

## **Nonkilling ARTs Research Committee (NKARC) Letter: September 2015**

Dear friends,

Hope you had an enjoyable summer. For this month's newsletter, you sent my way some interesting Nonkilling Arts related material covering theatre, poetry, arts installation, cinema, film documentaries, journalism and other news and reflections. I share these for you may find them of relevant interest and inspiration.

### **1. Theatre and Nonkilling:**

Unlike compassion, kindness, and cooperation, the notion of Empathy is rather recent in our conversation. Performing arts provide unique opportunity to understand that seldom articulated sentiment in us. Matt Jones' essay, "TOWARDS A THEATRE OF GLOBAL EMPATHY: IMAGINING OTHERNESS IN THE WAR ON TERROR" in the recent issue of the Alt.theatre makes an interesting intersection between theatre and ethics through a comparative analysis of three contemporary "soldier plays". He writes:

"As many of the recent soldier plays attempt to show us, in extreme situations we might be willing to die to protect those around us. But one problem that develops from this is that we tend to empathize more with people near us because we see them regularly. This helps to solidify a social bond that, because it is based on proximity, will always be parochial in nature... what it would take to develop a sense of global empathy that crosses borders, escapes the provincialism of the nation, and allows us to empathize with the people on the other side of the world with whom we are somehow connected... But is there a way that theatre might help us do this? The faces that theatre brings into view are almost always the faces of (usually local) actors. The presence of these faces highlights the absence of the real faces of the other. What techniques might theatre practitioners use to help us imagine the other?"

For full article, you can download it on the following link:

<https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBhNWNwMGtoeVpEzU1UQw>

Kudos to Matt Jones and the alt.theatre for such leading edge articles. An important work towards creation of Global Nonkilling Ethic.

### **2. Nonkilling Poetry**

#### **(a) "Nonkilling - Its Not Unusual" by Rich Panter**

Rich writes that "with the 3rd major killing spree this summer in the USA", he was inspired to write this poem re-working Tom Jones '1960's hit, "It's Not Unusual". Imagine if Tom Jones sang Rich's parody. See below both versions.

#### **"NONKILLING - IT'S NOT UNUSUAL"**

**By Rich Panter**

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO BE SHOT BY ANYONE  
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO BE KILLED BY ANYONE  
BUT WHEN I SEE THEM BEING GUNNED DOWN RIGHT ON THE NEWS  
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO SEE ME CRY  
OH, I WANNA DIE

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO GO OUT AT ANY TIME  
BUT WHEN I SEE THEM SLAUGHTERED ABOUT IT'S SUCH A CRIME

IF YOU SHOULD EVER BE RANDOMLY KILLED BY ANYONE  
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL - IT HAPPENS EVERYDAY - NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY  
YOU FIND IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME

CONGRESS WILL NEVER DO - WHAT YOU WANT IT TO  
WHY CAN'T THIS CRAZY KILLING CEASE?

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO BE MAD WITH ANYONE  
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO BE SAD WITH ANYONE  
BUT IF I EVER FIND THE NRA'S CHANGED AT ANYTIME  
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL TO FIND THAT **WE-CAN-STOP-THESE-CRIMES!**  
WHOA-OH-OH-OH-OH

### **Original**

#### **"It's Not Unusual"**

It's not unusual to be loved by anyone  
It's not unusual to have fun with anyone  
but when I see you hanging about with anyone

It's not unusual to see me cry,  
oh I wanna' die

It's not unusual to go out at any time  
but when I see you out and about it's such a crime

if you should ever want to be loved by anyone,  
It's not unusual it happens every day no matter what you say  
you find it happens all the time

love will never do what you want it to  
why can't this crazy love be mine

It's not unusual, to be mad with anyone  
It's not unusual, to be sad with anyone  
but if I ever find that you've changed at anytime  
it's not unusual to find out that I'm in love with you  
whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh

