

NKARC Letter: Sept. 2012

## **Nonkilling Arts Research Committee: Nonkilling Literature: Fiction and Nonfiction**

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

**From:** [Bill Bhaneja](#)

**Date:** 3/9/12

**Subject:** Nonkilling Arts Research Committee: Nonkilling Literature: Fiction and Nonfiction

Dear friends,

I am enclosing (see below) the revised draft of the paper on Nonkilling Literature that I circulated in May. Thank you for your comments, especially the points made by our nonkilling novelists and other colleagues. Thanks also for your patience to have read this lengthy treatise (!). In particular the paper benefitted greatly from my exchange of emails with Professor Paige, especially on the topic of nonkilling creativity - whether it is random or shaped by an artist's deep commitment to nonkilling ethic. There are gaps in the references/bibliography part of the paper because of some insightful thoughts provided have not been yet published.

In particular, two profound references to be mentioned are from political scientist professor Chaiwat Satha-Ananda and linguist professor Francisco de Matos on the elaboration of Nonkilling. I have also benefitted from the comments of Tolstoy scholar Koozma J. Tarasoff ([www.spirit-wrestlers.com](http://www.spirit-wrestlers.com)).

In the new year, we are hoping to work on bringing out a special CGNK volume dedicated to Nonkilling Literature and Arts. Focus of the volume will be on description and analysis of creative processes which makes each of us produce works that we can feel comfortable in describing as "nonkilling arts". Such description will be supplemented by an example/sample of your creative work whether it be prose, poetry, music, painting, photography etc. You may find the attached paper helpful on defining parameters of Nonkilling arts. So over the next few months, let us put on our thinking caps to address some of these points from our particular vantage point.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

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"Nonkilling is THE measure of human progress."

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## Nonkilling Literature: Fiction and Nonfiction

Balwant Bhaneja

It was Canadian philosopher Northrop Frye who once observed that we may not live in literature as much as we live in culture. Cultures get defined by institutions, structures and mores of people as well as through our thoughts, words, and actions. Cultures may be geographic specific, in contemporary post-colonial period however they have been changing sometimes beyond recognition in one's life time. We see their depiction in literature on the positive side a phenomenon of longing for values of highest order such as love, peace, and nonkilling, and on the negative side these values curbed by baser desires of unchecked ego, greed, domination, and in some cases a masochistic pleasure to torture and kill others without remorse in the name of defending higher order values. As a nonkilling literary critic, it becomes essential that we be able to identify in the literature these emerging structures at work and map the patterns to show the connections and causal relationship of the trends. Literature remains an integral part of our culture as it describes and defines our self (identity), seeking to exist in this complex transcending modern world with both these negatives and positives pointing to our interdependence and our existence as an interconnected species and the inhabitants of one planet.

It was in 2002 the book *Nonkilling Global Political Science* by Glenn D. Paige was first published. (Paige, 2002) The ripples of profound insights emanating from that slim volume over the past decade have been immeasurable. Significant thinking has gone into understanding this pioneering concept that has involved poets, politicians, artists, philosophers, linguists, scientists, and social science thinkers.

As one of the earliest reviewers of the book, I have seen immense growth in our understanding of the term Nonkilling. It now covers an affirmation about choosing Life with dignity as a fundamental priority. Life defines us from our Alpha to Omega (Satha-Anand, 2010). Without Life, all other issues facing us - environment, poverty, sustainability, armaments etc --everything else become futile. That's the prime thrust of Nonkilling - it is about No killing, primarily prevention and protection from our choosing to self-destroy as an individual, nation and globally. The "Right not to be killed" and "Responsibility not to kill" as stated in the Principle 13 of the Nobel Peace Laureates' "Charter for a World Without Violence" thus becomes the over-arching theme of Nonkilling (Nobel Peace Laureates, 2011)

I am barely scratching the surface here of what has been said, debated, and analyzed in the seminal writings put in between the covers of publications now available at the CGNK website ([www.nonkilling.org](http://www.nonkilling.org)) and in publications and work done on this topic elsewhere. (Urbain, 2009; Hamadeh, 2011) The definition is so basic and encompassing that one must conclude that Nonkilling has to be THE measure of human progress. Professor Francisco Gomes de Matos shows a linguistic continuum between Peace, Nonviolence, and Nonkilling. He elucidates as follows:

