

**WELCOME!**

**Lettre Ulysses Award  
for the Art of Reportage 2004**

**Award Ceremony on 2 October 2004**

**Press Folder**

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## **A World Prize for the Art of Reportage – the *Lettre Ulysses Award*** **At a Glance**

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### **What is the Lettre Ulysses Award?**

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- The *Lettre Ulysses Award* is the first and so far the only world prize for reportage literature.
- It is awarded annually for the best pieces of literary reportage in the world, which were published within the preceding two years.
- It is also the most generously endowed, and the only international literary prize in the German capital city of Berlin.

### **Prizes**

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The *Lettre Ulysses Award* gives three money prizes of: € 50,000, € 30,000, and € 20,000.

Additionally, the winner receives a Lettre Ulysses Trophy created by the artist Jakob Mattner.

Further Prizes:

- The Goethe-Institut gives four Berlin sojourns to the other finalists.
- The clock manufacturer *Nomos/ Glashütte* gives four hand-made clocks to the other finalists
- Every short-listed candidate receives a translation of their texts into English. This supports their access to international media and publishing houses.

### **Prize Award**

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- The presentation takes place on 2 October 2004 in a gala attended by ca. 500 international guests in the Berlin TIPI tent.
- The prize winners are first announced at this event.
- All of the finalists and jury members will be present.
- The finalists will read from their texts and provide background information about them.
- The Tunisian author Abdelwahab Meddeb will give a speech entitled “Epiphanies from the Southern Shore,” about the situation in the Arab world.
- The Polish reportage writer Ryszard Kapuscinski will present the Lettre Ulysses Trophy.

## **Initiators and Partners**

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- The prize was initiated by the cultural magazine *Lettre International*, Berlin.
- It is supported by the *Aventis Foundation*.
- The *Goethe-Institut* is a partner of the prize.

## **Goals and Ambitions**

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The *Lettre Ulysses Award* aims to:

- Place the authors and their achievements in literary reportage in the centre of worldwide attention
- Provide reportage writers with symbolic, financial and moral support
- Strengthen the important tradition of reportage literature
- To raise interest in one of the most fascinating journalistic and literary forms
- To establish the prize both world-wide and as a prominent cultural event in Berlin's agenda.

## **Jury**

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The Jury 2004:

- Consists of eleven members
- Is composed exclusively of writers who are at home in the genre of reportage
- Unites native speakers of ten of the largest language areas world-wide (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)
- Linguistically ensures the largest possible region of perception
- Communicates in English
- Changes annually in terms of its composition.

## **Jury procedures**

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- Texts which can be considered must have been first published after January 2002.
- Each jury member has the right to nominate two texts. These can be written in any language.
- Each jury member explains their proposals through written appraisals.
- All of the appraisals and proposed texts are translated into English and distributed among the jury.
- The decisions, about a short-list and the prize winners, are made in a two-stage discussion process.

## The *Lettre Ulysses Award* 2003 – the first year

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- The *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art Reportage* was established in 2003. The prize was awarded for the first time on 4 October.
- Last year, the Russian author Anna Politkovskaja won the first prize (€ 50,000) for her book *Le déshonneur russe* about the war in Chechnya, which still has not been published in Russia.
- The second prize (€ 30,000) was awarded to the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah for *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*; Jiang Hao, from China, received the third prize (€ 20,000) for *The Secret Life of Poachers*.
- Further finalists were Ian Buruma (Great Britain), Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (USA), Linda Polman (Holland), Mark Tully and Gillian Wright (India/ Great Britain) who wrote about Chinese political dissidents, the Bronx, development in India, and UN crisis intervention.
- The Polish reportage writer Ryszard Kapuscinski held the ceremonial speech of the evening, about “Herodotus – Reporter of the Ancient World,” which was reproduced in *Lettre International* Nr. 63. The text can be found at the end of this press folder (p. 41 ff), and on the Award website.
- The premiere was well-received among the media, publishing houses and authors. Many in the international press, television and radio took the opportunity to provide more in-depth reports about the genre of reportage.

## Reactions to the first *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage*

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“Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaja was awarded the *Lettre Ulysses Award*, worth € 50,000. This is the first time the prize has been given. It aims to focus attention on literary journalism, against the background of the processes of globalization. In the future, outstanding pieces of reportage from all over the world are to be distinguished annually: texts that search beyond “what is reflected in the mass media”.

**FAZ, 6 October 2003**

“For Isabel Hilton, acting as speaker for the Lettre prize jury, the main sign of a good reporter is a journey which is not only understood in geographical terms. For her, the reporter leaves the certitudes and supposed securities of the world which is reflected in the media. The good reporter does not suffer from habitual thoughtlessness, but provides a history for events and conveys people as they are living their lives and worlds. In a time of globalization and the economization of the news business which channels attention and standardizes medial perception, the reporter is the friend of the particular and defendant of the divergent and the different.”

**NZZ Online, 16.01.2004**

“Shocking events in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. make plain just how deceptive the level of supposed public awareness really is. The *Lettre Ulysses Award*

seeks out writers whose inquisitiveness and courage bind good journalism together with the art of writing.”

**arte, 4 October 2003**

“The *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* was presented in the center of Berlin. It is the first award of its kind, and was given for the best book of literary journalism. The prize is part of an initiative by the magazine *Lettre International*, which has provided a formidable impulse in the promotion of serious journalism, in these times of wretchedness, poverty, cholera and garbage.”

**El País, 6 October 2003**

“The South African writer Breyten Breytenbach moderated the evening’s program as though he was born to the task. He invited the renowned reporter on Africa, Ryszard Kapuscinski, on to the stage with the joke that the Africans had only lent Kapuscinski to the Polish, whom he described as a missionary and translator who has brought greater understanding to the world.”

**Der Tagesspiegel, 6 October 2003**

“There is still no “world audience” as such. The glaring spotlights of international yet Western-dominated media such as BBC or CNN move around quickly, with the result that background information is never brought to light. Prominent European or American newspapers can afford foreign correspondents, and open their pages to writers from all over the world. Nevertheless, their readers remain limited, nationally and linguistically. While the *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* is a sort of journalistic prize, it is in fact more a form of literary recognition, a Nobel Prize for political non-fiction.”

**Süddeutsche Zeitung, 6 October 2003**

“The task facing the eleven jurors was not easy: months of reading carefully-translated literary works from all over the world, in a process that aimed to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. Then, the jurors—all authors well acquainted with the realm of literary journalism—had to agree upon three pieces to which they hoped to draw world-wide attention.”

**Público, 6 October 2003**

“One of the foremost practitioners of literary journalism, the Polish writer and journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, argued that the genre began with the historian Herodotus. If so, it sets at least one record: in more than 2,000 years, it is one of the few written forms that had neither been widely defined nor publicly celebrated with a prize. This has now been rectified. The winner of the first *Lettre Ulysses Award* was the Russian writer Anna Politkovskaja, for her second book on the war in Chechnya. Her writing is both more powerful and more durable than any number of news reports or television images. Good reportage is more than a recitation of events: it brings the qualities of a good novelist to bear on reality, without breaking its contract with fact.”

**New Statesman, 13 October 2003**

“We are only capable of progressing in life when we weigh our prejudices against reality, and we can learn—through our encounter with the “other”—how to recognize who we are. This is

the best way to describe the authors gathered in Berlin; authors who had the courage to challenge themselves and us. The seven nominated texts tell stories that would otherwise not be heeded, describing horror and injustice in an effective and forceful manner. Among the authors' themes are Chinese dissidents-in-exile, Somali refugees, poachers in Mongolia and rebels in Chechnya. It is here where the people, whose clamor is normally not loud enough to be heard, are given a voice."

**Dänischer Rundfunk, 11 October 2003**

"If you are passionate about journalism and the written word, if newspaper columns are too short for you, if you hate it when you reach the end of a good piece of reportage, then you will surely be interested in the *Lettre Ulysses Award* for literary reportage web site. The list of finalists is a good catalogue of quality journalism."

**Periodistas 21, 28 November 2003**

"We are in the Tipi, a tent which today is hosting 500 guests: journalists, writers, editors, and representatives of diverse international literary magazines. The magazine *Lettre International* has just awarded a weighty prize: € 100,000 for the *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage*. It is a prize that is a stimulus for good quality journalism; journalism that synthesizes rigorously researched information and the careful use of [literary] forms."

**Radio de la Plata, 4 October 2003**

## **The Lettre Ulysses Award** **Reportage: Tradition and Importance**

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### **Fascinating Journalistic and Literary Forms**

Reportage literature has a long and meaningful tradition, and is one of the most fascinating journalistic and literary forms. Some reportage texts reach beyond the particular circumstances from which they arose, becoming important literary works. Others count as historical texts, from Herodotus to Mark Twain, Egon Erwin Kirsch to Gabriel García Márquez.

Reporters move in unfamiliar zones, in distant territories of the world, as eyewitnesses of history and detectives of the unknown. They then recount the drama of life and the *comédie humaine*, tell stories of creation and destruction, hope and despair, fanaticism and cold calculation, of the hardship and the beauty of life. Their passion is reality.

These days, the dominance of the audiovisual media reduces the influence of the written word, and, in large part, has become synonymous with reporting and the importance of events. But writers of reportage take a stand against such oversimplified and short-sighted interpretations. With persistence and empathy, they dedicate themselves to their subjects, and attempt to convey the world in all its contradictory details.

Their curiosity, their courage, their talent for perception and feeling for language create excellent texts which enrich our understanding of the world.

The Art of Reportage, with its capacity to describe the world against the background of a complex and conflict-laden process of “globalization“, is becoming increasingly important; especially if we recall the explosive events concocted beyond the horizon of our perception.

Astonishingly, there has never before been a world prize for reportage literature. On the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to V.S. Naipaul in Stockholm, Günter Grass spoke of the need for a “second Nobel Prize for reportage literature.” At this point, the moves towards establishing such a prize were long in motion. The initiators took up the opportunity of this affinity of ideas to invite Günter Grass to join the *Lettre Ulysses Award* advisory board.

## The Jury

### **Nomination of Prize Winners**

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#### **Transcending linguistic and cultural borders**

In this tense period of globalization, the *Lettre Ulysses Award* hopes to encourage people to take the complexity of cultural differences and social developments seriously, to explore these and to describe them accurately, without falling back on stereotypes.

Authors who combine the curiosity and courage of journalists with the art of writing can decisively contribute to the understanding of local and global developments.

These perspectives also played an important role in the selection of the jurors – all well-known authors in their linguistic and cultural regions.

#### ***The Jury – experienced, independent and impartial***

The jury's aim is to annually locate the best examples of literary reportage published worldwide.

The members' experience and independence guarantee an objective and well-substantiated selection and award procedure.

