The Role of Arts in Peace Education

Kyoko Okumoto

平和教育における芸術の役割

奧 本 京 子

Abstract

We must not forget to study Peace Education from the field of arts (including literature) along with politics, international relations, economics, law studies, history, defence and security, psychology, and conflict resolution. The modern society we live in values how convenient and technologically advanced our lives are, but not how much we enjoy arts, because arts are regarded as an extravagance in some ways. However, we confront a lot of cases of social and structural violence in this society recently, so I believe that we should bring the power of arts in the field of Peace Education, since the power of arts teaches, heals and encourages humanity. To promote true peace, Peace Education through Arts must be available to all generations in different situations.

Key words: Peace Education through Arts (PETA), power, arts, literature

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抄 錄

平和教育を考える時、政治学、国際関係論、経済学、法学、歴史学、防衛論、心理学、紛争解決論などの様々な分野からアプローチすることも大切だが、もう一つ忘れてはならないのは、（文学を含む）芸術からのアプローチである。便利さを享受し、競争・情報社会になった現在、芸術という一種贅沢品であるかのごとく、ある程度の生活レベルを達成した者のみが、楽しむことを許されているもののように認識されている。いろいろな社会的・構造的暴力が目立つ今、特に平和教育の現場においては、芸術の力を軽視せず、その役割を考察すべきである。またその対象も、学校教育だけでなく広い世代の、様々な境遇の人々に、応じることの出来るものでなくてはならない。

キーワード：芸術平和教育、力、芸術、文学

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Introduction: Possibilities of Arts to Heal, Encourage and Nourish in Peace Education

There has been a discussion lately about the need for education to raise people's vision, compassion and imagination. We see and hear so many violent incidents that it must be clear to us that many people lack those qualities. As a person who is involved with education, I would like to see the possibilities of solving this modern issue. I believe that through materials from the field of arts including literature, paintings, music, and theatre, education can be enriched, and the power of arts will be understood as a necessary civilizing influence. Peace Education needs the help from the field of arts.

In the book titled Working for Peace: A Handbook of Practical Psychology and Other Tools, the authors discuss the possibilities of arts in Peace Education. Ingrid Rogers believes in “creativity” (228) that all people have and that it should be “awakened” (228) by music, drama, visual arts and crafts. Marian Philbin also insists on the power of music as an “Instrument of Peace” (232). Lauren Friesen writes, “While drama is an art form and is often judged on its artistic merits, it can also be useful as a means to educate about peace” (236), and the key “may lie in the power of drama's effects” (236), and finally, Marianne Philbin again examines creative arts projects and organisations including exhibitions, billboards, quilting projects, the ribbon, radio programs, poster and essay contests, US-USSR reconciliation projects (the article was written in 1985), and other projects such as dances, art auctions, peace fairs, poetry readings, film nights, theatrical presentations, and festivals (241 - 245).

This article is to search for the approaches to Peace Education in the light of the field of arts by finding the power within various art forms. First, I try to state what arts and their power are according to some artists' definitions. Second, by seeing exemplary workshops, the possible use of the healing and encouraging power of arts in the world will be introduced. Third, I give a thought to possibilities of the use of literature which is one of the art forms. Last, I suggest the necessity of Peace Education through Arts (PETA), and try to persuade why, where and for whom we need to use arts in order to grow peace by education.

The Power of Arts: What Are Arts?

First of all, the arts I mean here are anything which uses or expresses human emotions and nature with artistic media or instruments, such as painting brushes, paint, musical instruments, dramatic gestures and words. It is not important to draw a line between “sophisticated” arts and “primitive” arts. It can be said that “authoritative” arts which are approved by well-known critics are the “sophisticated” arts, but I also
find beauty and power in other types of arts which are created by the unknowns. That is because some “primitive” arts, for example, what children would draw, can be powerful and useful for Peace Education that I am discussing here. It can be also claimed that there are two kinds of arts, one produced by professionals, and the other by amateurs. However, here as well, I do not see the necessity of separation because for the purpose I use arts, the power and the beauty do matter, not the social reputation.