“In the history of languages, the concept of PEACE appeared first (the human mind genericized it), then there came NONVIOLENCE, and more recently NONKILLING. Thus, I make a case for a continuum that starts at a space-process called PEACE, followed by NONVIOLENCE and then by NONKILLING. My continuum is linguistically-semantically inspired: Humankind visits the space called Peace (the underlying, abstract, generic concept), then moves on to a still (less) generic space called Nonviolence and finally acts Nonkillingly (most specific space). If we see PEACE, NONVIOLENCE, and NONKILLING as three interrelated processes, then we’re right in arguing for NONKILLING as a prerequisite for Peace and Nonviolence. In such light, Nonviolence is a prerequisite for Peace and for Nonkilling too.” (Gomes de Matos, 2012)

Creative writing is an endeavour that is not necessarily shaped by conscious choice; it is dependant upon a creative urge that compels one to tackle a theme, an idea, into a form that may result into something that may or may not become a piece of literature. This paper is an attempt to define some parameters for nonkilling literature in order to assess the new writing in this field, mainly fiction and creative non-fiction. Due to lack of sufficient space, poetry, art, music and drama have not been included, though path-breaking work in these domains has emerged.

Since Paige introduced us to the idea of Nonkilling a decade ago, in this paper I point to three novels and four memoirs that stand out which can be described as creative writing focussed on Nonkilling. It is remarkable to see this literary resonance in such a short period, most of these books published between 2008- 2012.

Literary writing takes a huge amount of time and commitment. As a fellow writer I have tremendous respect for those who venture this path to narrate intertwined stories bringing out from within the spirit and consciousness of their imaginary and real characters they write about. It is a challenging task to inhabit such characters for years on their respective arcs, bringing meaning to their action, good and bad, and conditions which compel them to act in a certain way at a certain time in these stories. This is more so challenging when someone like late Governor Guillermo Gaviria chooses to write a Diary in FARC captivity while at the same time negotiating peace and his life with his captors, challenging them with virtues of alternative action to violence.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nonkilling literature discussed here are from both fiction and nonfiction categories. Rifet Bahtijaragic, *Chernov's Toil and Peace* (2010), *Natalia's Peace* by Adrian De Hoog (2011) and Rifet Bahtijaragic's second novel, *Blood in the Eyes* (2012) are three novels described in more detail later in this paper. In non-fiction category, I have included: *Diary of a Kidnapped Columbian Governor: A journey toward Nonviolent Transformation* by Guillermo Gaviria Correa (English translation -2010), *Captivity* by James Loney (2011), and *A Persistent Peace* by John Dear (2008). Two additional works with nonkilling directions that struck me for their eclectic approach are: *Palestine Anthology* by Anis Hamadeh (2012) and *Footprints* by Rifet Bahtijaragic (2008). Two other literary works with significant nonkilling connections though not discussed in the paper are: “Nurturing Nonkilling: A Poetic Plantation” (2009) by Francisco Gomes de

Matos and 3 plays of German playwright Ernst Toller (1893-1939) re-published in 2011 (Three Plays: Plays One" (edited and translated by Alan Raphael Pearlman). The last two nonkilling literary pieces are thematic and highly stylized in their content that do not fear mortality, but celebrate it.

In this overview essay, it will be difficult to do justice to all of these works, but I hope that this effort will provide the reader with a sense of the broad scope of imagination as well as both hurt and courage of their creators in putting words on the paper that led to varied Nonkilling visions in their respective works. Most of these books have not been published by mainstream outlets because the themes which are written with courage and honesty, are not deemed exciting and commercial enough to be brought into print. These also challenge our political and economic institutions complicit in promoting cultures of violence and killing.

The three novels by fellow Canadians Rifet Bahtijaragic and Adrian de Hoog provide us a glimpse into the protagonists willing to stand up in nonviolent ways for human integrity and dignity undeterred by assault of violence and brutality confronting them. The focus is on reconciliation with those who hurt and kill, the vengeful. Bosnian-Canadian poet-novelist Rifet Bahtijaragic writes in his novel, *Chernovs' Toil and Peace* about Doukhobor pacifism and refusal to kill. It is De Hoog's novel, *Natalia's Peace* which makes first explicit references to the concept of "nonkilling" in an English novel. De Hoog writes diplomatic-thrillers, this one is set in Canadian Embassy in The Hague with ambassadors, prime ministers, military-industrial complex lobbyists etc. It ends in the hope for a peaceful world where through new Nonkilling institutions and infrastructures for peace, a new global world order can be possible. What is interesting to observe in the three novels is a clear connection among atrocities from the World War I to World War 2 to the Cold War and beyond.