#### **Jury 2004 (Members, and their language regions)**

- **Svetlana Alexievitch** (Belarus): *Russian*
- **Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs** (Germany): *German*
- **Isabel Hilton** (Great Britain) : *English*
- **Natsuki Ikezawa** (Japan): *Japanese*
- **Tomás Eloy Martínez** (Argentina): *Spanish*
- **Michael Massing** (USA): *English*
- **Pankaj Mishra** (India): *Hindi*
- **Amjad Nasser** (Jordan): *Arabic*
- **Pedro Rosa Mendes** (Portugal): *Portuguese*
- **Abdourahman Waberi** (Djibouti/ France): *French*
- **Zhao Xinshan** (China): *Chinese (Mandarin)*

**The Short List 2004**

**Overview of Texts and Books**

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At the end of August 2004, the *Lettre Ulysses Award* international jury decided upon the finalists. For this, all of the texts have been translated into English.

All of the finalists will be present in Berlin on 2 October at the award ceremony. Excerpts from the texts in the final round will be published in German in the autumn edition (Nr. 66) of *Lettre International*, Berlin.

**Daniel Bergner**

*Soldiers of Light*

Allen Lane/Penguin, London 2004. English

(published 2003 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, under the title *In the Land of Magic Soldiers. A Story of White and Black in West Africa*)

**Howard W. French**

*A Continent for the Taking. The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*

Random House, New York 2003. English

**Chen Guidi & Wu Chuntao**

*A Survey of Chinese Peasants*

People's Literature Publication Company, Beijing 2003, Chinese

**Jean Hatzfeld**

*Une saison de machettes*

Le Seuil, Paris 2003. French

**Tracy Kidder**

*Mountains Beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*

Random House, New York 2003. English

**William Langewiesche**

*American Ground. Unbuilding the World Trade Center*

North Point Press/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York 2002. English

**Paulo Moura**

*A Baby and a Passport to Heaven & Missnana. The Light Sleep of Death*

Pública, magazine of the daily Público, Lisbon August & November 2003. Portuguese

**The Short List 2004**

**The Authors: Biographical and Bibliographical Summaries**

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**DANIEL BERGNER, USA**  
***Soldiers of Light***

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*"The music came from the edge of the camp, where the government soldiers stayed, or just beyond. Hearing it – that fast rhythm, that slow high-pitched voice singing words I couldn't understand – slipped away from my cot in the thatch lean-to, searching for the music's source. Dawn didn't come gradually there but all at once; before, I needed my flashlight to navigate past the rotting army truck, the trees split by lightening and others by shrapnel, and across the plateau of scrub towards the dark sheds where I thought the singer might be. I wanted to listen up close to his elongated notes, stretching above the tight drumbeats. I wanted to see his face in the first light.*

*I turned off the main path towards the shed where my ears directed me. The music ceased. I stood in the middle of the field, waiting. The shed was still a good distance away and I couldn't be sure the singer was there. Dawn neared. The Sierra Leonean soldiers would be stirring, and I felt a bit foolish, viewing myself as they might view me, a white man stumbling through the scrub, hunting for a morning song they took for granted."*

Journalist and writer. Daniel Bergner first travelled to Africa in 1983, and has reported from many African countries, as well as Afghanistan. He graduated from Columbia University's MFA Fiction Writing Program in 1988.

He is the author of the novel *Moments of Favor*, published in 1991. The novel is about the dangerous appeal of celebrity status. In 1999, *The God of the Rodeo* was published. In order to write the book, Bergner spent a year visiting prisoners with life sentences in Louisiana's "Angola prison." This prison hosts an annual rodeo for the public where the convicts compete against one another. The text tells stories of the rodeo, of those inmates Bergner came to know, and his chilling encounters with Angola's powerful warden. *The God of the Rodeo* was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year.

Daniel Bergner's *Soldiers of Light* (first published in 2003 under the title *In the Land of Magic Soldiers: A Story of White and Black in West Africa*) arose following visits to Sierra Leone over several years. In the West African landscape of spectacular beauty, he finds rampaging soldiers—many not yet in their teens—who have made a custom of hacking off the hands of their victims, then letting them live as the ultimate emblem of terror. The country is so anarchic and so desperate that, forty years after independence, some people long to be re-colonized. And the West wants to save it.

Bergner follows both a set of white would-be saviours—a family of American missionaries, a mercenary helicopter gunship pilot, and the army of Great Britain—and also a set of Sierra Leoneans, among them a father who rescues his daughter from rape, loses his hands as punishment, then begins to rebuild his life; a child soldier and sometime cannibal; and a highly Westernized medical student who claims immunity to bullets and a cure for H.I.V. It is a story of black and white, of the First World and the world left infinitely behind. The work describes people's involvement in the country's civil war, and their journeys towards restitution. The volume won the *Overseas Press Club Award* for international reporting, and was named the Best Book in 2003 by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Daniel Bergner's writing has been published in *Mother Jones*, and he is a regular contributor to *Harpers, Talk*, the *New York Times Magazine* and the *New York Times*. He is currently working on a book about Afghanistan.

Daniel Bergner lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife and two children.

### **HOWARD FRENCH, USA**

#### ***A Continent for the Taking. The Tragedy and Hope of Africa***

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*"I couldn't live with myself if I didn't wrestle with Africa and attempt to bring it to the world's attention [...]"*

*We need to re-imagine the way we think of Africa, and get it out of the cellars of our imaginations."*

Journalist and writer. Howard French was born in Washington, D.C. in 1958. As he was heading off to college at the University of Massachusetts, his father, a doctor, took a job running rural clinics for the World Health Organization in Cote d'Ivoire. Howard French spent his summers in Abidjan with his family, and then moved to Africa after graduating in 1979.

From 1980 to 1982, Howard French taught English at the University of the Ivory Coast, in Abidjan and also worked as a French-English translator. He then started writing as a freelance reporter in West Africa for a variety of publications, including *Africa News*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *African Business*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Howard French joined the *New York Times* in 1986, where he was a metropolitan reporter until 1990, covering a variety of topics from police to health care to Federal Court. During the course of his career, the newspaper has awarded him its highest prize, the *Publisher's Award*, six times, most recently for his coverage of Pakistan in 2002.

From 1990 to 1994, Howard French covered the Caribbean, Central America and the northern tier of South America for the *Times*. French then became a *New York Times* bureau chief in Abidjan in 1994 and covered West and Central Africa until 1998, devoting particular attention to the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko, the late dictator of Zaire, in 1997. His work in Zaire (Congo) was nominated for the *Pulitzer Prize*, and won the *Overseas Press Coverage Award* for best interpretation of foreign affairs. His articles from the Ivory Coast have appeared in papers and magazines around the world, including *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, and *The International Herald Tribune*.

From 1998 to 1999, French was a visiting scholar at the University of Hawaii, where he studied the Japanese language, and East Asian affairs. In the spring of 1999, he was also a Jefferson Fellow at the East-West Center, in Honolulu. He took up the position as Tokyo Bureau Chief for the *New York Times* in 1999, with responsibility for Japan, the Koreas and the Russian Far East.

French's book, *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, is a synthesis of his twenty-five years' experience reporting on Africa. Through observation, historical

narratives and anecdotes, he describes a wide range of countries and analyses the continent's situation, its disasters, its challenges and its opportunities.

Howard French is now a senior writer for the *New York Times*, and has been the newspaper's Shanghai Bureau Chief since August 2003.

Howard French lives in Shanghai, China with his wife and their two sons.

### **CHEN GUIDI AND WU CHUNTAO, CHINA** ***A Survey of Chinese Peasants***

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*"We have seen unimaginable poverty, unimaginable evil, unimaginable suffering and desperation, unimaginable resistance and silence. We are not heroes, because we have no power and no money. All we have are our writing pens [...]. Whether the city dwellers hold prejudices against or sympathies with the peasants, they don't really understand them. This book was written for the city dwellers to read, so that they can understand how peasants really live."*

Writers and Journalists. Wu Chuntao was born in the Hunan province of China in 1963. Her husband, Chen Guidi, was born in 1942 in the Chinese province of Anhui. Both authors come from peasant families, spending their formative years in the countryside before moving to the city at the age of nine and eleven, respectively.

Wu and Chen are both members and respected writers of the *Hefei Literature Association*. Mr. Chen, who is also a member of the *Association of Chinese Writers*, has been a recipient of the *Lu Xun Literature Achievement Award*—one of the most important literary prizes in China—for his piece of reportage on the environmental conditions of the Huaihe river. Several of his texts received nationwide renown for their courage investigating corruption and abuses. Both authors have received awards by the US journal *Contemporary Age* for different, groundbreaking pieces of reportage writing. A recent text by Mrs Wu won a place on the billboard of the newest literary works in China.

In 2001, the couple began their work on their monumental piece of literary reportage entitled *A Survey of Chinese Peasants (Zhongguo Nongmin Diao cha)*. Though they had discussed the idea for the text over a ten year period, it was when Mrs. Wu was giving birth to her son that the couple finally made their decision; the couple observed how a pregnant mother and her child died while giving birth because the family was too poor to afford proper medical attention.

*A Survey of Chinese Peasants* took over three years to write, forcing the couple to spend all of their savings in order to produce the book. Mr. Chen and Mrs. Wu travelled to over 50 towns throughout the Anhui province, made several trips to Beijing to talk with authorities, and interviewed thousands of peasants.

*A Survey of Chinese Peasants* is an exposé on the inequality and injustice forced upon the Chinese peasantry, who number about 900 million. The book describes what the authors

term to be a *guaiquan*, or vicious circle, where unjust taxes and the arbitrariness of authorities, sometimes resulting in extreme violence against the peasants, is the norm.

The exposé was first published by the literary magazine *Dangdai* (Modern Magazine) at the end of 2003. The magazine quickly sold 100,000 copies; all ten editions were sold out. The success of the piece promoted one of China's main literary publishers, the *People's Literature Publishing House* of Beijing, to reproduce the reportage in book format. In just one month the book sold over 150,000 copies before suddenly being taken off the shelf by Chinese authorities in March, 2004. Following the move, only pirated editions could be found on the streets, seven million of which were sold throughout China.

The couple is currently writing a new exposé under the working title *Fighting for Peasants in Court*.

Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao live in the city of Hefei in the Anhui province.

