

3rd International
FESTIVAL OF
PROSE WRITING

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THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PROSE WRITING NOVI SAD, 15-17. 04. 2009

George Konrad (Konrád György), Hungary
Alexander Genis (Александр Александрович Генис), RUSIA/USA
Aleksandar Prokopiev (Александр Прокопиев), FRYOM
Christopher Hope, South Africa/England
Vida Ognjenović, Serbia
Milica Mičić Dimovska, Serbia
László Végel, Serbia
Svetislav Basara, Serbia
Goran Petrović, Serbia

Schedule of Appearances:

Wednesday, 15th April **The Matica srpska Gallery**

13:00 – Festival inauguration and presentation of the 'Milovan Vidaković' Award to George Konrad
18:00 – VIDA OGNJENOVIĆ
19:00 – RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ
20:00 – GEORGE KONRAD

Thursday, 16th April **The auditorium of 'Jovan Jovanović Zmaj' Comprehensive High School**

11:00 – Vida OGNJENOVIĆ, George KONRAD

Memorial Collection of Pavle Beljanski

18:00 – GORAN PETROVIĆ
19:00 – ALEKSANDAR PROKOPIEV
20:30 – ALEKSANDAR GENIS

Friday, 17th April **The auditorium of 'Jovan Jovanović Zmaj' Comprehensive High School**

11:00 – Aleksandar PROKOPIEV
Christopher HOPE
Alexander GENIS

Memorial Collection of Rajko Mamuzić

18:00 – MILICA MIČIĆ DIMOVSKA
19:00 – LÁSZLÓ VÉGEL
20:30 – CHRISTOPHER HOPE

CITY AS A MONUMENT

George Konrad

(The speech delivered at the presentation of honorary doctor titles of the University of Novi Sad to writer and publicist George Konrad, Novi Sad, 24th October 2003)

(...) There are more people in the centre of Novi Sad than Budapest, which I like very much. There are a lot of beautiful women, that's what even an elderly visitor can remark, objectively. As a young author, I was envious in Budapest, with a reason, while reading the magazines in Hungarian from Novi Sad; envious at the relative freedom of thought and expression, which could also be felt in the speech of my friends and colleagues from Novi Sad. In 1970 I liked to spend my time sitting in the tavern of a certain Lajos, where authors of different linguistic expressions communicated with ease and friendliness. In June 1973 I was investigated by the police; this ended up in a court caution and the loss of job, because customs officers managed to catch a dangerous villain: I tried to bring to Novi Sad a sociographic study of my friend Miklós Haraszti entitled *Work on a Chord* to be printed in the literary magazine *Új Symposion*. Together with my friend writer Miklós Meszelyi, from the fee received here, I took a pleasant journey through Belgrade, Sarajevo and Mostar to Dubrovnik, from where we went on to visit Korčula and Split. This was the first time I stepped on the Mediterranean coast. I must admit, back then, it did not even cross my mind that this country of diverse cultures was to fall apart along its extremely fragile ethnic borders. This was over thirty years ago, but I managed to maintain my bond with this city, modestly but successfully, alive. One needs partners for friendships. If you allow me, Ladies and Gentlemen, to, in front of you, express my gratitude to László Végel, Arpad Vicko and Alpar Losonc, who have been intermediaries of my thoughts to the readers and radio listeners here in both spoken and written word, at the same time presenting me with the gifts of their own thoughts and stories. Further, I express my gratitude to the memory of Danilo Kiš, who was close with everyone I have spoken to in this city. Deeply touched, I express my gratitude to the image of Aleksandar Tišma, still alive in our hearts, whose sharp profile under a cap, when I was here last time, still used to emerge at the stairs of the underground passage, like some spirit of the city, my impression being confirmed as I happened to run into him twice more that same day, which led me to the conclusion that he liked wandering around the city. A city belongs to the one who walks its streets.

Svetislav Basara

Svetislav Basara was born on 21st December 1953 in Bajina Bašta.

Published books:

Stories: **Disappearing Stories** (1982); **Peking by Night** (1985); **Phenomena** (stories, 1989); **Lost in a Supermarket** (2008); **Monkey-writing** (2008)

Novels: **Chinese Letter** (1985); **Cracked Mirror** (1986); **The Fuss about Cyclists** (1988, Award of Željezara Sisak); **On the Grail's Trail** (1990); **Mongolian Guidebook** (1992, the Nolit Award); **De bello civili** (1993); **Doomed Land** (1995); **Winter Solstice** (2001); **John B. Malkovich** (2001); **Heart of the Earth** (2004); **The Rise and the Fall of Parkinson's Disease** (2007, the NIN Award, the 'Dereta' Award, the 'Laza Kostić' Award, the Award for the Best Book by a Domestic Author in the Serbian Public Library Network for 2008); **The Diary of Marta Koen** (2008)

Essays: **On the Edge** (1987); **Dark Side of the Moon** (1992); **Virtual Kabala** (1996); **History Tree** (1996); **The Wolf's Lair** (1998); **History Tree** (2008)

Studies: **Looney Tunes** (1997); **Holy Lard** (1998); **The Ideology of Heliocentrism** (1999)

Dramas and screenplays: **Dolce vita**, **Oxymoron**, **Hamlet Remake**, **Good Lord**, **Boomerang**, **New Stradija** (after the motifs of R. Domanović's stories, 2009)



About the novel *Fuss about Cyclists*

The appearance of this novel was considered a kind of cultural, social incident; ideological fire fighters waged a war against the 'Little Brothers of Evangelistic Cyclists of the Rose Cross'. The prosecution is not over yet, but the literary imagination of *The Fuss* has become reality.

Petar Arbutina

We can only safely say that we are now two decades and several reprints of this novel older. The newcomers are yet to start spending the metaphysical time of *The Fuss about Cyclists*. The journey continues.

Miodrag Raičević

This book is actually a story about the moment which never was. This is why it outlives History, insanely giggling over its grave. As Chateaubriand, who seriously suffered from the syndrome of historicity, would say – these are the memories from the other side of History's grave.

Branko Kukić

Twenty years ago, I thought to myself, nothing prepared me for the appearance of *The Fuss about Cyclists*. Basara had already published his first stories and novels then, and in my collection *Shock in the Shed* I published the story 'Svetislav Basara Interviewing Samuel Beckett for Radio Belgrade's Third Programme'. Basara's early novels indicated literary vivaciousness, a postmodernist play with content and form, flowing with absurd - all the features typical of Basara's prose procedure; but nothing indicated the leap, the great soaring invited

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by the publication of the novel which would become even more typical of his prose. After the appearance of *The Fuss about Cyclists*, one can safely say, the Serbian prose has never been the same, just like Basara has never been the same author, just like I have never been the same reader again.

David Albahari

About the novel *Heart of the Earth*

In a series of novels, essays and interviews Svetislav Basara varies the idea that the contemporary world, especially politics, has reached an absolute dead end, and that the heralds of apocalypse are closer and closer, in his ironical-parody-jocular discourse. This, so to say, Basarism has become recognisable even though the author publicly denounces it, and his readers seek it as an affirmation that everything is allowed and possible in a novel. In this construction and deconstruction, mystification and demystification, mixture of speculative and metaphysical, scientific and pseudo-scientific speech, fact and fiction, Basara has gone furthest with his latest novel *Heart of the Earth*.

