



Tatjana Debeljački vs.

Noris Roberts: Interview

Lawyer, writer, Peace Ambassador, and I also read that you are a designer?

Lawyer: Yes, I'm a lawyer and I've worked in my profession ever since I graduated from college.

It is very difficult to practice law in Venezuela because there is no real impartiality. Everything is very biased and politicized. Justice is not blind; it has eyes and a pointing finger. The scales of justice today are tilted in favor of government supporters.

Judges, in the shadows, impregnate their sentences with atrocious dissonance and allow false statements to strike against the innocent, and therefore they result object of this infamy. The testimony of weaker voices is betrayed and with ruthlessness and are judged with iniquity and not by justice.

Writer: Indeed, I have written since I was as a child. Writing fills me immensely. It gives me peace and I enjoy its magical spell. When inspiration strikes me it is

full of virtue, I exhale each one of my words, which I absorb with hope and excitement. The words know my joys and sorrows and the alpha and omega of my imagination.

Peace Ambassador: It is very arduous and complex to work as a Peace Ambassador in a troubled country, where there is violence, intolerance and political polarization. However, I act according to my convictions and objectives. My work and action, as a messenger and representative of universal peace, is not limited to post comments on websites or sending emails with the logo of Peace Ambassador. I approach neighborhoods where the humble and needy people live, bringing a message of peace mainly to children to whom I read stories and play games with, encouraging activities aimed in a simple way, to lead them to the concepts of tolerance and brotherhood. I also work with and help adults by providing free legal assistance in legal clinics, that I created years ago. In order to carry this out I have the collaboration of other colleagues who share generously, the concept of solidarity, but in a very practical and direct manner. I do not give away clothes or food, but twice a year, at Christmas and Children's Day, I do give children toys, thanks to many people who donate them for that purpose.

Designer: As said in another interview, during a very special moment in my life, in my teens I had cancer, of which I am a survivor. I had to mitigate and forget everything that was happening to me, during that process, and therefore I decided to study fashion design. I confess that I liked very much, because it is a highly creative activity. Even today I design part of my wardrobe.

Can you tell us something about your hometown and growing up?

My hometown is Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, located in a coastal area, in the northeast of the country, surrounded by beautiful beaches, with open, friendly and easy smiling people.

I grew up in a family environment where love, respect and discipline were foremost. As a little girl I laughed a lot and enjoyed playing with my dogs and a

rabbit that my eldest brother gave me. However, reviewing the footsteps of my childhood, there were also times when the hardships of my soul hurt more than those of my heart. Sometimes I felt alone despite being surrounded by many brothers and sisters, because they were older than me, they obviously involved in their own activities. As a little girl I was very sensitive; as a teenager I was very quiet and reserved and sometimes unable to express my feelings. I was lost in my world of dreams and expressed my feelings and thoughts writing stories and poems.

So far, in different languages, 31 video-poems published?

Yes, I'm doing this to promote freedom of expression, to expand the relations between the peoples of the world, to share a joint effort but basically it is intended to convey a message of love, peace, freedom. I am thankful for having the cooperation of many people. Poets, musicians, speakers, translators and video and sound technicians have intervened pro bono in this project to make this come to be. I firmly believe that the world should not have political boundaries, borders or censorship and should raise itself above racism, ideologies, dogmas, prejudices and discrimination. This is my way of putting my grain of salt in a vast ocean full of pain and injustice. I very much enjoy this on going project.

What is your greatest pleasure when you write?

The ability to express myself through writing is the greatest gift that life and God gave me. Writing takes over my emotions. Words suddenly appear, they go through my mind and bloom in a fertile field of my imagination. When I write wonderful things take place in my soul, sensations that walk on the tips of my fingers. The words flutter in my mind and convey me tranquility and appeasement, no matter the topic that arises.

You've been writing since childhood and is it primarily poetry?

Yes, I write from the age of nine. Who lead and encouraged me into the beautiful world of poetry was my father. When he came home from work, he sat me on his legs and recited a poem. That made me extremely happy and in return I would

recite him one that I made up. I soon learned and realized that words were beautiful and at the same time powerful.

I not only write poetry, I have also written short stories and narratives that have not yet been published.

When did you publish your first book and how did success follow later?

In 2002 I published "The Mirror of the Soul", a collection of poems, in a limited edition that was sold privately to gather funds for a healthcare foundation for poverty stricken children. My satisfaction was enormous and continues up to today as I felt that the outcome of this success was the result of many children's smile that I will never forget.

The rest of the time used for writing, reading and listening to music?

Yes, I enjoy all kinds of music and I read everything that comes to hand. When I can I go to the seaside, in late afternoon, or I simply escape into the mountains to be in touch with nature.

Peace Ambassador requires getting much closer to the people and each day brings a different challenge?