### **JEAN HATZFELD, FRANCE** ***Une saison de machettes***

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*"A war is like a river which breaks its banks. It floods all that is around, but it's still a stream that flows. A genocide is when the river dries out: there is nothing left. As long as I live, I shall return to Nyamata. Even if I know that I will never understand."*

*"Alone, faced with the reality of genocide, a survivor chooses to speak, or to be silent. A survivor who chooses to speak accepts the constant need to question and challenge the confusions of his memories.*

*Faced with the reality of genocide, a killer's first choice is to be silent, and his second is to lie. So you cannot plan on questioning him alone. And so I decided—after a string of insipid discussions—to address a group of prisoners who would feel protected from the dangers of truth by their friendship and complicity, a bunch of pals secure in their group identity established before the genocide."*

Reporter, war correspondent, and writer. Jean Hatzfeld was born in Madagascar in 1949, where his father was a teacher. His Jewish parents had moved there seven years earlier, fleeing from the Nazis, but he and his family eventually returned to the Auvergne region.

After having various jobs, Jean Hatzfeld started to work as journalist for the French daily *Libération* in 1977. He also contributed to other newspapers and magazines, such as *L'Autre Journal*, *Géo*, *Actuel*, *Rolling Stones*, *Autrement*, and he has directed four TV documentaries.

As a special correspondent and war reporter, Hatzfeld travelled extensively throughout Eastern European countries, from the advent of Solidarnosc in Poland until the fall of Berlin's Wall. He covered the 'Velvet Revolution' in former Czechoslovakia and the fall of the Ceausescu regime in Romania.

For 25 years, since the end of 1970s, he mainly worked in the war-affected countries of the Middle East, in Lebanon, Israel and recently in Iraq. He spent three years in countries of Former Yugoslavia, between Vukovar and Sarajevo. In Sarajevo he was seriously injured

through a Kalashnikov salvo. Hatzfeld published two books set against this background: *L'Air de la guerre* (1994), evoking his experiences in the former Yugoslavia; and *La guerre au bord du fleuve* (1999), a novel inspired by the war. He also worked in Haiti, Congo, Algeria, Burundi and Iran.

In 1994, Jean Hatzfeld travelled to Rwanda to report about the massacre there, and its aftermath, for *Libération*. He later decided to leave daily journalism in order to focus solely on research into the genocide. He published *Dans le nu de la vie* in 2000, in which he reports the stories of Tutsi survivors. The volume was awarded the *Prix Culture 2000*, the *Prix Pierre Mille* and the *Prix France Culture*. Hatzfeld said that after the publication of his first volume, readers expressed interest in hearing the voices of the Hutu perpetrators. Two years later, his conversations with condemned Hutus culminated in *Une Saison de machettes*, for which he won the essay category of the *Prix Femina* in 2003 and the *Prix Jossef Kessel* in 2004.

Jean Hatzfeld divides his time between Rwanda and Paris.

### **TRACY KIDDER, USA**

***Mountains Beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World***

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*"I'm a little suspicious of the great, overarching view. It always leaves something out. What interests me is trying to catch the reflection of the human being on the page. I'm interested in how ordinary people live their lives."*

*"A lot of the job of a person trying to write stories that are true is to make what's true believable. It isn't enough to say, well, it actually happened. You have to make it believable on the page; you have to bring people to life and scenes to life."*

Writer, reporter, and journalist. Tracy Kidder was born in New York City in 1945. He spent his childhood growing up in Oyster Bay, Long Island, where his father was a lawyer and his mother a teacher. He attended Harvard where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1967. From 1967 until 1969, he served as first lieutenant in Vietnam, and was awarded a Bronze Star.

Following the war, Kidder obtained his Masters from the University of Iowa, where he participated in the Writers' Workshop, a program known for the literary lustre of both its staff and alumni. It was there that Kidder met *Atlantic Monthly* Contributing Editor Dan Wakefield, who helped him get his first assignment for the magazine as a freelance writer. Kidder's articles in the *Atlantic* have covered a broad array of topics, ranging from railroads, to energy, architecture, the environment, and more.

His first book, *The Road to Yuba City: A Journey into the Juan Corona Murders*, published in 1974, grew out of an assignment about a mass-murder trial in California. His second publication, *The Soul of a New Machine* (1981) won him both a *Pulitzer Prize* and the *American Book Award* in 1982. Other bestselling works of non-fiction include *House* (1985), *Among Schoolchildren* (1989), *Old Friends* (1993), and *Home Town* (1999).

Kidder has also received the *Robert F. Kennedy Book Award* (1990), the *Ambassador Book Award* (1990) and the *Sarah Josepha Hale Award* (1998), among others. Three of his books

have been considered by the *New York Times Book Review* to be one of the best books published in their respective years. He has also written several short works of fiction.

Kidder's most recent work, *Mountain Beyond Mountains*, is a journey into the life work of Dr. Paul Farmer, an American doctor who has dedicated himself to fighting global health problems and who established hospitals and new health care structures in several countries, in favour of the poorest of the poor. More than a biography, the book described his pragmatic attempts under difficult circumstances to create real forms of progress, and to increase awareness world-wide concerning these issues.

Kidder also writes for the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times Book Review*. He is a Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Massachusetts, Springfield College, and Clarkson University.

He is currently working on a book about his experiences in Vietnam.

Tracy Kidder lives with his wife and family in western Massachusetts and Maine.

## **WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE, USA** ***American Ground. Unbuilding the World Trade Center***

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*"I'd like to keep surprising readers with unexpected subjects. I'd like to take them to places where they otherwise might not go, and to pursue this idea of mine that our world is not getting smaller but rather the opposite – that despite the uniformity that seems to afflict it, the human experience remains infinitely rich and varied. "*

Travel writer, journalist. William Langewiesche was born in 1955. He graduated from Stanford University in 1977 with a degree in anthropology. Assisted by his father, himself a pilot, he first sat behind the controls of an airplane when he was just five years old. By the age of fourteen he had already performed his first solo flight.

After two decades of working as a professional pilot, at the age of 36, Langewiesche began to dedicate himself to his true passion: writing. In 1991 he began writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*. His first piece of reportage for the magazine, entitled *The World in Its Extreme*, began a relationship with the publication which reaches up to the present.

Langewiesche has written on a range of issues which stand out both for their diversity and their strong, evocative prose. His reportage include pieces on the U.S.-Mexican border, a 300,000 hectare compound owned by the wealthy American environmentalist Douglas Tompkins in the heart of Chile, the plane crashes of ValueJet 592 and EgyptAir 990, the U.S. military deployment in the Balkans, the million-dollar nose of wine connoisseur Robert Parker, and the crash of the space shuttle Columbia, among others.

Langewiesche is the author of five books, his first of which is *Cutting for Sign* (1994), which deals with the complex reality of the U.S.—Mexican border. This volume was followed in 1996 by his book of travel writing, *Sahara Unveiled: A Journey Across the Desert*. *Sahara*

*Unveiled* has been translated into Spanish and German. In 1998, Langewiesche went on to publish a third book—a mixture of personal, philosophical, and journalistic essays—about his passion for flying entitled *Inside the Sky: A Meditation on Flight*.

His work on the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> in New York, *American Ground: Unbuilding the World Trade Center* (2002), is an insider's account of the nine month period of clean-up of the Twin Towers, where Langewiesche was the only journalist permitted to cover all aspects of the demolition process. *American Ground* was considered to be one of the best books in 2002 by *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Publishers Weekly*. His latest book, *The Outlaw Sea: A World of Freedom, Chaos, and Crime*, was published in May, 2004.

Langewiesche has been nominated for several writing and journalism prizes such as the *Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism*, and is a four-time nominee for the *National Critics Circle Award*. In 2002, he won the *National Magazine Award for Excellence in Reporting* for his piece in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled *The Crash of EgyptAir 990*. Two years later, in 2004, his groundbreaking reportage on the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster—*Columbia's Last Flight*—was awarded the same prize. Langewiesche currently lives in France and California.

## **PAULO MOURA, Portugal**

### ***A Baby and a Passport to Heaven & Missnana. The Light Sleep of Death***

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*“Does the world know we’re here?” asks Jonathan, 29. ‘In Europe is there anyone who lives in bushes? Does the world know we go hungry? That we’re here without shelter, in winter, in the rain and cold? That we’re the object of hunts, of killings?’  
In Missnana, death is a light sleeper.”*

Journalist, writer. Paulo Moura was born in Porto, Portugal on December 27, 1959. He studied in Porto, gaining a degree in History and another in Journalism. In 1989, he began working as a journalist with the Portuguese daily newspaper *Público*. He served as a correspondent in the United States from 1993 to 1995, based first in Washington, then in New York City. In 1997 he began working for the *Público's* Sunday magazine *Pública*. He was the magazine's editor-in-chief from 1999 to 2001.

Over the last fifteen years Moura has written pieces of reportage and chronicles about culture and media. He has reported on all major conflicts and wars, in Algeria, Angola, Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In Afghanistan, he followed the Northern Alliance in its military campaign from Kadja Baudin to Kabul. In Iraq, he followed the American troops from Kuwait to Baghdad.

Moura has been awarded many journalism prizes, from the Prize for Reportage of the *Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento* in 1994, followed by the Prize for Written Reportage of the *Clube Português de Imprensa* in 1996, 1998 and 2002. In 2001, he won the *European Commission's Prize for Journalism*. And in 2003, he was awarded the “Journalism for Tolerance” prize by the Portuguese government's High Commission for

Immigration and Ethnic Minorities for his pieces of reportage on the inhumane conditions which Sub-Saharan immigrants encounter along their flight to Europe.

A pair of investigative articles has been nominated for the prize, *Missnana. The Light Sleep of Death*, and *A Baby and a Passport to Heaven*. In these, Moura observes African refugees' strategies on their way to the wealthy North, their stations, their living conditions, and their manifold attempts and failures to enter Fortress Europe.

Before beginning to work as a journalist, Moura taught History at a secondary school. Now he teaches journalism at the *Escola Superior de Comunicação Social de Lisboa*.

Paulo Moura lives in Estoril, at the seaside near Lisbon, and has a 16-year-old son who wants to be a scientist.