### **'Chernovs' Toil and Peace'**

Rifet Bahtijaragic, *Chernovs' Toil and Peace* is a historical novel written in true Russian tradition with multitude of characters over generations covering a wide geographical canvas from Tbilisi, Georgia to present day Kamsack, Saskatchewan. It starts in the late 19th Century, focussed on the exodus of a small Doukhobor community fleeing from their persecution by the Russian Tsar regime and the Russian Orthodox Church of the time. Doukhobors chose to burn their guns and weaponry than join the Tsar's army to fight an imperial war.

In the novel, the author is searching for genes of nonviolence and nonkilling in human spirit from ancient history of civilization until nowadays. He sees that in the humane spirit of titan Prometheus and in the present day Russian-Canadian Doukhobor's understanding of their duties toward humankind. He points out that his story is not just coincidence why Prometheus was sentenced to be chained on Caucasus mountain. This is where on Caucasus the Doukhobors began their resistance to carry arms and therefore expelled by the Russian imperators.

The historical novel is told through the story of Dr. Misha Chernov and his family — their uprooting and migration from their homeland, journey across the sea, and settlement in Canada, the story of their struggle in redefining their identities in a new land while protecting their unique nonkilling culture and traditions. Problems of retaining a Nonkilling identity by his novel's protagonists in North America are not without problems. In a way it is the same which eventually made their ancestors leave Russia to escape ridicule of their beliefs. A Doukhobor is aptly described in a meeting between Misha and British journalist Arthur (pp.143-46) and near the book's end (p.359) where Misha explains: "Everyone of them who is an honest person knows that our philosophy of life is humane...That all people are brothers and sisters, that we do not hate anybody, that a man has no right to kill another, or to exploit him in any way. That our understanding of the relationship with God is in the domain of each individual's spirit, and that nobody has the right to make politics or profit out of it..." This for me defines in no uncertain way the Nonkilling character.

The indestructible nonkilling genes in human spirit as embodied in the Doukhobor way of living and thinking are interspersed throughout the novel. At one place, the novel's narrator using analogy of river comments on the longevity of Doukhobor philosophy: "The philosophy which the Doukhobors embraced and made possible in practice had not been born in their movement. It had been like a river disappearing inside the earth in one place just to bubble forth again in some other place in the form of a new stream or river." He continues elsewhere on the same theme: "Aspects of that (Doukhobor') philosophy had for thousands of years crept through the crevices of civilization and survived all barbarities..."

## **Blood in the Eyes**

Rifet Bahtijaragic's second novel is about the killing fields of Bosnia ravaged by 1992 civil war between Serbs and Muslims. It is a story of two brothers of mixed culture Yudja and Osman, and their complex disconnect depicted over three generations. The story told through the memory lens by old Yudja who has moved to Canada as a refugee. Yudja is awaiting his wife and daughter who are separated from him by the war. Instead he is surprised by his illegitimate son Fehrat, arriving on his doorstep asking Yudja to provide him a temporary shelter. Fehrat, also a refugee in waiting, is missing a hand and a foot, both hacked off by a Serb during the conflict.

The old Yudja and the young man know each other vaguely, but they begin to talk and exchange stories of the atrocities they have witnessed and experienced. Yudja's story of nonkilling is shaped by the events of the Second World War when we learn what he went through at the outbreak of that war followed by the Nazi occupation of the Balkans. How that leads Yudja and his brother Osman choose different paths. Yudja can never forget Osman who always had 'blood in his eyes' like he sees in young Fehrat.

Yudja represents the novel's protagonist who chooses to keep himself away from hating having seen the tragic cycle of vengeance and reprisal. De Hoog in his introduction of Bahtijaragic's novel points out to the nonkilling nature of Yudja's characterisation, "Bahtijaragic, through Yudja, summarizes an important tradition in Bosnian multi-ethnic

harmony - *Whatever you are doing to other human beings, you are doing to yourself.* - which is one of the underpinnings of the philosophy of nonkilling.” The novel ends with Yudja realizing the reason behind Fehrat’s anger which makes him violently attack the man who maimed him in Bosnia.