What matters, therefore, is the power of arts, and the power can be useful for Peace Education. By studying numerous examples of arts to heal, to encourage, and to teach, I hope to find a common factor of each art mode which makes it powerful enough to challenge the purpose of educating people toward peace. Some artists actually define the power of arts. For example, the western-style painter, Koji Kinutani says paintings have the character to point out and to demonstrate all of human lives, past and present, and to expose the importance of being and dignity, according to the interview. Tonomonbu Imamichi also analyses that arts not only awaken our spirits to realise their important value and give us the hope to live, but also teach us positively the obligation “how we should live our lives” (56). A poet, Shuntaro Tanikawa also believes that modern poetry should be based more on emotions and expressed with physical voices, bodies, and actual human lives; that means, poetry should go back to what it used to be at the birth of poetry itself. According to his words, it is important to “understand” the meanings of poetry, but we must “feel” and “experience” it first of all. What all of the artists above insist is that we should trust in the power of the arts. The arts do teach us the reality of human emotions, passions, and lives, and they also encourage us by experiencing them. Arts bring out the nature of humanity and the core or essences of human beings.

Moreover, Juan Goytisolo, a writer born in Barcelona, insists on the positive power of arts and artists. In his book, Saraeno Noto (originally titled as Cuaderno de Sarajevo, Anotaciones de un viaje a la barbarie), he reports the actual situation of the conflict in Sarajevo in summer 1993. There he meets Susan Sontag, another well-known writer and a critic from the United States of America, and writes about her activity in Sarajevo. She was staying there to direct a theatrical production of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot only with candle lights at a small theatre in the besieged Sarajevo. Goytisolo describes this activity as “a desperate cry and defence of ‘civilization,’ ‘tolerance’ and ‘culture’ against ‘barbarism’ which had been dominating the area at the time” (translation mine 4). Here what Goytisolo is doing is to condemn harshly “the uncaring modern intellectuals and artists” (translation mine 108), and sees the most terrible situation is not only the conflict itself, but even more the reality that arts are not using their positive power at all. That is, he is anxious about many people who are involved
with arts in many ways because he only finds in those people powerlessness, resignation, and disdainfulness about the role that arts can play and their possibilities. This proves that, along with Sontag, Goytisolo is an artist who believes in the power of arts and literature to change the situations better and to create nicer societies. His words convince us that arts including literature have the power to achieve, or at least to challenge to, peace in this cruel and savage world.

Examples of Movements and Workshops, Which Use the Power of Arts

When finding the power among different forms of arts, it could be one of the helpful approaches to see the characters of rather “primitive” forms of arts. They should not necessarily be “sophisticated”, but are of obviously powerful artistic manifestation. Those types can be found in forms of workshops for healing wounded hearts, for example. Asahi Shimbun reports the international conferences in Kobe and Osaka in November 1997, and questions, “How Far Can Arts Heal People?” (translation mine). In the field of medical care and welfare, the power of arts is being focused, and especially in Japan experiments along these lines have been started quite recently. “Tanpopo no Ie [Home of Dandelions]” is a good example of such an organisation in Nara, and the chief director of the institute, Yasuo Harima, is trying to examine the effects of arts in medical treatment and welfare.

Also, in Kobe, according to Asahi Shimbun, an article entitled “Cheer Up, Wounded Souls!” (translation mine) writes that some artists who once felt hopeless and overwhelmed started lately their activities using their own styles of arts, and now they try to be a part of the movement of recovering from the Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake in 1995. A dramatist, Hiroyuki Naito, encourages Kobe and himself through drama. An architect, Tadao Ando calls for sculptures by foreign sculptors. A writer, Seiichi Morimura, writes lyrics to a composer, Shinichiro Ikenabe’s music, believing that “if we use music in a correct way, we can cheer up wounded hearts” (translation mine). An art group called “Permanent City” consisted of university students of art tries to preserve the “Kobe no Kabé [Kobe Wall]” which survived the earthquake, and is now to them a symbol of encouragement, so they perform in front of the wall. This whole movement of artists teaches us the possibilities of using arts to heal and to encourage people.