The Long List 2004

**An Overview of the Texts Selected by the Jury**

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The long list of texts nominated for the *Lettre Ulysses Award 2004* (in alphabetical order, listing the author, title, publisher and year of publication):

**Nominated Texts 2004**

- **Ales Adamovich & Daniil Granin**, Russia: *The Blockade Book*, Peak Independent Publishers, Moscow, 2003
- **Suad al-Amiry**, Palestine: *Sharon and my Mother-in-Law*, Feltrinelli (*Sharon e mia suocera*), Milan, 2003
- **Daniel Bergner**, USA: *Soldiers of Light*, Allen Lane/Penguin; first published under the title *In the Land of Magic Soldiers*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 2003
- **Chen Guidi & Wu Chuntao**, China: *A Survey of Chinese Peasants*, People's Literature Publication Company, Beijing, 2003
- **Howard W. French**, USA: *A Continent for the Taking. The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2004
- **Rose George**, Great Britain: *A Life Removed. Hunting for Refuge in the Modern World*, Penguin, London, 2004
- **Amira Hass**, Israel: *Reporting from Ramallah: An Israeli Journalist in an Occupied Land*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles & New York, 2003
- **Jean Hatzfeld**, France: *Une saison de machettes*, Seuil, Paris, 2003
- **Jiang Wei**, China: *Who do You Represent?* Reportage Vol. 17, Beijing, 2003
- **Tracy Kidder**, USA: *Mountains beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*, Random House, New York, 2003
- **William Langewiesche**, USA: *American Ground. Unbuilding the World Trade Center*, North Point Press/FSG, New York, 2002
- **Graciela Mochkofsky**, Argentina: *Timerman. El periodista que quiso ser parte del poder (1923-1999)*, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 2003
- **Paulo Moura**, Portugal: *Missnana. O sonho leve da morte & Um bebé é um passaporte para o Céu*, Pública: supplement of Público, Lisbon, 2003
- **Mikhail Ryklin**, Russia: *A Time for Diagnosis*, Logos, Moscow, 2003
- **Åsne Seierstad**, Norway: *The Bookseller of Kabul*, J. W. Cappelens Forlag (*Bokhandleren i Kabul - et familiedrama*), Oslo, 2002
- **Kayoko Yamasaki**, Japan: *A Blue Darkness Whispers from There*, Kawade Shobo, Tokyo, 2003

## The Jurors

### **Biographical and Bibliographical Summaries**

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#### ***Svetlana Alexievitch, Belarus***

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*“Chernobyl is a leap into a completely new reality. What happens there not only exceeds our knowledge but our imagination as well ... The whole time I asked myself the question: Whom are we to learn from? In any case, science is not helping us along and culture is powerless. Do we perhaps have to learn from the animals? Or from simple people who live close to nature? Those for me are the major questions.”*

Writer, journalist, filmmaker, editor. Svetlana Alexievitch, born in 1948 in the Ukrainian village of Ivano-Frankovsk, is a world-renowned journalist whose writings, theatre pieces, and screenplays have been reproduced and translated in over twenty different countries.

Her Belarusian father was a school headmaster, and her Ukrainian mother was a teacher. Even as a child, Alexievitch was aware of her family's painful past: Eleven families members were victims of the war and the Stalin period.

Like her father, Alexievitch studied journalism at the Belarusian State University in Minsk. After finishing her studies, she remained in the city working as an editor, until being forcibly transferred to the Polish border for a year.

Her career began with the publication of two books on the Second World War. Two years of censorship elapsed after the completion of her first book, *War's Unwomanly Face*, before it was eventually published. Alexievitch then produced a volume of childhood memories about the war entitled *Last Witnesses*, which led officials to accuse Alexievitch of “pacifism and the un-heroic portrayal of the Soviet woman”.

For its demystification of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, her third book *Zinky Boys* was vehemently attacked by both Communists and the Russian military. The volume was subsequently banned for ten years. Her following publication, *Bewitched by Death* (1993), investigates the problems of suicidal disturbances in a traumatized post-Soviet society, which has not yet come to terms with the ending of this period.

Her book *Voices from Chernobyl: Chronicle of the Future*, based on talks with hundreds of witnesses and victims of the 1986 nuclear catastrophe, contains both shocking evidence and profound analysis. For Alexievitch, Chernobyl is more than just an accident. It is a sign of how, with the radioactive catastrophe, an era of new dangers has dawned, an era which can only be measured in “astronomic time.” Chernobyl was a technical accident; an accident on the part of human understanding, but also more: a crisis in our world view.

Alexievitch has been involved in the making of 21 documentary films and has written various theater pieces. Her books have been published in 19 countries, and some have also been filmed, set to music, or dramatized. In 2002, she took part in the exhibition *Die Kriegerinnen*

*und der Tod: Das Schicksal der Frauen in der Roten Armee (Female Soldiers and Death: The Fate of Women in the Red Army)*, which was shown in the Deutsch-Russisches Museum Karlshorst, near Berlin. She also participated in Paul Virilio's exhibition *Ce qui arrive* in the Parisian Fondation Cartier.

Her texts have received various international prizes including the *Kurt Tucholsky Prize* from the Swedish PEN 1996, the *Triumph Prize for Russian Art and Literature* 1997, the *Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding* 1998, the *Prix Témoin du Monde* (Witness of the World) from Radio France Internationale 1999, the *Friederich Ebert Foundation Special Prize for the Best Political Book*, and the *Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize* 2001, among others. Svetlana Alexievitch lives in France.

She is currently a guest at *Künstlerhaus Schloß Wiepersdorf*.

### **Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Germany**

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*“Everything I do is related to my travels. I travel, therefore I am. Gone. Out of excitement, I write the beginning of the story with much affection. Before reading about the subject. Before the journey. Before the encounter. Before the all so satisfying passion. Having barely arrived, the landscapes of Cairo and New York can be seen in the distance, while I walk around in the highlands, wait for a bus in the lowlands, or linger around a port in anticipation of the next steamship.*

*In the middle of a book, my eyes dash through the rest of the pages; they want to be somewhere else.*

*I disappear, depart, and then I come back. Now I'm here. Now I'm there.”*

Anthropologist, writer, publisher. Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs was born in 1945. He has studied philosophy, ethnology, theatre, linguistics, and psychology at universities in Cologne, Rome, and Bremen.

In 1975, Heinrichs began his publishing career with a re-issue of Johann Jakob Bachofen's 1861 book *Das Mutterrecht (Mother Right)*. This was followed by various re-publications of the works of Michel Leiris (1977, et seqq.), Victor Segalens (1982 et seqq.), and Fritz Morgenthaler (1984 et seqq.), among others. Five years later, in 1980, he founded the *Qumran Verlag für Ethnologie und Kunst* (Qumran Publishing House for Ethnology and Art), based in Frankfurt and Paris.

Alongside his publishing activities, Heinrich has written numerous travel books in the German language, (*Annäherung an Afrika. Reiseerfahrungen in Marroko*, 1980; *Der Reisende und sein Schatten*, 1990; *Die geheimen Wunder des Reisens*, 1993; *Das Feuerland-Projekt. Über das Reisen*, 1997), several books on ethnology and psychology (*Ein Leben als Künstler und Ethnologe. Über Michel Leiris*, 1981; *Sprachkörper. Zu Claude Lévi-Strauss und Jacques Lacan*, 1983; *Wilde Künstler. Primitivismus, art brut und die Trugbilder der Identität*, 1995); various critiques of modernity (*Die katastrophale Moderne*, 1984; *Fenster zur Welt. Positionen der Moderne*, 1989; *Grenzgänger der Moderne*, 1994). He has also published two collections of conversations: *Die Geschichte ist nicht zuende. Gespräche über die Zukunft des Menschen* with Peter Sloterdijk, 1999, and *Die Sonne und der Tod. Dialogische*

*Untersuchungen*, 2001 (*Sun and Death. A Dialogical Study*). His books have been translated into English, French, Spanish and Dutch.

Heinrichs regularly publishes columns in various German newspapers and magazines such as *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Die Zeit*, *Lettre International*, and *Azkente*. He is also a collaborator for *Deutschlandfunk* for the radio program *Büchermarkt* (Book Market). He speaks English, French and Spanish.

In 2002, Heinrichs received the *Denkbar Prize for Dialogical Thinking*. He is a frequent lecturer at diverse institutes and universities in Germany and abroad. His latest book, *Die gekränkte Supermacht. Amerika auf der Couch*, was published in 2003.

Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs lives in Frankfurt and in Spain.

### ***Isabel Hilton, Great Britain***

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*"I had already tried several routes to Dharamsala. This time, I flew to Jammu in Kashmir and continued by car. As we crossed Kashmir towards Himachal Pradesh, the usual caravans moved along the road: slow shambling water buffaloes, lean cattle, now and again a moth-eaten camel, a herd of monkeys. People wrapped in large shawls huddled around open fires in search of protection from the morning cold. Now and again someone would hold a bare foot over the flames, obviously without any uncomfortable consequences. Groups of neat schoolchildren in colourful uniforms rambled along the edge of the street, the boys with white topknots, the girls in sari uniforms or pleated skirts. At checkpoints, whose purpose of existence was a secret, papers were checked and stamped."*

Writer, journalist, reporter, commentator, radio broadcaster. Isabel Hilton was born in Aberdeen, Scotland. From 1973 to 1975, she studied Sinology at the University of Edinburgh and continued her education at the Peking Languages Institute and the Fudan University, both in Shanghai. She is an expert in Chinese affairs.

In 1977 she joined the *Sunday Times* as a feature writer. Subsequent posts included: News Reporter; Insight Reporter; Special Correspondent, China; Latin America Editor; Assistant Foreign Editor, for which she covered a wide range of domestic and foreign affairs. Foreign assignments took her to the United States, France, Spain, the Middle East, Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Africa. In 1986, Isabel Hilton joined *The Independent* newspaper, pre-launch, as Latin America Editor. She progressed to European Affairs Editor, from 1989, covering the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent elections in Central and Eastern Europe. She also oversaw coverage of Western Europe, including the European Community, in the run up to 1992. She left the *Independent* in 1995 to write a book about China and Tibet.

Isabel Hilton presented Radio 4's *The World Tonight* (1995-1998) and joined Radio 3's *Night Waves* as a presenter in 1999. Her documentaries include: *Petra and the General, an investigation of the life and death of Petra Kelly*, (BBC 1994); *Kingdom of the Lost Boy, an account of the search for the 11th Panchen Lama* (BBC 1996); *City on the Edge, a documentary about economic reforms in China* (1998); *Condemned to Live, a report about the after-effects of mass rape and genocide in Rwanda* (1999), and *The Caravan of Death*,

about the case against Pinochet. She has also worked on documentaries about right-wing extremists in Germany, and bio-piracy in Ecuador.

Isabel Hilton wrote *The Search for the Panchen Lama* in 1999. She co-authored *The Falklands War*, 1982; *The Fourth Reich: Klaus Barbie and the Neo-Fascist Connection*, 1984; and *Betrayed, Abuses of the Rights of the Child* (contributor), 1986. Her work has been included in *The Best of Granta Travel*, 1990 and *The Best American Travel Writing*, 1999. Hilton is the only reporter ever to have interviewed the world's longest-reigning military dictator, General Alfredo Stroessner, and this is also included in a *Granta* collection. She contributes regularly to various publications, including the *New Yorker*, *New Statesman*, *Time*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Literary Review*, *Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* and *Lettre International*.

Hilton is a renowned lecturer on international relations. She is a member of the *Royal Institute of International Affairs* and has a seat on the editorial board of *International Affairs*. She is also a member of the *British Association of China Scholars* and is part of the advisory committee of the *Latin America Bureau*.