Milan Živanović

Writing yet another novel true to his narrative poetics which is characterised by a consistency of literary insights in regard to those points of reality where metaphysical thinking meets radical scepticism towards the phenomena of the material world with sometimes simply bizarre events, usually absurd and taken from current reality, Svetislav Basara in the core of this book places a Friedrich Nietzsche's alleged three-month visit to Cyprus in 1882, unknown to history.

Nenad Šaponja

Constructed after the tested model of postmodernist (pseudo)novel, *Heart of the Earth* wears a mask of a non-literary genre – structural elements of a scientific study: forewords (of an anonymous writers, a manuscript finder and a translator), chapters each of which is dealing with a certain 'aspect of the problem' (from a general overview of the mystery of Nietzsche's biography' to the individual discussions of the philosopher's attitude towards God, Wagner, women, followers), numerous contributions (unpublished fragments, letters, a posthumous interview) and an afterword. Historical figures are stripped of everything but their names; everything else is fantasy serving the purpose of an allegoric interpretation of the 20th century.

Vesna Trijić

About the book of stories *Phantom Pain*

All the stories are written as a Rableisian alternative history and make up a seductive mixture of fiction, mystification, esotericism and historical factography where all seems to be an illusion, possible and allowed. Like film disclaimers 'any similarity to real people is coincidental' or, to translate it to the language of literature: mimesis as a prose discourse is Basara's number 1 enemy, so in this collection everything is subjected to doubt, irony, relativism,

trickery. Numerous paradoxes, alogisms and mystifications influence the literary creation of a parallel reality where strictly controlled fantasy intersects with the bizarre phenomena of this world in a punning way. Humour arising from this is a humour of absurd which, although without a comical effect, in its essence functions on the ethical level, defying and relativising authorities, ideologies, submissiveness, scientific seriousness or theoretical rigidity.

Jasmina Vrbavac

About the novel *The Rise and the Fall of Parkinson's Disease*

The winner of the Award of NIN's jury of literary critics for 2006, this novel possesses all the features of the talent, craftsmanship and literary maturity of Svetislav Basara: the mastery of composing fragmentary novel structure; refined, sparkling style, especially in the essay-like parts of the text; the eagerness of reflection and wittiness of conceptual twists, with an unsurpassable sense of black humour and absurd...

Goran Lazičić

Not twenty years after *The Fuss about Cyclists*, Svetislav Basara yielded to the temptation and returned to the place of success! Namely, *The Rise and the Fall of Parkinson's Disease* is in many aspects reminiscent of this almost cult accomplishment of the constantly greatest talent of the contemporary Serbian prose in which an entire reading generation recognised, with certain exaltation, the exemplary and funniest fruit of our postmodernism.

Tihomir Brajović

About the novel *The Diary of Marta Koen*

Svetislav Basara is a distinct figure of our literature in all respects, and his prose requires at least a minimally curious reader of broad education who will not give up at fantastic twists, mosaic-like aggregation of stories, at parody, absurd, irony, juxtaposing incompatible personalities and ideas, but who, on the contrary, will enjoy the unusual mixture of humour and lucidity, following it closely without losing their way in the labyrinths of the manuscript. Fortunately, such readers were many even at the time of *The Cyclists*, which marked a turning point, and their numbers must have been rising since then, unless Basara's proposition about the lack of any sense in these parts is true.

Jasmina Vrbavac

About the drama *New Stradija*

In Svetislav Basara's text, in the acute interpretation brought by the National Theatre ensemble and director Kokan Mladenović, *Stradija* is a historically bordered, gold-plated frame, satirical horizon of our way of life, an ode to the collected and selected national foolishness and silliness, in the spirit of Erasmus of Rotterdam, and Alfred Jarry. Our own Ubuism!

Muharem Pervić

László Végel

László Végel, a prose and dramatic writer, essayist and critic, was born in Srbobran in 1941. His literary career started in 1965 with the publication of his reviews in the cult magazine *Új Symposion*. He has been intensively present on the literary scene of Vojvodinian Hungarians, former Yugoslavia and Serbia ever since. He has collaborated with all prominent literary magazines of the region. After the 1989 social and political changes, he started publishing his books in Hungary and contributing to Hungarian magazines as well. In 2005 a short monograph about Végel's opus entitled *Végel-Symposion*, containing selected reviews of László Végel's works by Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian critics, was released in Budapest. The monograph editor Zoltan Virag states that the literary opus of László Végel is important, among other things, because it synthesises traditions and narrative impulses of Hungarian literature and literary discourses from the former Yugoslav territories. In this respect, László Végel equally belongs to Hungarian literature, but is simultaneously one of the few minority authors who have settled in the circulatory system of Serbian literature. As Aleksandar Tišma wrote, Végel is a prosaist of modern, urbane vocation and he is – according to Péter Eszterházy – a predecessor of Hungarian prose for this very capacity.



Works:

Novels: *Memoirs of a Pimp (Egy makró emlékiratai, 1967)*; *A Course in Passion (A szenvedélyek tanfolyama, 1969)*; *Double Exposition, (Áttün(tet)ések, 1984)*; *The Novi Sad Trilogy – Memoirs of a Pimp, Double Exposition, Ekhard's Ring (Újvidéki trilógia – Egy makró emlékiratai, Áttüntetések, Eckhardt gyűrűje, 1993)*; *Exterritorium (Exteritórium, 2000)*; *Parainesis (Parainézis, 2003)*. Novelette collections: *We Swear, with Our Eyes Full of Tears (Szitkozódunk, de szemünkből könnyek hullanak, 1969)*. Essay collections: *The Challenge of Poem (A vers kihívása, 1975)*; *Abraham's Knife (Ábrahám kése, 1988)*; *Giving up and Surviving (Lemondás és megmaradás, 1992)*; *Wittgenstein's Loom (Wittgenstein szövőszéke, 1996)*; *The Great Central-Eastern-European Feast Enters the Picaresque Novel (A nagy Közép-Kelet-Európai Lakoma bevonul a pikareszk Regénybe, beszély a pikareszk regényről, a story about picaresque novel, 1998)*; *Life on the Edge (Peremvidéki élet, 2000)*;

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Dramatic text collection *Judith* (*Judit*, 1989), and diary notes *Committing Time to Paper, in the Meantime* (*Időírás, időközben*, 2003).

László Végel is an important dramatist; his dramas have been staged in Yugoslav theatres directed by such important directors as Dušan Jovanović, Ljubiša Ristić and Ljubiša Georgievski.

He has received the *Mladost* Award (1969); *Ady Endre* Award (1993); *Nagrada slobodne štampe* (Free Press Award) (1994); *Déry Tibor* Award (1995); *Jelenkor* Award (2000); The Republic of Hungary President's Golden Medal for Literary Work (2000); The Hungarian Book of the Year Award (2001); *Milán Füst* Award for Prose of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2003); *Kosut* Award (2009).

