

WELCOME!

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

**Award Ceremony
30th September 2006**

Press Folder

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A World Prize for the Art of Reportage – the *Lettre Ulysses Award*

At a Glance

What is the *Lettre Ulysses Award*?

- The *Lettre Ulysses Award* was initiated in 2003 and is the first and only world prize for reportage literature.
- It is awarded annually for the world's best pieces of literary reportage, which have been published within the preceding two years.
- It is also the most generously endowed and only international literary prize based in the German capital city of Berlin.

Prizes

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

The first-prize winner also receives the *Lettre Ulysses* trophy, created by the artist Jakob Mattner.

Further prizes:

- The *Goethe-Institut* gives four working residencies in Berlin to the other finalists.
- The clock manufacturer *Nomos/Glashütte* gives four valuable hand-made clocks to the other finalists.
- Every short-listed candidate receives a translation of his or her text into English if that is not the original language. This supports their access to international media and publishing houses.

Award Ceremony

- The presentation takes place on 30th September 2006 at a gala attended by approx. 500 international guests at the Berlin TIPI Tent.
- The prize winners are first announced at this event.
- Finalists and jury members are all present.
- Actors read from the nominated texts and the finalists talk about their work.
- World music by *Abrasaz*, a group with musicians from Turkey, Japan, India, Germany and the USA.

Initiators and Partners

- The prize was initiated and is organized by the cultural magazine *Lettre International*, Berlin.
- The prize is made possible through the financial support of the *Aventis Foundation*.
- The *Goethe-Institut* is a partner of the prize.

Goals and Ambitions

The *Lettre Ulysses Award* aims to:

- Place the authors and their achievements in literary reportage at the centre of international attention.

- Provide reportage writers with symbolic, financial and moral support.
- Strengthen the important tradition of reportage literature.
- Raise interest in one of the most fascinating journalistic and literary forms.
- In this age of tense globalization processes, to investigate and describe cultural differences and unequal social developments, in all their complexity, without using stereotypes.

Jury

The Jury:

- In 2006 consists of ten members, uniting native speakers of ten of the largest language areas world-wide (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish).
- Linguistically ensures the largest possible area of perception.
- Works together through English.
- Changes annually in terms of its composition.
- Is composed exclusively of writers who are at home in the genre of reportage.

Jury procedures

- Texts which can be considered in 2006 must have been first published after January 2004.
- 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, which are accompanied by lengthy text extracts.
- At the first two-day jury meeting, following intensive discussion, seven finalists are selected from the longlist.
- The remaining seven texts, where necessary, are translated in their entirety into English.
- Following the thorough reading of all the texts, the winner is decided upon at a second two-day jury meeting in Paris.
- The decision of the jury remains secret until the award ceremony.
- A speaker of the jury announces the decision at the award ceremony.

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The Short List 2006

Overview of Texts and Books

All of the finalists will be present in Berlin on 30th September at the award ceremony. Excerpts from six of the seven nominated texts are published in German in the autumn edition (Nr. 74) of *Lettre International*, Berlin (the seventh appeared originally as a book in German).

- **Karl-Markus Gauß**, Austria: *Die Hundeesser von Svinia*, Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Vienna, 2004 [*The Dog Eaters of Svinia*]
- **Linda Grant**, Great Britain: *The People on the Street. A Writer's View of Israel*, Virago Press, London, 2006
- **Juanita León**, Colombia: *País de plomo. Crónicas de guerra*, Aguilar, 2005 [*Country of Bullets. War Diaries*]
- **Li Datong**, China: *"Bingdian" Gushi*, Guangxi Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2005 [*The Story of "Freezing Point"*, Guangxi Normal University Press]
- **Erik Orsenna**, France: *Voyage aux pays du coton. Petit précis de mondialisation*, Fayard, Paris, 2006 [*Journey to the Lands of Cotton. A Brief Manual of Globalisation*]
- **Manjushree Thapa**, Nepal: *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*, Penguin Viking India, New Delhi, 2005
- **Zhou Qing**, China: *"Min Yihe Shi Wei Tian". Zhongguo Shipin Anquan Xianzhuang Diaocha, Bangao Wenxue, 9/2004* [*"What Kind of God". A Survey of the Current Safety of China's Food, in: Reportage Literature 9/2004*]

The Short List 2006

The Authors: Biographical and Bibliographical Summaries

Karl-Markus Gauß, Austria

Writer, Essayist, Journalist * 1954

Die Hundeesser von Svinia

“There are two dangers when writing about the Roma: One is the kitsch approach, of presenting the Roma as a poor but happy and singing people. The other is what I would describe as black kitsch, which only perceives the Roma as victims who are pushed to the margins of society. To do so is to no longer consider the Roma as people, but as nothing more than victims. I tried to avoid both approaches.”

