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**The 5<sup>th</sup>  
International  
festival of  
prose writing**

Novi Sad  
13-15 April 2011

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International  
festival of  
prose writing**

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13-15 April 2011

Participating:

DAVID GROSSMAN (Israel)  
RADOVAN BELI MARKOVIĆ (Serbia)  
ILYA STOGOFF (Russia)  
GEORGI GOSPODINOV (Bulgaria)  
IVANA SIMIĆ BODROŽIĆ (Croatia)  
ILDIKÓ LOVAS (Serbia)  
RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ (Serbia)  
DRAGAN VELIKIĆ (Serbia)  
VULE ŽURIĆ (Serbia)

**WEDNESDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**

**THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF NOVI SAD**  
5 Katolička porta, Great Hall

• 6 pm

**FESTIVAL INAUGURATION  
PRESENTATION OF THE  
"MILOVAN VIDAKOVIĆ" AWARD**

• 6:15 pm

**DAVID GROSSMAN**

\* reading and discussion

Participants: *Gojko Božović*  
and school students

• 7:30 pm

**ILDIKÓ LOVAS**

\* reading and discussion

Participants: *Irena Javorski*  
and school students

• 9 pm

**RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ**

\* reading and discussion

Participants: *Aleksandar Jerkov*  
and school students

## THURSDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

• noon, "J. J. Zmaj" Grammar School auditorium, 4 Zlatne grede  
**DAVID GROSSMAN, IVANA SIMIĆ BODROŽIĆ, ILDIKÓ LOVAS**  
School students participating in the discussion

• noon, "Laza Kostić" Grammar School theatre, 1 Laze Lazarevića  
**RADOVAN BELI MARKOVIĆ**  
School students participating in the discussion

• 2 pm, "Laza Kostić" Grammar School theatre, 1 Laze Lazarevića  
**RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ**  
School students participating in the discussion

**THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF NOVI SAD**  
5 Katolička porta, 'Tribina mladih'

• 6 pm  
**RADOVAN BELI MARKOVIĆ**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Mileta Aćimović*  
and school students

• 7 pm  
**GEORGI GOSPODINOV**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Mihajlo Pantić*  
and school students

• 8:30 pm  
**DRAGAN VELIKIĆ**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Franja Petrinović*  
and school students

## FRIDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

• noon, "J. J. Zmaj" Grammar School auditorium, 4 Zlatne grede  
**ILYA STOGOFF, GEORGI GOSPODINOV**  
School students participating in the discussion

• noon, "Laza Kostić" Grammar School theatre, 1 Laze Lazarevića  
**DRAGAN VELIKIĆ**  
School students participating in the discussion

• 2 pm, "Laza Kostić" Grammar School theatre, 1 Laze Lazarevića  
**VULE ŽURIĆ**  
School students participating in the discussion

**THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF NOVI SAD**  
5 Katolička porta, 'Tribina mladih'

• 6 pm  
**IVANA SIMIĆ BODROŽIĆ**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Teofil Pančić*  
and school students

• 7 pm  
**VULE ŽURIĆ**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Srđan Srdić*  
and school students

• 8:30 pm  
**ILYA STOGOFF**  
\* reading and discussion  
Participants: *Melina Panaotović*  
and school students



## DAVID GROSSMAN

**David Grossman** (Jerusalem, 1954) is one of the most important contemporary writers in the world and certainly the most important contemporary Israeli author.

Known as a novelist, story writer, essayist and playwright, Grossman is the author of lucid and provocative engaged texts and political non-fiction, usually dealing with the Middle-eastern topics.

Selected books of fiction: *The Smile of the Lamb*, *The Book of Intimate Grammar*, *The Zig-Zag Kid*, *See Under: Love*, *Be My Knife*, *Someone to Run With*, *Her Body Knows*, *Lion's Honey*, *Until the End of the Land*.

He has published several books of children's fiction, most important being the short novel *Duel*.

The most important books of non-fiction: *Yellow Wind*, *Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel*, *Death as a Way of Life*.

There are two films made after Grossman's novels: *The Smile of the Lamb* and *See Under: Love*.

David Grossman's works have been translated in over 25 languages, and the author has received numerous prestigious international literary awards. He has been among the top candidates for the Nobel Prize for literature in the last several years.

Grossman has been presented with numerous awards including Chevalier de l'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres (France), Valumbrosa Prize (Italy), Prix Eliette Von Karajan (Austria), Premio Grinzane (Italy), Premio Mondelo (Italy), Vittorio de Sica Prize (Italy) the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation (UK), the Juliet Club Prize (Italy), the Buxtehuder Bulle 2001 (Germany), the Sapir Prize (2001), the Premio per la Pace e l'Azione Umanitaria 2006 (City of Rome/Italy), Onorificenza della Stella Solidarita Italiana 2007, Premio Ischia – International Award for Journalism 2007, the EMET Award 2007 (Israel), the Geschwister Scholl Prize 2008 (Germany) and the Albatros 2010 awarded by the Guenther Grass Foundation. The author has been the recipient of the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Booksellers Association in Frankfurt 2010.

He lives in Jerusalem.

*Arhipelag* has published the following books of fiction by Grossman in Serbian: *See Under: Love*, *Her Body Knows* and *Until the End of the Land* for which the author has received worldwide acclaim.



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## About the book *Until the End of the Land*

David Grossman's new novel *Until the End of the Land* is a masterpiece of a great contemporary world literature master. Published in 20 countries, the book has swept the world.

The novel *Until the End of the Land* is an exciting, unusually powerful and deep saga on Israeli-Palestinian relations, about love and pain, and a son's loss in the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

While the son goes to war guided by the feeling of duty, his mother and father leave their home to walk a path around Israel, dedicating this long walk to the son they worry about and fears and hopes they are living with. The walk, reminiscing and a never ending dialogue are an attempt at safekeeping their son through the magic of storytelling. In their long walk, the mother and the father, separated in everyday life, recall their whole lives, their son's growing up, their loves, rises and falls, moments of happiness and moments of utter desperation. The miraculous power of Grossman's novel stems from the ability to put history to human measure, and reveal layers of history and the necessities it yielded in our everydayness.

History and the present time, love and hate, passion and despair, pain and rage, humility and flight from a predestined life, memory and reality, fundamental human values in the world full of violence, everyday life with a constant fear of a new war or the ongoing war or of a suicide bomb – all these are great themes of Grossman's novel written as an exciting and multilayered story of many nuances.

Grossman's storytelling is suggestive and exciting, giving his novel the force of a great fresco and polyphony brimming with images and voices, lifetime experiences and things worthy of memory.

As Grossman personally says, the novel *Until the End of the Land* is his most intimate book. Speaking about the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations, Grossman tells a story about contemporary events, where one of the climaxes of this exciting and voluminous book is the tragic death of the author's son in the Israeli Army, at the very end of the war against Hezbollah.

The novel has won several awards: **Albatros** (2010); **The Peace Prize of the German Book Trade** (2010); it was among the **Top Ten Novels Published in Israel in the Last Decade** voted by the Critics' Grand Jury of the most popular Israeli daily newspaper **Jediot Aharonot** (2010); **Amazon Best of the Month** in September 2010; **Book of the Year** by **The New Yorker's Critics Pool** (2010); **Best Book of Fiction** by the bookstore chain **Barnes&Noble's** (USA, Best Books of 2010).

Grossman is among *Foreign Policy's* **100 Global Thinkers** (2010).

