't want to feel separated from the dancers, some disengaged spectator watching fine art in motion behind the glass case of culture. That felt so wrong.

I had never seen them perform before and didn't know what to expect. The troupe has been around since 1959. I guess I waited till I was old enough to be truly ready for them: this heritage of African-American dance, born of the "blood memories," as Alvin Ailey himself described them, of a man who grew up black in Texas in the 1930s and '40s."

For more, click on the link:

<http://commonwonders.com/peace/rocka-my-soul/>

## **ROCKA MY SOUL**

By Robert C. Koehler

Robert Koehler is an award-winning, Chicago-based journalist and nationally syndicated writer. His book, *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound* (Xenos Press), is still available. Contact him at [koehlercw@gmail.com](mailto:koehlercw@gmail.com) or visit his website at [commonwonders.com](http://commonwonders.com).

## **INSTALLATION/SCULPTURE**

1. Temple of Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Fire has been a potent symbol in Northern Ireland of provocation by one group or the other bringing in the recent past bombings and killings leaving behind scars and wounds who lost their near and dear ones in killings. Last month David Best, an American Irish from California built a 75 feet wooden Temple in Derry to be lit - fire here was meant to be something beautiful, not a weapon taking in within this wooden edifice the pain and hurt held within by both adversary communities using the flaming of temple with notes and mementos left in there as "a moment for to let go" the rancour of past, remembering those who all died and seek forgiveness for who caused harm on both the sides. Fire represented dust to dust ashes to ashes - a temporal sculpture representing pain, forgiveness, and reconciliation. For full story, click on:

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/derry-prepares-for-symbolic-burning-man-fire-ceremony-1.2135911>

and

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/we-use-fire-for-healing-a-bonfire-in-derry-without-all-the-acrimony-1.1998047>

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/15/david-best-the-man-who-builds-art-and-burns-it-burning-man-derry>

## **2. Banksy In Gaza:** Haunting Images by the British Graffiti artist among ruins of war

The English graffiti artist has taken his politically charged message to the bombed-out neighborhoods of Gaza, where a series of murals amid a backdrop of devastation attempts to give voice to the desperation felt by Palestinians.

The street artist explained in yet another spray-painted bit of commentary the reaction of a local man to the work, and his response:

“A local man came up and said ‘Please – what does this mean?’ I explained I wanted to highlight the destruction in Gaza by posting photos on my website – but on the internet people only look at pictures of kittens.”

Banksy, who is widely believed to be Robin Gunningham, an artist from Bristol’s underground art scene, has gone from the streets to the top of the art world.

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2015/03/banksy-in-gaza-haunting-images-among-ruins-of-war/>

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: POEM AND REVIEW**

March 8 was the International Women's Day. Violence against women has been one of the priority themes of CGNK. See below:

CGNK addresses the 59th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

November 2014. The Center for Global Nonkilling, in its capacity of non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, submitted a formal written statement to the United Nations addressing the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59), to be held from 9 to 20 March 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The English, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese versions of the statement can be downloaded here or from the official UN documentation site under reference number E/CN.6/2015/NGO/21.

The draft resolution could be also read at CGNK website:

<http://www.nonkilling.org/node/589>

I enclose below three timely contributions from NKARC colleagues below: a poem by IFLAC's founder Ada Aharoni’s and a review of documentary film on fight against rape violence in India by Sumeet Grover, and anti war fashion show and peace march by peace activist Christine Ahn:

### **Poetry:**

#### **You Cannot Bomb Me Anymore**

Poem by Ada Aharoni

For International Women's Day

Listen, little big man,  
you cannot bomb me anymore  
because I don't allow you  
to bomb me anymore  
nor to choke  
nor rape me anymore,  
for I have my own strength now  
and my own creative  
peace business now

With this woman's mind  
this woman's body  
this woman's heart -  
we don't allow you  
to bomb us anymore  
for our sisters in Norway  
have shown us the way  
and now -  
you cannot, cannot, bomb us  
anymore.

For it was  
the grandmother  
who ate the big bad wolf  
and not the other way round --

so now  
we will not allow you  
to bomb us, bomb us,  
ANYMORE.