Though English translation of the *Blood in the Eyes* is a recent one, the novel was in fact written during the last Bosnian war, twenty years ago. Its author recently pointed out:

“My nonviolence and nonkilling point of view of human’s relationships was very clear in this novel. I was all my life a pacifist. I was always blind for nations, religions and races differences. In the novel, my Yudja takes his nonkilling orientation in front of Tito’s partisan sympathiser Emina:

*“Killing is destruction, regardless of who does what to whom and why. Is it more humane and justifiable to butcher in the name of a better tomorrow and some vague ideals?! Killing is killing! They are all butchers to me. There is no difference...So, you are suggesting that I murder for the sake of the future of humanity. That I become one more criminal in the battle against other criminals...What you don’t see is that the butchers will be victorious. One will defeat the other. It remains in us, pardon, in you! It remains in the people! (On that way) we will forever be killing one another. Do you really think that this will be the last of the butchery, if you win? If you think that there will be no more killing, that you are blind!*

*...And life? Maybe, I’ll follow you into the Party if you will guarantee me that I will kill nobody and stay alive...” (Chapter 9)*

The book describes horrible sufferings and monstrous killings caused by war that one can not imagine any human doing in the name of duty towards their tribe, religion, or country. In one scene at the beginning of the novel we see a woman attempting to kill herself because she has filled a child’s life in her body as an outcome of rape (Chapter 1). At the other end of the novel, Emina explains to Yudja in the dark night on the riverbank, the unforgiveable crimes committed by men against women and children:

*“Man’s hatred created children which they were forced to throw into the river. Now their only contact with the drowned infants is their weeping... Weeping under the cover of night’s darkness so that they won’t be discovered and further humiliated. (...Tens of female cries combined and mixed with the rushing sound of the water. Through the willow branches, I could see the lit candles on the other side of river.) “What a haunting scene,” whispered Emina, as if not wishing to disturb the mothers’ contact with their drowned babies. “Can there be a grater crime? ...You men have no idea what evil you are able to do to us women. And we... we... we can only weep and light candles. You drive us to murder our new-born... And those who will be born... Your entire minds will think of nothing else but how to invite war and murder our children.” (Chapter 9)*

Bahtijaragic in his correspondence noted that in this novel he just wanted to explain that many in the Balkans had “nonkilling feelings and social orientation”. But, there were also

the others, mainly men, on both the sides who were always ready for the opposite. The blood in their eyes was so dark that they could not see a sign of light or hope anywhere.

### **Natalia's Peace**

Adrian de Hoog in his third novel *Natalia's Peace* incorporates as a major theme the need for world peace. *Natalia's Peace* is not a historical or a political novel but is written as a diplomatic-thriller, a genre in which de Hoog specializes as seen from his two previous works, *The Berlin Assignment* and *Borderless Deceit*. His new novel is set in the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and its Embassy in The Hague. The challenging themes of international politics of today are touched upon: Possibility of a Nonkilling world as the new world order; Creation of a Global ethic with responsibility to prevent killing and to build a culture of nonviolent peace; and the establishment of new peace infrastructures as Peace Ministry/Department and Civilian Peace Service comprising civil peace specialists as mediators and reconciliation experts working on the root causes of conflict. The Holland setting of the novel and inside story of how governments work comes from de Hoog's background as a former Canadian diplomat posted in Europe and Africa.

De Hoog's main protagonist Natalia is the Canadian ambassador in The Hague. The possibility of building a nonkilling global world in the novel gets unfortunately destroyed by a small carelessness on part of Natalia which kills the peace initiative she is involved with. The novel's narrative shows the potential of failure for such happening due to powerful influence of leaders and lobbyists of military industrial complex and their long reach within democratic governments. The cost paid by Natalia is not only the destruction of her career but the killing of her anthropologist husband by the same lobbyists. Despite her personal losses, De Hoog redeems his heroine by finding a way for her to continue her path towards a nonkilling world, indicating that a righteous action in the end does protect its doer as there are always those, though not many, who cherish the universal humanizing values of truth, peace, and justice and move to act on their conscience and a belief of humane ethic of nonkilling. The two-faced villain of the novel Alistair Paradis in his confession to his imagined lover Robbie confesses: "I know now that my life did not go right. I made decisions that I rue. For a very long time I refused to look into my soul because I was too busy manipulating it. I confess this to no one but you. Why? Because you are the only one I know who is my perfect opposite." (p.325) Robbie is not impressed by Alistair's confession as she realizes that likes of Alistair "through their lies and betrayal would do anything to acquire an advantage". She questions Alistair's self-loathing: "If he was understanding the extent of the misery he caused, should she expel him for that? And imagine too, that in full contrition he had already killed himself. Where would that take him? Back into essentiality's vast pool of spirituality? His cleansed spirit would be commingling there with others, becoming part of many new spiritual configurations..." (p.325)