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## David Grossman about the novel *Until the End of the Land*

*I started writing this book in May 2003, six months before my eldest son Jonathan left the Army and a year and a half before his younger brother Uri was recruited. They both served in armoured forces.*

*Uri knew the plot and characters of the novel. Each time we spoke on the phone or he came on a leave, he would ask what was new in the book and the lives of its characters. "What have you done to them this week?" was his regular question. He spent most of his service in occupied territories, in patrols, scouting, ambushes and control points, and he sometimes told me about his adventures.*

*At that time, I felt – or, more accurately, I wanted – to protect him by the book I was writing.*

*On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2006, in the last hours of the Second Lebanese War, Uri was killed in southern Lebanon. A missile hit his tank while he was trying to save soldiers from another tank. The entire crew of his tank were killed together with Uri: Benaya Rein, Adam Goren and Alex Bonimovitch.*

*After the mourning period of Shiva was over, I returned to the book. It was almost finished. The greatest change was the echo of the reality in which its final version was written.*

A panorama of breathtaking emotional force, a masterpiece of pacing, of dedicated storytelling, with characters whose lives are etched with extraordinary, vivid detail. This is one of those few novels that feel as though they have made a difference to the world.

*Colm Toibin, New York Times Book Review*

Grossman's book aims to free itself from the congealed vocabulary of war, which the novel suggests has infused every aspect of Israeli life...Grossman invites us to look beneath the shrill headlines, beyond the road-blocks, within the clenched fist -- to see Israel's predicament not as "the situation" but as many situations, one for every person... A desperate book that somehow does not cause despair, a book about death that stubbornly insists on life, *To the End of the Land*, like all great literature, is an act of generosity, opening itself to every human possibility.

*Washington Post*

At moments [*Grossman*] has talked of the risk of dispassion, of being paralysed with fear and despair. With the publication of this extraordinary, impassioned novel, such purpose or hope acquires a new meaning and intensity. It now seems that the life to be saved by writing, even though the struggle may be doomed, could only be – perhaps always has been – the life of a child. *To the End of the Land* is without question one of the most powerful and moving novels I have read.

*Jacqueline Rose, The Guardian*

Grossman's novel, even more than his prose so far, has a purifying effect. For those who want to remain as close as possible to Israel's difficult truth and its moral complexity; to avoid the political competition for vic-



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timhood and for eternal righteousness, and to contain in their souls both the triumph and the tragedy that is Israel, Grossman is an indispensable guide.

*Ha'aretz*

This novel touches on every emotion mankind encounters in life. The essence of the message is that you will always lose. You think that you can hold on to happiness, children or a loved one, but they will all slip away. The book is delivered in rich and graceful language that you can quote all your life and it makes most other books seem irrelevant

*Fleur Speet, Het Financieele Dagblad*

The novel alludes to the hopes for redemption in the stories of the Jewish tradition: the journey into the promised land, the coming of the Messiah, the renewal of the covenant between God and his chosen people. But these allusions are not endorsements. Mr Grossman's imagination is secular, worldly, self-questioning and ironic. The Israel he imagines, beautifully and sorrowfully, is not going to be saved by any divine intervention.

*The Economist*

David Grossman's novel is to be read slowly because we don't want it to end. For days afterwards we are dazed from the world in this novel that couldn't save a life but still represents a salvation since we don't want to live in a world without books such as TO THE END OF THE LAND.

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Rundschau*

The success of the author is in finding the perfect tone, 100% human content that exudes more truth than a hundred history books.

*Ricard Ruiz, Time Out*

This novel is without a doubt Grossman's masterpiece.

*Ricard Ruiz, El Periòdico*

This novel is a great and emotionally charged piece of fiction, a modern recreation of *War and Peace* settled in Israel, from the time of the 6-Day War until today.

*ABC Spain*

The simultaneous publication of *The Entire Life* and *Writing In The Dark* shows us how David Grossman, as an essayist as well as a novelist beautifully drives in the same direction: knowing "the other" in any possible way.

*El Pais*

A novel which is human in the deepest sense of the word...In *The Entire Life* everything is complex, everything has multiple interpretations, everything is quite real, just as in our lives....David Grossman dares to make us feel part of both sides of the conflict and this achievement only belongs to great writers.

*La Vanguardia*

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Excerpts of reviews from the German press re David Grossman's UNTIL THE END OF THE LAND

The story about Ora and her family, a woman caught between two men and her two sons is one big protest against war.

*German TV Channel One*

David Grossman writes with a vulnerability that is free of fear, poetic and powerful, sensual and angry, passionate and gentle. He writes not only for his survival but for ours as well.

*Die Zeit*

It is with immense patience that Grossman allows the story to develop and make this novel so moving. Without pathos or sentimentality a spate of words emerge which express and preserve the fragility of human existence.

*Sueddeutsche Zeitung*

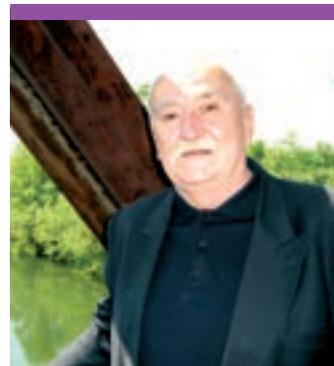
Can a book save a life? The pace with which one reads Grossman's novel becomes slower and slower because one doesn't want it to finish. Days after finishing the novel one is still dazed and filled with the world of this novel that couldn't save a life. However it still saved us because we couldn't live in a world without books.

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

There are novels that change the literary landscape of a nation. The latest novel by David Grossman belongs among these. It is an attempt to get to the heart of the Israeli existence and explore the inner world of Israeli life.

*Die Welt*

## RADOVAN BELI MARKOVIĆ



**Radovan BELI MARKOVIĆ**, born on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1947 in the village of Čelije near Lazarevac, writes short stories, novelettes and novels, publishing since 1969.

**Books of stories:** *Crni kolač* (*Black Cake*), 1983; *Švapska kosa* (*The Swabian Scythe*), 1989; *Godine raspleta* (*The Years of Denouement*) 1992; *Živčana japija*, 1994, 2003 (final version); *Stare priče* (*Old Stories*), 1996; *Setembrini u Kolubari* (*Settembrini in Kolubara*) 1996, 1997; *Male priče* (*Little Stories*) 1999, 2000; *Aša*, 2007; *Corava strana* (*The Blind Side*), selected and new stories, 2007.

**Novels:** *Palikuća i Tereza milosti puna* (*The Arsonist and Teresa the Merciful*), 1976, 1992 and 1996 (final version included in *Stare priče*); *Lajkovačka pruga* (*The Railroad of Lajkovac*) 1997, 1998, 2001, 2004; *Limunacija u Čelijama* (*Illemonation in Čelije*) 2000, 2005; *Poslednja ruža Kolubare* (*The Last Rose of Kolubara*), 2001, 2002, 2003; *Knez Miškin u Belom Valjevu* (*Prince Mishkin in White Valjevo*), 2002, 2003; *Devet belih oblaka* (*Nine White Clouds*), 2003 (first edition 'Filip Višnjić', final version 'Narodna knjiga'); *Orkestar na pedale* (*A Pedal-driven Orchestra*), 2004, 2009 – Evro Giunti: the second polished edition; *Kavaleri Starog premera* (*The Cavaliers of the Old Measure*) 2006; *Kolubarska trilogija* (*The Kolubara Trilogy*) (*Lajkovačka pruga/Limunacija u Čelijama/Poslednja ruža Kolubare*), The Library of Great Novels, Prosveta, Belgrade, 2008; *Gospođa Olga* (*Mrs Olga*) 2010.