ADA AHARONI

## **2. Review**

NKARC colleague Sumeet Grover reviewed the documentary film, *India's Daughter: From Nonviolent Demonstrations to People's Revolution*. The film is about the rape of women in India. He writes: Two central narratives dominate the documentary film *India's Daughter*: the trauma of rape and murder of a bright young woman against a belief embedded in the skeleton of society that it is women after all who invite what is done to them. These two narratives that stand in outrage and death ambitions against each other have been brought together courageously and sensitively by filmmaker Leslee Udwin who deserves our sincere praise. For more,

click on:<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2015/03/indias-daughter-from-nonviolent-demonstrations-to-peoples-revolution/>

**3. Fashion show and Peace march:** I was recently introduced to the work of American journalist and peace activist Christine Ahn. She is responsible for unique fashion show that points to fashion and the US military mindset. She writes:

“Yet what all the facts and figures cannot quite crack is the deeply entrenched military mindset that so dominates American society and culture.

That's why in May 2005 we worked with the Women of Color Resource Center in Oakland, California to stage a popular education project, "Fashion Resistance to Militarism." Professional designers and home dressmakers created eye-catching outfits to deconstruct military policies. We wrote scripts for each runway that were read by a narrator as the models strutted their stuff. An enthusiastic crowd of 450 people convinced us that this unlikely genre is a highly effective way to discuss the militarization of culture in accessible terms and to get the audience thinking about heavy topics like the military budget or sexualized military violence... “

For more on Christine's unique fashion show, click on

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2009/03/10/fashioning-resistance-militarism>

Also a proponent of peace in Korean peninsula, Christine Ahn is actively engaged in the planning of a Korean peace march for May24, from DPRK to ROK. For more, see: [www.womencrossdmz.org](http://www.womencrossdmz.org). The march will be led by among others by CGNK honorary sponsor Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Gandhi's Experiments With Truth**

Book review by Koozma J. Tarasoff. Feb. 19, 2015 — Link: [goo.gl/nuDTMq](http://goo.gl/nuDTMq)

Experiments with Truth: Gandhi and Images of Nonviolence is a beautifully-illustrated book, documenting a 4-month exhibition of the same name, organized by The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas, USA, October 2, 2014 to February 1, 2015.

The exhibit visually portrayed Mahatma Gandhi's ethics of nonviolence, using 130 paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, sculptures, rare books, and films by artists around the world, all in the book. The cover shows Gandhi's last possessions. See 13 photos.

The book is an impressive art publication on thick art paper, with many colored photos, B&W, poetry, letters — a collection of images, many familiar, which if seen separately would not convey the impression they do together. This flat record

cannot convey the 3-D items, smells, videos and sounds of the live exhibit. See 13 photos.....

For more, click on:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZA31wChM3ZpJIH\\_tWNalAwZ8-VY3FzGcT93AVuTNdgU/edit?pli=1#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZA31wChM3ZpJIH_tWNalAwZ8-VY3FzGcT93AVuTNdgU/edit?pli=1#)

### **REFLECTIONS ON CHARLIE HEBDO KILLINGS:**

There are many venues/ columns where discussion on the topic of politics of these dastardly killings have taken place, there are some important cultural issues which need to be given some thought . From NKARC perspective, we have chosen two pieces from our CGNK colleagues by French philosopher Jean Marie Muller and by Thailand's Prof. Chaiwat Satha Anand. Both reflections available on CGNK site. For Muller click on: <http://www.nonkilling.org/node/610> and

For Satha Anand click on: <http://www.nonkilling.org/node/593>

Muller writes: The history of humanity is a history of crimes. Hopelessly so. Murderous violence inevitably seems to weigh on history. The universal requirement of rational conscience forbids murder: "Thou shalt not kill". However, our societies are ruled by the ideology of necessary, legitimate and honourable violence which justifies murder. From then on, for numerous reasons, Man becomes the killer of other Men. And religion often emerges as being an integral part of the criminal tragedies that bring bloodshed to the world.

