

## IMPORTANCE OF A LITERATURE AND A CULTURE OF PEACE

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## Summary

Culture is transmitted to new generations, through education, but is known and learned by others cultures thanks to art and literature. Literature allows us to transmit the profound meanings of a determinate culture, its stereotypes, archetypes and collective in conscience, creating the possibility of social change through a critic that is able to act into the subliminal world of emotions. Ethical emotions and ethical feelings are new matters of study, that deserve to be centre of researches and specialized scientific studies. Peace is not only the most important objective to our generation but first and foremost the acquisition of a new social behaviour based in love and respect. Apparently Peace depends on the decision of a few, but in fact, it is a potential achievement of each inhabitant of the planet, a state of the mind which needs to be developed in the inner space, in the family groups and in the small neighbourhoods. The cells of society are ill of violence and are not able to conduct the world, through democracy, towards peacemaking decisions.

This article treats the concept of Peace, the role of art and literature and the compromise of the artist and the writer with their contemporary and future co inhabitants, in the sense of being witnesses, educators from the perspective of permanent education of the adult and even transmitters of high values that will make it possible the dream of Peace. In the first section we will have the panorama of our socio-political circumstances that are far away from peace. In the second section we will study the phenomenon of peace in its different aspects: psychological and sociological aspects.

In the third section we will study the systematic transmission of culture through education and its problems. In the fourth section, the non-systematic transmission of cultural values through art, literature and specially poetry. In the fifth section we will develop the importance of a literature and a culture of peace.

### 1. Introduction

Culture is transmitted to new generations through education but is known and learned by others cultures through art and literature. Literature allows us to transmit the profound meanings of a determinate culture, its stereotypes, and archetypes and collective in conscience creating the possibility of social change through a critic that is able to act into the subliminal world of emotions. Ethical emotions and ethical feelings are new matters of study that deserve to be centre of researches and specialized scientific studies. Peace is not only the most important objective to our generation but first and foremost the acquisition of a new social behaviour based in love and respect. Apparently Peace depends on the decision of a few, but in fact, it is a potential achievement of each inhabitant of the planet, a state of the mind which needs to be developed in the inner space, in the family groups and in the small neighbourhoods. The cells of society are ill of violence and are not able to conduct the world, through democracy, towards peacemaking decisions.

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adult and even transmitters of high values that will make it possible the dream of Peace. In the first chapter we will have the dreadful panorama of our socio-political circumstances that are far away from peace. In the second chapter we will study the phenomena of peace in its different aspects: psychological and sociological aspects.

In the third chapter we will study the systematic transmission of culture through education and its problems in the fourth chapter, the non-systematic transmission of cultural values through art, literature and specially poetry. In the fifth chapter we will develop the importance of a literature and a culture of peace.

## **2. Global Society**

*“Postmodern World” by María Cristina Azcona. First Prize in Caddan Poetry Contest 1998*

*Today the world is fashionable.  
A fashionable world.  
(The modern hell).  
Girls are starving, pushing up  
Themselves to death.  
(With their extremely narrow legs).*

*Human brains are becoming smaller  
(Two sizes smaller).  
They are going faster than  
Their own rollers.*

*There are some children working  
Just like slaves...nobody cares.  
Virtue? Quietly has gone.  
Love? is a virtual love.  
Society? lost in lonely dirty thoughts..*

*Anybody looks for Prudence  
Through this outrageous days.  
A chimpanzee is looking to its reflect  
Into a mirror...  
Its face is red in shame...*

*Please, world... just stop and think!  
Amend the rout and maybe you will find  
Peace*

### **2.1. The violent circumstances**

Since the events of 9-11, the world has changed. Every person, every city in the world has become aware of a new circumstance in human life: Insecurity. The fear of a terrorist attack is the fact that has broken the weak crystal of that sensation of

tranquillity, which in the past, at least an important sector of occidental society felt almost daily.

Nevertheless, the great troubles were there, hidden but alive, since much time before those events started to be one of our worst nightmares. Since industrialization was born, the human being began to give great importance to economic welfare, over other values. Comfort, speed in the travels and communications, to name only two particularities of post-modern life, seem to be more relevant than nothing else. Far from ethics, science is experiencing with human embryos just as if those embryos were rats. Remember when Adolph Hitler said something terrible about rats...What happened after that? So, the pendulum is giving a new chance to the human being to destroy his brother, once again.