It can be said about Végel that, starting from his habitus, living circumstances, represents a very specific understanding of literature, life and language (...) Tradition of this literature is, surely, Hungarian, and it emerges within the framework of Hungarian literature, but moreover, it is in its nature intercultural, which stems from its historical situation. His opus includes – conscious or not – Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, i.e. 'ex' Yugoslav reality. Different character traits appear in the linguistic layer, in the discourse, in interpretative forms.

Jutka Rudas

The author marks *The Resigned* with a fine melancholic tone, accidentally painted in a bitter tone.

Gregor Mayer

Végel's heroes belong to a generation, which has made its 'works and days' – to use the title of Hesiod's piece – immensely preliminary.

Slobodan Šnajder

Végel, born in 1941, who lives in Novi Sad, was rather unknown in the German speaking area. It is good that this won't be the case in the future.

Michael Martens

[Végel]... doesn't stop at the description of alienation, atmosphere of hopelessness and meaninglessness, characterising many of his predecessors, but defends this feeling vigorously and angrily, even though it lacks a safe orientation, stereotypic solutions...

Aleksandar Tišma

Novi Sad, as a former new foundation, bears a special importance and symbolism for Végel.

Sándor Radnóti

Actually, Végel is a devotee to consistently accepted and suffered life roads which end up, finally, in an absurd world of the hope in hopelessness.

Csaba Utasi

Alexander Alexandrovich Genis

Writer, critic. He was born on 11th February 1953 in Ryazan, but grew up in Riga. After graduating from the Faculty of Philology of the Latvian University in 1976, he moved to the USA, living in New York since 1977. He has worked for Russian emigrants' magazines ('New American' and others). His works have been published in Russia since 1989, and he has been contributing to Radio Freedom (as a commenter and the author of weekly shows for the 'Beyond Barriers' series). He is the author and host of the personal column for the 'New Gazette' and a permanent column in 'Esquire' magazine. He is a member of the Editorial Board of 'Foreign Literature' magazine and a member of the Booker Award Jury (1993), as well as a member of the Academy of the Philological Sciences of the Russian Federation, the laureate of the 'Star' magazine award (1997), etc.

With P. Vail Alexander Genis co-authored six titles: **Contemporary Russian Prose**, **Mother Tongue** (after the recommendation of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation), **Russian Cuisine in Exile**, **The 1960s**, **The World of Soviet Man**, etc.

Since 1990 he has been working alone. The titles **American Alphabet**, **The Tower of Babel**, **Ivan Petrovich Has Died**, **Darkness and Silence**, **Landscapes**, **Clothing** and others have been published as a three-volume edition of collected works **Culturology. Research. Personal** (2002, 2003). In 2004 he published the collection of essays **Sweet Life (Vagrius)**, and in 2006 – a book of culinary voyages **Kolobok**¹ (AST), 2008 – the book **The Zen of Football**

¹ Kolobok – small round bread in folk fairy tales.



and Other Stories (AST) and the volume **Six Fingers (Ko-Libri)**. The collection of philological prose **Special Case** and album **Fantiki** are currently being prepared for print (AST). Since 2004 he has been writing a permanent column for the 'New Gazette'.

Alexander Genis is the author of the text for the documentary film about the Ukrainian Revolution ('Orange Winter', directed by A. Zagdansky).

His works have been translated into English, Japanese, German, French, Italian, Serbian, Hungarian, Latvian and other languages.

Credo

The miracle of literature lies in the fact that it is capable of delivering that inexplicable, inseparable and essential part of a human being to the reader; the part which distinguishes one author from the other. Having exhausted one's curiosity with abstractions, we are not interested in a group of ideas, equal as cards in a deck, but the uniqueness of their sequence, the pattern, which has emerged in the marvellous arrangement of general ideas in a consciousness. Book is a proof which leads literature to its culprit. In a book, the readers search for clues left by the author. It is characterised by authenticity which reveals the presence of reality, yet not reality itself. The clue only indicates that reality has been here. As everybody knows, literature is capable of repetition. What is unique, basically, is the soul residing between the body and the text.

Alexander Genis

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About the author:

Genis has traversed the entire physical world we know of (and the one we don't, as well). The immense curiosity, focused in all directions, leads to Alexander Genis; it is a thirst for reaching the God's design, as if he was the last, almost lonely renaissance figure (...) curious about the world and generous to us, he pioneers to reconnoitre, report, stop for a moment, sit, tell a story and leave on a voyage again.

Tatyana Tolstaya

Genis cuts through the artificial nature that man has built around himself with a pulsating stream of bursts. His energy forces us to forget temporarily that language is a grandson of forced nature, not a real one. And more than that; Genis has positioned himself in such a way to take a look at Russia from America and at America from Russia – over China.

Milorad Pavić

(...) Wandering round the Conglomerate of the USA without any prejudices, noticing great immanent advantages of a country which has had the privilege of constituting ex nihilo, avoiding all the historical mistakes and traps of old Europe, Genis does not hide his amazement at Americana, but he also explores lucidly the rumbling, screaming below the surface, horror of the void the New World was built upon. Or, at least, this is how it seems to an Old World immigrant, coming from the land of Dostoyevsky, no less... But don't fear - Alexander Genis does not suffer from the typical 'Russian writing' diseases, and is not eager to show us that he is on the first name bases with Eternity; instead, he chooses the strategy of a lyrical travel journal writer who attempts to pull together the shards of his impressions and reflections and systematise them in a 'strict' dictionary form (...). There are few editions of *Geopoetika* that are so profoundly 'geopoetical', yet by no means in a doctrinarian way, as this inspiring volume of the Russian immigrant; we are so deeply exhausted by the infamous geopolitics, some are barely alive. Some, yet, not even as much.

Teofil Pančić

(...) Genis earned popularity with our audiences with his philological novel 'Dovlatov and Environment'. The book is not only an intimate narrative about the author and the last generation of the Soviet immigrants in America, gathered around the newspapers and radios, but about the author himself who is hiding behind Dovlatov's 'burly figure'. Genis's writing is palatable, plastic, aphoristic, intended to lure the reader into the world of the author's reflections. 'All my life I have been trying to create the restrained, unpretentious style, through which the reader and the listener adopt the content, without even noticing the way they do it.' The notion of 'secret' is the focal point of Genis's reflections about art.

Ana Otašević

Sasha Genis interprets the character of Sergei Dovlatov through both his soul and his body (called life). Therefore the text he created can be pigeonholed into none of the genre categories known under the names of critique, review, essay, foreword, lyrical biography, study, panegyric, ode. He has satisfied himself with the most sublime, his own genre, called the philological novel. This syntagm is the highest reach of the love for words. Perhaps it originates from culinary art: a smart cook, except the herbs and spices listed in the recipe, adds the most important ingredient to her cooking – love. All for the sake of magic.