**Awards and recognitions:** Award of the Cultural-Educational Society of Valjevo for *Švapska kosa*, Andrić Award for the book of stories *Setembrini u Kolubari*, 'Bora Stanković' and 'Biblios' Awards for *Male priče*, Nolit Award and 'Branko Ćopić' Award for *Lajkovačka pruga* (given by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Committee), for *Limunacija u Čelijama* awards: 'Meša Selimović' and 'Račanska povelja', for *Poslednja ruža Kolubare* golden award 'Žak Konfino', Award of the Valjevo-based weekly 'Napred' for *Knez Miškin u Belom Valjevu*, 'Stevan Sremac' Award for *Orkestar na pedale*, as well as three *Hit Libris* Awards from the Second Channel of National Television for the most read book, and 'Veljkova golubica' Award by the City of Sombor – for the short story life opus.

Radovan Beli Marković has been a member of the Association of Writers of Serbia since 1976 and the Serbian Literary Society since 2000, holding a title of *standing out artist* since 2009.

Stories authored by Radovan Beli Marković have been included in several selections and anthologies (in Serbian, German, English, Ukrainian and Macedonian), have seen their radiophone adaptations and several airing within the Radio Belgrade's Second and Third Programmes (*Živčana japija*, dramatised by Zvonimir Kostić, directed by Božidar Đurović; *Crni kolač*, dramatised and directed by Boda Marković). His prose – besides

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the sections of the 'Međaj' magazine (No.40, Užice, 1997) and on nobler occasions, during the last decade, in the Letopis of Matica srpska – was written about in the compendium *Serbian Contemporary Prose* (Trstenik, 2003), as well as in long thematic segments in the journals 'Gradina' (Niš, 2006) and 'Literature' (Belgrade, 2008).

The author's prose has been a subject of books: *Radovan Beli Marković, Stilske i jezičke igre (Playing with Style and Language)* (Valjevo, 2005) by Vitomir Vuletić; *Pesničko pripovedanje (Poetic Story-telling)* (Belgrade, 2006) by Stojan Đorđić, as well as the compendium *The Prose of Radovan Beli Marković*, from the scientific symposium on his work, with a selective bibliography composed by Branka Jović (Valjevo, 2009).

His prose has also been subject of doctoral theses – at the Faculty of Philology and Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade.

Radovan Beli Marković is a permanent member-associate of Matica srpska and Serbian PEN Centre.

He lives and writes in Lajkovac.

## Reviews

Erasing the borders between reality and imagination, between life and literature, is the favourite literary game this writers plays. Even if it is a knock on the open door, this passion of complementing, changing and liberating the classical works of the world and our literature in order to give new life to famous literary heroes and heroines in the desolateness of Kolubara, aside from its ingenious charm, it has an importance of a necessary dialogue with one's own readings, re-examination of the commonly accepted values. In this game, there is a glimpse of denuding honesty, self-confidence as well as self-irony, a confession of a scrutinising reader who has ventured into the workshops of other masters to gain skills, not for the sake of mere pleasure in the story. Irreversibly immersed into the language no longer spoken (testified to by 'polishing' the stylistically smoothed novel, first published six years ago), into memories not intriguing the majority of today's readers, into the depths of soul whose existence is doubted by more and more contemporaries, Radovan Beli Marković belongs to the group of authors who reject -isms and fashions and standards of their time, which see nothing but their own visions and an opaque future.

Ljiljana Šop, Blic knjiga

If there is anything that distinguishes Radovan Beli Marković from his contemporaries, than it is certainly the nature of his narrative procedure. The narrative procedure is so complex that, as has already been said, his stories and novels require to be read with an activation of both tradition and the quintessence of the spirit of modern literature; to be seen, in other words, as a cross between two particular codes. One of the codes is rooted in the realistically conceptualised image of the world, while the other is perhaps established with different kinds of fictional and lyrical material. And the unusual morphology of the literary text, as well as a personally positioned narrator in regard to the very story, are the most striking signs of entering upon a literary world where effects can be seen of all the styles and all the languages alternately present in our culture since



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the middle ages. Thus, not only the memories of different layers of culture are activated, but indirectly, the reader is offered with a review of all the ingredients comprising the building blocks of our culture's worldview. And as each style carries within a distinctive intonation, it can be said that Radovan Beli Marković has turned his prose into a complex audio-melodic fabric, which takes the breath away from a reader with a sensitive ear.

*Radivoje Mikić (Compendium: The Prose of Radovan Beli Marković)*

The author's invention operates in the field of words, their constructions and microstylistic units. A reader sensitive to linguistic nuances will notice in Marković' writing some new words which reside on the very borders of meaning (but remain firmly anchored in the spirit of the language), and comparisons, fresh and inventive; one will find litotes or euphemisms equally pointing to the ironical delicacy of the writer and amazing the reader of described characteristics. Marković' linguistic industry makes no difference between the so called 'people's' and the so called 'urban' languages, but builds its linguistic creation on the edges of them both. So, the author adopts loan words and transforms them in the spirit of his distinctive language, makes cross-breeds of quasi scientific words and domestic archaisms, sprinkling it all with an occasional vernacular word, not to be promoted or demoted, but to be incorporated into a great linguistic synthesis and transformation presented by each new book of Radovan Beli Marković.

*Slobodan, Vladušić, Politika*

The prose of R. B. Marković relaxes the boundaries between the existing and the possible worlds, so the living and the dead, 'real' people and literary characters meet in a cacophony of rumours, stories and chatters. But this confusion and an almost incomprehensible pandemonium works not to their advantage: the sublime literary plots, poured over (Kafkianly reduced) Valjevo's everydayness unmask their 'paperesqueness' and sharpens the satirical, comically-too-serious observations on reality. Unappeasedness of eminent and 'invisible' natives of Valjevo (compared to which the dreadful story of Sava Savanović seems like a mere lullaby) is not (so much) an introduction into the reflections on immortality of human soul (as much) it is an insight into the political scheming, reaching even for the dead (ideals of the past), especially in pre-election periods.

The clash between (the female) intimate secrets and (the male) historical businesses does not save the so called man in the street from his helplessness in the face of epochal events (in this novel World War II casts its shadow over the heroes, deeply immersed in gossip), but speaks of the small town's idleness which, despite the circumstances, chooses to nose into saucy affairs and party scandals. In her posing eccentric character and 'poetical' affectations, the novel's heroine, late Mrs Olga, envelopes the characters of Mrs Dafina, Madame Bovary and Anastassya Filippovna; petty bourgeois fuss about her precious and utterly (spiritually and materially) trivial heritage will, through the story's illusion of immortality, completely annul her.

R. B. Marković' world of a burlesque whirl is arranged to the smallest detail; it is unknown, even repulsive to the wide reading audiences (more inclined towards light pieces, swallowing without chewing), so that the heroes, stories and sentences from the author's previous novels return as an echo with each new book, relentlessly resonating in solitude, in the void.

*Vesna Trijić, Blic*



## GEORGI GOSPODINOV

**GEORGI GOSPODINOV** (1968) is a poet, writer and playwright, one of the most translated Bulgarian authors after 1989.

He has published four poetry books awarded with national literary prizes. His poems were included in many anthologies in translation, among which is **New European Poets** (Graywolf Press, USA, 2008).

Gospodinov became internationally known by his **Natural Novel**. It has been published 7 times in Bulgaria and in 17 languages abroad, including English (Dalkey Archive, USA, 2005), German, French, Spanish, Italian, etc. The novel was praised by the *New Yorker*, *NY Times*, *Village Voice*, *Guardian*, etc. European critics called the novel a “machine for stories” (*Le Courier*, Geneva) and the author – “a humorist of desperation” (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*).