Far from terrorism, which is undoubtedly an enemy of peace in Earth, war is not here since 9-11, but since always, because hunger of power and hunger of space or resources, has always been a human desire, and not always he has thought about the consequences for others. Is it possible to live in peace? Surely yes, since we are able to see civilized societies grow peacefully leaving the other to live peacefully too.

In fact, there are complex causes of violence and insecurity, and not a unique situation, like a terrorist attack here or there. Strike in other country is being defended as an option to end insecurity from a worldwide perspective, and this is a terrible enemy of peace, just as terrorism is. Hegemonic countries are trying to convince us of this maquiavelic alternative, which real intention is surely not only to end terrorism, but to take the resources that other countries have and they need. The industrialization needs resources like petroleum that are not endless, so war is used as a way of obtaining that rich material, what in Latin America is called “the black gold”. Terrorists are not psychotic individuals but the result of hate and thirst of revenge. They have seen the bodies of their relatives spread everywhere in their countries and have grown with this dreadful sensation of being massacred for economic and egotistic purposes. Terrorists are emergent activists of a multitude of persons who hate occidental development represented in the Trade Centre, for example.

Psychology of groups teaches us that aggressive individuals act what they feel is the profound desire of all their companions, of the entire group. The group inducts the aggressive reaction with a monotonous but effective dropping of hate. The poison of hate.

In Latin America, in conformism of the unoccupied workers produce violent attacks against edifices of the government, attacks to routes, hypermarkets and the home of the functionaries suspected of corruption. Once again, a secret abhorrence makes tension grow and grow till some excited activists decide that “the day has come” to destroy an edifice.

Also delinquency in Brazil, Argentina and other Latin-American countries is being increased day by day. Kidnapping, murder and violations are each day more destructive and sanguinary. The causes are in great amount found at the lack of education, the lack of a normal family in early ages, and the bad companies at the institutions for delinquents in early ages. The vicious circle of delinquency starts in a precarious house,

with an absent father and a single mother, in the middle of a terrible neighbourhood where human life is not a value. The kid begins to steal, the girl to be a whore and on time, they go to jail to learn more and more how to be a bad person. When they go out, they are ready to be an excellent delinquent and a non-recoverable citizen. The vicious circle of delinquency is completed when corrupted functionaries steal the money that comes from taxes giving a bad example to an ill society where values are perverted and the most clever person is that who steals better.

## **2.2. Ethics**

The abyss between rich and poor countries has increased its depth, the same occurs between rich and poor sectors of the population, at poorest countries, especially in Latin American. This situation creates social stress and resentment against rich countries, because population believes that rich countries influence the FMI (International Monetary Found) against their interests. This conviction develops hate towards determinate nations and social groups. The lack of education and labour opportunities complicate the reasoning of details referred to these concepts, transforming the ideas in rudimentary ideologies and prejudices. The radicalisation of the political concepts is the basis to perverse political leaders whose unique interest is to detent power through demagogy, in non-developed countries.

There is a lack of ethics in every section of society, from a worldwide perspective.

Moral values are distorted and sustained on philosophical principles like materialism, hedonism, individualism and positivism.

I use these terms in the following meaning:

Materialism is the tendency to pursue material goods without any care for human rights.

Hedonism is the tendency to pursue pleasure over spiritual fulfillment.

Individualism is the tendency to pursue selfish objectives, without any care for social welfare.

Positivism is the tendency to pursue success, even if it produces pain for others.

## **2.3. The rhythm of life**

In the part of society that enjoys a better quality of life, the rhythm of life has become hasty and superficial. There is no time to meditation or considerations. Human relations are more and more instant and cold-minded. There is a predomination of single persons living alone in small apartments into crowded cities, like Buenos Aires. From this perspective, there is no time to moral judgments and life starts to become egotistic and cynical. Scientific advances are so rapid that there is no time for reflection on ethics, like bio ethics.