Karl-Markus Gauß was born in Salzburg, Austria. He studied History and Germanic studies and then worked as a freelance critic and writer. In 1991 he became publisher and editor-in-chief of the Austrian literary magazine *Literatur und Kritik*.

Gauß has written extensively on Central and Eastern Europe's minorities and ethnic groups, such as the Sephardim in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Albanian-speaking Arbereshe in Italy, the Slavonic Sorbs in Germany, the Aromanians in the Balkans, the Ruthenians in Belarus and Ukraine, and the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe. His works include *Die Vernichtung Mitteleuropas* (1991), *Der Mann, der ins Gefrierfach wollte* (1999) and *Die sterbenden Europäer* (2001). His latest work is *Die versprengten Deutschen* (2005). His writing has been translated into more than 14 languages.

In his book, *Die Hundeesser von Svinia* [*The Dog Eaters of Svinia*] (2005) Gauß examines the plight of the Roma people of Eastern Slovakia, on the very edge of the new Europe. He immerses himself in the life of the Roma who, with their history of displacement, persecution and contempt are amongst the very poorest people in Europe. Their everyday life is marked by loss of identity, poverty and disorientation. He visits the town of Svinia, where the *Degeši*, or dog eaters, live. These people are marginalized and despised even by their fellow Roma, they are the ultimate pariahs, the lowest of all castes.

Gauß has received several awards for his work, including the *Austrian National Prize for Cultural Journalism* (1994), the *Charles Veillon European Essay Prize* (1997), the *Australian Booksellers Honorary Prize for Tolerance* (2001), the *Vilenica Prize for Central European Literature* (2005) and the *Manès Sperber Prize* (2006).

He regularly contributes to *Die Zeit*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Die Presse*.

Karl-Markus Gauß lives in Salzburg with his wife and two children.

Linda Grant, Great Britain

Journalist, Novelist * 1951

The People on the Street. A Writer's View of Israel

“Although I am not an Israeli, but a Diaspora Jew, I think that it is the eye of the novelist, who coming from the outside, can often see what other do not ... I spent a lot of time sitting in cafes, listening, drinking my cup of coffee, while the country assembled itself around me, in all its perplexing reality.”

Linda Grant was born in Liverpool, the child of Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants. She read English at the *University of York*, before going to Canada to complete an MA at *McMaster University*, Ontario, and further postgraduate studies at *Simon Fraser University*, Vancouver, where she lived from 1977 to 1984.

She returned to Britain in 1985 and became a journalist, first of all as a feature writer for *The Guardian* and then as a freelance journalist for a variety of publications, including *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *Vogue*. She was short-listed for the *UK Press Gazette Feature Writer of the Year* in 1996.

Her first book was *Sexing the Millennium: A Political History of the Sexual Revolution* (1993) and her first novel was *The Cast Iron Shore* (1996), which won the *David Higham First Novel Award* and was short-listed for the *Guardian Fiction Prize*. Her other works include *Remind Me Who I am Again*, an account of her mother's decline into dementia, and the novels *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000) which won that year's *Orange Prize for Fiction*, and *Still Here* (2002) which was long-listed for the *Booker Prize*.

In her book *The People on the Street. A Writer's View of Israel* (2006) Grant attempts to portray the thoughts and attitudes of ordinary Israelis. In 2003 she travels to Tel Aviv, with the intention of writing a novel. Instead her visit becomes an opportunity for a systematic and in-depth exploration of Jewish identity and its relationship with the state of Israel. She closely observes this troubled land that is determined to defend its existence and that is ensnared in a conflict that seems to promise tragic consequences rather than peaceful prospects.

Grant is a member of the advisory panel for the MA in Creative Writing at *Middlesex University*. She is a leading member of the *Society of Authors* and patron of the *National Academy of Writing*. Her work has been translated into many languages, including German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Czech, Turkish and Chinese.