Another example is, as NHK reports, a Jewish lady’s activity for Palestinian children under Israeli occupation. Arna Hamis is The Right Livelihood Award winner in 1993, which is also called an “Alternative Nobel Prize.” She was born as a Jew, but devoted the latter half of her life to Palestinian children under Israeli occupation. Of course, it is an unusual thing for Jewish people to stand on the Palestinian side, but
since she believed that she had to be on the weakest side, she wanted to work for the very victims of the situation, and in this situation, they happened to be children in the refugee camps. They are the people who are dispersed from their homelands. According to the programme, Palestine's population is 50,000 altogether, but one fifth of them is categorised as Palestinian refugees. Moreover, when the famous movement among Palestinians called Intifada started in December 1987, children in the streets and in the refugee camps inevitably joined this stone-throwing protests. Naturally, when they are surrounded by such violence, they are quite often exposed to experiences such as that their close families and friends get killed or wounded because conflicts, fights, murders, and Israeli army are surrounding them all the time. The programme reports that a half of the children from six to twelve years old in the refugee camps have been beaten by a group of soldiers more than once.

In these circumstances, children naturally lose their sense of security, and especially when the regular schools are closed, they feel more vulnerable because there is no place for them to rely on and to protect their self-esteem. Kids get irritated and frightened because they have nothing to do during both day and night, and eventually start to devote themselves to violence such as the Intifada movement. Arna used methods including paintings, and had children draw pictures. She also had children use clay to make some figures. In the beginning of the movement, nobody offered any shelters or rooms, so she and her refugee children started the activities in the streets. Kids play “Intifada” which is a game among children, according to the programme, during which Palestinian kids attack a playmate who pretends to be an Israeli soldier with a gun, and they win over the soldier at the end. Arna believed that children, instead of playing such a violent game, should have more interesting things to do. She tried to find alternative movements for the children instead of the Intifada movement. She died at the age of sixty-five in 1995, and now her son, Juliano, an actor active in Israel, is taking over her activities. Although there is much less Intifada protest now, the children there still have complicated problems, and they do need this kind of activities. As an actor, he uses the method called “psycho drama.” This helps kids to express themselves in a positive way, he explains.

The refugee children in the camps are oppressed by politics and the environment, physically restricted, and cannot go out of Palestine under Israeli occupation. They are oppressed by the grown-ups’ business, and they do not have any place to acquire new knowledge and to discuss with classmates. There is no place where people would tell them that they are remarkable in some points, or where they can raise their confidence as they grow up. That is because they eventually lose their self-respect, and they would lack imagination which should be developed throughout the whole educational system.
Arna and Juliano are giving opportunities to the children to have peaceful alternatives, to express themselves, and eventually to establish their positive identities. Those chances are given in art forms, such as paintings, playing with clay, and drama. Kids who were born in the refugee camps and then recovering from such conditions by Arna and Juliano's therapeutic trials say that they were not happy throwing stones during the Intifada, and now are happy to find an alternative. By expressing themselves in dramas and paintings, they bring back their freedom as a child, or even as a human, where they can be freed from all the oppressions which surround them. They find self-awareness as human beings, so that they do not have to devote themselves to violent acts any more.

The next example is taken place in Croatia, one of the republics which became independent from the former Yugoslavia. In another NHK programme, a Japanese painter Taiji Harada visited painter-friends in Croatia after the major conflict in 1996. There he saw the power of paintings on children’s minds. Children who are dispersed from their homelands, who lost their parents and friends, and who suffered from the violence of war, come to a small studio in Zagreb where NGO workers hold workshops. The process of a workshop is as follows. Instructors explain to the children that because they have been through really tough experiences, it will help them if they express their feelings of anger on a sheet of paper. They are allowed to use watercolours and other materials such as newspapers to create some figures on the paper. In the programme, a girl from Vukovar then drew something like a fire on the paper with red-colour and created something with old newspapers, saying that she really needed stronger red to express her angry feelings. The next process takes place with comfortable music, and instructors let the children have some time to reflect upon what they expressed earlier, during which some children shed some drops of tears. Last, NGO workers tell them that they have already spat out their anger, so no negative feelings are left in them, and what is left in their hearts is only nice and positive feelings. The children, then, have a chance to express love and peace on a bigger sheet of paper with the classmates. In such a co-operative activity, they draw pictures of heart-shapes, doves, and people living happily.

One of such non-governmental organisations is named “Bedem ljubavi-Mothers for Peace” founded in Croatia in 1991. Josipa Milas-Matutinović, the first president of the organisation, writes in her book that the beginning of this independent Croatian peace movement was to “enforce the return of sons who found themselves to be soldiers in the Yugoslav Federal Army who were used for the aggression against their own families, people and country” (147). According to Milas-Matutinović:

Women kidnapped thousands of young men from the Yugoslav Federal Army
"Mothers" also "help to secure direct and continuous assistance and psychosocial support for the victims of war especially children and women, displaced people, refugees and invalids" (149), among which is to hold children's workshops similar to what I explained earlier. Here as well, the power of arts, especially of paintings, is used to heal wounded hearts.