## **2.4. The chaos of information versus critical thought**

Globalisation of information is a great advance, comparable to Guttenberg invention, but specially youngsters are in danger to loose critical thought and simply swallow information from everywhere, without guide or consideration on moral statements. This situation in poorer groups, creates a situation of impoverish in their critic thought and

they go from TV screens full of violence to PC screens full of indiscriminate chat, easily consumed pornography and unscrupulous publicity.

## 2.5. Social Victims

- Women who, in a huge lack of knowledge, use industrial silicone instead of the good one, to insert in their breasts, because is cheaper. And then, they realize there is no cure for the consequences.
- Babies of the Poverty, born from single teen-age mothers, who are sexually aroused sooner and sooner, thanks to a Media invaded by pornography.
- Women executed to death only because they have been unfaithful to their husbands, in the name of the Law.
- Victims of terrorism.
- Children starving to death because the governments of their countries have dilapidated the common richness in their own benefit.
- Refugees from war, who die trying to escape from inferno, looking for horizons of freedom.
- Millions that are born and grow and get old, and die, without a miserable opportunity of a dignified job in countries where destiny is written by human hands.
- People who are discriminated by the colour of the skin, or because of their religious believe or even by their IQ measurement.

The list is interminable.

## 2.6. Globalisation of Hate

Paradoxically, globalisation is a great progress, in the sense of technique but progress is not global, in the sense of equal opportunities.

Mass media progress allows us to take notice of people suffering in other places. And their beseeching eyes deeply excavate in our sensitiveness. . Their right to study, to be well fed or to be protected from brutality is truthfully denied to them. There are children growing with envy of other children. They also see in their TV screens, because of progress, how others can enjoy life, while they are submerged into the hollow of times. They claim for justice but no one answers...and without any future at sight, they conceal their dissatisfaction under the mask of unbelievable philosophies full of Evil. Of course, they don't have the right to transform their frustration into violence, but it has occurred in front of our eyes.

There is an entire generation that hate progress because they guilt it on their unhappiness. Ignorance is mother of Brutality and Frustration is mother of Hate. So, how can we be secure if we globalise violence? There must be a way out of this situation.

The renovation of educational system in order to established, recognized values like Goodness, Justice, Honesty, Integrity, Truth, Honour and Heroism.

Overhauled laws, updated ideas, and a new concept of social justice could be studied. Human Rights are enough forgotten during this era of selfishness and acquisitiveness.

Since pre-historical times our priority has been peace. A lovely fire and the old ones joined around the flames, with the children making familiar noises. Future went through, the years passed and children grew. Then, again and again up today. Nevertheless, today we are able to see new light philosophies and the damage that confer to young people upon submerging them in a fashionable self-centred style of living. No more families around the fire or noisy kids owning the neighbourhood. Everyone is occupied in his own desperation. “Panic attack” is the modern name to the Nausea of Sartre’s Existentialism. “I have the right to be happy” says a man, and goes far away from his wife and five children. Then, when these children grow full of hate and finish their travel in the drug paradise, their father will say: “What happened? I’m so surprised!” Individualism is the most direct route to depression. Consumism is not other thing than eating the bread of someone else before he notices. Teresa de Calcutta once said: “Don’t invite me to dinner...with one hundred dollars I can feed a person for a month”.

Tragic times are these, and they are, in a roundabout way, the result of human rights depreciation. These circumstances are somehow connected with heartless superficiality of the generation of the Third Millennium. They are not producers of the phenomenon but surely they are not helping to resolve the dilemma.

## **2.7. Starvation**

In this era, we are arriving to an awful suspicion: food and water will not be enough to maintain an exploding population. In front of our eyes, starvation is killing hundreds and even millions of souls. Their right to live begins in their right to eat. Corruption is installed in the government of their countries. The population sometimes does not hear or see anything. Citizens walk at their side without a single word. The lattice of inconsiderateness hurts more than the knife of hunger. Shamelessly, there are not many corporations taking the compromise to effectively save a particular starving child

## **2.8. Post-modern Family**

Certainly, nobody is enough concerned in these days about children right to live with both parents. In opposition, everybody cares about their own right to do whatever they want. Post-modern family is a new model of family constructed as a juxtaposition of kids from there and there. Is a very amusing way of living, but...what happens inside the brain and heart of these boys and girls?