(b) **The Chicago Lake:** Our NKARC colleague Rashida Khanam from Bangladesh was in Chicago this summer on a sabbatical. She sent us this poem, a beautiful reflection about Chicago, a change from the stories of street gangs and killings one reads about in the media. For Rashida, Chicago Lake becomes a metaphor for healing:

### **Chicago Lake --The Embodiment of Nonkilling Environment**

By Rashida Khanam

Your Journey from Prehistoric Past started with grief of mind for being confined in passive inactiveness

With courageous heart and loving mind for encountering yourself in doing good to others you came out with philosophic spirit

You are the embodiment of the Nonkilling Environment! Its Reflection are being reflected on the uniqueness of your activities

You are enriching the lives of Animate and Inanimate Beings

Your Acceptance of people from different faiths, traditions and Cultures on your space for their livelihoods,

highlights the principles of Inclusiveness highlighting the principles of democracy of belongingness with equal dignity and respect

The flock of geese and sea gulls express their joyous gesture while swimming spreading their white and brown feathers on your lap  
as you embrace them with compassion and love

The sky also with its beautiful blueish color has his loving reflection on you

The wind too makes you express your liveliness through gentle waves

The Sun paints the Sky with its different colors that adores you with its beauty of Art and you appear in different images with joy

Nature in the form of Green trees and the buildings with their architectural eloquence beside your beach have also joined in the process of making the space a space of beauty and joy to people

who are from different levels, creed and values are coming to get healed with your love

For Fountain, the flow of water comes out from different sources but meeting together enchanting the beauty of unity

The every ripple is also found singing the songs for touching the heart with beauty of improvisation

With your quality of harmony, co-existence and solidarity to serve humanity

You are letting us know the core principles of life

Care, Love, Joy and Hope highlighting

The Nonkilling Philosophy of Life

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NKARC colleague Bob Koehler who is a long-time Chicago resident and a journalist responded to the poem as follows:

"This IS the Chicago I know: "The every ripple is found singing the songs touching our hearts with beauty of improvisation." There's enormous good in this city, enormous hope and possibility. That's what lured me here some 40 years ago and what keeps me here. "

Thank you Bob. Thank you Rashida.

(c) Good News: Sumeet Grover's Global Poetry website that was mentioned in August letter is now launched. Congratulations, Sumeet!. It's an eye-catching arts website with a Nonkilling Poetry. Click on: <http://www.globalpoetry.org/blog/category/nonkilling-poetry/>

E: [mail@sumeetgrover.com](mailto:mail@sumeetgrover.com) T: 0772 3399 074 (International Dialers: +44 772 3399 074)

### **3. Art Installations and Nonkilling:**

An interesting report below received through TRANSCEND news about the political focus of the famous biennial art exhibition in Venice this year and it attracted a large gathering of artists, activists, scholars and others.

**Art, Politics and Social Change at the Venice Biennale** by Amy Goodman and Denis Moynihan – Democracy NOW!

"Today's artists are doing much more than providing a mirror," Anne Pasternak of the organization Creative Time told us at one of the Biennale's main venues, the Arsenale. "They're getting into the gritty work of actual social change." Creative Time, a New York-based nonprofit that commissions and supports public art and engagement, convened a three-day summit at this year's Biennale. For more, click on: <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2015/08/art-politics-and-social-change-at-the-venice-biennale/>

Thank you Antonio.

### **4. Nonkilling Cinema/ Screenplay:**

Glenn Paige pointed to classic film, "Judgment at Nuremberg" (1961) and why he thought should be considered a film worthy of serious attention. Screenplay Abby Mann and direction by Stanley Kramer, this gritty black and white film won Academy Award for Best Picture. Actor Spencer Tracy plays as chief judge of the Military Tribunal. After gripping arguments from prosecution (Dachau photos) and defense (atomic bombing America and whole world were complicit in rise and atrocities of the Hitler regime not just Germans and the 4 civilian officials in the dock), the Judge (with one dissenter among three) found all 4 guilty and sentenced each to prison for life. Judge said his verdict was based upon *"truth, justice, and the value of single human life."*