**And Other Stories** (2001), his collection of short stories, came out in English (NU Press, USA, 2007), German, French, etc. Gospodinov’s short story is included in the anthology **Best European Fiction 2010** (Dalkey Archive, USA).

Gospodinov has written two theatre plays – **D.J.** (the initials of Don Juan; 2005) and **The Apocalypse Comes at 6 p.m.** (2010). The plays were awarded as the best Bulgarian dramatic text of the respective year. Both were staged in Sofia, **D.J.** also in Austria and France. Their radio versions were produced by the Bulgarian National Radio.

Gospodinov is author of screenplays for short feature films, the latest being **Omelette** (4.44’; Honorable Mention at the *Sundance Film Festival 2009*).

His most recent project is the art graphic novel **The Eternal Fly** (2010, with the artist N. Toromanov).



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## From Reviews

The Western metafictive meets Eastern European metaphysics...

*World Literature Today*

Sharp pen and gentle look... With Gospodinov one ventures into an imaginary world where each letter is associative of a woman, and each word sways between sorrow and humour.

*Le Nouvel Observateur*

To read Gospodinov, a laughing Bulgarian – a real pleasure!

*Metro, Paris*

A machine for stories...

*Le Courrier, Geneva*

funny and erudite, arrogant and refined, but brilliant in every respect and innovative in its form.

*Livres-Hebdo, Paris*

...both earthly and intellectual.

*The Guardian*

...anarchic, experimental début.

*The New Yorker*

...a quirky, compulsively readable book that deftly hints at the emptiness and sadness at its core.

*The New York Times*

...a quick and enjoyable – and surprisingly affecting – work.

*Complete Review*

...humorous, melancholic and highly idiosyncratic work.

*The Times*



## ILYA STOGOFF

**Ilya Stogoff** (Sankt Petersburg, 1970) was born as Ilya Yuryevich Stogov.

A Master in Theology, he has been working as a journalist. He has worked as a tradesman, a television host, a street currency dealer, a teacher, a cinema cleaner, an editor in chief of an erotic magazine, a bodyguard, a translator, a music critic, a barman and a casino spokesman. He has been active in the media for about twenty years, receiving the title of Sankt Petersburg's journalist of the year 1999.

Selected novels: *The Emperor's Skull* (1997), *Bloody Mary* (1997), *Kamikaze* (1998), *Revolution Now!* (2001), *Club Life. Pretend to Be an Expert* (2001), *Machos Don't Cry* (2001), *Opener* (2002), *The Ashes of Empires* (2002), *mASIAfucker* (2002), *1,000,000 Euros* (2003).

Books of stories: *Ten Fingers* (2003) and *The Dead Can Dance* (2005).

He has published a book of press texts: *Tabloid. Articles 1995–1997* (2001).

His novel *Machos Don't Cry* was used as a base for a film of the same name, while several excerpts of it were used by the popular Russian rock group *Scary B.O.O.M.* for songs on their CD *Kuala Lumpur*. In 2001 Stogoff was voted the author of the year and his *Machos Don't Cry* the novel of the year by the magazine *OM*.

Ilya Stogoff's books have been translated into more than ten European languages.

Stogoff's novel *mASIAfucker* was published in Serbia within the edition 'A Hundred Slavic Novels' by *Arhipelag* (2010), while *1,000,000 Euros or a 1002<sup>nd</sup> Night of Year 2003* by Mono and Manjana (2011).

Stogoff spent some time living on the island of Sakhalin, but lives and works in Sankt Petersburg.



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## Book Reviews

### About *mASIAfucker*

Like some kind of Eastern Kerouac, Stogoff's vivid and almost spoken style leads his reader through the vast landscapes of European and Asian Russia, as well as the neighbouring countries which used to occupy the fringes of the Soviet Union.

The story bears all the features of a picaresque novel, bringing close distant and exotic regions from the point of view of a foreigner. The hero is a Moscowian grown up with rock culture coming from the West and he, as a metropolitan, experiences a shock faced with the hardships of the living conditions backed by Kafkain totalitarianism and general corruption.

Written in a lively and dynamic style covering the gamut of styles ranging from journalistic to poetical, from adventurous to critically intoned, Stogoff's novel offers new colours in understanding the complexities of a life in a country so huge, and so highly populated and full of contrasts such as Russia.

Gojko Božović

Ilya Stogoff was born in Leningrad in 1970, as Stogov of course, but he 'branded' his name as a brand of vodka (Smirnoff) or something similarly Eternally Russian; that is, my man, postmodernism at work, not like the quasi Alexandrianism of our geeks... However, Stogoff made a name as a brilliant journalist during the 1990s, and then as a writer of a peculiar post-Soviet new sensitivity, old enough to remember 'those times', and young enough to learn, locate and give a proper literary rendition of the phenomena of the New Russia; this much is glaringly obvious in his books *Machos Don't Cry* and *Thirteen Months* (translated in Croatia), and equally so in his wacky journal travel novel *mASIAfucker* (translated by Natalija Nenezić; Arhipelag, Belgrade 2010) which finally 'brings' him to Serbia. Based, as usual, on stylised autobiographic material and playing with it, *mASIAfucker* is an immensely funny, refreshing politically incorrect guide book of the post-Soviet reality, seen through a prism of the Non-European Other: the author/narrator sets off, all of a sudden and with no apparent 'rational' reason (if we rule out running away from his wife, or 'urban life' as such...), to visit the vast lands of the ex-Soviet central Asia, to the group of -stans, in the vicinity of the most unpleasant of them all in Russian imagination: Afghanistan, no doubt... The images of unfathomable poverty as a continuous, trans-generational state and way of life, petty bribery as an omnipresent everydayness and impressively developed, refined sadistic absurdity of giga-Kafkian bureaucracy the 'naive' man from Prague could not have dreamt of, as well as a general cultural back-walk on the crossroads between the tribe-religious 'evergreen' and the ruins of additionally devastating Sovietism; Stogoff's novel-journal sparks all these off as it clatters in the rhythm of train wheels taking us on several-day long travels to the depths of Asia; several parallel narrative strings, Stogoff flashbacks to 1986 Volgograd, to 1990 West Berlin, and Crimea of the mid 1990s, as if to a particular three-level genesis of the then 'imperial' life framework. Surely, what other purpose there is in visiting 'exotic' destination, but to make sure that there is a place 'worse than here', so early Putin's Russia seems like Sweden in comparison to -stans, but Stogoff knows very well that these are just different dosages of basically One and

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the Same; that's why he would say, upon his return to Rodina: 'This is what it's like, my great country that has taken up two thirds of Euro-Asia. A vast expense... and few scared people drinking heavily.' Anthological, however you take it.

*Teofil Pančić*

### **About 1,000,000 Euros**

Surprising, bewildering, exciting! Making a reader laugh with its uniquely Stogoffian style, the novel **1,000,000 Euros** revolves around a murder investigation into the death of a Professor in search of the Knights Templar treasure allegedly hidden in the dark and secret underground of Sankt Petersburg. Critics label this genre pop-crime story, a new genre. Successfully combining sequences from contemporary life with a thriller-plot, Stogoff guides the reader to the solution of the mystery with humour.

There are some new names being mentioned among the Russophiles lately, together with the paradigm of Russian Classicism, which are neither Dostoyevski, nor Tolstoy or Gogol. Today, the label of a classic is frequently used when spoken of modern writers, exemplars of the contemporary trends in Russian literature, such as Victor Pelevin and Ilya Stogoff.