Even when they do not kill "in the name of religion", human beings repeatedly invoke religion while killing. In many circumstances, religion allows murderers to justify their misdeeds. It offers them a doctrine of legitimate violence and righteous killing. On many occasions, it wrongly leads murderers to believe that "God is on their side".

Remarkably, despite emphasis being placed on different points, religions tend to follow the same doctrine. What matters most is not what religions say about God, but what they say about Man, and more specifically what they do and do not tell Man...

### **PHOTO IMAGE OF EARTH FROM SPACE**

Image from Nasa's Cassini mission was sent by colleague Rich Panter, a beautiful reminder of our fragility as a planet ...the tiny punkt on the image are us.

Click on:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=view+of+earth+from+saturn's+rings&biw=1780&bih=1271&tbm=isch&imgil=mi8F-alxWgFtpM%3A%3BOqNFpBpO01a3HM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.nasa.gov%252Fmission\\_pages%252Fcassini%252Fmultimedia](https://www.google.com/search?q=view+of+earth+from+saturn's+rings&biw=1780&bih=1271&tbm=isch&imgil=mi8F-alxWgFtpM%3A%3BOqNFpBpO01a3HM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.nasa.gov%252Fmission_pages%252Fcassini%252Fmultimedia)

[http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/styles/946xvariable\\_height/public/20130722\\_annotated\\_earth-moon\\_from\\_saturn\\_1920x1080.jpg](http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/styles/946xvariable_height/public/20130722_annotated_earth-moon_from_saturn_1920x1080.jpg)  
[http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/cassini/multimedia/pia17171.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/cassini/multimedia/pia17171.html);946;532

### **TOURISM:**

Back to Belfast, “Black Taxi tours” take passengers through the once Troubled areas of Falls and Shankhill Roads, Catholic and Protestant , respectively, and still strongly sectarian. Drivers also deliver a running commentary on the Troubles and explain the significance of the numerous political murals that so clearly divide the neighbourhoods. The Irish nationalist Bobby Sands is a staple of the Catholic murals while terrifying balaclavas holding machine guns are popular in loyalist areas. They all cover the same areas and advertise themselves as impartial. Very interesting to learn in post-conflict period the histories being told by the individual taxi drivers who were born in one of these neighbourhoods showing their politics clear without any desire to return to old time bombings and killings.

### **RHYME ABOUT POSITIVENESS:**

TOWARD A WORLD PEDAGOGY OF POSITIVENESS : A PLEA  
by Francisco Gomes de Matos, a peace linguist, Recife,Brazil

Sad to see that in my parts of the world there is increasing negativity, which calls for educators everywhere to enhance the power of positivity

If we look at Positiveness and Negativity in the History of Languages will be shown ?

Will uses of those two concepts in spoken/written vocabulary have grown ?  
Let´s look at four pairs of antonyms in English and see what they reveal

Taking their year of entry into written English ,using evidence that is real  
In written English, before the adjective NEGATIVE had made its visual debut,

POSITIVE was already available to language users, as a good point of view  
(Negative: from 1350; positive: from 1250)

In written English, before the noun PESSIMISM appeared from 1785  
OPTIMISM had already been introduced from 1730 and it was to thrive



If we keep adding to this list of positive X negative contrasts, a surprising fact will be found  
sometimes it is the negative concept that precedes what is considered sound

Thus, the adjective DESTRUCTIVE entered written English from 1480  
but its opposite CONSTRUCTIVE was not visually born until 1670

Also UNHAPPINESS was already being expressed in writing from 1250  
whereas HAPPINESS would only be visually represented from 1520

Since in the history of Humankind, GOOD and EVIL coexist  
how can we do our very best for POSITIVENESS to persist ?

By teaching language users to build and enhance their vocabulary of POSITIVIZERS  
by choosing positive words, expressions and phraseologies which can

meet our communicative needs as Positive World organizers  
In this age of increasing shameful, violent, killing negativity,

a plea is made for educators to help citizens become  
dignifiers and peace-builders deeply committed to positivity

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My deep gratitude to all colleagues and sources for this Letter. Please continue with  
your contributions and kind comments.

With Nonkilling Regards,  
Bill

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