Looking through Nonkilling lens, Glenn writes: "On reflection it struck me that all 4 were found guilty of complicity in 6 million murders, but none sentenced to death whereas US had the death penalty for murder. I Googled for info about the film (found it based on a fictional? screenplay by

Abby Mann not a book) and for the Nuremberg Trials. Found that only 11 were sentenced to death by an International Military Tribunal in the Nuremberg Trials (Hermann Goring committed suicide on day of execution of 10). However there were many other trials and summary executions. Very complicated story. Might a Ph.D. dissertation on Nonkilling and Post WWII German War Crimes Trials be a good subject for CGNK Nonkilling Law exploration? Just a thought. But discovery of words "the value of a single human life" in an emotionally charged dramatic context seemed worth sharing this detour with you and colleagues."

Glenn, thanks for this new nonkilling find. For more about the play and the film check out Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgment\\_at\\_Nuremberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgment_at_Nuremberg)

## **5. Film Documentaries and Nonkilling:**

Colleague Jan Slakov sent information on the following three thought-provoking documentary films:

### (a) The Singing Revolution

First occupied by the Soviets in 1939, then by the Nazis, and then by the Soviets again, Estonia lived through decades of terror. By the end of World War II, more than one-quarter of the population had been deported to Siberia, been executed, or had fled the country. Music sustained the Estonian people during those years, and was such a crucial part of their struggle for freedom that their successful bid for independence is known as the Singing Revolution.

The Singing Revolution is the first film to tell this historically vital tale. "This is a story that has not been told outside Estonia," said filmmaker James Tusty, who is of Estonian descent. "We felt it was time the rest of the world knew of the amazing events that happened here."

Four years in the making, The Singing Revolution is a moving, intensely human testament to the sustaining power of hope and the motivating strength of song. The film reflects the indomitable human drive for personal freedom, political independence, and self-determination.

<http://www.singingrevolution.com/cgi-local/content.cgi>

(b) Pray the Devil Back to Hell - documentary film directed by Gini Reticker and produced by Abigail E. Disney. Won "Best Documentary" at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival.

The film documents the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace peace movement. Organized by social worker Leymah Gbowee, the movement started with praying and singing in a fish market. Leymah Gbowee organized Christian and Muslim women of Monrovia, Liberia, to pray for peace and to organize nonviolence protests. Dressed in white to symbolize peace, and numbering in the thousands, the women became a political force against violence and against their government.

Their movement led to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia, which became the first African nation with a woman president. The film has been used as an advocacy tool in post-

conflict zones like Sudan and Zimbabwe, mobilizing African women to work for peace and security.

<http://praythedevilbacktohell.com/>

(c) A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict, produced and directed by Steve York. There is also a 16 page study guide and a companion book written by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall. These films focus on how the power of nonviolence has been used in various situations (e.g. Danish resistance to Nazism, the civil rights movement in the US, opposing apartheid in South Africa, etc.)

<http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/>

Thank you Jan for pointing out these documentary films.

## **6. Nonkilling Journalism:**

Last month, for a while it seemed the killing of lion Cecile in Zimbabwe by American dentist hunter Dr. Walter Palmer would not go away from newspaper pages. All sorts of opinions were expressed linking Cecile's killing to bio-diversity, development assistance, refugees, climate change, consumerism etc. There was one piece written that stuck with me. It is by Tony Keller in the Globe and Mail - "Dr. Palmer Why Did You Kill Cecile?"

Keller writes: "It is seeking out something rare and beautiful and alive - and killing it. It is searching for this beautiful thing not for the joy of being awestruck at its existence, but to be able to say that you ended its life. It is the worst of human impulses, which is in each of us; the impulse to destroy and glory at the destruction we have wrought."