She is currently working on a book of collected reportage, including writing from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tibet, India, and the Middle East. She speaks fluent Chinese, Spanish, French and German.

Isabel Hilton lives with her family in London.

### ***Natsuki Ikezawa, Japan***

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*"Theirs were extremely pensive expressions. Were they being pumped with righteous indignation and desire to fight? Were they reliving these past twenty years of warfare and sanctions? Were the younger ones among them steeling their will to fight? Or trying to hold back anxieties about the death and disfigurement awaiting them?"*

Novelist, poet, essayist, literary critic, translator. Natsuki Ikezawa was born in 1945 in Hokkaido, in the northern part of Japan.

After studying physics at Saitama University, Ikezawa moved to Greece in 1974, where he resided for three years. On returning to Japan, Ikezawa first became known as a lyric poet and translator, translating American authors Kurt Vonnegut and Jack Kerouac, among others. He also translated Modern Greek poetry into Japanese, and produced subtitles for the films of Greek director Theodoros Angelopoulos.

In 1984, Ikezawa published his first novel, a modern adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. Three years later, in 1987, he published a collection of longer short stories *Still Lives*, which was highly praised, and received the renowned *Akutagawa Prize*. He has since published many stories and essays, including *Ending with Happiness*, which received the *Yomiuri Prize*.

In 1995, Ikezawa published the novel *The Fall of Macias Guili* (not available in English) for which he was awarded the *Tanizaki-Junichiro Prize*. The work is a political novel about the uses and abuses of power, and the conflict between Western modernism and the primeval world of the South Pacific: a novel about spirituality, death, sexuality, and the archaic dimensions of life. His next novel, *A Burden of Flowers*, is set in Bali and is an exciting story involving drug schemes, court dramas, and political conflicts. As in many of his novels and essays, Ikezawa engages with the themes of cultural identity within the current political and societal context, and his relation to nature and the cosmos.

In the autumn of 2002, Ikezawa journeyed to Iraq where, together with renowned Japanese photographer Seiichi Motohashi, he documented the country in the face of the approaching war. This resulted in a piece of literary reportage entitled *On a Small Bridge in Iraq*, which can be found on the internet ([www.cafeimpala.com](http://www.cafeimpala.com)) alongside his weekly commentaries *Welcome to the New Century*.

Ikezawa speaks Japanese, English, French and Greek. He is considered to be one Japan's most important contemporary writers. His works have received laudatory reviews and have been translated into English, French, Russian, Turkish, and German.

Ikezawa used to live on the Southern Japanese island of Okinawa and has just moved to France.

### **Tomás Eloy Martínez, Argentina**

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*"Of all the professions, journalism is the one that allows the least amount of space for absolute truths. The fundamental principles of journalism are doubt, careful revision of information and constant scrutiny. It is precisely the points of certainty in a document that should arouse journalistic inquiry. To query, to learn, and to doubt a hundred times over before reporting about something: these are the most important verbs in the most risky, passionate profession of the world."*

Writer, journalist, screenplay writer, university professor. Tomás Eloy Martínez was born in 1934 in the Argentinean town of Tucumán, where he studied Spanish and Latin American Literature. In 1970, he received his MA in Literature from the *Université de Paris VII*, writing his dissertation on the works of Jorge Luis Borges.

After studying in Tucumán, Martínez moved to Buenos Aires in 1957, where he began working as a film critic for the daily *La Nación* and as Editor-in-Chief of the weekly *Primera Plana*. He wrote for a variety of other publications (*La Opinión, Panorama, Abril*) until he was forced into exile in 1975 by the newly-established military dictatorship. From 1975 to 1983, Martínez lived as an *émigré* in Caracas, Venezuela, where he edited the literary section of the newspaper *El Nacional*. Later, he launched the daily *El Diario*, and worked as its Editor-in-Chief (1979).

In 1969, Martínez published his first book, *Sagrado*. He then went on to publish *La pasión según Trelew* (1974), in which the author combined various literary genres including prose, drama, lyricism and journalism. Two collections of essays followed, entitled *Los testigos de*

*afuera* (1978), and *Retrato del artista enmascarado* (1982); and a volume of short stories, *Lugar común, la muerte* (1979).

From 1984 to 1987, Martínez was Professor of Latin American Literature at the University of Maryland. In this period, he published his next novel, *La novela de Perón* (1985), dealing with Juan Domingo Perón's return in 1973, after 18 years in exile. The book caused a scandal in Argentina, as parts of Perón's supposedly fictional memories were suspected to be genuine. This is in fact possible, as Martínez had interviewed the Argentinean populist many times.

This book was followed by the publication of *La mano del amo* (1991) and *Santa Evita* (1995). The latter has been translated into over 30 languages, and is the most-translated book in Argentinean history. The work prompted Gabriel García Márquez to comment, "Finally, here is the novel that I have always wanted to read."

His book *El vuelo de la reina*, published in 2002, won the distinguished Spanish Alfaguara Award for Best Novel. The jury attributed its decision to the importance of how Martínez describes the power of politics and mass media as a "world of corruption" that pervades all aspects of society. The book was subsequently translated into 17 languages. He has also written ten screenplays. His most recent publication, a novel entitled *El cantor de tango*, has already been released in Argentina and Spain, and will be published by Bloomsbury (London & New York) and Suhrkamp (Germany) at the beginning of 2005.

Martínez has received seven honorary doctorates. He has been a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation, the Wilson Center, and the Kellogg Institute, all based in the United States; and is currently Deputy Director of the *Fundación para un Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano* in Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia. Martínez is a regular columnist for *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, *El País* of Madrid, and the *New York Times* Syndicate.

Tomás Eloy Martínez resides in New Jersey, where he is Distinguished Professor for the Latin American Studies Program at Rutgers University.

### ***Michael Massing, USA***

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*"I think that since 9/11, journalism has been in a very tight place in the world; almost never before has there been more attention paid to it and more need for journalists to report insightfully and aggressively about what's going on. The magnitude of events, the need for information about other societies and other cultures is greater than ever before. But at the same time, the pressures on journalists are greater than they've ever been, because the stakes are high, because there's a tremendous degree of expectation of force exerted by public opinion. Even the best journalists are often prisoners of their own culture's way of looking at things."*

Journalist, writer, lecturer. Michael Massing received his Bachelor of Arts from *Harvard College* and an MS from the *London School of Economics and Political Science*.

In 1998, Massing published his first book entitled *The Fix: Solving the Nation's Drug Problem*; a critical report on the history of the "War on Drugs" in the United States since the 1960s. That same year, the highly acclaimed book received the *Washington Monthly's Political Book Award*. Arising from an article which was written for the *New York Review of Books*, he carried out ten years of extensive research that took him from the crop growing regions of the Andes and the militarized Mexican-American border to the abandoned American inner-city ghettos, this major journalistic undertaking demystified the disastrous failures of the U.S. War on Drugs.

In his professional career, Massing has also focused on the relationship between media and political powers in crisis and war regions, leading him to report about Kosovo and from Iraq, among other countries. More recently, Massing published *Now They Tell Us* for the *New York Review of Books*, an investigation of why the U.S. media failed to report properly on the Bush Administration's pre-war preparations. *Now They Tell Us* is a meticulous critique of how American journalists feared to challenge a popular president in times of patriotism and war, thus utterly failing in their responsibility to report the truth.

Massing's articles have appeared in publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *The New Republic*, *The Washington Monthly*, and *Rolling Stone*.

In 1989, Massing was awarded an Alicia Patterson Fellowship for Journalism, and in 1992 he was named a MacArthur Fellow.

He is a former Executive Editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* and remains a contributing editor at that publication. He has served as an adjunct professor at the *Columbia School of Journalism* and at the *Columbia School for International and Public Affairs*. He is co-founder of the *Committee to Protect Journalists* and currently sits on its board of directors. He speaks English and Spanish and is a member of *PEN America* and of the *New York Institute for the Humanities*.

Michael Massing lives in New York and is currently working on a book about the rivalries between Erasmus and Martin Luther.

### ***Pankaj Mishra, India***

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*"Culturally speaking, India is much more dependent on the West today than in previous times. The nationalistic faction that split apart from the independence movement had practically been defeated. I belong to a globalized generation and mostly grew up with Russian and European literature. I write for people that have read the same books as me, Flaubert, Turgenjev and Chekhov for example, from whom I myself have learned."*

Writer, literary critic, and lecturer. Pankaj Mishra was born in 1969 in India. His childhood and adolescence were spent in the Northern Indian province of Uttar Pradesh. Mishra first graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce from the Allahabad University before completing his

MA in English Literature at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. He wrote his first novel when he was only seventeen years old, and two further novels followed, although none have been published.

In 1992, he moved to Mashobra where he began working as a literary critic for *The Indian Review of Books* and for the newspaper *The Pioneer*. His travel book, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (1995), describes the profound changes taking place in rural Indian towns.

Mishra's first international breakthrough came in 1999 with the publication of his novel *The Romantics*. The book's main protagonist is a young Brahmin intellectual named Samar, who stumbles upon a group of Western dropouts. The ensuing friendship provides Samar with a fresh, more serious look at life, and he begins an erratic journey in search of himself. The novel was an international success and has been translated into eleven European languages.

Mishra contributes book reviews and political essays to a number of journals, including *The New York Review of Books*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *New York Times* and the *New Statesman*. Working as an editor for Harper Collins, he is credited with having discovered Arundhati Roy's exceptional novel *The God of Small Things*. Mishra has also written an introduction to V.S. Naipaul's latest travel book *The Writer and the World: Essays*. He speaks Urdu, Hindi and English.

Mishra is currently working on projects such as *How to be Modern: Travels in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan* (2005), *The Rise of Modern India* (2006), as well as a book on Buddha entitled *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World*, which will be published in October 2004. He states: "I would like to express much more than is possible in a novel. I grew up where Buddha walked the earth, 2,500 years ago. For me, this region represents history; possibly the only one with which I feel a bond."

Pankaj Mishra lives between New Delhi, Shimla, and London.

### **Amjad Nasser, Jordan**

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*"You finally belong to another generation when  
you read the works of younger poets and grieve about the poetry  
whose voices remind you of offspring singers  
that sound like adamant cicadas of  
sleepless nights  
you can count with your fingers the number of people walking the streets  
that are dressed like you and have the same haircut  
looking long and hard before they cross the street"*

Poet, journalist and publisher. Amjad Nasser was born in 1955 in al-Turra, Jordan. He has worked as a journalist since 1976, in television and newspapers, first in the cultural section of

*Al-Hadaf* journal in Beirut, and later in Cyprus as Arts Editor of *Al-Ufq* magazine. He also spent time working as a reporter for Jordanian television.