While our readers have had a chance to get to know the works by Victor Pelevin, who has gained great popularity in Serbia, we have had no opportunity to read Stogoff much, as only one of his novels has been translated into Serbian – **mASIAfucker**, within the edition *A Hundred Slavic Novels* (Arhipelag). In Russia, his popularity follows in the footsteps of Pelevin, while in Croatia he has already gained a status of the cult writer of the new generation.

## IVANA SIMIĆ BODROŽIĆ



**Ivana Simić Bodrožić**, born in 1982 in Vukovar, is a graduate year student of Philosophy and Croatian Language. She published her poetry collection entitled *Prvi korak u tamu* (*The First Step into the Darkness*) in 2005, receiving the *Goran* Award for young poets. The same collection has won the *Kvirim* Award by Matica hrvatska for the best poet up to 35 years of age. She publishes her poetry in various literary magazines: *Vijenac*, *Quorum*, *Poezija*. Her poems have been included in the anthology of contemporary Croatian poetry *Utjeha kaosa* (*The Comfort of Chaos*) by Miroslav Mićanović, where she is featured as the youngest author. Her poetry has been translated into different languages of Europe; the Spanish publication of the entire collection is expected soon. The novel *Hotel Zagorje* was published in 2010 by publishing house Profil, receiving the *Josip i Ivan Kozarac* Award (*Success Medal*); *Kočičevo pero, Banjaluka – Beograd* (*for outstanding success in contemporary literature*); *Kiklop* – *for the best prose piece in 2010*.

### Bibliography:

***Prvi korak u tamu*** (poetry collection, SKUD Ivan Goran Kovačić, Zagreb, 2005)

***Hotel Zagorje*** (novel, Profil, Zagreb, 2010)

*Hotel Zagorje* could have been just an ordinary novel about growing up, or better still, the school days of the heroine, who, at the age of nine, leaves for the seaside with her elder brother. It could have been such a novel had it not been the summer holiday just before the war broke out in Yugoslavia, which was going to have a major influence on the heroine, namely, the novel narrator is never to come back home to Vukovar from the prolonged 'holiday'. The first line of the novel (*'I don't remember anything, how it started.'*) introduces the story's main topic, that is, the volatility of the narrator's memory, who is now grown up and is supposed to tell us the story about her life. It cannot be easily seen in the later sentences, as it seems that the narrator has an extraordinarily good memory, offering us with a spectrum of visual and gustative colours in relating the atmosphere before leaving her hometown for holiday. The reader certainly ponders over this first sentence, because, in a way, what comes after it seems to refute the first key statement in the novel. That's where the puzzle of this first sentence lies, which as a narrative cord, or better still, a cable holding a basket or a lift, which starts lifting us through the novel's structure, from the heroine's childhood through her exile, moving from one to the other foreign flat in Zagreb, ending up in a former political school in Kumrovec, which is now turned into a *hotel*, that is, involuntary home for exiles and refugees. What insoluble problem is the one an-

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nounced by the narrator at the very beginning and where exactly does her (the hotel's) narrative lift take us? It turns out that from one floor to the other, from one point in the story to the other, it leads us towards an 'empty' spot in narrative memory. This spot in the novel, so *empty* and *dark* (actually the place of her absent father), has a crucial power to organise memory. It does just that, from the first to the last line of *Hotel Zagorje*.

Saša Ilić

The narrative technique used by the author reminds of Agota Kristof's *The Notebook*. She speaks in relatively short, emotionally reduced sentences, which occasionally, especially when she touches upon her father and his violent death in the agricultural estate and pig farm of the Vupik Ovčara Combine, grow into dramatic bursts of machine gunfire of horror and evil. The text consistently stays within the perspective of the narrator, and thus the readers learn and experience things together with her. The whole terrifying description of killing, an unusually successful literary piece, we learn about through the narrator's dream. However, even here, at the certainly the most tragic moment in the book, the narrative does not stray into pathos, staying within the limits of good taste. Namely, the terrain is well prepared, possible landslides secured and all the morbidity can be expressed without any fear of jeopardising the text's cohesion. Finally, it has to be said, uttered, re-lived (in psychoanalytical sense), because it is the heart of the darkness, the spot closest to the core of the trauma.

Finally, when, after innumerable humiliations and experiences, the family (or what is left of it) reaches the desired flat in the 'closest' vicinity of Zagreb, all the despair comes gushing out from the narrator, now a young girl, simply overwhelming not her alone, but also us, who witness it. The final maturing, the final truth of every dream, is contained in the line uttered by her mother in a conversation with her friend: 'Fucking life, I couldn't sleep all night!'

*Hotel Zagorje* is a comprehensive and authentically told story about the war trauma and exile. In our parts, this has occasionally been done by Vule Žurić in his novel *Blagi dani zatim prođu*, and certainly the most moving, but without any literary context though, by Mirko Demić in his column written for refugee newspapers *Pravi odgovor*. However, Ivana Simić Bodrožić' novel captures by its details and the perspective carried out to the point of cruelty, leading to partial catharsis through a primal cry of despair not only in Croatian Zagorje, but all over the mountainous Balkans, where being a refugee is a customary life's phenomenon and strategy.

Vladimir Arsenić

When something important happens in literature, when a good book is written, then one should stop for a while, give applause and make way for the great writer. Ivana Simić Bodrožić's novel leaves a stamp on a period of Croatian history. This is the best a writer can do and the most important of all the roles literature can assume. There is no match to *Hotel Zagorje* in competition for Croatian literary awards and it cannot be measured by one or ten literary seasons. It is a novel which will mark an entire generation. So, although there is no literature which can repay for the moment of humiliation of a small girl, her mother and brother, *Hotel Zagorje* acknowledges there is a sense in such a life, after all. Literature is, in this particular case, a vehicle for compensating for the senselessness of everything else.

Miljenko Jergović

## ILDIKÓ LOVAS



### Biography:

**Ildikó Lovas** was born in Subotica on 18. August 1967. She enrolled the Hungarian Language and Literature Department of the Faculty of Liberal Arts in Novi Sad, and received her diploma in 1991. She is a professor of Hungarian language and literature by profession.

She was working at the Novi Sad Television from 1987 to 1991. She then became a reporter to the cultural section of Magyar Szó, the "Kilátó", in 1995. In 1998 she taught Hungarian language and literature in the "Bosa Miličević" Economic Secondary School.

She became the editor-in-chief of Üzenet in 1998. During her editorship, the periodical became available on the Internet, and the editorial was invited to several events together with other periodicals as well as to separate evenings dedicated to the Üzenet. It started publishing thematic issues which were an integral part of the Subotica cultural and culture-historical life – that is the reason why, apart from the writers, she enlisted several other professionals: historians, architects, ethnologists, cultural historians among her co-workers – as well as connecting to the broader "audience".

Ildikó Lovas has been organising and presenting literature evenings in the "Danilo Kiš" Town Library since 1998.

She was the City Councillor for Culture and Information in Subotica between 2003-2010.

Since 2010 she is the Councillor for Culture in National Council of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority.

### Publications:

Her writings have been published in Serbian and Hungarian periodicals ("Új Symposion", "Üzenet", "Rukovet", "Književna reč", "Matica Srpska", "Ex Symposion", "Jelenkor", "Kalligram", "Győri műhely", "Új Forrás", "Art Limes").

Her short stories have been printed in several novel anthologies: **Varázsszobor** (Forum, Novi Sad, 1990), **Felütés** (Jászberény, 1990), **Kapun kívül** (Kriterion – Pelikán, Budapest, 1993), **Budapesti aggadák** (Múlt és Jövő, Budapest, 1999), **Könyv-Jelző** (Park Kiadó, Budapest, 2002), **Huszonnyolc colour total** (Zetna, Zenta, 2003) and an anthology published by the Hungarian Writers' Association in 2001.