Linda Grant lives in London.

Juanita León, Colombia

Journalist, Writer, Lecturer * 1970

País de plomo. Crónicas de Guerra

“War is always a tragedy and takes over everything because when there is no life, everything else comes second. But what I find interesting is the connection between the conflict and everything else: everyday life, health, cinema, television. And this is seldom talked about.”

Juanita León was born in Colombia and graduated from law school before moving to New York to do a masters degree in Journalism at *Columbia University*. After her studies she worked as a reporter on the *Wall Street Journal* before returning to Colombia in 1998.

She worked as an editor for the country's largest daily newspaper, *El Tiempo*, and then for *Unidad de Paz*, that paper's special supplement on the peace process in Colombia. In 2000 she began to work as a reporter and editor at Colombia's most important current affairs weekly *La Semana*, covering in particular the armed conflict in the country. She then worked as the editor of that magazine's online publication, *semana.com*. She has also worked as an investigative reporter for the TV series *Tiempos difíciles* and *Regreso a la Esperanza*.

León was the editor of *Anos de fuego* (2001), an anthology of the best Colombian reportage from the 1990s. In 2004 she published *No somos muchos pero somos machos*, a collection of her reportages on civil resistance by Colombia's indigenous people. Her work has also appeared in many journalism anthologies: most recently an article on paramilitary atrocities was included in the collection *Lo mejor del periodismo de América Latina* (2006).

Her book *País de plomo. Crónicas de Guerra [Country of Bullets. War Diaries]* (2005) is a detailed portrait of the victims and protagonists of Colombia's deadly armed conflict at the beginning of the 21st Century. She travels to different parts of this dangerous war-torn country, and

describes the conflicts between the army, the left-wing guerrillas and the paramilitaries, as well as the suffering of the rural population, the ravages of the death squads, the incompetence of the government, the role of the drug economy and the increasing loss of humanity.

León won the World Health Organisation's *World Prize for Health Journalism* in 2001 for an article on the health risks posed by the conflict in Colombia, and was a finalist for the *Fundación para un Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano - Cemex Journalism Prize* in 2002.

She teaches journalism at the *Universidad de los Andes* in Bogotá and was a founding member of the NGO *Opción Colombia* which organizes voluntary youth projects. She was named a Nieman Fellow by *Harvard University* in 2006 and is currently studying there.

Juanita León lives in Bogotá.

Li Datong, China

Journalist, Editor * 1952

'Bingdian' Gushi

(The Story of 'Freezing Point')

"As a professional journalist, I am completely incapable of understanding or accepting the suspension of 'Freezing Point' ... To those who made this decision, what do the readers count for? What does the prestige of a large mainstream newspaper count for? What do the laws of the country and the party constitution count for? What does the reform and the opening up of China count for? They see this public instrument as their own property, thinking they can dispose of it as they please."

Li Datong was born in Sichuan, China and moved to Beijing with his parents. During the Cultural Revolution he was sent to Inner Mongolia, where he worked as a cow herder for ten years. When he returned to Beijing in 1979 he began to work for the *China Youth Daily*. His career was cut short in 1989. After leading a conversation between more than 1,000 reporters and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and taking part in the pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, he was banned from working as a journalist for five years.

In 1995, during a period of relative economic transformation and liberalisation he was reinstated and launched the pioneering *Bingdian (Freezing Point)*, a weekly supplement in the *China Youth Daily*. With its courageous, realistic and lively reportages on every realm of contemporary Chinese society the paper quickly became one of the best and most popular publications in the country. His critical articles frequently landed him in trouble with the Communist Party censors before *Freezing Point* was closed down in January 2006 and he was once again dismissed. He reacted to his sacking by writing a scathing public letter of protest which was posted across the Internet before being taken down later the same day. The case gained significant international media attention.

His book *The Story of 'Freezing Point'* (2005) deals with his clashes with the authorities and describes the paper's attempt to transform the Chinese media. It is a study of Chinese society under the magnifying glass. His most recent work is *Using News to Influence Today* (2006).

Li Datong lives in Beijing.

Erik Orsenna, France

Economist, Novelist, Writer * 1947

Voyage aux pays du coton. Petit précis de mondialisation

"This is my profession: using the novel and travel reportages, I attempt to open doors and to make the world more understandable ... Cotton gave me a means of tackling globalisation. Cotton-

related labour involves several hundred million human beings, on every continent. There are those who plant, those who spin, those who weave, those who distribute, those who trade, and then there's us, who wear it."

