

Nonkilling Arts RC Letter: June 2015

Dear friends.

This month's NKARC letter has Nonkilling arts contributions on Fiction, Theatre, Cinema/Documentaries, Peace March, Spirituality and Nuclear Abolition etc. showing once again that there is no end to nonkilling creative arts. More below.

1. Nonkilling Fiction:

NKARC colleague writer James Loney last month suggested 3 novels as must read. Published over the past decade, these works of fiction are entitled: 'The Cellist of Sarajevo', 'Cold Mountain', and 'The Lizard Cage'. James found in these stories their protagonists owning up to ethical and psychological consequences of their choice to kill. There is a value of each individual spirit and how an act of killing as a soldier or as a civilian can change the perpetrator for ever. Below is a short summary of the three novels. Hope this will inspire you (especially NKARC fiction authors) to write comments on whether these works should be considered as Nonkilling fiction:

The Cellist of Sarajevo (2008) by Steven Galloway

"One afternoon, the cellist is standing by his window, watching his neighbors line up in the street below to buy bread. A mortar explodes among them. Exactly twenty-four hours later, the cellist descends the staircase leading from his apartment, carrying his cello and a stool to the small crater that marks the mortar's point of impact. In utter sadness, he sits and plays Albonini's Adagio, a composition which symbolizes hope rising from the ashes. The cellist resolves to do this each day for twenty-two days, one day for each of the twenty-two human beings killed there at that spot. He is not sure that he will survive, or that he even has twenty-two adagios in him, but he will try." The cellist has an angel guardian in an anonymous sniper who wants to protect him from the sniper on the other side in whose sightline the cellist played. The novel is also about how the cellist's music becomes a part of both adversaries resisting them from killing, affirming "that the world still [holds] the capacity for goodness."

The Lizard Cage(2008) by Caren Connelly is a celebration of the resilience of the human spirit. The novel's protagonist "Teza once electrified the people of Burma with his protest songs against the dictatorship. Arrested by the Burmese secret police in the days of mass protest, he is seven years into a twenty-year sentence in solitary confinement. Cut off from his family and contact with other prisoners, he applies his acute intelligence, Buddhist patience, and humor to find meaning in the interminable days, and searches for news in every being and object that is grudgingly allowed into his cell."

Cold Mountain (1997) by Charles Frazier tells the story of W. P. Inman, a wounded deserter from the Confederate army near the end of the American Civil War who walks for months to return to Ada Monroe, the love of his life; the story shares several similarities with Homer's The Odyssey. The narrative alternates back and forth every chapter between the story of Inman and that of Ada Monroe, a minister's daughter recently relocated from Charleston to a farm in the rural mountain community called Cold Mountain from which Inman hails. Though they only knew

each other for a brief time before Inman departed for the war, it is largely the hope of seeing Ada again that drives Inman to desert the army and make the dangerous journey back to Cold Mountain.” The novel is about love and hope winning against killing.

The above novel synopsis collected from the Internet.

2. Nonkilling Theatre:

In recent issue of the ‘alt’ theatre periodical, there is a thought-provoking interview with NKARC colleague, founder of the Teesri Dunity Theatre, Canadian playwright Rahul Varma. The interview is by Despina Artenie in connection with the remounting of RV’s play ‘Bhopal’ held in Montreal last year. Rahul’s plays go to the core of human social consciousness and delve into ethics of survival in a conflict situation. Below are excerpts from Despina’s interview (for the full interview, see alt.theatre attachment):

“...In theatre in general, in a social catastrophe, and in war, women are not underrepresented; they are subjugated. For example, war: War is always reported in the form of men fighting with each other. We have not paid attention to the fact that cases of abduction, sexual enslavement, rape, and women being snatched away take place in countries where war happens. They are always sidelined in comparison to who is the victor and the political dynamics. We have the experience of two world wars and several genocides. We have not taken into account how much damage war has done socially, psychologically, and physically to women who continue to suffer from it.”

“...Understanding is a relative word because there is no single kind of understanding. Yes, you want to empathize with the characters, but more than empathizing with the characters, the play also permits us to ask if what we are doing is ethically correct. There is a lack of ethics in the relationships among people depending on how much wealth one has. The play allows us to question some of the ethics of survival.”

Thanks to Nikki Shaffeeullah and Despina Artenie for the piece.

3. Peace March:

Unique role of women in peace movement world over is well-known, especially in leading peace marches and protests, e.g. their notable lead in Campaign for the Nuclear Disarmament in the 1960s. Kudos to 30 Korean and International group of women who completed on May 24 the Korean reunification peace march showing the importance of “citizenship diplomacy”. Click on link below to a report on the march:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/women-peace-activists-cross-dmz-to-mixed-reaction-from-south-korea/article24584386/>

CGNK colleagues Mairead Maguire and Christine Ahn were part of the march.

4. Nonkilling Cinema:

A. Film 1: Sports and Reconciliation: Soccer/Football as a Trailblazer for Reconciliation?

Sports has been a part of bridge-building diplomacy for a long time. The initiative of ping pong, cricket, hockey and soccer matches have been effectively used to promote friendship between former adversaries. A recent documentary by Thomas Lemmer and Matthias Frickel shows the game of football/soccer as a way of continual reconciliation between Germany and Israel. The doc is entitled: **“90 Minutes for Israel and Germany - Football between Tel Aviv and Berlin”**.