She also had some of her writings published in the Serbian language in a prose collection of the periodical "Symposion" (Novi Sad, 1999) as well as in the book "**Jedina priča**" (Forum, Novi Sad, 2003) which features the writings of Vojvodina Hungarian writers and has the title of one of her short stories as the title for the book.

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The Slovenian anthology titled "**Vzvalovano Blatno jezero**" (Študentska založba, Ljubljana, 2003) giving an overview of the contemporary Hungarian novels as well as the Italian-Hungarian anthology "**Scrittori ungheresi allo specchio**" (Carocci, Rome, 2003) also feature her writings.

#### **Translations from Serbian and Croatian languages:**

She translated two books by Boško Krstić (wh was both the author and the editor of the books): **Gradska kuća Subotičko čudo – Városháza, a szabadkai csoda** (1999) and **Secesija u Subotici – A szecesszió Szabadkán** (Književna zajednica – Íróközösség – Kijárat, Szabadka-Budapest, 2002), as well as the book **Sjećanja** (Publisher: Durieux, Zagreb, 1997) by Eva Grlić – **Emlékezések** (published by: Múlt és Jövő, Budapest, 2000).

#### **Her own volumes:**

Her first original volume titled **Kalamáris** (Forum, Novi Sad) was issued in 1994. It was followed by the book **A másik történet** (Osvit, Subotica) containing her short novels in 1995. Her first novel, **Meztelenül a történetben** (Forum, Novi Sad) was issued in 2000. Her third volume containing short stories was published in 2001, titled **Via del Corso** (Orpheus, Budapest). She had three novels published in 2005: the **Kijárat az Adriára – James Bond Bácskában** (Kalligram, Bratislava – reprinted in 2007), the **A spanyol menyasszony** (Kalligram, Bratislava – reprinted in 2008) and the **A kis kavics** (Kalligram, Bratislava 2010).

In Serbian language, the **Via del Corso**, translated by Árpád Vickó, was published in 2005 (Fabrika knjiga, Belgrade) the **Spanska nevesta** in 2009 (Árpád Vickó, Fabrika knjiga, Belgrade).

In German language, **Zugang Zur Adria James Bond in der Batschka** (Ballasi Institut, 2005).

In Bulgarian language **Izlaz na Adriatika Dzeims Bond i Backa** (roman, Ergo, Sofija, 2008)

In Croatian language **Izlaz na Jadran James Bond u Backoj** (roman, Meander, Zagreb, 2009)

#### **Awards, acknowledgements:**

In 1994, the **Kalamáris** won the **Szirmai Literary Award**, which is awarded every second year to the best volume of short stories.

In 2000, the novel **Meztelenül a történetben** (Nude in the Story) won the **Bodrogyári Prize** as the most outstanding literary work of the year.

In 2005 Ildikó Lovas received the **Sziveri Prize** for her work as an author and editor, and within the same year her novel **Kijárat az Adriára** won the **Bezerédi Award**.

In 1998 she received the *Móricz Zsigmond scholarship*, in 2004 the *scholarship for prose writers* and in 2007 the *NKA belles-lettres scholarship*...



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## Book Reviews

The girlish novel **Španska nevesta** of the well-known Hungarian writer Ildikó Lovas flows in two parallel voices. The first belongs to the wife of Hungarian author Géza Csáth (1887-1919) who killed her, only to end up tragically himself (taking poison when the Yugoslav authorities caught him attempting to flee to Hungary), while the other is set in the 1980s. In both - the first putting us right before the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the second introducing the fall of Yugoslavia – we follow parallel stories of two heroines who are trying to understand life and find its meaning. The story about Géza Csáth and his wife who is reading the writer's diary is a secretive and dangerous story with a tragic end, while the story of the girl who was brought up in the spirit of brotherhood and unity which, is about to be revealed as a lie, is a lyrical, literally skilfully composed piece of writing. This is a perfect opportunity for a newly introduced reader to get to know the rich fictional world of Ildikó Lovas, who has already shown it to us with *Fabrika knjiga* back in 2005, when she published the story collection entitled **Via del Corso**.

Mića Vujičić

However, the novel **Španska nevesta** is not just an engaged feminist story. It is a brilliantly done picture of the socialist society in its downfall, the society we lived in and whose antinomies and internal tensions are so plastically conjured before our eyes through the images of Subotica's discos and parks, and adventures in Novi Sad and Petrovaradin. However, Ildikó Lovas' narrative is by no means sentimental in this respect, there is no melancholy or nostalgia in it, it is no glorification of Yugoslav El Dorado, but a story of the border, whose sense of not belonging to the majority, being dislocated in geographical, ethnical, educational sense as well as in its sensibility allows it to be detached in the best sense of the word.

**Španska nevesta** is an excellent piece of writing whose attempt to escape is reflected in the very language, to stay independent and elusive, to be an authentic voice belonging to two women. Its greatness and importance lie in the constant testing of the limits set upon (perhaps self-imposed) Olga and the narrator. This novel is, finally, an invitation to the reader to cross the limits and ignore them.

Vladimir Arsenić

Together with the skilfully executed procedure of associative storytelling, where each chapter brings soft transitions of times and motifs, developing a wholeness of a memory, experience and a distinctive destiny, it can be said that the main quality of the novel **Španska nevesta** lies in the emotional span and subtle narrative nuances of the phenomenon of love. This is where the ironically genre subheading 'girlish novel' draws its adequate justification from. Girlish novel (women's writing) thus evokes and plays a pulp hint of a romance, remaining sovereignly in the territory of a 'heart discourse'. At the same time, the novel makes us wonder about the depths and layers of love both as a burden and a psychological imperative, as well as a dual way to reach happiness.

Saša Ćirić



## RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ

**RADOSLAV PETKOVIĆ** was born in 1953 in Belgrade where he graduated from the Faculty of Philology, Yugoslav and General Literature Department. He has published:

Novels: **Put u Dvigrad** (*The Trip to Dvigrad*) (1979, "Miloš Crnjanski" Award); **Zapisi iz godine jagoda** (*Notes from the Year of Strawberries*) (1983); **Senke na zidu** (*Shadows on the Wall*) (1985); **Sudbina i komentari** (*Destiny and Commentaries*) (1993, awards: "Meša Selimović", "Borba's Best Book of the Year Award, NIN's Best Novel of the Year Award, in 2004 listed in the top ten novels awarded by NIN) and **Savršeno sećanje na smrt** (*A Perfect Memory of the Death*) (2008, "Bora Stanković" Award).

Books of stories: **Izveštaj o kugi** (*A Report on Plague*) (1989, "Andrić" Award); **Čovek koji je živeo u snovima** (*The Man Who Lived in Dreams*) (1998, "Vital" Book of the Year Award).

Essayist prose books: **Ogled o mački** (*A Study of A Cat*) (1995), **O Mikelandelu govoreći** (*Speaking of Michelangelo*) (2006) and **Vizantijski internet** (*The Byzantine Internet*) (2007, Ramond Serbic Award for the entire work), as well as the books of short essays: **Upotreba vilenjaka** (*The Use of Elves*) (2008)

selected press texts: **Događaj godine** (*The Event of the Year*) (2010).

Radoslav Petković' stories are included in several anthologies published in our country and abroad.

He has translated from English the books by Defoe, Chesterton, Stephenson and Tolkien.

Radoslav Petković' works have been translated into French, Greek, Hungarian, English, German, Russian, Italian, Slovakian and Bulgarian.