Having co-founded *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* daily newspaper in London, he has worked as Associate Editor and Arts Editor since 1987. Under his direction, the daily's cultural supplement has grown to become a major forum for modern Arabic literature. He is also one of the founding editors of *Banipal*, a magazine for modern Arabic literature.

He has published various collections of poetry and two travel books, *Flight of Wings* (1998) and *Under More than One Sky* (2002). In 1998, a collection of his selected poems were published in French, followed by one in Italian (2001), and one in Spanish (2002). Some of his poems can also be found in various poetry anthologies in English and German. His complete works were published in Arabic in 2002.

Nasser has attended several international poetry conferences as a guest, including meetings in Colombia, Italy, Holland, and Brunei, among others. Recently, a Jordanian television station produced a documentary about the journalist and poet's life.

Amjad Nasser currently lives in London.

### ***Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal***

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*"With each millimeter of soil I am confronted with the last moment of my life. As far as the eye can see. That's why they only drive me around at night. To protect me. It's supposed to suit me. Now it is night, and abundantly so. I am always nervous at night. My fear has gone, deserted me. It has become part of the terrain. There is no solidarity. Nothing. Nothing for me to embrace. That can be deadly. The earth, the streets, the savannah, the land: fear is like a map that we are forced to cling to."*

Writer and freelance journalist. Pedro Rosa Mendes was born in Cernache do Bonjardim in Portugal in 1968. After his jurisprudence studies in Coimbra, he worked as a journalist, mainly for the daily *Público* – the Portuguese partner in the "WorldMedia" syndicate of newspapers. He reported from conflicts in Zaire, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe, Angola – he was *Público* correspondent in Luanda in 1997 –, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. He was twice awarded the *Feature of the Year* Prize in Portugal and in 2000 he got the Lisbon Press Club's *Bordalo*, the most prestigious award for Portuguese journalists.

In 1996 he wrote accompanying texts for the photographs of Alfredo Cunha, the publication *O Melhor Café* was the result. In 1999, Pedro Rosa Mendes published *Baía dos Tigres* (Publicações Dom Quixote), voted as the best Portuguese novel by the Portuguese Pen Club. Ryszard Kapuscinsky praised the book as "a fascinating, lively and rich work of literature". The novel was so far translated in German, French, Italian and Spanish. In English the book is due to be released in May 2003 in the United States and Canada (*Bay of Tigers*, Harcourt&Brace, New York), United Kingdom (Granta Books, London), Ireland, Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand and also, later the same year, in Denmark and the Netherlands. The book describes the three and a half month journey which the author made in 1997 from Angola to Mozambique. Pedro Rosa Mendes traveled over 10,000 km of

the continent between the two former Portuguese colonies. The civil wars after independence from the former colonial power left, particularly in Angola, areas where there were more mines than people. Not only the landscape but also the political relationships were a testimony to the ravages of war.

The French translation of *Baía dos Tigres* was short listed in June 2001 for the *Étonnant Voyageurs Book of the Year Award* (Saint Malo). A group of German, Swiss and Austrian critics voted the book for the monthly “Bestenlisten” in the months after it was released.

In November 2002, Pedro Rosa Mendes published *Ilhas de Fogo* (ACEP, Lisbon), a reportage book with co-author French illustrator Alain Corbel, about civil society organizations in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissao, São Tomé e Príncipe and Cape-Verde. Pedro Rosa Mendes is also the author of the novel, *Atlântico* (Temas e Debates, Lisbon, 2003), with co-author photographer João Francisco Vilhena.

Pedro Rosa Mendes works now as freelance journalist. He contributed with reportage and essays to different publications, including *Lettre International* (Berlin), *El Pais Semanal* (Madrid), *Terra Negra* (Brussels) and *Grand Street* (New York). In 2001, Pedro Rosa Mendes was invited to join the *Pro-Helvetia Foundation's* (Geneva) project *Über die Grenze. Au-delà des frontières. Frontiere a confronto. Borders and Beyond*, an international photography project and international exhibition commissioned by photographer Daniel Schwartz.

In Fall 2000, Pedro Rosa Mendes was a *Stiftung Kulturfond* Fellow in *Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf*, Germany. He is currently a Fellow of the *DAAD* writers-in-residence program in Berlin and works on a reportage book about Western Africa.

Pedro Rosa Mendes lives with his family in Portugal.

### ***Abdourahman A. Waberi, Djibouti and France***

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*“For almost two hundred years now, since the defeat of Napoleon III., the collapse of the colonial empire and the ensuing hegemony of the United States, sweet ‘ole France is really very tiny. This country has become a trusted landscape for me. I study the natives in their natural environment. However formidable, the major difference between me and professional anthropologists is that I don’t work for any investigative institution, but instead do it at my own expense. My moneybag suffers because of it, but who really cares. In Africa, investigations and apprenticeships are devaluated to such an extent that mothers already begin to worry about their daughter’s future as soon as they are old enough to marry, telling their admirers, “Hey, you! Go work or teach!”*

Novelist, journalist, essayist, poet. Abdourahman A. Waberi was born in 1965 in Djibouti. He spent his childhood and adolescence in Northeast Africa. He was 12 years old when Djibouti declared its independence in 1977. He was lastingly influenced by this upheaval and saw himself as a “contemporary” of his country, to which he wished to maintain a literary obligation. In 1985, he left Djibouti, which he called a “miniature republic” and went to Caen in France to study English language and literature. He wrote a Master’s thesis on the poetics of space and on politics in the fictional work of the Somalian writer Nuruddin Farah.

Waberi is the author of numerous novels, essays, articles, and travel reports. His articles, short stories, and reviews are published in many international newspapers, including *Le Monde diplomatique*, *Africultures*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Jeune Afrique Economie*, *DU*, *Grand Street*, and *Lettre International*. Waberi is a renowned authority on African literature and works as a consultant for the French publishing house *Le Serpent à Plumes* on the selection of African and Black Diaspora literatures.

Waberi's first volume of stories *Le Pays sans ombre (Land without Shadows)* was published in 1994 and in the same year received the *Grand prix de la Nouvelle francophone* from the *Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Française de Belgique* and the *Prix Albert Bernard* of the *Académie des Sciences d'Outre-mer de Paris*. In 1996, another volume of stories followed *Cahier nomade (Nomad Notebook)*, which received the reputed prize *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique noire*. Waberi's first novel *Balbala* was published in 1997. With this book and the volumes of stories that preceded it, he completed the Djibouti trilogy about his "native country." For *Balbala*, Waberi received various prizes, including an author's grant from *UNESCO*. In 2000, his first volume of poems *Les Nomades, mes frères, vont boire à la Grande Ourse* was published.

In 1998, the organizer of the festival *Fest'Africa* in Lille invited Abdourahman Waberi to come to Kigali in the context of the project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire*. With 9 other writers as well as a film director and a sculptor, he attempted to artistically address the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. This resulted in the book *Moisson de Crânes: textes pour le Rwanda*, reflections about the Rwandan genocide. This mixture of essays, travelogues, and stories was published in Paris in 2000. In 2001, *Rift, routes, rails* was published, fiction-like variations on the twin themes of exile and nomadism. In 2003, his second novel *Transit* will be published, which he characterizes as a "universal chronicle on the subject of war and exile."

*Le Pays sans ombre (Land without Shadows)* and the project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire* were adapted for the stage.

Waberi's books have been translated into German, English, Italian, Spanish, and Serbian.

He lives with his family in Caen, Normandy, where he works as an English teacher.

### **Zhao Xinshan, China**

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*"I write every day, from morning to night. It calms my soul's need for silence. People today lack silence, externally and internally. Shangri-La is a Tibetan word. It means "Paradise," or "Harmonious Land." Shangri-La lies in the area between Tibet and the Province of Yunnan. Traveling in a valley in the region, I came across a Catholic church, built one hundred years ago by the French. There, the quiet graves of two priests are to be found. However, the native people of Tibet venerate the God of Nature, or the God within Nature. This valley is a panorama of possibility. Here, in this last, quiet place in the world, people and nature, people and people, knowledge and belief, live in unity."*

Writer, philosopher, university professor. Zhao Xinshan was born in 1938 in the South-eastern Chinese province of Jiangxi. From 1955 to 1961, he studied philosophy, German literature, natural sciences and music at the University of Peking. Zhao then worked for the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science until 1978, dealing with issues connected to crops, soils, and population.

Zhao taught comparative philosophy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences from 1978 to 1983. He then worked as professor for Comparative Philosophy at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, between 1983 and 1988. He has been teaching philosophy at the Institute for European Research of the Shanghai Academy since 1988. He speaks German and English, as well as Chinese.

Although his works have yet to find a foreign audience, Zhao has written more than 40 books on a diverse range of topics, including music theory, philosophy, architecture, politics, human development, and poetry. His work *Shangri-La as I see it* is a volume of literary reportage. His latest book, entitled *Genius-Creativity-Madness*, is a psycho-analytical study of the works and thinking of several major musicians and intellectuals.

Zhao has received several research grants to carry out studies in both Japan and Germany. He has been a member of the Advisory Board of the China Writers' Association since 1994.

Zhao lives with his family in Shanghai.

**Voices on the Genre of Literary Reportage**  
**Statements from the Jurors**

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We need a second Nobel Prize for literature, for reportage literature. Above all others, Ryszard Kapuscinski would have earned such a prize.

**Günter Grass** (Stockholm 2001 – Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to V.S. Naipaul)

The genre of “literary reportage” has a different meaning in many languages and cultures. But despite all the differences, there is one important aspect in common: pieces of literary reportage are more journalistic texts than literature. They are created through serious witnessing and they work with “facts.”

**Pedro Rosa Mendes** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Portugal)

Reading good reportage should be fun for readers. And this pleasure has many facets: to learn about something, to really understand something, or to develop sympathy for the people concerned. Good reportage should have humor.

**Natsuki Ikezawa** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Japan)

“Eye witnessing” is the linchpin of literary reportage.

**Nedim Gürsel** (Jury member 2003 / Turkey)

The particularities of events are not to be found so much in their obviousness, but tend to be found behind the backdrop, or on the edge of the main stage. So good and interesting reportage keeps both of these arenas in view.

**Nirmal Verma** (Juror 2003 / India)

Documentary prose ought to transcend the strict boundaries between the formats of literature and journalism. The person of the author, his mentality, his philosophy and his sensitivity must be unified by a good writing style. Documentary work means using reality as the raw material to create a new reality.

**Svetlana Alexievitch** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Belarus)

Journalists are always in danger of getting lost in the breadth and complexity of collected information. Reportage is the processing of facts in the form of interviews and research in a literary form. What is created is not a novel, but a truly well-written text.

**Pedro Rosa Mendes** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Portugal)

In England there is a long tradition reaching back into the nineteenth century. We have a lively non-fiction culture in England. "Literary reportage" needs the cultural environment of a free press, which can also provide material resources for its authors.