Vladislav Bajac

The title *The Tower of Babel* by Russian author Alexander Genis hides several of his books, some of them translated directly from the manuscripts. Genis has reached the highest summits of style, and since his first Serbian publication (six of his books have been published by *Geopoetika* so far) has attracted great interest among the reading audiences in our country. His irresistible humour, the abundance of topics, and the lightness of narration are recognisable traits of all of his essays.

Draginja Ramadanski

George Konrad

George Konrad (Konrád György) was born on 2nd April 1933. He studied literature, sociology and psychology. From 1959 to 1965 he worked as a social worker. In the same period he edited the collected works of Tolstoy and Balzac and published his first essays and journalistic writings.

In 1965 Konrad started working at the scientific department of the Institute for Urbanism. Around that time he started collaborating with sociologist and urban sociology theorist Iván Szelényi. The two co-authored the extensive historical-philosophical study entitled ***The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*** – the police confiscated the manuscript in 1974 brought charges against the authors which was soon abandoned. Szelényi emigrated, while Konrád was practically not allowed to publish anything in Hungary until 1988. He spends the period between 1976 and 1984 mainly abroad on scholarships of different foundations – two years in West Berlin, then in the USA; he travelled around Europe, Australia and America.



George Konrad was one of the leaders of the democratic opposition in one-party Hungary, and one of the founders of the largest liberal party – the Union of Free Democrats. He has received Herder's Award (1983), European Essay Award (1985), The Peace Award of German Publishers and Booksellers (1991), The International Literary Award 'Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša' (1998), Goethe's Memorial Medal (2000), The International Carlo's Award (2001), The Human Rights Award 'Franc Verfel' (2007) and the Jewish Book Council Award (2008). He has received the highest state decorations of Hungary, France and Germany and is an honorary Doctor of the University of Antwerp (1990) and Novi Sad (2003).

From 1990 to 1993 he was president of the International PEN club and between 1997 and 2003 he presided over the German Academy of Arts Berlin-Brandenburg.

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Works:

The Case Worker (A látogató, novel, 1969); **The City Builder** (A városalapító, novel, 1971); **Temptations of Autonomy** (Az autonómia kísértése, essays, 1980); **The Loser** (A cinkos, novel, 1989); **Antipolitics** (Antipolitika, essays, 1989); **A Feast in the Garden** (Kerti mulatság, novel, 1989); **Dragomán és Melinda** (novel, 1989); **At the Navel of Europe** (Európa köldökén, essays, studies, 1990); **The Melancholy of Rebirth** (Az újjászületés melankóliája, essays, articles, studies, 1991); **Stonedial** (Kőóra, novel, 1994); **Awaiting** (Várakozás, essays, articles, 1995). **The Current Listing** (Áramló leltár, essays, articles, 1997); **The Invisible Voice: Meditations on Jewish Themes** (A láthatatlan hang, essays, 1997); **Heritage** (Hagyaték, novel, 1998); **The Yugoslav War** (A jugoszláviai háború, polemics, 1999); **Ready for a Journey** (Útrakészen, essays, articles, 1999); **What Does a Green Frog Know?** (Mit tud a levelibéka, selected essays, 2000); **Leaving Home and Coming Home** (Elutazás és hazatérés, autobiographic novel, 2001); **Solar Eclipse, on a Hill** (Fenn a hegyen napfogyatkozáskor, autobiographic novel, 2003); **A Writer and a City** (Az író és a város, essays, speeches and articles, 2004); **The Sorrow of Roosters** (Kakasok bánata, novel, 2005); **Marvellous Figures** (Csodafigurák, literary portraits, essays 2006); **Pendulum** (Inga, novel, 2008).

www.konradgyorgy.hu

If one was looking for an opus with a remarkable analysis of the experience of history and historised existence in this geo-historical part of the world and this century, then the work of George Konrad is what we must turn to.

Gojko Božović

Leaving Home and Coming Home isn't a book focused on death but life, full of suffered cheerfulness.

Heiko Strech, 'Tagblatt'

Leaving Home and Coming Home is written in a new tone. Quiet, without pathos, almost tender. This new voice has nothing reminiscent of the bitter rage of *The Loser* or the absurd world of *The Case Worker*.

Michael Rohrwasser, 'Literaturen'

Leaving Home and Coming Home is Konrad's linguistically most succinct and most personal book – it fully equals the level of *The Loser* and *The Case Worker*.

Gregor Dotzauer, 'Der Tagesspiegel'

The autobiographical novel *Leaving Home and Coming Home* by the great Hungarian writer and chronicler of Central Europe, an intimate testimony about mass suffering, a piece of prose written with an autobiographical intention but a reach and effect much wider than the challenges of 'a single case' can offer. With no moralistic commentaries and insisting on the naturalistic image of war violence, Konrad lines up the images of sorrow, hunger and death in masterful strokes, while factographically and calmly painting the existential anxieties in the background of war clashes – in the case the 'background' of the main hero and his sister is nothing but a euphemism for a fortunately avoided death on several occasions.

Vladislava Gordić Petković

Freedom as a cause for melancholy? Surely, not for the Americans, who believe that revolution breaks ground for freedom, which then develops everywhere equally. However, freedom for the Hungarians is just a transitional period, filling in the hiatuses between the times of old and new conquerors – the Tatars, the Turks, the Habsburgs, the Germans, the Soviets...

Nick Owchar, 'Los Angeles Times'

Milica
Mičić
Dimovska

Milica Mičić Dimovska was born in 1947 in Novi Sad. She graduated from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, Department of General Literature and Theory of Literature. She has published four short story collections: *Stories about a Woman* (1972), *Acquaintances* (1980); *Defrosting* (1991); *In the Gap* (1998); *Fiancés* (a prose selection, 2003); four novels: *Wraiths* (1987); *The Last Passions of MMS* (1996, 1997, 2003.); *Opacity* (2002); *Refuge* (2005); and a travel journal *Travel Journals* (1999). The title *Acquaintances* has been given the 'Karolj Sirmaji' Award, *Defrosting* received the Andrić Award, *The Last Passions of MMS* has been awarded as many as three prizes: *Nolit*, 'Branko Ćopić' and 'Bora Stanković'. Her stories have been translated into English, Hungarian, Polish, Slovakian, Italian and Swedish. Her works have been included into several anthologies of Serbian prose. Milica Mičić Dimovska lives and works in her hometown.



Milica Mičić Dimovska (...) writes stories about women who are branded by the hidden sin of their genre, about women caught between the demands of their bodies and the opaque enclosed fields of consciousness. She gets under her heroines' skin, better to say their models of living, follows them patiently, unwaveringly, picking their sore spots until they burn, and everything she observes is committed to paper, into the patient's record, leading her character with a firm story-teller's hand into the (deserved) downfall.

Judita Šalgo

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About the book *Opacity*

Opacity is a book written in the tradition of a classical novel; it is an attempt to depict the entire picture of a time which was a turning point and put to the test all the inherited values and traditional ideals of Serbian society. Therefore, although psychologically concretised, the characters of Milica Mičić Dimovska do not strike us as copies of real persons, but as representative literary creations, bearers of psychological and moral characteristics typical of the world they belong to.