For Tony's full article, click on: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/dr-palmer-why-did-you-kill-cecil/article25784337/>

(b) Op-ed by CGNK colleague Chaiwat Sathanand who lives in Bangkok and felt the impact of the bomb explosion that killed 20 people at a local shrine last month. Chaiwat's op-ed about what those with nonviolent beliefs do in the face of terror? Sound advice on how to preserve our humanity in times of terror:

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/662456/let-ponder-a-peaceful-reply-to-terror-acts>

(c) In his Op-ed, "A Wedge for Nuclear Disarmament" Chicago Tribune journalist Bob Koehler shows how a small country like the Marshall Islands could make a major impact globally on nuclear disarmament having taken a large nuclear weapons nation USA to the court.

Bob writes: "Oral arguments in the U.S. case are likely to begin sometime next year. There's no telling what will happen, of course. But this is not mere powerless, symbolic protest of a great wrong. The Marshall Islands suits challenge the nuclear states at a level that could yield real, not symbolic, victory and change. As the website Nuclear Zer <<http://nuclearzero.org/>> puts it: "The Republic of the Marshall Islands acts for the seven billion of us who live on this planet to

end the nuclear weapons threat hanging over all humanity. Everyone has a stake in this." For more, click on <http://commonwonders.com/world/a-wedge-for-nuclear-disarmament/>

Thank you Tony Keller, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, and Bob Koehler.

### **7. Peace Festivals and UN Days of Peace (Sept. 21) and Nonviolence (Oct.02);**

Many of you may be preparing for Peace Day which has Sustainability as a key theme this year. As co-founder and co-convenor of Ottawa's Annual Peace Festival I've been involved in mounting the NINTH festival to celebrate citizen level volunteer peace activism. With 25 events in planning, it is a true community grass roots event with no funds from any level of government. For this year's program in Ottawa, click on:<<http://ottawapeacefestival.blogspot.com>>.

Modeling itself along Ottawa, Edmonton Canada is also holding this year a similar 12 day long festival promoting a culture of nonviolence peace. For more on Edmonton program, click: <http://www.gandhifoundation.ca/edmonton-peace-festival-2015.html> .

### **8. Dialogue and Nonkilling:**

I wanted to share with this lovely piece sent by Glynda (Christian) who joined us at the CGNK Futures Meeting in Honolulu last June. She writes:

Greetings All,

"We never know how high we are

Till we are called to rise;

And then, if we are true to plan,

Our statures touch the skies.

The heroism we recite

Would be a daily thing,

Did not ourselves the cubits warp

For fear to be a king."

-Emily Dickinson, 1896

The secret to dialog seems to be passing over and over and then returning--we seek to understand the experience and insight of another or perhaps of some different tradition. But when we return to ourselves, as we always must, we are changed in an almost imperceptible manner--no longer just the same. So simple, yet so compelling. How useful to transformation.

Thank you for the discussions, the laughs, the humor of so much, and the realness of it! I enjoyed each of you in different and special ways. I enjoyed going out on my own and making some discoveries I thoroughly enjoyed and then again in "reporting" back to you. Much to be done in many ways.

Best to all,

Thank you

Glynda (Christian)

### **LAST WORD**

In memoriam to Cecile the Lion: A Nonkilling plea from our Nonkilling poet laureate Francisco Gomes de Matos

#### **For animal hunters : A Nonkilling plea**

**by Francisco Gomes de Matos, a peace-nonkilling linguist, Recife, Brazil**

Animal hunters,

When of their life animals you deprive

You violate animals right to live, to survive

Killing animals shows you don't treat LIFE with dignity

and challenges us to show how hunting could have a deeper quality:

Instead of pursuing animals for food , sport, or prey, ensuring their environmental liberty

As animal hunters, you could give Humankind a deeper lesson in humanity

by transforming the act of hunting into an act of humbling admiration:

interacting with animals as co-partners of global sustainability

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ABrAço  
Francisco

My profound gratitude to all those who contributed or pointed to the material for this letter.

Looking forward to your contributions and comments as always.

Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

Bill (Balwant) Bhaneja

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

***"Nonkilling art explores the spirit and practice of how to prevent, respond to, and to improve individual, social, and global well-being beyond killing." - Glenn D. Paige***

**== Nonkilling is THE measure of Human progress==**