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**Isabel Hilton** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Great Britain)

Literary reportage has a long tradition in Russia. But now there is a very unusual situation there. As we know practically nothing about our own past, authors are looking especially hard for the truth of our history. So very few authors work as literary reporters, and literary reportage is not a genre which is widely used.

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**Svetlana Alexievitch** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Belarus)

When a journalist works historically, there is little in common with reportage. But when what I call "history of the present" is concerned, then there are many interesting examples in the Portuguese language area, particularly in Brazil. When history reaches up to the present, works in which living human beings play the leading role can emerge from these themes. That gives the work strength, depth and an especially an intense humanity. People and their history speak out of it. The author lends them expression. That is where the particular strength of literary reportage lies, and that is where it differs from memoirs and biographies.

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**Pedro Rosa Mendes** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Portugal)

"Literary Reportages" contain interviews and discussions, the voices of contemporary witnesses. But interviews are a technique and medium to obtain information. They cannot dictate the firm of the text. They are the material for a story which the author must create. The construction of a story differs from the reportage of daily journalism which focuses more on current daily issues and focuses on events. Literary reportages approach reality from the perspective of a story, but process impressions and information with the discipline of the journalistic approach.

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**Isabel Hilton** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Great Britain)

Our genre is concerned with reality and good writing. It can bring sense, cohesion and coherence to a chaotic and banal world. Nietzsche and Roland Barthes have said that writing can bring structure to the chaos. "Literary Reportage" has much to do with this. It does not invent reality, but grasps it. It exposes, understands, and presents connections. And expresses this in well-written language.

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**Jorge Edwards** (Juror 2003 / Chile)

I am not a reportage author and nor am I a professional journalist. So I discovered the genre of literary reportage only very late in life. And to my great astonishment, this happenstance was an enormous help to me as a writer of novels.

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**Nirmal Verma** (Juror 2003 / India)

The human depths of literary reportage convey more to us than the news from CNN. These depths can only arise because the authors had time for their work, time which permits the comprehension of interrelations.

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**Abdourahman Waberi** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Djibouti - France)

When we reach an agreement on what reportage "isn't," we find common criteria for selection and evaluation, and a path between objectivity and subjectivity. There is no

“objective text.” When we decide according to the extent and depth of the author’s personal involvement, “literary reportage” is more than on the “objective” page.

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**Isabel Hilton** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Great Britain)

From the reader’s perspective, it’s relatively simple to characterize “literary reportage:” they read journalistic texts because they ought to be informed about things. That can include war, economic developments, rape, or other abominations. But with “literary reportage” the interaction with reality should be fun.

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**Natsuki Ikezawa** (Juror 2003 & 2004/ Japan)

The author’s personal and emotional experiences play a secondary role. Reportage is about the decoding and the comprehension of reality. This differentiates it from autobiographies and memoirs.

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**Isabel Hilton** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Great Britain)

Literary critics often have a low opinion of “interviews.” But we need contemporary witnesses who report, who often have more to say than authors. To listen to people can be helpful to come nearer to the banality and complexity of life.

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**Svetlana Alexievitch** (Juror 2003 & 2004 / Belarus)

The first root is traveling as discovery, as exploration, as exertion: traveling in search of truth, not relaxation. My travel means alertness patience to investigate, the will for knowledge, to see, to understand and to accumulate all there is to know. Such travel means commitment and hard work.

I see myself as a detective of others. Other cultures, other ways of thought, other behaviors. I’m a detective of foreignness understood in a positive sense, one with which I want to come into contact, in order to understand it. It’s about the question of how I can describe reality, newly and adequately. Some name this kind of writing non-fiction writing. I would call it creative non-fictional writing.

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**Ryszard Kapuscinski** (Ceremonial speaker, Gala 2003)

The Sculpture and the Poster  
**The Artists**

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**Jakob Mattner**

Born in Lübeck in 1946.

Sculptures, Drawings, Installations, Theatre design.

Solo exhibitions at the *Kestner-Gesellschaft*, Hannover; Pervaja Gallery, Moscow; Carpenter & Hochmann Gallery, New York.

Artworks shown in the *Akademie der Künste*, Berlin and in the *Hamburger Bahnhof*, Berlin.

In 2000 he did the stage design for the German Pavilion at the EXPO Hanover.

He designed and realized countless stage designs for the *Berliner Festspiele* and the *Berlin international literature festival*, among others.

The artist lives in Berlin.

**Miquel Barceló**

Born in Mallorca in 1957. He studied at the *Escuela de Bellas Artes* in Barcelona. His long journeys have lead him to Mali again and again, where he has dedicated himself to the exotic landscapes and the depiction of their people and the characteristics of time.

Since the 1980s, Barceló is considered to be among the most important contemporary painters. In Spring 2004, the Louvre devoted an exhibition to his works.

Miquel Barceló designed the poster for this year's *Lettre Ulysses Award*, and designed the current edition of *Lettre International* (# 66).

He lives in Palma de Mallorca, Paris and Mali.

## Initiators, Supporters and Prize Partners

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The prize was initiated by the journal *Lettre International*, published since 1984 in a number of Western and Eastern European languages. Through its publishing work and world-encompassing projects, this renowned international cultural journal has proven its unique capability to realize international cultural projects.

In the Aventis Foundation, Lettre has found a strong and committed project partner. Legal subject of the project is the Foundation Lettre International Award, a non-profit society with limited liability, which was founded for this purpose.

The Goethe-Institut, with its worldwide infrastructure, supports the *Lettre Ulysses Award*.

## Lettre International – Europe's Cultural Magazine

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*Lettre International* was established in Paris in 1984. The German edition was first published in 1988. Now, the magazine has editorial boards in Budapest, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Madrid, Paris, Rome, Skopje und Sofia. *Lettre* maintains contact with writers, journalists, artists, social scientists and poets, and also to magazines and cultural institutions world wide. *Lettre International*, Berlin, is known as one of the most important German language cultural newspapers.

The founder of *Lettre International*, Antonin Liehm, was awarded the *Leipziger Buchpreis zur europäischen Verständigung* in 1997.

*Lettre International* is published by its own publishing house (*Lettre International Verlags GmbH*), and is sold via subscription, at kiosks, in book stores and sold individually from the publisher.

*Lettre International*...

- is an independent, modern cultural publication
- has an interdisciplinary and international focus
- exclusively publishes texts which are appearing in German for the first time
- is an important intellectual and cultural platform for discussion for the processes of Europeanization and globalization
- stands for openness towards the world, plurality of perspective, quality, and creativity
- integrates multifaceted text- and image genres (essays, reportages, discussions, short stories, poetry, art, photography)
- traverses the ocean of culture - science, literature, theatre, art, music and film – as it does the seas of history, politics, the economy, and technology
- is a complete, Babylonian work of art
- is an international network which expands beyond the borders of language and culture
- is a laboratory for those who are curious, experimental and creative
- is an important platform within the cultural and creative world and an influential cultural paper for opinion makers.

**Contact:** Lettre International, Frank Berberich, Esther Gallodoro, Elisabethhof - Portal 3 b, Erkelenzdamm 59/61, D - 10999 Berlin, Tel.:+49 (0) 30-30 87 04 52, Fax: +49 (0) 30-283 31 28; E-Mail: [lettre@lettre.de](mailto:lettre@lettre.de)

### **The Aventis Foundation**

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The Aventis Foundation is a charitable foundation headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, which serves to promote music, theater, art, and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research, and higher education.

The Aventis Foundation was established in 1996 as the Hoechst Foundation with an endowment of € 50 million. In 2000 the foundation was renamed the Aventis Foundation subsequent to the 1999 merger of Hoechst, the founder, with the French company Rhône-Poulenc, which created Aventis, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Since its inception, the Aventis Foundation has been promoting music, art, theater and literature. The projects promoted should be international, interdisciplinary and innovative. We want to support artists who cross boundaries, eliminate prejudices, create original works and seek new horizons.

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### **The Goethe-Institut**

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The Goethe-Institut is the largest German cultural organization overseas. In January 2001, a fusion took place between the Goethe-Institut (founded 1951) and Inter Nationes (founded 1952). The entire network encompasses 3,100 employees and 141 cultural institutions in 77 countries.

- Together with our partners, we develop and organize cultural programs in the areas of arts, society, education, science, media, and information.
- Approximately 175,000 students of the German language visit our courses both in Germany and abroad. Furthermore, we support students of German in their engagements.
- Our information centers and libraries competently provide you with media services and information regarding languages, cultures, and society in Germany.
- Moreover, we offer an extensive array of German-based books, magazines, games and documentary films as well as online offers of our own materials.
- As part of our Visitor's Program, around 1,500 foreign guests participate in our highly qualified informational and contact travels.
- The Goethe-Forum in Munich brings world cultures to Germany and thereby promotes international cultural debates.

The Goethe-Institut is financed by the Foreign Office, the Federal Press Office, sponsors, and from our own resources. The 2001 budget totaled approximately 242 million euros, a third of which was self-financed. President: Prof. Dr. Jutta Limbach, General Secretary: Dr. habil. Andreas Schlüter

**Contact:** Ulrike Hofmann-Steinmetz; Main Office Goethe-Institut, Tel.: 030/ 259 06 470, 030/ 259 06 565; E-Mail: [hofmann-steinmetz@goethe.de](mailto:hofmann-steinmetz@goethe.de)

Aventis Foundation

## **Reasons for Supporting the Lettre Ulysses Award**

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### **Why does the Aventis Foundation support the *Lettre Ulysses Award*?**

For one very good reason: to promote a multicultural understanding of the world. Representing all the world's major languages is an international approach that is unique to the Lettre Ulysses Award. The original texts of a Chinese or Turkish author are accorded the same attention and weighting as those of a French or Anglo-American author. As a result, the blinders and customary views within personal language and cultural spheres are removed, opening up prospects for a true global view, a literary review that connects people all over the world. Within this framework, the literary reportages are about living conditions in highly disparate regions, they reflect observations, experiences and conversations, they are the witness to this day and age. The genre tells us how little we know, yet if we choose to join the journey, we will learn about the breadth and depth, the historical roots, the horrors and the strength of human existence. A multicultural understanding of the world could be a way to solve many of the world's problems and conflicts or perhaps prevent them from arising in the first place— if more people would embark on this journey, whether as authors or readers.

When Lettre International approached the Aventis Foundation with the proposal for this project, it became quickly clear that our criteria for cultural promotion would be ideally met—the projects should be international, innovative, interdisciplinary and help to break down barriers, eliminate prejudices and create something new. The pharmaceutical company Aventis, which established the Aventis Foundation, operates globally in nearly every country of the world, employing people and providing patients, physicians and healthcare systems with pharmaceuticals and human vaccines. By supporting international authors and the literary reportage genre, the Aventis Foundation wants to promote a better and deeper understanding of the living conditions in forgotten areas of the world, as well as those that we presume we know well.