One last example is called "Feeling Arts." It is an attempt by a modern artist living in Osaka, Japan. The artist, Yoshihiro Kitamura, creates works using 140cm × 240cm canvases with bokuju (China ink), soil, gold powder, and acrylic colours. He then illuminates his works with red, blue, yellow, green and plain lights, changing the amount of each light. Also, music plays an important role while showing the works with lights. Performances are joined with synthesiser-music, the ocarina, the sho (a traditional Japanese court musical instrument), the piano, the tsugaru-shamisen (Japanese guitar), the western flute or guitar. Sometimes the performance is held with literature-reading as well. Audiences experience the change of lights and colours on his works along with music. Reflection on each small part on the works move, and light and darkness, shallowness and profundness, and different visions at different times give audiences various kinds of images. Since the works themselves are produced with natural resources, the visions are comfortable for audiences.

According to Kitamura, some audiences in the past had the images of being inside of mother's womb, of the sunlight through the trees in the woods, of the earth which is seen from the outer space, and also of the childhood and hometowns while watching the performances. In other words, they at the same time draw those images on the canvases in their minds. In this process, audiences try not to examine what is happening actually on the canvas, but they are asked to relax and observe the space between the canvas and themselves. By doing so, they can have their own images created in the space, reflect on themselves, bring out their feelings inside them, and feel secure by the comfortable music and lights. This process also calls for hopes for living and natural healing power. For example, a person who is a victim of the Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake and now lives in a "Kasetsu Jutaku [temporary house]" in Kobe says that when purple, red and pink lights illuminate the canvas, it reminds him of the scene on January 17th, 1995. He feels the pain again, but by reflecting on the painful memory in his mind, he recovers gradually from the trauma. The healing power definitely exists...
here at least for him. Kitamura and his team give performances at many different places. They visit and perform at an institute for patients of muscular dystrophy, a juvenile reformatory, an institute for the heavily-physically-and-mentally-challenged children, hospitals, hospices, a group of home-caring, and also local auditoriums for ordinary citizens.

The five examples of arts I presented above are paintings, music, drama, sculptures and creative arts using artistic works, lights and music. The first example is of the healthcare where people use ordinary patients’ manifested arts, and most of which presumably are not sophisticated types of arts because they are not usually professional. The second example of the movement is mainly of famous artists. The third and the fourth are rather primitive types of arts because they are based on children’s simple paintings or simple drama works. The fifth example is more sophisticated and it uses the combination of different artistic factors. Whether it is primitive or sophisticated, well-known or unknown, the core of arts always exists within each of the activities; that is, the power of arts, which is the most natural and essential being of arts, works in some ways on people and it has the healing and encouraging power.

They also may be called “art therapy” to a certain extent. A definition of art therapy can be stated as follows according to Caroline Case and Tessa Dalley:

Art therapy involves the use of different art media through which a patient can express and work through the issues and concerns that have brought him or her into therapy. The therapist and client are in partnership in trying to understand the art process and product of the session. For many clients it is easier to relate to the therapist through the art object which, as a personal statement, provides a focus for discussion, analysis and self-evaluation. As it is concrete, it acts as a record of the therapeutic process that cannot be denied, erased or forgotten and offers possibilities for reflection in the future. The transference that develops within the relationship between therapist and client also extends to the art work, giving a valuable ‘third dimension’ or three-way communication. (1)

The definition sounds as if the whole process is too mechanical, but it also proves that the therapy is promoted through different kinds of arts. Art therapy uses the power of arts. A registered art therapist and a licensed psychologist, Judith Aron Rubin remembers that in her childhood both making art works and perceiving of art were of “vital importance” (10) to her as she grew up. As she explains further, “the notion of order in creative activity is intimately and inextricably intertwined with that of freedom” (23). The freedom by making and perceiving arts made her realise personally and professionally that this essential power of arts is definitely indispensable to all people but es-
especially to children.

