

Nonkilling Arts RC Letter - May 2015

Dear friends,

As I put together this month's Nonkilling Arts Letter, a new controversy seem to emerge in the civil society organization PEN which defends human rights of writers - the controversy among the supporters of Charlie Hebdo who consider the right of freedom of expression of authors to be supreme whereas its dissenting 145 members (contrary to media accounts claiming that only 6 PEN members have objected to the group's decision to bestow Charlie Hebdo with an award) are of the view that the context in which such right gets exercised is equally important.

Since NKARC is neither a literary nor a political organization but a civil society movement with 'No More Killing' conviction, I wondered how one might look at all this from NK vantage point. This month's letter includes references to: a study of a modern day Romeo-Juliet romances and their consequences in South Asia; reviews of two books of poem, *Wake up!* by David Krieger and *Love and Resistance* by Theresa Wolfwood; a tribute to Glenn Paige and philosophy of nonkilling; a sic farce from Israel about killing as a ruse to provoke and hold mirror to the other side; the "Agreement Express"- a railway link as means of reconciliation between India and Pakistan; an update on women's Korean peace march; and what's behind nonkilling peace journalists being called 'idiots'.

The talisman test as Gandhi would use the term for Nonkilling work is: whether a particular act ultimately prevents or enhance killings? How many lives a deliberate act of killing by a state, an individual, or a group can save or how many lives will be lost by that deliberate action? Most material you sent my way cover such topic/concern.

#### 1. Romance Tragedy in Romeo and Juliet Style in India and Nepal

NKARC colleague David Evans from Australia sent an interesting paper from his PhD thesis where literature intersects with social sciences presenting a study of social emergence in relation to forbidden marriage and its consequences (romance tragedy) in India and Nepal. His inspiration initially started from his interest in romance folklore of the South Asian subcontinent (love stories of *Heer-Ranjah*, *Sassi-Punnu*, *Sohini-Mahiwal* and *Anarkali-Saleem* etc.) but he then went on to find contemporary case histories of similar failed romances and the causes of their high incidence, succumbing to pressures of traditional structures of caste, class and religious divide resulting in violence and honor killings of women and men. David Evans writes: While citizenship of India incorporates the right to free choice of marital partner, ongoing violations of this right have attracted worldwide publicity since 1993. Prior to 2006, criminal aspects of romance tragedy were handled by local authorities, often with no penalty, no recourse to justice for the victims, and no retribution against offenders. Since 2006, individual cases taken to the High Court of India have seen petitions upheld, with penalties awarded against perpetrators and local police. Media awareness of romance tragedies involving young couples has seen an increased human rights movement, mostly led by women, calling for capital punishment for those murdering or persecuting couples in contentious marriages, and providing safe houses for couples." For David's thoughtful paper, see the attachment.

David Evans holds a PhD in Humanities from the University of New England, Australia, and is a retired medical practitioner whose work in Tasmania, Australia, specialized in Pathology and Sexual Health Medicine. He is an active member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Welcome to NKARC, David.

###

## 2. Nonkilling Poetry: Two reviews

A. Sumeet Grover from London recently reviewed a poetry collection entitled, "Love and Resistance" by Theresa Wolfwood. Theresa is an activist and director of the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation, Victoria, Canada. About her insightful and inspirational collection, Sumeet writes:

"I believe that Wolfwood's form and style of poetry combined with her passion for social justice and nonviolence based on her decades of peace work is a significant contribution to peace poetry through this book. What her poems achieve is that they examine the lives of individuals; lives that tell stories of what is happening in diverse parts of the world."

For more on review and Wolfwood's poems, click:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sumeet-grover/theresa-wolfwood-love-and-resistance-review\\_b\\_7003180.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sumeet-grover/theresa-wolfwood-love-and-resistance-review_b_7003180.html)

For the second year, Sumeet who is a poet in his own right has been shortlisted for the Jane Martin Poetry Prize dedicated to violence against women in India, poverty and inequality. Being shortlisted itself is a recognition of the human dignity of the people for whom he writes the poems. For launch of his new collection, "House Arrest & Disobedience", click on the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/poetry-book-launch-house-arrest-disobedience-tickets-16621547496>

B. *Wake up!* by David Krieger - A collection of poems (Santa Barbara, Calif: Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Book, 2015, pp. 115)

*Wake Up!* is a book of powerful poems by nuclear disarmament champion and civil society activist David Krieger, founder of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF -<<http://www.wagingpeace.org/>>). The book divided into five parts comprising 86 thought-provoking poems. They paint evocative images of wars and killings yet giving us hope through possibility of self-correction in finding our shared humanity.

David challenges the notion of Theodor Adorno that to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric asserting that in fact poetry after Auschwitz is needed today more than ever, it has no longer the luxury of being trivial. Those who write poetry must confront the ugliness of our human brutality. His exhortation to the poets is that: "They must express the heart's longing for peace and reveal its grief at our loss of decency. They must uncover the truth of who we are behind our masks and who we could become." He adds: "Poetry can uncover truths that can reconnect us with ourselves and with our lost humanity."