Andrijana Marčetić

While in her previous novel (*The Last Passions of MSS*) authentic biographical material is transformed into a dramatically graded and nuanced story from 'within' – from the inside of a restless and melancholic being suffering because there are no more passions and ideals, *Opacity* follows parallel stories of several families and lonely individuals, within a half-a-century timeframe, as observed in a 'rear view mirror'. Namely, the novel *Opacity* envelops life stories of several families compressed through two or three generations, dependent and networked around the national institution *The Serbian Forum* (can be allusion to either the Academy, Matica or the Institute), prone to unscrupulous and mimicking laws and rules of behaviour of the wheels of power.

Aleksandar B. Laković

The story of *Opacity* is mainly told in the third person, including the entire gamut of procedures for describing the state of mind of the characters, while the only parts delivered in the first person singular are those presenting the reflections and the frame of mind of an almost immobile old woman with cataract who does not take an active part in the plot others are involved in. She represents some kind of a key figure of the piece: illness she is the only one physically suffering from can be figuratively diagnosed in others: the blurred vision of reality and a lack of the desire to see it more clearly, being absorbed into one's own obsessions and memories. Yet, the old lady's spiritual sharpness, rather ironically contrasted to the two limitations – cataract and physical isolation – makes even the characters who want to change the world appear naïve in their enthusiasm: she has already seen it all, it has all happened before.

Mirjana Petkov

About the book *Refuge*

Refuge, some freedom allowed, can actually be read as a kind of an 'extended' and discretely polemical epilogue of *The Last Passions of MSS*, so far undoubtedly the most significant narrative accomplishment of Milica Mičić Dimovska. Equally meticulously in regard to style

and occasionally inventively written, especially in those parts dealing with the narrator's internal world and deeply symbolical dreams, her latest novel, on the other hand, depicts modern sober and deserted 'inside' of a romantic illusion upon which the story about the unfinished poetess Milica Stojadinović from Fruška Gora Mountain is mainly based upon.

Tihomir Brajović

Mauriacianly dark and Bernhardianly psychotic, this novel opposes the literary mainstream which underestimates the value of 'story' and characters.

Vesna Trijić

About the book *In the Gap*

The story-telling mastery of M. M. Dimovska at least equals the richness and relativity of her literary content, if it does not outmatch it. Becoming more and more complex, her narrative procedure leaves the impression of an ever growing simplicity. The secret of this magic lies in a full maturity of her original gift, the freshness of inspiration and the power of creative concentration. In regard to form – the field which is better left untouched – it is reflected in several factors: in an imperceptible alternation of narrative perspectives and different types of narrators; in effective and efficient rhetoric proportion between narration and the story; in the inventive and dynamic composition, often dissonant in finales; in the direct nature of story-telling cultivated by oral word, in several tonalities; in an unusual plasticity of the experienced speech.

Marko Paovica

About the book *The Last Passions of MSS*

Delineating new contours of biographical novel as a complex study about a man and creator in time, Dimovska brought the novel of a national charge and tone close to the complex creative orientation of this genre (fewer in our than in foreign literature), while the finale of the book (an amalgam play of despair and eroticism at a graveyard) is constructed as a match to the world's highest reaches in fictional prose, such as Kennedy's studies of losers and people from the social margins (Frankie Falan and Helen in the novel *The Weeds*), accomplices in an equally sacred and dirty ritual of survival. By this radically cleaned stroke, equally dramatic and fresh, Milica Mičić Dimovska announces significant possibilities of new prose explorations.

Tanja Kragujević

Vida Ognjenović

Vida Ognjenović was born in Dubočke near Nikšić, and she was raised and educated in Serbia. She went to primary school in Vrbas and matriculated from comprehensive high school in Sremski Karlovci, later graduating from the Department of General Literature at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade as well as the Department of Directing at the Academy of Theatre, Film and TV in Belgrade.

Although Vida Ognjenović started her postgraduate education at the Sorbonne in Paris, she defended her master's thesis in the field of the Theory and Practice of Directing at the University of Minnesota, USA, on a Fulbright Foundation scholarship (1972).

From 1974 to 1979 she worked as an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. In 1977 Vida Ognjenović was appointed Manager of Drama at the National Theatre in Belgrade, and after her four-year-long mandate she stayed at the same theatre as a permanent director.

As a visiting professor she has taught at the universities of Los Angeles (UCLA, 1981-1982), Chicago (UIC, Columbia College, 1996, 1998 and 2000), and within lecturing tours she has visited on several occasions as a visiting lecturer all more prominent universities of the USA (1985, 1991, 1997, 1999). She is a professor at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad.



Her directing opus includes nearly a hundred theatrical as well as numerous television and radio works, many of which were made after her own texts.

Vida Ognjenović has written 11 dramas, which have been produced and performed a number of times, and have been published in different editions. As a director she has visited a number of theatres throughout former Yugoslavia (Montenegro, Slovenia, Croatia), and has directed theatrical plays outside our country. Her directing repertoire is varied and includes both domestic and foreign classics, as well as modern contemporary dramas and numerous premieres. She has received a number of significant prizes for drama and directing, among which are: *Belgrade October Prize for Theatrical Art* (1984); *Golden Laurel Wreath for Directing* (Sarajevo 1985); *Vuk Award for Art* (1992); *Sterija Award for Best Drama* (1991); *'Joakim Vujić' Award for Theatrical Art* (2001); *Sterija Award for Best Drama* (2002); *Sterija Award for Best Director* (2002); *Budva - Theatre City Award for Theatrical Art* (2007);

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Vida Ognjenović has also published prose and essays, dramas and travel writing: *Poisonous Dandelion's Milk* (1994), *The Old Clock* (1996), *The Best Short Stories by Vida Ognjenović* (2001), *The Right Address* (2007);

novels: *The House of Dead Scents* (1995), *Adulterers* (2007);

travel prose: *A Journey into Travel Book* (2005);

an essay collection: *On the Contrary to Prophecy* (2007);

an interview collection: *No Question Is Naïve Any More* (2008);

books of dramas: *Kanjoš Macedonović* (1989, 1994, 2004), *Melancholic Dramas* (1991), *Mournful Comedies* (1993), *A Blue-Haired Girl* (1994), *Mileva Einstein* (1988, 2002), *Jegor's Road* (2001), collected dramas in three volumes: *Dramas I, II, III* (2000, 2001, 2002), *Don Krsto* (2007).

She has received a number of significant awards for her literary work, among which are: *Prosveta* Award for the Book of the Year (1994), *Andrić* Short Story Award (1995), *Branko Ćopić* Prose Text Award (1996), *Laza Kostić* Novel Award (1996), *Karolj Sirmaj* Short Story Award (1996), *Ramond Serbica* Prose Award (1998), *Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša* Award for Literature (1999), *Todor Manojlović* Award for Modern Expression in Literature (2004), *Milica Stojadinović –Srpkinja* Award (2007), *National Library* Award for the Book of the Year (2007)

Her prose and dramas have been translated into English, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, Czech, Macedonian and German.

She publishes translations from English and German. She lives and works in Belgrade.