Bernie Warren also trusts the power of creative arts and uses “the arts (art, music, dance, drama, puppetry, storytelling and so on) and other creative processes to promote health and encourage healing” (xi). The five examples of movements and workshops adapt to the methods of “art therapy” in the way of using artistic factors. My point is that this essential power of arts should be used not only for the healing purpose used in such as art therapy, but also in Peace Education. This will stimulate people’s minds, and develop their sensitivity, imagination and humanity, and surely will raise people's awareness on the necessity of understanding and creating peace.

The Use of Literature in Peace Education

Therefore, it is clear that the power of arts is able to heal, to encourage, and to teach. Why not use literature which is also a form of art, and some other forms of arts as well? Since my personal main concern in arts is literature, now I would like to examine some writers or works of literature in the light of Peace Education.

African American writers are good examples. Gloria Naylor’s The Women of Brewster Place, Linden Hills, Mama Day, and Bailey’s Café, are not only depicting African Americans’ social positions, but revealing African American women’s reality. Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Paule Marshall are no exceptions. They build on the history of African slaves taken from West Africa to the Caribbean islands and to the South of the United States of America. As the discrimination toward African American women is said to be doubly structured, as being African-originated, and as being women, those women writers’ novels powerfully reveal a lot of issues that we can use for Peace Education because they also protest politically in their works. It is quite possible to use these novels in Peace Education, and learn or teach the history of African slaves in the United States of America, for example, and discuss the world-wide issues of discrimination and human rights. Moreover, those works are not only revealing political issues practically or structurally, but also are about universality. Readers understand this fiction (sometimes non-fiction too) convinces them that the texts reveal the reality first of all, about the United States, and secondly, about many other parts of the world.

It is easily understood that political literature can be useful for Peace Education, but can we also use Shakespeare? Shakespeare wrote plays primarily for dramatic purposes, and certainly not for political “protesting.” Nor did Shakespeare give much attention to “healing” or “encouragement.” He was a dramatist and an actor himself. As a theatrical man, what concerned him primarily was how his plays would have been accepted by the audiences including the ordinary citizens of London but also Queen
Elizabeth I, King James I, and the aristocrats. Of course, it is well-known that Shakespeare wrote sonnets and some plays to flatter his patrons or the queen, but compared to the African American writers I introduced above, his works are not political in the same sense because they are not to “change” people’s awareness of their societies. I define “political works” as those that are intended to give people a chance to think about social (and private which is more structural) problems.

Therefore, in considering the possibilities of education of human rights and discrimination using Shakespeare’s plays, there will not be so much interest, but we should not ignore that there are some factors in this perspective as well. Othello and The Merchant of Venice are famous plays where discrimination issues are strongly concerned. The Taming of the Shrew and Much Ado about Nothing will give good chances to discuss women’s talents, roles and femininity. The Tempest will be re-examined from the post-colonial perspective. Moreover, in Romeo and Juliet, people would have an opportunity to see how violence and darkness are illustrated by Shakespeare’s rich language, in contrast with the imagery of light and Romeo and Juliet’s love and passion. Furthermore, in a way, Romeo can be said to be a loser that could not continue his non-violent ideas.

No matter what type of literature you choose, you will find an approach from the political perspective examined above. On the other hand, we are still attracted by Shakespeare’s plays at the end of the twentieth century though not necessarily from the same social and political perspective. Apart from the possibilities of using literature in the light of “human rights,” “feminism” or “discrimination,” we still find other possibilities in those literatures. That is, not only political protests, but also the beauty and the power of literary works. Arts are not journalistic writings. Arts are not necessarily created primarily for protesting. If they are just for the sake of telling people about the cruel situations of African Americans, they just write historical criticism. Arts add more onto this. I definitely put both Shakespeare’s plays and African American works in the category of arts because they have, as Kinutani defined, “the character to point out and to demonstrate all of human lives, past and present, and to expose the importance of being and dignity,” and we can, accordingly to Tanikawa, “feel” and “experience” them by being taught “the reality of human emotions, passions, and lives,” and “they also encourage us by experiencing them.” They teach us universal human nature as well as make us understand their political perspectives. In short, arts reveal universal passions, emotions, intellects, and minds. That is why the power in good literary texts can also be used for education of “hearts.”
Why, Where and for Whom Do We Need Peace Education through Arts?