When Germany and Israel established diplomatic relations 50 years ago, the Holocaust was still too fresh and a "normal relationship" between the two countries was considered impossible. In the documentary, the two filmmakers Lemmer and Frickel tackle the question as to how football played a pioneering role in reconciling the two countries. For the documentary, click on:

<http://www.dw.de/documentaries-and-reports-90-minutes-for-israel-and-germany/av-18441637>

Deutsch Welle in its promo blurb on this interesting documentary comments: “When Israeli national team player Almog Cohen takes the pitch against his old love, Nuremberg, his German fans welcome him with Israeli flags. A German, Michael Nees, is technical director and coach of the Israeli under-21 team and is helping to build the future of Israeli football. With more than 5,000 participants, the next “European Maccabi Games” at Berlin Olympic stadium, where the Nazis celebrated their triumphs in 1936, will be the largest event to feature Jewish athletes outside Israel. Israeli team captain Alec Privalov wears the Star of David on his chest and the German tricolor on his back. Tsvika Riz, the German national team’s biggest fan in Israel, sees no contradiction between walking through Tel Aviv in a Germany shirt, although his grandfather refused to allow even a single German product into his house. Almost the entire Tsvika family died in the Holocaust.”

The documentary for me raised the question - will there be similar soccer friendly matches someday held between Israel and Palestine?

B. Film 2: 'We Are Many': Documentary by Amir Amirani depicts legacy of Global Anti-War Movement

Recent documentary “We are Many” celebrating the protest against Iraq War interviews key organizers of the march—including Damon Albarn, Ken Loach and the late Tony Benn—as well as the officials who pushed for the U.S. to invade Iraq. A trailer for the film also shows peace activists being dragged away from congressional meetings, Iraqi children weeping in the aftermath of bombings, and veterans throwing away their army medals in a demonstration against the war. 2003 march against Iraq War—the largest protest in history. For more:

Click on: <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/05/20/we-are-many-documentary-depicts-legacy-global-anti-war-movement>

C. Review of the feature film "Good Kill" asks, "Why Do We Wear Our Flight Suits, Sir?" You wonder how these men and women sitting in drone cabins away from their human targets internalize the distant act of aerial bombing, it is a film about 'stress to kill'. Click on below for an insightful review: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/30781-good-kill-asks-why-do-we-wear-our-flight-suits-sir>

Thanks to friend Anthony Marsella for recommending the above two pieces. Our NKARC filmmaker and videographer colleagues should find these of interest.

5. Nonkilling Spirituality and Nuclear Disarmament:

Religious and spiritual groups have been leaders in the peace movement advocating nonkilling peace, in particular, about abolition of nuclear weapons. At the recent NPT Treaty Review Conference in New York, inter-faith organizations and their leaders put forward a strong resolution for nuclear weapons possessing countries. SGI colleague Tony Meers forwarded the news report for sharing. For full text, click on:

<<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/05/08/faith-based-organizations-warn-impending-nuclear-disaster>>

Thank you Tony.

5. Nonkilling Journalism:

(a) Nation of Snitches by Chris Hedges

Colleague Tony Marsella forwarded this probing piece by Chris Hedges which points to thin borderline which moves from a democracy to totalitarian state when the precarious balance between freedom of expression and security starts eroding. See below the link to his excellent essay-report: <http://www.nationofchange.org/2015/05/11/a-nation-of-snitches/>

5. Colleague Ada Aharoni of Iflac forwarded the following report by Israeli journalist Shlomi Eldar, entitled, "Arab youth use social media to send message of peace to Israel". Eldar writes for Al Monitor Israel's Pulse

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/israel-arab-youth-facebook-peace-messages-idf.html>

Shlomi writes: "It all began as a personal project by a young Israeli Arab who lives in northern Israel. He wanted to use social networking to convince other Israeli Arabs that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are not some "army of evil" and that its soldiers are not as bloodthirsty as they tend to be portrayed in Arab propaganda films. He soon learned, however, that in the digital age, there is no end to surprises. Instead of messages and responses from the Israeli Arab audience he was targeting, he

began receiving messages of peace and love from young Arab men and women from across the Arab world.”

Last word:

“THE SINGLE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN COMMUNICATION IS THE ILLUSION THAT IT HAS TAKEN PLACE (GEORGE BERNARD SHAW)

Communication is like an asymptote. Asymptotes are geometric figures in which a curved line approaches, but never quite reaches, a straight line. Likewise, communication approaches, but never quite reaches, the straight truth, due to repressed facts, feelings, and memories. So we can never quite connect with ourselves or others, no matter how hard we try. Tantalized, we struggle with the nuances of our asymptotic identity, asymptotic communication, and asymptotic relationships, all of which is symptomatic of being human and longing for contact.

Hugh Mann (<mailto:hughmannorganicmd@gmail.com>)

My gratitude to all who contributed to this Letter. Please continue sending your ideas and suggestions.

Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

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"Nonkilling is THE measure of human progress"