He was a Secretary of the Ivo Andrić Endowment from 1988 to 1994, and the Director of the Institute for School Textbooks from 2001 to 2004. He is currently a deputy of the Provincial Secretary for Culture of the AP Vojvodina.

Married to Prof Dr Vladislava Gordić Petković, he lives and works in Novi Sad.



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*Sudbina i komentari* is a novel putting under one umbrella all the interests and choices of the previous narrative pieces by Radoslav Petković, thus representing the principal work of this notable and esteemed prose author (...)

Starting from a symptomatic and limited 'flirtation' with the genre of chronicle within a 'mosaic' structure of *Put u Dvigrad*, testing also the possibilities and limits of the journal genre in contemporary fiction in his book *Zapisi iz godine jagoda*, Radoslav Petković in his most ambitious and most mature novels arrives at particular and complex memorable narrative forms, which sublimate all these attempts. *Senke na zidu* (1985), with its mimicking narrative form which, following the history of film or 'motion pictures', actually outlines an alternative history of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially, and his *Sudbina i komentari* (1993), with its complex, ambivalent facture of authorial and personal, 'all-knowing' and 'questionable' personal narration, are pieces which narratively recast history and the present time, that is, they taking alternatively chronic-journal or 'historiographic' and personal-effective or 'actor's' stance, partially seeking, and to a great extent finding, its wholesomeness and artistic suggestiveness.

History in its different effects, a character of a historian in his different personifications – these are probably the key elements of the narrative-fictional world of the book *Sudbina i komentari*. In the novel's three parts and epilogue-like designed 'Summa', in which the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries intertwine and follow each other in different ways, sometimes 'in person', sometimes in pen and paper, the figure of a historian constantly reappears under the names of Plutarch, Zaharije Orfelin, Jovan Rajić, Pavle Vuković, Đorđe Branković and – not to forget – the Narrator-character himself, in a certain way. Some of the names represent real persons, some of them are purely fictional characters, while some – an utmost peculiar case – none of the above, that is: both at the same time.

Tihomir Brajović

*Savršeno sećanje na smrt* is set in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Byzantium, at the time of the fall of Constantinople, where Petković very vividly and accurately depicts the atmosphere of that time, outlining his characters and the war turmoil. However, this somewhat reduced time-space setting of the novel is a merely motivational base and an arena for thematising and examining some other problems Petković is more interested in, from religious to philosophical phenomena, to history and esotericism, alchemy.

*Savršeno sećanje na smrt* is obviously written 'in cahoots' with postmodern poetics, as it reinterprets and problematises history each time when the discourse threads on the 'steep and slippery paths of memory' and testimony, since it poetically consciously establishes numerous intertextual relations which are seen in an emphatic illuminative function, because the book thematises ontological and mystical status of the text whose structural arrangement allows it to grow into the probably greatest factor in the constitution of the meaning. Petković' overall creative imagination – which would fail some of the writers so glorified today – imagination which finds its full formal embodiment in a truly occult, textually alchemic way, is an example of an authentic and outstanding enrichment of contemporary Serbian literature.

Đorđe Despić

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In this sense, the novel *Savršeno sećanje na smrt* is a novel of soft prose procedures but monumentally complex by its historical period and diversity of philosophical concepts it takes under scrutiny, including esoteric tradition, so rarely explored in domestic prose. By the technique of weaving a complex pattern from the threads belonging to different genre forms of narration, which stem from both traditions, Platonic (reality as a secret) and Aristotlean (art as a mimesis of reality), the author presents a reader with the choice of accepting or refusing the one he can or want, without stripping the text of its essentially novelistic features, which is an awe inspiring achievement of the accomplished story teller's great prosaic talent.

And to the initial dilemma: Plato or Aristotle, to put it more simply – spirit or matter, beyond this world or from it, Petković offers both narrative forms, but by prosaic means he gives a hint as to which one he prefers, by subverting and transcending the mimesis by fiction and historiography by an alternative history.

*Jasmina Vrbavac*

*Savršeno sećanje na smrt* is not just an artistic creation, but a novel which has succeeded in returning credence to storytelling, simultaneously showing the essential futility of the search for history. No one will ever be able to deny that Constantinople fell in 1453, but a tremendous skill will be necessary to describe it more credibly than Radoslav Petković' story does.

*Vladimir Arsenić*

Radoslav Petković is actually in absolute control of his novel, playing with history, philosophy, discussing religion; he is humorous and entertains his reader all the time even though the topic of his novel is by no means easy. For all these reasons, we could echo the opinion that *Savršeno sećanje na smrt* is a magnum opus of Radoslav Petković, a triumph of the writer's experience and his already well-known, almost unbelievable erudition.

*Mića Vujičić*

## DRAGAN VELIKIĆ



**Dragan Velikić**, born in Belgrade in 1953, graduated from the Department of General Literature and Theory of Literature at the Belgrade Faculty of Philology. From 1994 to 1999 he was the editor of Radio B92 Publishing Sector, working also as a columnist for NIN, Vreme, Danas and Reporter.

From March 1999 to mid 2002 he lived in Budapest, Vienna and Berlin, holding the post of Serbian Ambassador in Austria between June 2005 and November 2009. He lives and works in Belgrade as a freelance writer.

Published novels: **Via Pula** (1988, Miloš Crnjanski Award), **Astragan** (*Caracul*) (1991), **Hamsin 51** (1993), **Severni zid** (*The Northern Wall*) (1995, Borislav Pekić Fund scholarship), **Danteov trg** (*Dante's Piazza*) (1997), **Slučaj Bremen** (*The Bremen Case*) (2001), **Dosije Domaševski** (*The Domaševski File*) (2003) and **Ruski prozor** (*The Russian Window*) (2007, NIN Award and Meša Selimović Award); story collections: **Pogrešan pokret** (*A Wrong Move*) (1983), **Staklena bašta** (*Greenhouse*) (1985) and **Beograd i druge priče** (*Belgrade and Other Stories*) (2009); essay collections: **YU-tlantida** (1993), **Deponija** (*Landfill*) (1994), **Stanje stvari** (*State of Affairs*) (1998), **Pseća pošta** (*The Dog Mail*) (2006) and **O piscima i gradovima** (*On Writers and Towns*) (2010) and a book of selected interviews **39,5** (2010).

He has received the *Central European Award* by the Viennese Institute for the Danube Region in 2008. His latest novel *The Russian Window* has seen 14 editions in the scope of two years, with a circulation totalling at 22,000 copies.

Dragan Velikić' books have been translated into a dozen European languages, with a particularly strong presence in the German speaking area. His work has been represented in domestic and foreign anthologies.

### Translated books:

**Via Pula**, Wieser Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1991; second edition March 2000; **Das Astragan-Fell**, Wieser Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1992; **Stimme aus der Erdspalte**, Wieser Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1992; **Glas iz Razpoke**, Založba Wieser, Celovec, 1993; **Youtlantide**, UBACS, Rennes, 1993; **Der Zeichner des Meridian**, Wieser Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1994; **Astragan**, Triada, Praha, 1998; **Dante-Platz**, Wieser Verlag, Klagenfurt, 1999; the second edition Oktober 1999; the third edition November 1999; **Az eszaki fal**, Forum, Novi Sad, 2000; **Dante Ter**, Jelenkor Kiado, Pecs, 2001; **Le mur nord**, Gaia Editions, Larbey, 2001; **Der Fall Bremen**, Ullstein, Berlin, 2002; **Plaza Dante**, Metaphora, Madrid, 2002; **Dossier Domaszewski**, Mare Verlag, Hamburg, 2004; **Astragan**, Cankarjeva Založba, Ljubljana, 2004; **Lichter der Berührung**, Ullstein, Berlin, 2005.; **Casus Brema**, Pogranicze, Sejny, 2005.; **Severná stena**, Kalligram, Bratislava 2006.; **A Domaszewsky-dosszié**, Napkút Kiadó, Budapest, 2006.; **Lichter der Berührung**, Taschenbuch, List, Berlin, 2006.; **Pripad Brémy**, Kalligram, Bratislava 2008.; **Russische Fenster**, DTV, München, 2008.; **Via Pola**, Emauela Zandonai Editore, Rovereto, 2009.; **Orosz Ablak**, Geopen, Budapest 2009.; **Pyщкy Прозорецy**, Сто Словенски Романи /Serbia/, Слово, Скопје, 2009.; **Ρωσικό Παράθυρο**, Konidaris, Athens, 2010.;

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*The Russian Window*, Geopoetika Publishing, Belgrade, 2010.; *Рускія Прозорец*, Agata, Софія, 2010.; *Dritarja Ruse*, Koha, Prishtinë, nëntor, 2010.; *La finestra Russa*, Zandonai, Rovereto, 2011.