Family is the basic cell of society. So, what will happen to a society where more than the half does not live into a familiar group? Nobody knows yet.

## **2.9. Child abuse**

*“Family Abuse” by María Cristina Azcona*

*Beauty in moonlight.  
Beauty in monster sight.*

*Satan and the angel, face to face.  
Satanic face.  
(Fire, desire, fire, desire).  
Truly ice, in the eyes.*

*(Fire, desire, fire, desire).  
Truly ice, in the eyes.*

*Forced, chilled, frozen care for the child.  
Wild, mild, cruel sweetness in the glance.*

*Candy, toys are dancing with the demon.  
Clumsy toy grows on cloudy days.  
Clumsiness is growing  
this morning  
through an evil dance  
at moonlight.  
(glance, dance, glance)*

*Nobody is receiving messages today  
from Baby.  
baby is being abused,  
being abused,  
being abused.*

Children are the seed of the future, but we are destroying their growth since the very moment we denied to accept their lack of opportunities as our own fault. All of us, earth habitants, have a compromise with them. We are the silenced witnesses of abuse. Exploitation is not only made while a child is used in a pornographic film. Abuse is also made when a child is working in the streets under our eyes. In Latin America is very common to see boys and girls in their early adolescence, being prostituted for the benefit of others. Poverty is the general cause of this horrible situation, although they are exploited by perverse delinquents.

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[This is the first book of social poetry published ever in Argentina. It includes 10 drawings by the author who also made the cover art. Its verses portrait the poverty of the population in Latin America and constitutes a testimony and moral criticize of Argentinean plight. The book is the result of a grant included in the First Prize in Poetry that the author gained in Caddan’s contest of poetry 1998. The English version of this book, by the same author, is still unpublished although the poems have been partially published in many literary journals and anthologies from India and USA. The book is actually at all the Internet libraries]

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[This is the second book of poetry by Azcona. It includes images of oil paintings by the author. The introduction is a short essay on post modern philosophies. Also there are quotes and aphorisms about the same theme. There are ecological, social, lyrical and philosophical poems about the problems of post modern times.

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[This is the first novel by Azcona. The novel has been inspired in the sociological characters, stereotypes and archetypes of post modern Argentinean society, findable at the two books of poetry by the same author. The book is substantially impregnated by the spirit of respect towards human rights through the defense of family rights and children rights, although the story is a fiction. The book is a sample of the communication of high human values through literary work in prose].

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[This website contains the writing and biographies of the most important contemporary bilingual and multilingual poets and writers. Homepage has a link to the best peace poets and Peace personalities].

### **Biographical Sketch**

**María Cristina Azcona** (LCP, LPC) is an internationally published novelist and poetess. She is a bilingual writer and editor. She has received two university degrees in: Educational Psychology and Family Counselling, one in Argentina and the other in Spain. Since then, she works as a Psychotherapist in Buenos Aires.

She was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1952. She obtained her title as a Teacher in 1968, in English and Spanish.

She received her university degree (LCP) as Educational Psychologist in 1975.

In 1977 she married Ernesto Castellano and had two children. Her daughter is nowadays a lawyer and bilingual writer. Her son is a Computing Systems expert, and is still studying at the University.

In 1998 she won First Prize in poetry at one of the most important contests of her country, organized by the Argentine Centre for Development of New Authors, (C.A.D.D.A.N.). Since that moment she has had published four printed books in Argentina, and has participated in many international anthologies around

the world, especially at USA, India, Jordan and Spain. Her work is also known in Algeria, Pakistan and Chile.

In 1999 she obtained her second university degree in Family Counseling (LPC) in University of Navarra, Spain.

María Cristina Azcona is permanently consulted about Education and Literature for Peace . Recently she became Director in Argentina for IFLAC, International Forum for Literature and Culture of Peace.

During the last five years she has been gaining increasing recognition and international awards, not only because of her social poetry and peace poetry, written originally in English and Spanish by the author, but also because of her fulltime dedication to the promotion and diffusion of the work by international personalities for peace, through her non profit bilingual websites.

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