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There is so much ground for conflict between the many opinions that you could expect the worst. But this does not happen: the books coexist peacefully and the readers respect this peace. And there lies the magic of libraries: by definition a library is a place where differences are respected. Except of course, in totalitarian countries where relentless efforts are made to reduce differences through censor and fire.

It is also for this reason that libraries are symbols: symbols of accepting others, the foundation of peace. Being on peaceful terms with your neighbor means you must be able to accept his differences, coming to the library means accepting to rub shoulders with opinions far removed from your own. The Library, in this respect, is a little metaphor of international organizations like the UNO, devoted to dialog and peace: each member country, each delegate knows that in the confines of these walls, respect for one's neighbor is essential if any dialog is to take place. i

c death, r emains very much alive as a symbol of the essence of peace and dialog which I have just evoked. Dag Hammarskjöld was a man of great culture: he had a doctorate in economics but was also passionately interested in literature, music and painting. It seemed that no area of knowledge, from humanities to the sciences, was out of reach of this open-minded and curious-spirited man.

But he also knew, like many others from his generation who partook in the major dramas of the first half of the century, that culture alone could not save

