

NKARC Letter: October 2012

Non killing Arts: Five Scenarios by Glenn Paige (with comment by Oliver Urbain)

----- Original Message -----

From: "Bill Bhaneja" <billbhaneja@rogers.com>

Subject: Fw: Nonkilling Arts: Five Scenarios

Dear friends,

One of the themes raised in my Nonkilling Lit paper circulated last week was whether creativity in nonkilling arts is random or results from ethical commitment of the artist? I enclose a succinct short piece from Glenn Paige below that was sent in response pointing that arts are not necessarily random but follow certain patterns --such as four movements of symphonies or popular songs; styles of poetry, painting, and in literature; the expectable plots of mystery thrillers; good guy vs. bad guy movies; and romantic outcomes of musical theatre... I think this is structure than about creation or discovery of meaningful content. In an attempt to build a template of nonkilling arts and literature, Glenn ties it to political scientist Gene Sharp's work on nonviolent political action. It is quite a daring attempt that could develop useful tools for analysis and criticism of arts from nonkilling vantage point. It can provide new insights while both creating one's own and comprehending other people's work. Thought you would find it of interest.

Your comments are welcome.

Nonkilling regards,
Bill

July 28, 1012

To: Bill Bhaneja, Coordinator

Nonkilling Arts Research Committee

gdp

Nonkilling Arts: Five Scenarios

Since various arts are not random but follow certain patterns—such as four movements of symphonies or popular songs; styles of poetry, painting, and literature; the expectable plots of mystery thrillers; good guy vs. bad guy movies; and romantic outcomes of musical theatre-- why not envision a template for various forms of nonkilling arts? It might be helpful as an anticipatory framework from which infinite nonkilling creativity can depart.

One approach could be to carry forward the four-part template for nonviolent political action articulated by Gene Sharp in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973); namely CONVERSION, ACCOMODATION, and COERCION. These seem to be adapted from his study of Gandhian theory and action.

He later added DISINTEGRATION (meaning goals not achieved amidst chaotic social breakdown).

Adapted for nonkilling, the NKARC might seek to identify existing works and contribute to creation of new works of art that demonstrate one or more of the following scenarios:

1. NONKILLING CONVERSION. Processes by which killers (individuals, couples, groups, or societies) become converted to nonkilling principles and action. Soldiers, revolutionaries and murderers convert. Or scientists, professors, priests, novelists, poets, artists, or musicians.

2. NONKILLING ACCOMODATION. Killers are not converted, but a degree of mutually acceptable modus vivendi is achieved. Like abolishment of the death penalty in societies that continue to kill law enforcement and in war. James Loney's nonkilling forgiveness of his Iraq jihadi kidnappers in *Captivity* (2012) is an example of accommodation.

3. NONKILLING COERCION. Killers are at least temporarily prevented from lethal policies and actions by elaborating upon Sharps' suggested seminal 198 methods. Maybe like stealing the keys to a doomsday box that prevents a nuclear attack. Examples: Indian Independence, Philippines Peoples' Power, Kingian Civil Rights, and Arab Spring. Mixed dependence upon military acquiescence or threat against opponents for success. Attempted coercion – Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*.

4. DISINTEGRATION. Societies break down—killing-nonkilling chaos. Failed states. Nonkillers are killed. Suicides.

5. NONKILLING REINTEGRATION/TRANSFORMATION (To be added). “Out of chaos we pluck this flower” unifying NONKILLING TRANSFORMATION. Drawing upon all aspects of the other four-- plus reference to the continuing discoveries in the work of the Center for Global Nonkilling –contributions by nonkilling arts can be made “to promote change toward the measureable goal of a killing-free world”. This is to go beyond tendencies of conventional arts to lament, invent, entertain and profit from atrocities of killing while extolling the heroism of favored champion military and other killers.

In a long novel like Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or epic film aspects of all five scenarios might appear. Or particular aspects may be explored in symphonies, dances, songs, poems, plays, and other forms

As nonkilling creations in the seven arts are pioneered or discovered throughout world cultures, new insights into their patterns and influences upon societies will emerge.

Glenn Paige

Response from Oliver Urbain:

Dear friends,

Continuing our conversation on Nonkilling Arts and Literature, I share below a thoughtful response from NKARC colleague Olivier Urbain on the question posed in my last email. It is: "whether creativity in nonkilling arts is random or results from ethical commitment of the artist?" Olivier's research focus is on relationship between music and peace as a means of finding universal among different cultures, traditions, and nationalities. He also wrote a chapter for CGNK publication, *Toward a Nonkilling Paradigm on Nonkilling Arts*, available on nonkilling.org website.

Thank you Olivier for your insightful feedback.
Nonkilling regards,
Bill

----- Original Message -----

From: Olivier Urbain

To: Bill Bhaneja

Sent: Monday, September 10, 2012 10:53 PM

Subject: Re: Fw: Nonkilling Arts: Five Scenarios

Dear Bill,

" whether creativity in nonkilling arts is random or results from ethical commitment of the artist?"

I think it's both. Looking from the point of view of a researcher analyzing "nonkilling artworks," songs, poems, paintings and other forms of arts can have a strong message against killing, but the origin of the message could be anything.

- the artist might have made a strong commitment to nonkilling values.

- the artist might have made no such commitment, but have another philosophy that includes respect for life.

- the artist might have made no such commitment, not care at all about ethics or changing the world, but just felt like creating whatever was created at that moment.

- an artist that actually enjoy killing could create a nonkilling piece in a temporary moment of self-doubt.

In conclusion, I believe in looking at the work of art first, and consider what kind of nonkilling message can be expressed by it.

Then in a secondary analysis, if the intention of the artist is known clearly (which is rare I think), one can see if there is a nonkilling philosophy at the basis of the creation.

Hope this helps,

Olivier

Dr. Olivier Urbain

Director

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