### **Diary of a Kidnapped Columbian Governor**

Columbian Governor Guillermo Gaviria Correa was kidnapped by FARC guerilla on April 21, 2002 on the fifth day of the march for nonviolence and solidarity with the municipality of Caicedo which he planned and led. He was sacrificed by his captors in a failed rescue operation by military forces of Columbia on May 5, 2003. The Diary was written by Governor Gaviria as reflections of his daily life in captivity as letters addressed to his wife Yolanda Pinto de Gaviria. (p.15) The book gives the reader an opportunity to reflect about kidnapping and the need to work to combat it. James Amstutz in his preface to the book writes: "Through the Governor's eyes we see the day to day existence of the disappeared. Through his ears, we hear the lament of fellow captives and the deep longing for words of hope. Through his words we speak an abiding faith of one committed to a higher calling and purpose. Through his suffering and death we count the cost of our convictions to strive for a nonkilling global society. *Will the work continue?*" (p.14) Gaviria's letters show day to day growth in the commitment of the kidnapped Governor for deeper commitment in his beliefs to nonviolent transformation in making both the Columbian government and the FARC kidnapers understand and recognize the value of life with dignity and importance of the resolution of ongoing conflict through nonviolent means.

Two other new millennium non-fiction books that fit in similar nonkilling genre are: *Captivity: 118 Days in Iraq and the Struggle for a World Without War* by James Loney (2011) and *A Persistent Peace: One Man's Struggle for a Nonviolent World* by John Dear (2008). Similar to Gaviria's Diary, these books are written by transformational peace activists who epitomize Jesus and Gandhi's nonkilling thinking, "Be the change you want the world to become."

## **Captivity**

James Loney while serving as a volunteer witness for Canada's Christian Peacemakers Team during the second Iraq war was kidnapped in November 2004. He was held hostage for over three months along with three other members of a Christian Peace Makers Team(CPTM) in Baghdad. The book written as a memoir examines the "illogical logic" of violence from the inside. Loney found the paradox of his release as a hostage by soldiers whom he had gone to dissuade from participating in the war. He writes:

"My living, breathing, everyday-walking –around freedom comes directly from the hand of the soldier who took a bolt cutter in his hands and cut the chain that held me captive for four months. Yet I remain a pacifist, a Christian who believes that Jesus's teaching to love one's enemy is a call to lay down the sword and pick up the cross, to accept rather than inflict suffering. It is a paradox."

Loney's spiritual confrontation with and reaction to violence are the story, and his journey back from captivity to a live of spiritual wholeness is the outcome. There is a deeper level of truth telling going on in Loney's book– only seen in works like Gandhi's autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*. Paul Schutzenruber notes that not only Loney sets path of nonviolence but in the process tries to unravel the context of

Christian and Catholic tradition which has been often ambivalent toward war. (Schwartzeneruber, 2011, p.148)

Similar to Gaviria, Loney also speaks about the relationship between the captor and the captive: "the captor requires two things from his captive: one, primary, the other secondary (though no less necessary). The first: control and submission. The second: absolution." Schwartzeneruber points out that "it is in this second dimension as the captors come to experience the humanity of their captives which opens up a kind of spiritual passage, a common humanity between them." (Schwartzeneruber, 2011, p.149) This is where the reader finds in Loney's book that profound insightful moment about the reality of nonviolence where he tries to overcome in reality the tendency to dehumanize his captors.