## Book Reviews

*The Russian Window* is a true masterpiece; it has the potential necessary for keeping a book insensitive to the passage of time, making it attractive in the future as well.

Vladimir Vujinović, Radio B92

The omnibus novel by Dragan Velikić *The Russian Window*, the winner of the NIN Award, is an allegory of personal and political choice, and an allegory of identity, equally individual and national.

Vladislava Gordić Petković, Danas

Velikić is absolutely fashion-free in regard to literature, both global and local. His hero is as out of fashion as the Orient Express, resembling the private person of the author, and the stylistic devices used to tell his story are certainly not from the 2008 spring-summer season.

Miljenko Jergović, Jutarnji list

The hero of *The Russian Window* is the very style it was written in. A contemporary reader could ask himself why what we call literature today used to be called belles-lettres. Velikić' style offers an answer to such an inquisitive reader. So, the beauty of style: there is a kind of the lost time where each Velikić' book is aiming at.

Slobodan Vladušić, Politika

A writer who, after tens of editions, panegyrics and numerous translations, finds strength to (even discreetly like this) step out of his (tested) matrix, without slipping into populism and servility to the taste of majority, deserves all praises and a prizes.

Zoran Janković, Pop Boks

Velikić is 'a poet of the City' extraordinaire, and in this novel it is Budapest in the first line, the lavish royal city which does not get every year a dedication so successful, knowledgeable, full of love yet quite unsentimental, even 'distanced' at first sight... Extraordinarily artful, remarkable mastery of Velikić.

Teofil Pančić, Vreme

Composed as a concentric, spiral unit comprising of three unequal parts: *Notes from the Life of a Bourgeois*, *Trains* and *Some Other Stories*, that is, as the subheading says, a 'novel-omnibus', Dragan Velikić' *The Russian Window* is a carefully constructed, dramaturgically tense and persuasive, and to a great extent a stylistically expressively precise, and in certain parts, a particularly suggestive and effectively executed piece of fiction. It is actually a story done in fragments about destinies of those who don't really feel like at home in the world as it is.

Mileta Aćimović Ivkov, Književnost

## VULE ŽURIĆ



Vule Žurić was born in Sarajevo in 1969.

He has published the following books of stories: *Umri muški (Die Hard)*, 1991, *Dvije godine hladnoće (Two Years of Coldness)*, 1995, *U krevetu sa Madonom (In Bed with Madonna)*, 1998, *Valceri i snošaji (Waltzes and Copulations)*, 2001, *Muljin ruž (Mouljin Rouge)*, 2003 and *Katenačo (Catenaccio)*, 2011

novels: *Blagi dani zatim prođu (And Then the Holy Days Are Gone)*, 2001, *Rinfuz (In Bulk)*, 2003, *Tigrero*, 2005, *Crne ćurke i druga knjiga crnih ćurki (Black Turkeys and the Second Book of Black Turkeys)*, 2006, *Mrtve brave (Dead Bolts)*, 2008, *Narodnjakova smrt (The Death of a Folk Singer)*, 2009 and *Nedelja pacova (The Week of the Rat)*, 2010.

He has authored the following radio-dramas: *Omča od hartije (A Paper Noose)*, dedicated to the life and death of Bora Stanković, *Čovek bez peripetija (A Man without Hassles)*, dedicated to Milan Rakić, *Ostrvo Uskoković (Island Uskoković)*, dedicated to Milutin Uskoković, *Crni glas za belu hartiju (A Black Voice for White Paper)*, dedicated to Emanuil Janković and *Branin orfeuum u Zunzarinoj palate (Branas Orpheum in Garbage Fly's Palace)*, dedicated to Brana Cvetković. The dramas, produced by the Radio Belgrade's Drama Programme have been aired on the waves of the National Service. He has also co-authored the screen play for the graduation film of Miloš Ajdinović *Mrtav čuvek štuca (A Dead Man Hiccups)*.

Žurić' stories have been translated into German, Polish, Slovenian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Hungarian and Italian. In 2003 his selected stories were published in Italian under the title *Stassera a mezzogiorno (Tonight at Noon)* by Edizioni Tagete.

He lives in Pančevo, where he leads a number of literary programmes, affirming the youngest generation of Pančevo's authors.

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...I had such an experience while reading **Narodnjakova smrt**, my favourite novel by Vule, not only because of its thematic closeness to my profession, but because of the fact that Vule is one of those who has realised that having as difficult and as complicated time setting as possible is extraordinarily important for an artist. In **Narodnjakova smrt** he chose nowadays, or the period of transition, while **Nedelja pacova** is set in a still better time: World War II, seven days of November 1943 in Titovo Jajce. Is there a more interesting time in the history of this country abundant in difficult times?! Moreover, Vule's heroes of this *first partisan mystery*, as he calls it, are all mythological characters whose mention invites tears in the eyes of anyone who feels any nostalgia for the good old times. From Tito, Đilas, whose only interest lies in firing squads, through Koča, Churchill's son, Nikoletina Bursać, Branko and Skender, and Vladimir Dedijer, who flies to Italy to have a shrapnel removed from his head... this book is a combination of Alan Ford and Arthur Conan Doyle, revealing all the courage of the author's joyride and readiness to collect all the myths of our past in one place, to come close to them through a relaxed and unpretentious humour, without a trace of hatred so present and common in our parts at the mention of historical figures of our not so bright and already mentioned past. That's where the secret of Vule's charm lies. Rare are those who can put in a book so many historical figures whose influence is still felt, without being pretentious, malicious and surly, without taking a higher moral ground in regard to the greats spoken about....

*Dr Nele Karajlić*

Vule Žurić' prose often radiates elitism typical of *catenaccio*. Such insistence on elitism is good and defends (!) both Žurić' poetics and its autonomy within the *text* of the contemporary Serbian literature. This is not an idiosyncratic and burdening self-confinement, but an authenticity of the *voice*, which is very important to Žurić. Therefore, I think about the author's work so far as a critical *expansion of the territory of Text*, in the sense of a local narrative procedure as well as in the sense of an intervention in the field of autochthonous language.

*Srđan Srdić*

Seemingly naive, buffoon-like entertaining and bizarrely self-contained **Narodnjakova smrt** is actually ironical and subversive in the first line. Because it is culturally 'indecent', and perhaps even more so because it is 'unconstructive', because it offers no 'serious' and 'generally important' topic, or at least a kind of aesthetical, ideological or practical consolation, at this very moment, when we have almost already forgotten our demons from the past and reached the 'green branch'. And this is outright cheeky, isn't it?

*Tihomir Brajović*