Laudable in all this is the vision of a poet challenging his countrymen and others to change the status quo and work towards building a Nonkilling America as a model example to the world. Yet he is realistic about progress as he writes in one of his poems, "*Time carries no pretense of progress nor perfection... It (time) is a patient teacher whose voice by force must be our own.*"

For my full review of "Wake Up" in this week's Transcend News, click on:

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2015/05/wake-up-by-david-krieger/>

The title poem of the collection *Wake Up!* is in nuclear disarmament part of the book entitled Global Hiroshima:

*"Now, before the arrow is let loose,*

*before it flies across oceans*

*and continents.*

*Now, before we are engulfed in flames,*

*while there is still time, while we still can,*

*Wake up!*'

David has a keen sense of schadenfreude. In poem "Einstein Sticks out his Tongue", he delves into the mind of the great scientist whose brilliant  $E=MC^2$  equation contributed to development of the Atom Bomb:

*"When asked for a pose, Einstein turned*

*toward the camera and stuck out his tongue*

.....

*He was Albert. He was Einstein. He was*

*his own man, first and always.*

*He was lovely. He was real. And behind*

*his dark eyes, there was fear."*

Dr. Krieger's inspirational collection reminds us that it is time for the world to awaken to the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age. A must read poetry that illumines dark corners to show presence of truth and thereby possibilities for peace.

Thank you Anthony Rosa and Sumeet Grover.

###

### 3. Nonkilling Journalism

I admire NKARC colleague op-ed columnist Bob Koehler for he persistently writes from the value of shared humanity. Last month his three op-eds were right on the mark from my Nonkilling perspective. I could have chosen all his weekly op-eds for their shining light on truth: 'The Real Nuclear Threat' or 'Should Police be Armed', or 'Idiots of the World Unite'. All three are written underlining our shared values and presumably aimed at the governance in his own country which requires more courage than pointing finger at an adversary/enemy in another land. My interest in his op ed, "Idiots of the world Unite" is high because it summarizes the essence of killing problems surrounding us. Those who praise power have complimented him this time addressing him an "idiot". In his thoughtful op-ed, he writes:

"Last week I raised the idea of unarmed policing, as practiced in half a dozen countries around the world. I wasn't calling for immediate gun surrender but, rather, the diversion of human energy away from short-sighted, violent responses to conflict situations — at pretty much every level of society, from interpersonal to geopolitical — and to the complex, courageous, creative task of building a culture of peace.

Being called an idiot for making such a plea is to be expected, of course — it happens all the time, and I relish it because it means my words have reached people on the other side of the great political divide. That's what building peace is all about."

He continues: "But I also felt a tug of deep frustration, which seldom finds resolution. We emailed back and forth, "idiot" morphed into "naïve" and, seemingly, that was that. I was left with the same quandary as ever: How will things ever change? How will human society let go of violence — "good violence," which is the most seductive and most destructive of all — when its utterly crucial necessity permeates the media, permeates collective thought? Good violence is so simple, so "surgical." You take out only the problem situation and innocent people everywhere are instantly safer. Then you close your eyes and refuse to see what happens next." (for Bob's thoughtful answer to this quandary, click on the link: <http://commonwonders.com/category/wonders/>)

###

### 4. Glenn Paige and Philosophy of Nonkilling

NKARC colleague Sohail's 'Inspiration 636' on his website [www.drsohail.com](http://www.drsohail.com) is entitled, "Glenn Paige and Philosophy of Nonkilling". I chose to include Sohail's essay as more than Professor Paige, it provides an insight into the inner most values of psychotherapist Dr. Sohail himself. The tribute to Glenn Paige, the Nonkilling movement founder was last month chosen by IFLAC for its website. Sohail's article begins as follows:

"One afternoon, when I was working in my Creative Psychotherapy Clinic in Canada, I received an unexpected email from Glenn Paige. He mentioned that he had read my book, *Prophets of Violence, Prophets of Peace*, and wanted to correspond with me. I had never heard his name but when I went to the internet and googled him, I found out that he was a political scientist who had a special interest in world peace and had created an international organization for global nonviolence. I became quite intrigued by his philosophy and called him in Hawaii. On the phone

he talked like a kind, caring and compassionate man. He promised to send me his book titled *Nonkilling Global Political Science* and I promised to send him my new book *From Holy War to Global Peace*. Since that connection we have been corresponding with each other. When I read his book I was impressed by his personality and philosophy, his knowledge and experience, especially his wisdom. I realized that while Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were the philosophers of non-violence, Glenn Paige is the philosopher of non-killing. The more I read the writings of Paige, the more I became impressed by his humility and sincerity, integrity and optimism. He dreams of the day when human beings will develop peace consciousness and killing other human beings will become a matter of the past. Paige's book has already been translated in more than twenty languages so that people from different communities, countries and cultures can connect and create a peaceful world together."