The stories and novels by Vida Ognjenović are full of a narrative, attractive language. This language is functional, sometimes a language of jargon, brought by remarkable characters of recognisable features, while the stories invite us on a cognitive reading adventure.

Gojko Božović

This book brings together all the vocations of Vida Ognjenović and all her interests (dramatic literature, theatre directing, set and costume design, film, painting, literary and cultural tradition and contemporariness, story and novel, critique and essayistic literature, but politics as well). From time to time, *'On the Contrary to Prophecy'* becomes a book of author-ess' memories, occasionally it is a book of a deep devotion to the greats (Njegoš, Ljubiša, Joakim Vujić), yet, at moments it reminds of an scrapbook with pictures of friends, but this malleability of focus, multi-sidedness equalling curiosity, the need to know and participate, she binds together by at least three bonds. The first is the joy of writing. The second is the story and narration. The third is the invention of a strange angle, which allows the presentation of a portrait or a topic in an interesting and charming way. In our age, where the exclusivity and scorn are highly regarded everywhere, literature and literary life included, Vida Ognjenović does not stop short at the joy of meeting the values, does not hesitate to let this joy show, knowing that the recognition we deny others will not, alas, be preserved for us.

Mihajlo Pantić

Nevertheless, it is quite possible that *Adulterers* are the so far best accomplishment of Vida Ognjenović. Mostly because of its cognitive background revealed as the best allegory behind the screen of a thrilling and well-tailored story.

Mića Vujičić

The fact that dramaturgical skill and experience is woven into the prose opus of Vida Ognjenović (books of stories and a novel) has already been emphasized, as well as the fact that her dramas possess a high literary value characterising her prose. One could say that *A Journey into Travel Book* is led, built and knitted by a skilled dramaturgical hand and procedure. However, this book has some of the main features of a travel journal, as the authoress defines it in the terms of genre in her interesting and informative discussion on this topic. *A Journey into Travel Book* is, therefore, a piece of explorative, fictional, epistolary prose as well as an essayistic discourse – all at the same time. The usual and highly valued characteristics of her prose are present here as well: a lively, fresh, sparkling, linguistically concise and luxurious story-telling, the impression of a direct conversation, almost confiding in the individual reader, as well as frequent witty and ironical twists.

Mileta Radovanović

A Journey into Travel Book is not a travel account, but an exciting novel mimicked into a form of a travel book which allows almost all literary genres to be imported into the story.

Gojko Božović

In Vida Ognjanović's *Adulterers* Amalija Kojić almost becomes a tragic victim of the misconception that identity is revealed in a search for roots. Her world falls apart, not when she finds out that she was adopted, but when she comes face to face with her biological relatives whose moral and emotional strongholds are far away both from the world which adopted her and the values she adopted. In an attempt to reconcile the differences, Amalija will lose her husband. The woman who unconditionally believed in her own undisputed belonging to the elite class, intelligentsia, the world of happy and calm people, will have a mental and emotional break, but will fortunately manage to find a new balance. Amalija's dilemma whether identity is built upon the origin we did not choose or on the base of the decision about the class and values we will belong to can be regarded as an individual, national and genre commitment, but also as a struggle to accept the Other.

Vladislava Gordić Petković

Identity reduces people to marks, but the demarked, thanks God, is irreducible. Identity is, therefore, always adultery. The betrayal and compensation more than affirmation and actualisation of a selfhood. That is the reason why playing with identity is so exciting and dangerous. That is where such a convincing reading impression comes from. Judging by the novel *Adulterers* it is certain that adultery is a perfect metaphor for identity. After all, identity is always a metaphor, never a fact. Identity establishes a relationship we invest our convictions, our judgements in. As such, identity judges us, in the end. Unauthorised. Yet truly. Metaphor transcends facts.

And then, if everything is true, if adultery is a perfect metaphor for identity, which is by itself nothing more than that – a metaphor and adultery – then we must withdraw the remark that the title of this novel is treacherous and unreliable. Since it becomes obvious that the title truthfully and accurately denotes the topic. And then it becomes obvious that the author of this book is a master. It is no accident that the author of such a book is a woman. Her identity is irreducible. Her name is Vida Ognjenović.

Sreten Ugričić

The peaks of the novel are, by all means, two masterly shaped scenes: the one in which the heroine learns the truth about her being adopted, and the one in which, in an operetta-like 'diplomatic' environment of both families, she finally meets her biological mother. Written with imagination which implies knowledge of dramaturgical and directing craftsmanship,

these intimately breaking-point situations are at the same time novel-determining, as they bring to the main character anticlimaxes and internal decomposing turbulences they will never recover from instead the expected cathartic twists, thus tacitly directing the reader's mind's eye away from the otherwise routine scope of possibilities. That is why *Adulterers* is disillusioning account of internal bursting or psychological implosion, in whose aftermath the heroine's life is revealed as a ruin of misconceptions about her own identity, but also about the identity of her seemingly protected world.

Tihomir Brajović

Painfully sobered up by being reminded of her personal falls and meanness (adultery and abortion), which help her forgive love treachery (to the ex and already somebody else's husband), the heroine stops having illusions that she can be an arrogant and unscrupulous person from a feminist fairy tale, but comes to terms with the truth that she is the stereotypical little insect (which 'hits the glass until stunned') and that she has to reject the 'inherited deed' in order to earn the right to a (dignified) future.

Vesna Trijić

In the story collections *Poisonous Dandelion's Milk*, *The Old Clock*, *The House of Dead Scents* and the dramas *A Blue-Haired Girl*, *Kanjoš Macedonović*, *Mileva Einstein*, *How to Make Master Laugh*, *Was There Prince's Dinner?*, *A Shock and a Flicker*, and others, Vida Ognjenović shows, in an extremely suggestive way in regard to language, the skill of reconstructing the past times and lost worlds, which serves the purpose of creating a link between the eternal and current issues of human existence, national tradition, culture and the modern sensation of the world through universal analogies and application of artistic methods.

The explanation for the 'Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša' Award presentation

Goran Petrović

Goran Petrović was born in 1961 in Kraljevo. He works as Editor-in-Chief of the literary magazine 'Povelja' and the publishing department of the 'Stefan Prvovenčani' National Library. In over seventy editions he has published: the short prose collection **Advice for an Easier Life** (1989), the novel **The Sky-Locked Atlas** (1993), the story collection **The Island and Neighbouring Stories** (1996), the novel **The Siege of the Saint Salvation Church** (1997), the novel **The 'Stroke of Luck' Haberdashery Shop** (2000), the short story collection **The Neighbours** (2002), the short prose selection **Everything I Know about Time** (2003), the dramatic text **Ferry** (2004), the short story collection **Differences** (2006) and the book of writings **Browser** (2007).

Petrović's novels and books of selected stories have been published in French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian, Polish, Slovenian, Ukrainian and Macedonian in over twenty editions.



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The enchanting world of Goran Petrović's prose rises in the reader's mind as a fragile creation of the awoken language.

Tihomir Brajović

On the map of nowadays, the world of Petrović's stories is an oasis which cherishes the spiritual values, lyricism, right to dreaming and hoping for a better and nicer reality.