As Loney at one point talking about his captor's writes: "It seems as if the first step down the road to violence is taken when I dehumanize a person. That violence might stay within my thoughts or find its way into the outer world and become expressed verbally, psychologically, structurally or physically. As soon as I rob a fellow human being of his or her humanity by sticking a dehumanizing label on them, I begin the process that can have, as an end result, torture, injury and death." (p.363)

Like Gaviria, Loney is a true Nonkilling champion, he practices what he preaches even when it comes to putting his life in danger in seeking the truth (not just going to Iraq or Palestine, but choosing the vocation of a nonviolent witness and intervener). Basic belief of CPTM volunteers has been similar to Gandhi's *Satyagrahis* and *Shanti Sainiks* (nonviolent peace soldiers). As he points out that as armies expect casualties when they go to war, those working for peace in war have to be prepared for the same. That's what motivated Loney and his colleagues to join the CPTM. We get to know the admirable work of CPTM in serving as an "intermediary amplifying the cries of those who have no voice", a sort of human rights special forces team (p.22). He asks a profound question: "what would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to non-violent peacemaking that armies devote to war?"

Loney's Nonkilling ethics is reflected in his many spontaneous reactions to the situations in the book: "The glory of- just- being alive" (p.341) at the time of his rescue or "whatever you do to others you do to yourself" as a proven law of life (p.388) or his strong Nonkilling conviction that he wants to share with his captors that we all were created to give life, not to take it (p.332) :

"I wonder, if we sat and talked for a while, if I could tell you about them, maybe you would see what I have begun to see, that there is no such thing as "Iraqi freedom" or "American freedom" that there is only human freedom. We were created to give life, not to take it. Our freedom begins when we live in accord with this purpose"

A major strength of Loney's account is that it shows that death is not ultimate fate of every nonviolent activist when in the killing fields. Except American CPTM volunteer Tom Fox who was murdered by his captors, everyone comes through this ordeal alive

## **A Persistent Peace**

This book is the autobiography of Jesuit peace activist John Dear. It starts in Israel by the Sea of Galilee and ends in New Mexico, taking us to all the troubled spots of the past two decades across the globe (Northern Ireland, Israel, Palestine, Iraq, USA etc) where Dear resisted peacefully the demonstration of violence by those in power. Dear has been arrested more than seventy-five times for his civil disobedience for different causes mostly in the USA, in protests against the mighty US military-industrial-complex. One of such protests has been, challenging both the government and church authorities at the Los Alamos labs where nuclear weaponry continues to be developed.

Dear describes his life journey to be one taking him to the Gospel nonviolence. His conscience wouldn't allow him to accept that both the God of peace and the idols of war can co-exist – “One can't sing praises to the Creator and design weapons that could put the earth into an eternal winter”. (p.410). In one of his visits to a school in New Mexico he asks a student – “what is that about when Jesus says The Kingdom of God is at hand?” He is struck by the insightful reply of the youth: Isn't the kingdom of God life itself. Dear states that the youth's simple yet honest reply made him understand for the first time that the substance of life itself is the kingdom of God. The reign of God is already here – in our ordinary lives – in breathing and wonder. (p.381). For him, the Gospel nonviolence holds the key to personal, social and global transformation. He concludes: “The future will be a future of peace, if we dare to seek it, sacrifice for it, and enact it – a new world without war, poverty, or nuclear weapons, where God's reign abounds freely and all accept its abundant grace and love.” (p.424)

Dear in his civil disobedience activism embodies Catholic peace activist Dorothy Day who once said, “the measure of discipleship is the amount of trouble you are in for justice and peace”. (p.368) For that you require courage and this book shows that its author has much courage that is made into a virtue by his nonkilling journey for peace.

## **Palestine Anthology**

This e-book comprising thought-provoking essays, poetry, plays, “faked” interviews, and paintings by German born Anis Hamadeh is unique in its concept. The first half of the eclectic "Palestine Anthology" is essayistic, the second literary, with poetry and prose, satire, dialogues, a diary, and even a short story. Each of the two parts is broadly chronological, starting with the most recent.

Anis Hamadeh is writing not as a pro-Palestine or anti-Israel, he points out that it emanates from his shared humanity through understanding of his country Germany and its past as well his father's people in Palestine, their history and culture. In one of his essays, “The Second Case”, he writes: “There are villains, heroes and disinterested people on all sides, this is the message that needs to be conveyed in Germany today. There certainly are Jewish heroes and Palestinian villains. There also are Palestinian good guys and Jewish bad guys. The stereotypes of our media and culture are always

harmful when they are based on a double standard. Therefore it is important to make sure that after the paradigm shift the Palestinians are not conceptualized as the good guys in turn, or the Jews as the bad guys again. (p.35)

Hamadeh writes from a unique vantage point born to German mother and Palestine father, demanding emotional space for expressing himself as a bicultural humanist challenging Germany's role in history, in particular its ambivalent attitude about Israel and Palestine where he finds the guilt of one holocaust prevents it from commenting the "oppression" and "apartheid" caused by Israel vis a vis Palestine. There is a irony in his writing, humour hiding the deep felt pain at the global apathy for Palestinians plight.