For more click on: <https://iflac.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/the-philosophy-of-nonkilling/> . Since its posting on IFLAC blog, there has been interesting conversation on this essay on IFLAC blog. Thank you Sohail and thank you Ada for posting it.

IFLAC is a voluntary Association that strives for peace by building bridges of understanding and peace through culture, literature and communication. It is founded and directed by Egyptian-born Israeli writer Ada Aharoni (Ph.D), since 1999.

###

#### 5. Spoof and Satire:

Last month, I received a message from our colleague Ada Aharoni informing us about the youtube video where as she noted "these heartless girls from Gaza sing: KILL ALL THE JEWS! On the Nazi Holocaust Day! The editors of the song and the singers should be put in prison for many long years!"

<<http://player.vimeo.com/video/106171741>>

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/1061717>. IFLAC in its statement condemning the "Gaza Girls" hatred video called upon "all human society to abolish it and to bring its creators to court". AT CGNK, we unhesitatingly expressed our disgust at such an outrageous video. However we wondered what would be a measured and constructive response to such a sic video ? What action/ideas groups such as NKARC and IFLAC should create to counter such hate promoting propoganda - how we can apply our peace arts creativity to counter the dangerous Gaza Girls work in addition to condemnation and political discussion on many other places?

As all this was going on, we found out that the video was in fact made by a freedom of expression enthusiastic Jewish artist. The "Gaza Girls" was a fictitious girl band and the video was made by artist Orit Arfa, an Israeli American Jewish who considered the satire/spoof as a part of her political art. Arfa thinks that by saying out loud what many people think, one hears the cruelty of Hamas message.

Maybe this Jewish artist be asked to create instead a piece along lines of "Don't Kill Jews or Palestinians, Not Even One!" by "No-Kill Girls" or "No-Kill Boys" bands? Or

other arts? Maybe others in NKARC and IFLAC have suggestions for a counter nonkilling arts creativity to an alternate piece of arts. Your thoughts/ideas are welcome.

Orit Arfa is an Israeli Jewish artist who lives near Tel Aviv, and who created the video and explains how and why she did it here:

<http://www.israellycool.com/2014/11/02/reader-post-kill-all-the-jews-punked/>

To find out more about Orit Arfa see here:

<http://oritarfa.net/about/>

Grateful thanks to friends Glenn, Ada, Olivier and Solevig for wise comments. It is a good cautionary tale about freedom of expression with a narrow context which could be mistaken with grave unintended consequences.

###

#### 6. Nonkilling Video:

As feedback to NKARC last month's Letter, a reader pointed to the BBC documentary on a series, entitled, India's Frontier Railways. The episode 3 below entitled *Samjhauta Express* shows how the use of Railways as means of Reconciliation has been working over the past two decades. Though 60 minutes long, it captures interestingly how small political acts can help to heal wounds of human savagery which had resulted from poor foresight of politicians. For an enjoyable watch, click on episode 3 about the train service known as "Samjhauta Express (The Agreement Express)": [Episode 3 The Samjhauta Express](#)

###

#### 7. Update on Korean Peace March preparations:

Following North Korea's agreement to Women's Peace Walk later this month, the Government of South Korea has also approved the Peace Walk proposal. Click for more on: [www.womencrossdmz.org](http://www.womencrossdmz.org). 30 marchers will be participating. The plan is to go from Pyongyang to DMZ accompanied by North Korean women. South Korean women will come to DMZ from Seoul. If permitted, both groups will meet in a special part of the Panmunjom center where the military delegations confer. Then each will return to Pyongyang and Seoul. Only international participants will actually cross the DMZ.

###

A reader: "A great newsletter filled with a score of virtuous sites. In so many ways, the contents suggest we are growing conscious and conscience." Tony Marsella, thanks for your supportive comment.

In closing:

Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference is on in NYC with usual positions of nuclear weapons possessing countries likely to hold on to their stockpiles of arsenal while condemning others not to have any. Colleague Francisco Gomes de Matos in his rhymed reflections pays a tribute this time to the nuclear weapons ban treaty that Iran signed last month.

In praise of a peace-nurturing treaty,

by peace linguist Francisco Gomes de Matos

When commendably a group of nations a nuclear treaty sign  
it doesn't mean that global nuclear security will always be fine

but it does enhance a much-needed nonkilling universal hope  
that with such danger Humankind will be better prepared to cope

To share a world free from the threat of a nuclear war  
calls for ensuring that the right to a sustainable peace be stronger than  
before

###

My deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to this Letter.

With Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

Bill (Balwant) Bhaneja

Coordinator

Nonkilling Arts Research Committee(NKARC)

Center for Global Nonkilling(CGNK)

[www.nonkilling.org](http://www.nonkilling.org)

*"Nonkilling is THE measure of human progress"*