Peace Education can be put into practice in many different ways. We can learn how to bring peace to this world by studying politics, history, economics, psychology and conflict resolution, for example. Politics will teach how human beings negotiate and decide national and international matters. History teaches what people have been doing, from different perspectives hopefully. Economics might give us a clue to solve problems from the financial point of view. Psychology teaches us how racism and sexism are born in human minds, and how people's minds can be developed, controlled, changed, and used. Conflict resolution, moreover, studies how to negotiate to make more peaceful societies.

Now, how can we approach to peace from the field of arts? We live in the world which is filled with conflicts, violence, disasters, distrust, and wars. People are too busy to relax and reflect being surrounded by amazingly advanced information technology. People are gradually and unknowingly being brainwashed that to have the best of convenience is the main purpose of our lives in the modern societies, and are convinced that this convenience is brought to us by more industrialization. In such societies called “civilizations,” arts are regarded as the secondary or the extravagance that only chosen people can enjoy. Imamichi also backs up this point by writing that arts, that are the collection of beautiful factors gathered together artificially are not to be decorations around the human lives, but are to be settled in the centre of our lives and hopes (57). To the extremes, bread first, arts second. A lot of grown-ups believe that to live down-to-earth what we need to teach children are, for example in Japan, five disciplines; which are, Japanese, mathematics, science, social studies, and English. By such principles, children are evaluated on the basis of their abilities in those five subjects, and not so much in others such as music, drawings, or physical education which require the abilities of self-expression.

However, according to the definitions earlier in this paper, arts are the core of human “being” literally, so children especially need to learn these subjects which will bring about motivations for life. If we ignore these points, it would be a great disaster, since we are raising kids with no respect towards arts, and eventually no respects for life. When we look at the present societies, for example in Japan, we cannot neglect the fact that the society contains a lot of cases of juvenile violence, such as murders, thefts, and bullying. Without teaching and learning the human existence, which can be possible through PETA, people would not be able to understand others' feelings, sympathize,
or use imagination for others.

Humanity needs the education for hearts. It should raise people's imagination, vision and compassion, as Hugh Underhill in *Peace Is the Way* persists. Along with studying politics and the history of wars, people must learn together how to "feel" and how to "reflect." An ordinary history course will teach the major events in the human history, and the causes of the events. In the same way, PETA teaches history, but by using some war novels, for example, those novels teach us the historical background of the wars and also teach us to feel and think of human nature. What to learn is what exists behind the stories. *The Sorrow of War* informs you the reality of war and people, but that is not only what we learn in PETA. The most important purpose of the course will be teaching and learning the human emotions and the passions, sorrows and the universal humanity through arts including literature.

Art therapy or healthcare is targeted to mentally-challenged patients or people with wounded hearts. Feeling Arts is for general citizens, including any kind of patients. Peace Education through Arts should be practised by anybody: university students, primary school children, high school students, and also grown-ups. The difference between PETA and the rest is that PETA uses any kind of arts, from nice and pretty type of paintings to literature which exposes the human ugliness and weakness. Not necessarily at schools, but at homes, and after university education, people always or anytime should have the opportunities to benefit from PETA.

**Conclusion**

Peace Education is not only teaching and learning peace by studying politics, economics, international relations, psychology, diplomacy, security and defence issues and conflict resolution. As I have examined, the power of arts also can be a part of Peace Education. The power of arts is to teach, heal, and encourage people about living as human beings. Especially when the movements and workshops which use the power are analysed, it becomes clear that the power actually is effective in giving people opportunities to express themselves, so that they revive themselves again from difficult experiences. We should, at the same time, focus on the importance of arts, not only in the field of art therapy, but also in the field of Peace Education. For example, along with paintings and music, literature can be used in Peace Education. Literature educates and questions people about social and political issues, such as discrimination, ideologies, human rights and the power balance. Literature as an art form, on the other hand, demonstrates the universal human nature as well. Peace Education through Arts should be available to all people, from little children to elderly people, and from different sorts of patients to healthy and ordinary citizens. By PETA, people will be
more attentive to peace, and I believe, truer peace will reside in this world.

Notes


(2) Gloria Naylor is the author of these four fictions, born in New York City in 1950. She also has taught writing and literature at George Washington University, New York University, Boston University, and Cornell University in the United States of America. Her novels are mainly about African American women, but she also depicts human universality.

(3) The Sorrow of War was written by a Vietnamese writer, Bao Ninh, in 1991, originally as Thần Phận Của Tình Yêu, and was translated into many foreign languages.

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