Ljiljana Šop

The reality of language and narration can outgrow the reality of the real world and bridge the depths of history – as long as we are readers. This ambition is where the island of Goran Petrović's story-telling emerges from.

Gojko Božović

The Sky-Locked Atlas is directed towards correcting the flaws of the lack of imagination, effort, knowledge, love and dreams... In one of the most peculiar poetic prose volumes appearing in our country, such peculiarity and freshness reach the level of the utmost importance for a man's self-preservation.

Tanja Kragujević

The Sky-Locked Atlas is, paradoxically enough, a book reminiscent of many other books by its procedure (Scheherazade, Decameron, Borges, Pavić, Ende...), yet whose rarity, baroque-ness and festivity of imagination truly sets it apart from all of these books.

Mihajlo Pantić

The absolutely unrestrained burst of imagination is a rarity which must be immediately recorded. Goran Petrović's book *The Sky-Locked Atlas* is a whole imaginative and enchanting fictional Milky Way, a storm of witty sparkles stirred by novel-inducing-sorcery which, despite logic and seemingly strict governance of an enlightened mind, reaches us from some ancient pagan ritual hidden within the story.

Aleksandar Jerkov

Goran Petrović's poetics belongs neither to magical realism nor a modern authorship (so close to the contemporary, picky reader) but to a high-ranking literature, rare and authentic. Linguistically polished, stylistically original, palatable, enchanting, without stitches; fascinating for its imagination. Multi-layered, well conceptualised, wise and revealing. It smoothly connects the archaic middle ages and the events whose witnesses we are, historical facts and a parallel universe, morbid grotesques and poetry of living through a dream, horizontal and vertical meridians of the global system of existence, historical breaks and human destinies. Placing the marvellous Žiža monastery into the core and root of the novel, observing through Sava's windows the distances into the past and the present, the author condenses the centuries of Serbian existence into a sand clock of time, which inexorably seeps away. The novel is a page-turner. Its force lies in the power of the words, beauty of

images, revealing imagination, daring ideas, a truthful thought. As Virginia Wolf would say: 'It is a rich dinning table.' Žiža got a poet worthy of it, history got a daring interpreter, and reader got an unusual book which is much more than just a novel.

Nataša Kovačević

It is absolutely certain that in the contemporary Serbian prose there is no voice that expresses the inclination towards a full and humane figure of existence more consistently and with more quiet zeal.

Dragan Hamović

The NIN Award winner for the year 2000! Marvellous! Brilliant! Ingenious! A true pearl of the end of the century! A fascinating and exciting story about the tragic 20th century in the Serbian history, from King Aleksandar Obrenović's assassination (1903) to the long awaited changes in Serbia in the last year of the 20th century...

Gojko Tesić

Can a novel symbolically awake a whole century at its end? Goran Petrović with his third great novel proves that even impossible is possible.

Vasa Pavković

The 'Stroke of Luck' Haberdashery Shop seems as a magical window opened before our reading eyes by pure literary imagination. Therefore, at the very end, we would rather describe Petrović's novel as miraculous, without denying it the attribute of fantastic.

Novica Petković

The 'Stroke of Luck' Haberdashery Shop is a work of a creator who has a lively imagination, luxurious language and rational focus on the narrative forms of the novel.

Radovan Vučković

The 'Stroke of Luck' Haberdashery Shop is a great contribution to the faith in the power of our mother's tongue and its dreams.

Jovan Delić

To establish a contact with the neighbour and neighbouring, however distant he or it might be, by employing the immense faith in words and the need to name things, thus perpetuating them in a story, means to create a possibility for the existence of *time within time*, since - to paraphrase Petrović - each *time is part of a body too*. And to grasp your neighbour in the unnamed, the one who forgets only to remember again, and who is there to initiate the very primary humanity, means to create a possibility for revealing timelessness in all its aspects. This is what, among other things, the imaginatively exuberant and marvellous prose of Goran Petrović speaks about.

Ana Ristović

Aleksandar Prokopiev

Aleksandar Prokopiev was born in 1953 in Skopje, where he has lived for the most of his life, although travels became an equal and useful part of his life a long time ago. He has published a number of collections of stories, essays and haiku poetry, and his stories have found their place in numerous Macedonian and international story selections. His works have been translated into English, French, Italian, Polish, Japanese... and all the languages of the Balkans. His Serbian editions include the story collection ***Ars amatoria, Anti-Instructions for Personal Use***, the novel ***The Watcher*** (published by Geopoetika) and ***She Likes Chekhov*** (published by Zograf). ***The Watcher*** was the Macedonian candidate for *Balkanika* and was short listed for this prize. Aleksandar Prokopiev was awarded the *Masters of Prose* prize for the best prose piece in Macedonia in 2007.



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About the book *Ars Amatoria*

Macedonian storyteller and essayist A. Prokopiev is a combination of several different and not very compatible personalities: a doctor of philosophy, storyteller, radio host, director – member of alternative stage groups, former composer and music performer in the band *The Idols* from Belgrade and *Mouth to Mouth* from Skopje. Divergent, polyvalent, restless, always in action, driven by new ideas, today Aleksandar Prokopiev is one of unavoidable figures of the Macedonian literary scene. The ten stories about love entitled *Ars Amatoria* display the same features as their author – a particular dynamics and richness of characters, remarkable language and multitude of layers.

About the book *Anti-instructions for Personal Use*

This is a truly open piece of literature, which neither knows its own end nor genre borders and limitations.

Literature equalling eroticism – and therefore attractive, yearned for, totally unpredictable, seductive, eloquent, spicy, juicy, perfectly stylised.

This is, in the true sense of the word, polyphonic prose, a text-counterpoint, saturated with music, probably due to Prokopiev's deep devotion and commitment to it.

Some of these writings are dedicated to the very excitement which lies in getting to know about and encountering the Other – our own when meeting the West, and vice versa, the Western when meeting us.

Close to the spiritual legacies of the presently booming spiritual horizon of nomadism, a friend of the majority of nomadic intellectuals and writers, Prokopiev, in the true sense of the word, draws on the vagabond energy of the City, but also on the diffuse, labyrinth-like energy of the Library.

Prokopiev is primarily a believer in hedonism in search of pleasure and the joys of life and text.

About the book *The Watcher*

After several books of stories, essays and poetry collections, one of the best among the contemporary Macedonian authors, in the evidently mature writers' age, publishes his first novel.

The Watcher was nominated for the international literary award *Blakanika* immediately upon its release, and has won the *Masters of Prose Award* for the best prose piece in Macedonia in 2007.

...a dream-like, obsessive world where everything has its meaning. This technique does not mystify anything. On the contrary, everything is connected. Prokopiev offers us a role mod-

el of literary sensibility. The meaning of things resides in their resonance. And thus, very quickly, it manages to seduce us.

Fiona Simpson

...in his prose, sky is beautiful. Hero is like the ancient sculpture of the sleeper with an erection. The world is an illusion, and an artist's mission is to reach this illusion – this is the message Prokopiev's prose is sending.