Erik Orsenna was born in Paris. After his studies in philosophy and political science at the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris*, he studied economics at the *London School of Economics*. He lectured in international finance and the economics of development at the *Université de Paris*, before becoming a member of the *Council of State* in 1985. He became a ministerial advisor and for three years acted as cultural advisor to President Francois Mitterand. During the 1990s he was appointed by the foreign affairs ministry to advise on democratisation in Africa and the relations between southern Europe and north Africa.

Orsenna was elected to the *Académie Française* in 1998 and is director of the *Centre International de la Mer*.

He has written numerous essays and novels including *Grand Amour* (1993), *La vie comme à Lausanne* (1978) and *L'Exposition coloniale* (1988) which won the *Prix Goncourt*. His other works included *Le Nôtre: Jardinier du Roi Soleil* (2001) and *La Grammaire est une chanson douce* (2004).

His book *Voyage aux pays du coton. Petit précis de mondialisation [Journey to the Lands of Cotton. A Brief Manual of Globalisation]* (2006) takes a journey to the four corners of the world following the thread of the cotton trade, in an attempt to illustrate the affects of globalisation. He visits plantations in Mali and the United States, research laboratories and huge cotton farms in Brazil, museums in Egypt, the dried out Aral Sea and the steeps of Uzbekistan, textile factories in China and France. These are all places of encounter with the raw material which has marked the history of entire countries and which to this day hundreds of millions of people still depend upon for their livelihoods. His book brings the intricate mechanisms of globalisation to life, including the conflict between history and modernisation, between multinational companies and more traditional economies, and between the rhetoric of open markets and the reality of protectionism .

Erik Orsenna lives in Paris.

Manjushree Thapa, Nepal

Novelist, Translator, Journalist * 1968

Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy

"I am one of those people who cannot live without some means of creative expression. Writing gave me the means to engage with a broader society. Every thing I want to write about, at least now, is in Nepal. There is so much that can be done here, if politics would stop self-destructing."

Manjushree Thapa was born in Nepal and grew up in Canada and the United States. After studying photography at the *Rhode Island School of Design* she returned to Nepal and began to write for *Himal Magazine* and also worked in the NGO sector, particularly in environmental development work. She returned to the United States in 1998 on a *Fulbright Scholarship* to complete a Masters in Creative Writing at the *University of Washington*, Seattle.

Her first non-fiction book was *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* (1992), a travelogue about the then restricted areas along the Nepal/Tibet border. In 2001 she published her first novel *The Tutor of History* and co-edited *Secret places: New Writing from Nepal*. She has also translated many works of Nepali literature into English. Her essays and reportages have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Nepali Times*, *Hindustan Times* and *OpenDemocracy.net*, as well as other publications in the United States, Nepal, India and Great Britain. Thapa has also worked as a co-ordinator at the *Martin Chautari Centre* in Kathmandu, an organisation for public advocacy.

Her book *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2006) combines history, reportage and travel writing to examine the recent history of Nepal, including the royal massacre in 2001 and

the Maoist rebellion. Thapa describes the development of a society whose picturesque beauty hides widespread poverty. She leads the reader through Nepal's past and present, revealing its tangled politics and Byzantine power structures, and describing her journey to the remote Maoist-held western mountainous region. *Forget Kathmandu* was published just weeks before the royal coup in Nepal on 1st February 2005 and Thapa was forced to flee the country and to live in exile, mainly in India, from where she wrote extensively on developments in Nepal.

Thapa has won fellowships from the *Center for Investigative Journalism* in Kathmandu, as well as from *Hedgebrook*, the *Ragdale Foundation* and the *Espy Foundation* in the United States. In 2005 she spent three months at the *Centre d'Art Marnay* in Camac, France as a *UNESCO Aschberg Fellow*.

She currently works as a columnist at the *Kathmandu Post*, and her collection of short stories, *Tilled Earth*, is due to be published in 2007. She is also working on her second novel.

Manjushree Thapa lives in Kathmandu.