The e-book received raving endorsements from two leading contemporary global peace activists Noam Chomsky and Johan Galtung. I liked the satire in Hamadeh's "faked" interviews. His dialogues are crisp and didactic. His paintings mostly of the Palestine diaspora interspersed through the anthology are drawn with vibrant and warm earthy tones and delight to watch. The anthology reminded me of Rifet Bahtijaragic's book, "*FOOTPRINTS: Poetry and threads of a poetical impressions*" (2008) which is quite similar to Hamadeh's work in its broad concept, combining poetry, essays and "fictive" interviews with Marshal Tito, the Dalai Lama, and Stephen Hawking. Bahtijaragic notes that his "poetry born out of the recent- Bosnian War - lyrical, bitter, impassioned, searching, and ultimately hopeful." Though from different geographical parts, both authors in their anguish long for a genuinely globalized world where national boundaries will some day become meaningless and a majority of the people will share the core universal human values showing that love unites and that violence fragments us.

### **Creativity and Nonkilling Literature**

One of the earliest references to "Nonkilling creativity" by Glenn Paige I found in a book by Daisaku Ikeda, *For the Sake of Peace* (2001). In a Foreword to the book, Paige wrote that when he first met SGI President Ikeda on December 18, 1980, "our dialogue centered on the importance of creativity in realizing global conditions of principled respect for life." (Ikeda, 2001, p.xi) Ikeda greatly respected creative thinking as its importance had been highly emphasized to him by his revered mentor Josei Toda. Paige's drive has been from the outset on how to translate creative discoveries into action.

Paige recalled that once when teaching politics at Princeton he had asked Governor Munoz-Marin of Puerto-Rico, who was a poet as well as politician, what the similarities and differences were between the two roles. The latter replied, "Both the poet and the political leader have the creative ability to imagine non-existing states of affairs. But the political leader has additional ability to influence other people to bring them about." (p.xi-xii)

It is the creative ability of the artist however that helps to tap into the human conscience holding the mirror to our souls in which both our good and ugly traits get reflected in the hope that the reflection would urge us and our political leaders to question the status

quo and take action for change. The emancipation of the human spirit is the ultimate hope of an artist wanting to write a Nonkilling work. In literary explorations, potential for finding deeper insights intuitively are significant that might be often not possible through empirical works. As such, the discoveries that emanate from the call of one's conscience, consciousness, and human spirit try to bind us as humans. A nonkilling literary creation reminds us about the sanctity of lives, not about just one individual but the whole humanity irrespective of one's colour, creed, gender, and nationality.

As Japanese educationist Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) remarked that human beings did not have the power to create matter, they only had the power to create value. (SGI Quarterly, p.13), Aspiring for a nonkilling world in itself is a value - creation of a vision. Actions and thoughts of protagonists in the three novels show whether it is Misha, Yudja, or Natalia, despite their different trying circumstances, each one of them is seeking to find a space in which to retain their integrity and core values. Their search for truth is both internal and external. The external part is related to finding a geographical space where they could freely breathe. That search takes them away from their homelands – for Misha and Yudja, their refuge is in distant Canada; for Natalia it is the other way round, Holland.

Nonkilling literature brings out a profound reverence for human life as each individual is indispensable and respectable. That is the universal self the Nonkilling novels in this essay seem to be aiming at. A protagonist's potential to love unreservedly brings happiness and encouragement to others but for which sometime one may have to pay heavily. The question remains would these protagonists ever return to their homelands to make use of their individual transformations? In a globalized world, one's role as an agent of change as mentioned earlier is increasingly transcending the notion of narrow nationalism and geographical boundaries.

Nonkilling literature is about admission of that inherent purer form of love present in all of us, waiting to be tapped. Such love can emanate from selfless action as in the case of Yudja's confession to Fehrat of his past, revealing his connection to Fehrat as his biological father. In Natalia's loss of her peace-loving husband killed by the military lobbyists, there is unspoken understanding that in her desire to continue with her work at the new Institute of Peace, she is fulfilling the dreams of her murdered husband. Similarly, in non-fiction literature, the two memoirs by Gavia and Loney show a profound desire by both captives to practice their cherished convictions of shared humanity. Both Christians, without explicitly talking about their faiths, rely on what Lev Tolstoy described in his book, 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' where the concept of 'love' is central. (Tarasoff, 2010) And it is non-sectarian in the full sense of the word, (transcending gender, race, religion, church, class, ethnicity, nationalism and caste).