Our special thanks is due to Lettre International for their extraordinary dedication to the realization of this project as well as the project partners the Goethe-Institut for their support.

Lettre Ulysses Award 2003

## **Speech by Ryszard Kapuscinski**

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### **Herodotus – Reporter of the Ancient World**

Dear friends,

Absent from among you, for obvious reasons, is a certain Greek of Halicarnassus, by the name of Herodotus, who lived about twenty-five hundred years ago and left us his *Histories*, a work which is still widely read and to some extent topical. It's a book that still raises controversies among historians over what really happened in Greece and the world in Herodotus' times, and how true were the facts and events he described to that ancient reality.

I have read *Histories* a number of times and have traveled with it over different continents, as to me it is an exemplary specimen of reportage. Yes, Herodotus was my first reporter, our father and master, the forerunner of a genre that is still developing so creatively and dynamically.

And where does reportage come from?

It has three sources, of which travel is the first. Not in the sense of a tourist trip or a relaxing outing: rather, travel as a hard, painstaking expedition of discovery requiring substantial preparation, careful planning and research to supplement the traveler's own observations and experiences on the spot. This was just one of the methods Herodotus used to get to know the world. For years, he would travel to the furthest corners of the world as it was known to the Greeks. He went to Egypt and Libya, Persia and Babylon, the Black Sea and the Scythians of the north. In his times, the Earth was imagined to be a flat circle like a plate, encircled by a great stream of water called Oceanus. It was Herodotus' ambition to get to know that flat circle in its entirety.

Herodotus, however, besides being the first reporter, was also the first "globalist." Fully aware of how many cultures there were on Earth, he was eager to become acquainted with all of them. Why? He believed that the best way to learn about your own culture is by familiarizing yourself with others. For your culture will best reveal its depth, value and sense only when you see how it is reflected by other cultures, which can shed the best, most penetrating light on your own, and thereby help you understand it best by yourself.

What did he accomplish with his comparative method of confrontation and reflection? Well, Herodotus taught his countrymen modesty, tempered their self-conceit and hubris, their belief in their superiority and arrogance toward non-Greeks, towards all others. He told them, *"You think that the Greeks created gods? No. As a matter of fact, you've appropriated them from the Egyptians. You say your structures are magnificent? Yes, but the Persians have a far better system of communication and transportation."*

Thus Herodotus tried by means of his reportage to consolidate the most important message

of Greek ethics: restraint, a sense of proportion and moderation.

Beside travel, another source of reportage is other people, those encountered on the road, and those we travel to meet, in order to get them to convey their knowledge, tales and opinions to us. Here, Herodotus turns out to be the *maitre extraordinaire*. Judging by what he writes, whom he meets, and the way he talks to them, Herodotus comes across as a man open and full of good will toward others, making contact with strangers easily, curious about the world, investigative, hungry for knowledge. We can imagine the way he acted, talked, asked and listened. His attitude and bearing show reporters what is essentially important to a reporter: respect for another man, his dignity and worth. He listens carefully to his heartbeat, and the way thoughts cross his mind.

Herodotus noticed the weakness of human memory. He was aware that his interlocutors related different and often contradictory versions of the same event, so, trying to be impartial and objective, he conscientiously left room for us to decide about the most disparate variants and versions of the same story. Hence his reports are multidimensional, rich, vivid and palpable.

Herodotus was a tireless reporter. He took the trouble to go hundreds of kilometers by sea, on horseback or simply on foot, only to hear a different version of a past event. He was hungry for knowledge of the world, irrespective of what it cost him. He wanted his facts to be the most authentic, the closest to the truth. His conscientiousness sets a good example for us, of the responsibility we assume in a word, in all we undertake.

The third source of reportage is the reporter's homework: reading what has been written and endures in texts, inscriptions, or graphic symbols. Herodotus also shows us how to be investigative and precise. In his times, far fewer materials were available, so whatever he managed to collect was precious. Naturally, he was well-read in Homer, Hesiod, poets and playwrights. But he also deciphered inscriptions and symbols on temples and town walls. Everything was important, potentially able to reveal a message or a new meaning. Through his own example, Herodotus shows that a reporter should be a careful observer, sensitive to seemingly banal details, which could prove to be indications of new worlds stretching farther out, of a higher order.

"*All people have a natural tendency to acquire knowledge*," runs the sentence with which Aristotle, a little younger than Herodotus, begins his *Metaphysics*. He also noted that it is the eye that plays the most important role in this, as it is best at perceiving differences. The eyes of the reporter are vitally important, focused, penetrating, and noticing that what may seem invisible could also be an aspect of a given phenomenon, often the most essential one. However, often, to discover the key facts of a situation, you have to be present. And to get there, you have to travel. Herodotus' travels, and his experiences on arrival, make up his great reportage about the world, which we have been reading for twenty-five centuries with flushed cheeks.

Reportage arises from what Aristotle described as the "*tendency to acquire knowledge*." And in this human desire, a reporter's passion meets the desires of his readers, listeners and spectators. Reporters, driven by the "*tendency to acquire knowledge*," try to meet halfway

their readers' curiosity about the world, and their own "*tendency to acquire knowledge*."

And here we can find an answer as to why good reportage is so popular in the contemporary world. Modern people, living in a world conjured up by the media, of illusions and appearances, simulacra and fables, instinctively feel they are being fed untruth and hypocrisy. And so they seek something that has the power of a document, truth and reality, things authentic.

I see that during my meetings with readers. When I recount some of my adventures reporting, someone often interrupts me with the question: "Is that true?" I assure the person that I was really there. And a wave of relief rolls across the audience, and a friendly atmosphere develops. They're participating in something real, as someone who has witnessed and taken part in the event is actually standing right in front of them.

What is a literary reportage, then? How can we define and describe it?

It's not an easy matter, as we are living at the moment that Clifford Geertz called the era of *blurred genres*, a new species. The anthropologist hastens to add "by virtue of their definition, innovations are hard to pigeonhole."

Working in Third World countries as a correspondent for a press agency for quite a long time, I often felt dissatisfied. This arose from the paucity of the language of conventional journalism when confronting the rich, varied, colorful, ineffable reality of those cultures, customs and beliefs. The everyday language of information that we use in the media is very poor, stereotypical and formulaic. For this reason, huge areas of reality are then rendered beyond the sphere of description. So what was the way out of this cul-de-sac?

I looked for answers in the writings of Truman Capote, Norman Mailer and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose work straddles the border of fiction and press chronicle. They introduced the term *New Journalism* or *nuevo periodismo*. By this, they meant the kind of writing in which descriptions of real events, true stories and accidents are supplemented with the writer's personal opinions and reactions, and often with fictional asides to add color; with the techniques and manners of fiction. Literary reportage is the creative result of a combination of two different manners and techniques of communicating and describing.

So this is a seminal and productive *blurring of genres*, especially considering the rapid scientific and technological changes in the world which make life ever more difficult to describe with language. I realized this writing *The Shadow of the Sun* — How could I describe a jungle with the language of the press? This is absolutely impossible without borrowing from the treasury of *belles-lettres*, for its rich variety of expression. And on the other hand, literature avails itself continuously of reportage production. Notice how many reporters are characters of fiction, how many descriptions are typically in the reporter's vein among classically fictitious fragments and dialogues!

In this multicultural world, people from those other cultures demand that they be treated as equal, command the same respect as we, and be in our good graces. It is a well-established given that there are no "higher" or "lower" cultures, and what makes a difference is just the

result of specific geographical and historical conditions. But the problem is that we know little about other cultures, and rather than decent knowledge, we tend to make do with easy and false stereotypes. Herodotus understood this all too well. And he knew that only mutual knowledge makes understanding possible, and creates the only basis possible for peace, harmony, cooperation and exchange. So with this in mind, the reporter plunges into activity: travels, investigates, takes notes, and explains why others behave differently from us, and shows that those other modes of existence and understanding the world have their own logic and should be accepted, rather than generate war and aggression.

So reportage work carries a significant responsibility. Plying our trade, we are not just men of writing pursuits but also missionaries, translators and messengers. We do not translate from one text into another, but from one culture into another, to make them mutually better understood and thereby closer, even friendlier to each other. The way a reporter describes China, for example, will, consequently, determine his readers' attitude towards China and the Chinese. Likewise with Brazil and so on. That is why do not forget the human and humanitarian results your reporting triggers.

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Alongside Herodotus, also conspicuously absent from our company is the prime mover and shaker of contemporary reportage, who used to frequent his favorite coffee house here, on Unter den Linden in Berlin. I am speaking of Ego Erwin Kisch. How happy he would be, had he learned of this international ennoblement of reportage – thanks to the efforts of Lettre International. He was a great enthusiast of this particular genre. He wrote many reporter's books, among others the great anthology *Klassischer Journalismus*, published here in Berlin in 1923, in which he included into the roster of those plying this trade the likes of Pliny the Younger, Charles Dickens, Émile Zola and Henry M. Stanley. Kisch would frequently emphasize that our trade requires passion, curiosity about the world and people, appetite for information, diligence, and devotion.

And these were the traits of Herodotus. Indeed, his *Histories* somehow played the essential part in an incident that happened to me years ago. There was a military overthrow in Ghana in 1964. The rebelling army toppled the then president of the country, Kwame Nkrumah. I was staying in Nigeria at the time and as soon as I heard the news, I drove to Ghana by car. I crossed the border without any problems at all, but right before Accra, I was stopped by a military patrol. The soldiers searched through my luggage. One of them found Herodotus' *Histories*, and Agatha Christie's *The Mystery of the Blue Train*. The soldier looked at both. Was it because Herodotus' book looked too thick to him, or did the title of *The Mystery of the Blue Train* sound more attractive? It's rather hard to decide now. Anyway, after a moment's hesitation, he requisitioned Christie's novel, which had the additional appeal of a flashy colorful cover. I heaved a sigh of relief. Herodotus was to stay with me.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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## The Website

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The following materials can be found on the website [www.lettre-ulysses-award.org](http://www.lettre-ulysses-award.org):

- ⌚ Information about the **Lettre Ulysses Award 2003** (Photos of jurors, prize winners, book covers of the short listed texts, the initiators' and project partners' logos, the trophy);
- ⌚ The **speech** by **Ryszard Kapuscinski** from the 4th October 2003 in English and German;
- ⌚ **Biographies** and **Photos** of the **Finalists** and the **Jury 2004**;
- ⌚ A downloadable version of this **press folder**;
- ⌚ Past **press releases**;
- ⌚ **Time frame**.



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