Yes, it is a great challenge to live in such a troubled, divided, intolerant and violent country. It is a challenge because of the insecurity and anger that is reflected in its inhabitants. All this is the result of the language, violent actions, and grotesque and disrespectful daily speech that comes from government speakers and the head of state. It is curious and unfortunate since that this situation is much like Orwell's 1984, because while talking of peace and love the government sows division, hatred and violence. Each day does become a challenge and requires getting closer to people, to work harder and find alternatives to achieve the goals I've set. Yet, as difficult as it is, it is important to continue this work.

Say something about your opus, prizes, travels, and friendships?

Opus: I will publish, by the end of the year, another collection of poems titled "Whose fault is it?" which is a connection between injustice and hope. I'm also in the process of writing a literary journal called "Momentos" (Moments) that will probably be released in the first quarter of 2016. Up to now I've written over 1200 poems, numerous short stories and narratives that have not been published yet.

I have participated in anthologies. My work can be seen in literary magazines and much of my work has been widely disseminated on the Internet in various languages. In Italy, several of my poems were used to make songs.

In addition to the video-poems that are in Youtube I have two websites; one is "De Letra en Letra" and the other is "Palabras Pinceladas". Because of technical reasons, these have not been updated, but nonetheless both have part of my work and include poems and short stories published in Spanish, English, French and Italian; there are also sections which other authors have published their poems.

Awards: I have had the honor of receiving numerous awards and I'm very flattered by it. I never intervened or participated in competitions, basically because I never had a need or interest in it. The most recent award has been the Naji Naaman's Literary Prize and was named honorary member of Maison Naaman pour la Culture for my poem "My poetry is" that was sent to this contest, without my knowledge, by a colleague friend. Maybe later on I will take the initiative to intervene more actively in contests or competitions, but now I feel that my greatest reward has been to express my words and thoughts and essentially sharing them with others.

Travel: Before I used to travel a lot but it is now very difficult to leave Venezuela because there is a very strict exchange control and it is very difficult to get airline tickets since many airlines no longer operate in Venezuela. Unfortunately I had to

decline numerous invitations I had from colleagues and friends abroad; christening books, performances, etc. For now I am not attending invitations because of what I explained before. Venezuela has become an open-air prison for most of the population.

Friends: True friends I have few and these have been very good friends for many years now. We are very close. They are at my side when I need them and I'm there for them when they need me. We sometimes get together for lunch and we try to see each other on weekends either to go to the mountains, the beach or just to meet in one of our homes to share a moment. Beside my friends I have many acquaintances and colleagues of whom I have great affection and respect.

How do you manage all that with so much work that you do? Do you have time for yourself?

Time is human being's relentless enemy. So much to do and the hours don't seem to be enough, but I try to organize my activities so that my goals are met. Aside from my professional obligations, my contribution to community affairs as Peace Ambassador, I always keep in mind and am very careful to have time for myself; to write, read, think, and share time with friends.

What inspires you?

What inspires me is what I see, what I feel, what some people radiate. My inspiration usually comes at dawn. The words start falling into my hands and seem they can look at me without having eyes. They vibrate in the walls of my mind; they talk, scream, cry. They raise me to a different mind level; I feel dominated by them, they catch me with a friendly gesture that is woven in silence and without excuses interrupt my sleep.

I envision myself submerged in millions of words that are multiplied, like someone who makes thousands of copies with a photocopier. Words strongly sink between my fingers, and at that moment, in silence, I look at the mirror in my room and think; in that mirror my life or my death can be reflected. Time passes quickly and through my hands thousand of words and stories fall into the field of my

imagination until they glide to my fingertips and eventually are exposed in ink and on a paper.

Is there anything that could pinpoint and tell us about yourself between dreams and reality?

Many real sentences arise and are less credible than those that go through my mind. I think of the unlimited power of the mind that leads us, with particular regularity, to meditate about beautiful and profound things to come and without realizing it, before us, there is starry sky that stretches out its hand and acting like mirror that allows us to be honest, sincere; our soul.

When I was younger and very naive I thought I could change things by writing, without knowing or even imagining the joys and sorrows that I would have sharing my words with friends and other people that were not so friendly.

Death does not trouble me, but agony does. I've never been afraid of anything and least of all of physical suffering, because I've gone through that phase and thoroughly know what it's about. What I never imagined is that my palliative, in face of the reality that I lived, would be writing.

Noris Roberts's career in a few years?

Write, write and write more every day. Later on I want to create an organization or collaborate with UNESCO to work on behalf of the needy and homeless, especially for children and the elderly. There is too much suffering in our world and I want to contribute to help give even a small amount of relief.

What are your plans for creative work in the near future?

My plans for the near future are to publish my next collection of poems, later this year. Secondly, publish my literary journal "Moments" which will probably not be in Venezuela. I also have in mind to publish a novel, together with a script, with the aim of turning it into a movie. For this purpose the main theme, characters and plot have been selected and what I have to do is develop it and bring it into life.

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Thank you Noris, It was a great pleasure talking to you and you are always welcome to our house "Diogen pro culture" magazine.

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