Protagonists in all these works view their respective situation as an opportunity to test such fundamental humanizing values – practicing what they have contemplated for long facing up to their captors/oppressors and seeking in them reflection of their own humanity. When the notion of the other as an enemy disappears, the words like victory

and defeat loose meaning. Core belief of the nonkilling culture is faith in the limitless dignity and potential for each person's life.

Can Nonkilling literature/art be planned and developed or is it mostly random? A good creative work comes often as a response to the reality in which its creator is living or is surrounded by it. It may not be always possible to write consciously a Nonkilling literary novel or a poem but given some criteria it may still be possible to identify works we read, view, or listen as belonging to the Nonkilling genre. Once in a while we may be surprised that a personal piece has turned out to be nonkilling. Hence the intent is to create a space in which such literature could be identified, recognized, and the work disseminated broadly to promote essence of nonkilling ethic or its lack of. In this sense, NKARC platform can help to nurture development of Nonkilling literature.

The artist having a principled nonkilling spirit within, to create innovative nonkilling is of fundamental importance. (Paige letter, *Nonkilling Arts: Five Scenarios*, July 28, 2012) Otherwise as Paige notes, we will just seem to get 'atrocious- lamenting' art over the centuries without any principled nonkilling critique. Tolstoy is an exception. Recipients must make their own judgments. Hatred and counter killing remains an option. As we have seen from most works reviewed, in particular the personal diaries of Loney and Gaviria or the two novels of Bahtijaragic, point to Paige's contention that "nonkilling discovery within seems important before expressing it artistically or otherwise to others." Paige concludes that "artist without nonkilling spirit within might hypothetically invent it like scientists simulating nuclear war." (Paige short note to Bhaneja, 12July2012 email)

In summary, Nonkilling literature seeks to discover truth of how protagonists find essentially life's worth as individuals or groups. Fear, anger, hatred, and dehumanization play a role in killing, while empathy, trust, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion and other positive emotions contribute to the inhibition of aggressive behaviour. Empathy stands out as an important mental and emotional state for the inhibition of such behavior. Dehumanization may be often a cause and consequence of killing, but the ability to feel what others feel and take their point of view makes it difficult to inflict harm on them. In Loney's *Captivity*, this is a fundamental part of strategy by the four being held hostages when dealing with their Iraqi captors.

Nonkilling literature filters things out and left with the essence of what has to be treasured most - life beyond destructive forces of wars and violence of any kinds and it transcend the labels of gender, race, religion, class, ethnicity, and caste. The literature is in cognition of such truth through observation, understanding and evaluation of reality of existence, its meaning and value, Such literary body of work creates consciousness about stopping the rise of leaders and followers who celebrate vengeful extermination of enemies, by committing itself to prevention of killing, envisage ways to reconcile the vengeful, and to create conditions of life which brings out in us a profound respect for each human being.

A preventive Culture of Nonkilling Peace can identify and help to reconcile vengeful animosity, however recent or ancient, before they erupt in atrocities again. Recognizing

worth of something is not necessarily knowing its value. Nonkilling literature leads to creation of value and a genuine happiness is cultivated through such creation. Such literature also helps us overcome traumas associated with innocent human killings through positive engagement in prevention of killing and violence. It makes us observe, argue, and struggle with examples of decisions taken to killing and nonkilling. While pursuing those principles, the protagonists' lives are threatened and they are sometimes killed for pursuing them (sometimes under circumstances that could have been prevented by actions of others – nonkilling martyrs!). They engage in epic nonviolent movements or create ones when lethal opposition creates crisis and adherence to nonkilling principles.

Above is a preliminary list of insights from our first reading of the literature reviewed. The list can be expanded as new insights are gained with further writing and reading of the Nonkilling literature. We need more such Nonkilling literary works to provide us insights into authentic human relationships that crossover cultural, ethnic, gender and national divides, reminding us how valuable everyone's Life is. Such insights can enable us to understand conflict from the point of view of the 'universal human' and can provide inspiration for working towards a nonkilling global society.

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