Jasna Koteska

...*The Watcher* is an extraordinary novel with great aesthetic performances. A readable, seemingly simple, modern in its postmodernism, knowledgeable novel which hides its huge knowledge under the meta-prose mask of 'ignorance' and 'naiveté'; ironical, scandalously critical of the hypocrisy of collectivity, on the whole open for the deepest layers of personality... – something that has not appeared in our prose for a long time.

Venko Andonovski

Christopher Hope

Novelist Christopher Hope was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1944. He was educated at the universities of Witwatersrand and Natal and worked as a journalist before moving to London in 1975. He is a regular broadcaster and contributes articles and reviews to newspapers, magazines and journals. He has also written plays for both radio and television.

His poems were first published in *Whitewashes* (1971), but Hope's first significant publication was *Cape Drives* (1974), which won the Thomas Pringle Prize and a Cholmondeley Award. His published poetry also includes *In the Country of the Black Pig* (1981) and *Englishmen* (1985).

His first novel, *A Separate Development* (1981), was banned in South Africa. A rich, comic satire of the apartheid system, it won the David Higham Prize for Fiction. His other novels include *Kruger's Alp* (1984), which won the Whitbread Novel Award; *The Hottentot Room* (1986), set in a London drinking club, a home from home for South African exiles; and *My Chocolate Redeemer* (1989), the story of an unlikely friendship between a 15-year-old girl and an exiled dictator. More recent novels include *Serenity House* (1992), a black comedy set in an old people's home in London, shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction; *Darkest England* (1996), which subverts the colonial experience through African explorers visiting England; and *Me, the Moon and Elvis Presley* (1997), a satire set in the new South Africa. His most recent novels are *My Mother's Lovers* (2006), and *The Garden of Bad Dreams* (2008).

Hope's non-fiction includes a volume of autobiography, *White Boy Running* (1988), a travel book, *Moscow! Moscow!* (1990), which won a PEN Award, and, most recently, *Signs of the Heart: Love and Death in Languedoc* (1999), about his home in the South of France. *Brothers*



Under the Skin: Travels in Tyranny (2003), is a biography of the Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe.

Prizes and awards

Thomas Pringle Prize *Cape Drives*, 1972; **Cholmondeley Award** *Cape Drives*, 1974; **David Higham Prize for Fiction** *A Separate Development*, 1974; **Whitbread Novel Award** *Kruger's Alp*, 1984; **Central News Agency (CNA) Literary Award (South Africa)** *White Boy Running*, 1989; **PEN Award** *Moscow! Moscow!*, 1990; **Booker Prize for Fiction** (shortlist) *Serenity House*, 1992.

Author statement

Writing has always seemed to me to be a rather mischievous occupation. I write not to change the world but to undermine it, since the models on offer seem pretty dull most of the time. Much of life is odd and disorganised. Many people who pretend at being certain about things are either ingenuous or wicked. They are also often charlatans. One wants to record their utterances, wherever possible, as a warning to others. As a writer I was lucky enough to grow up in South Africa, a place where the lethal folly of what everyone assured me was 'normal' life far outstripped even the most audacious of writers. It made for a wonderful training. It taught me about the sheer inventiveness of life. And it gave me a subject - the triumph of power and the terminal comedy of those who wield it.

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[A] frequently hilarious and sometimes profound reverie... his feelings are unerring and his writing beautiful

Sunday Times

Riveting... a fascinating deconstruction... Hope never loses his ability to surprise

Telegraph

[It is] superb, telling us more about the anthropology of power than a thousand academic monographs...

Irish Times

He is a superb prose stylist, with a deep understanding of how a place works upon a person... Christopher Hope makes us taste and feel the lasting resonance of a simple meal of fresh bread, a twist of salt and fresh sardines in a damp, cold cottage in the Tarn

Catherine Lockerbie, Scotsman

Christopher Hope is a master of robustly inventive satire... He has never been funnier or more extravagantly manipulative of political circumstance... One admires the imaginative fertility of a novelist who has been able to turn extreme situations into exuberant allegory

Penelope Lively, Spectator

Very funny and acute about the contradictions and absurdities of the new South Africa... What impresses is the amount of sharp satire Hope has compacted into a brief book; with a dense economy of narrative, he tells the history of a whole town

James Wood, Guardian

Christopher Hope's latest South African extravaganza is mordantly perceptive as ever... An enticingly acerbic picture of a 'brave new world' which has earned neither of these epithets

Julia Read, Scotsman

It is usual to think of short stories as close-ups, rather than landscapes, but Christopher Hope manages to create large imaginative spaces with fine economy. Enigmatic yet also racy, the dense fragments of *The Garden of Bad Dreams* are redolent of forbidden sweets and a restless satirical mischief.

Henry Hitchings

Christopher Hope's stories are as tightly focused as poetry, without any sense of uncomfortable constriction. Free from the shape of conventional narrative, which builds up to a

climax and declines to denouement, they reveal significant moments in extraordinary lives. His empathy with a variety of quaint people and reasonable animals is kindly and entirely unsentimental.

Patrick Skene Catling

Crucially, however, Hope's stories are rooted in real life places, where we meet credible characters and encounter lives that are not too far from our own. It is this sense of a familiar world turned frightening that gives *The Garden of Bad Dreams* its unsettling and uncanny effect (...).

(...) Real life, as *The Garden of Bad Dreams* tells it, is far stranger than any fiction.

Sara Keating

Christopher Hope's compelling novels are crowded with gaudy, sometimes bizarre characters whose histories add to the cumulative effect of the world he depicts. He plays with words and twists his plots, but the commitment behind his fierce satire of authoritarian power is always clear. In the thirteen short stories published in his new book, *The Garden of Bad Dreams*, seven of which were originally broadcast on BBC radio, he has limited himself to central characters and single themes. His invention and wit are unimpaired. He is a master of the arresting statement, sometimes used effectively to catch the attention at the beginning of a story.

Sarah Curtis, the Times Literary Supplement

Christopher Hope is a consummately skilful novelist, and he seems to have written these 13 stories as a kind of display case or sampler of the genre (...) They might almost be by 13 different authors, and they show a virtuoso command of styles, settings and subject matter, as if to demonstrate what a modern short story can do. Reading them is like undertaking a journey of literary exploration, never sure where we are heading, or just what is happening to us (...)

Jan Morris, The Guardian

WHO IS WHO AT THE FESTIVAL

*

Producer

The Cultural Centre of Novi Sad

*

Director and Editor in Chief

Ласло Блашковић

*

Organizational Board

Вицко Арпад, Владислав Бајац, Ласло Блашковић, Гојко Божовић, Недељко Мамула,
Теофил Панчић, Зоран Пауновић (Chairman)

*

Executive Producer

Недељко Мамула

*

Festival Secretary

Весна Станишић

*

Organisation

Васа Тимотијевић, Зоран Докић, Миља Петровић

*

Program Assistants

Гимназија „Јован Јовановић – Змај“: Професорица Мирјана Грдинић; Ученици: Душко Баленовић,
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ENIGMA

Штампа: ФУТУРА

Тираж: 500