Zhou Qing, China

Journalist, Researcher, Editor * 1965

'Min Yihe Shi Wei Tian'. Zhongguo Shipin Anquan Xianzhuang Diaocha

['What Kind of God'. A Survey of the Current Safety of China's Food]

"The traditional Chinese saying that 'Food is the people's Heaven' shows the importance of food in people's daily lives ... In today's world, in which people have become more and more closely tied to the computer, you only have to type in the words 'food' or 'eat' in a Chinese search engine, you will find that the words that crop up the most in the list of results are 'safety' and 'poisoning'. This is an ironic state of affairs in a country that has prided itself on its fine cuisine."

Zhou Qing was born in Shanxi Province, China. He studied at the *Lu Xun Literary Institute* and at *Northwest University*, Xi'an. In 1989 he was imprisoned for two years, after taking part in the pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square. His sentence was extended by eight months for refusing to rehabilitate and attempting to escape.

Zhou Qing is a journalist, editor and a researcher into Chinese folk and oral history and has travelled to the United States and Russia as a visiting scholar. He is the former director of the *Xi'an Cang Xie Cultural Research Institute*, and was chief editor of *Folk* magazine, *Economy & Trade*, Shen Zhen edition, and managing editor of the newspaper *Legends & Stories*. He is currently chief editor of the magazine *Oral Museum*.

Zhou Qing is a member of the *Independent Chinese PEN Association* and of the *China Society for the Study of Folk Literature and Art*.

Zhou Qing spent two years researching the murky world of Chinese food and in 2004 China's most important reportage magazine *Baogao Wenxue (Reportage Literature)* published his long article: *'Min Yihe Shi Wei Tian'. Zhongguo Shipin Anquan Xianzhuang Diaocha* ['What Kind of God'. A Survey of the Current Safety of China's Food]. In his reportage, Zhou Qing exposes a topic that the authorities have striven to keep hidden. He interviewed food manufacturers and restaurant owners, fish farmers, peasants, traders, doctors, and consumers. He discovered shocking practices such as the use of contraceptive pills to accelerate fish farming, the pesticide DDT to keep pickles from going off, hormones used to replace foodstuffs, salt that is chemically enhanced, industrial oil altered to make cooking oil. The difficulty and danger of carrying out this work was, in the author's own words, 'More dangerous than chasing after drug dealers!'

Zhou Qing lives in Beijing.

The Long List 2006

An Overview of the Texts Selected by the Jury

The **long list** of texts nominated for the 2006 *Lettre Ulysses Award* (in alphabetical order, listing the author, title, publisher and year of publication):

- **Karl-Markus Gauß**, Austria: *Die Hundeeser von Svinia*, Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Vienna, 2005 [*The Dog Eaters of Svinia*]
- **Linda Grant**, Great Britain: *The People on the Street. A Writer's View of Israel*, Virago Press, London, 2006
- **Jeanette Erazo Heufelder**, Germany: *Der Smaragdkönig. Victor Carranza und das grüne Gold der Anden*, Piper Malik, Munich, 2005
- **Igor Klekh**, Russia: *The Deurbanization of Lvov* (Gorodskaya Zebra Magazine, Moscow, May 2004) & *A Week in Kishinev* (GEO Magazine, Moscow, July 2004)
- **Juanita León**, Colombia, *País de plomo. Crónicas de guerra*, Aguilar, 2005 [*Country of Bullets. War Diaries*]
- **Li Datong**, China: *The Story of "Freezing Point"*, Guangxi Normal University Press, Beijing, 2005
- **Táis Morais & Eumano Silva**, Brazil, *Operação Araguaia: os arquivos secretos da Guerrilha*, Geração Editorial, São Paulo, 2005 [*Operation Araguaia. The Secret Archives of a Guerrilla War*]
- **Erik Orsenna**, France: *Voyage aux pays du coton. Petit précis de mondialisation*, Fayard, Paris, 2006 [*Journey to the Lands of Cotton. A Brief Manual of Globalisation*]
- **Georg Packer**, USA: *The Assassins' Gate. America in Iraq*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 2005 (in the UK Faber & Faber, London, 2006)
- **Youssef Rakha**, Egypt: *Beirut shi mahal: an Egyptian in Lebanon*, Amkenah Magazine, Cairo, 2005
- **Mishi Saran**, India: *Chasing the Monk's Shadow: A Journey in the Footsteps of Xuanzang*, Penguin India, New Delhi, 2005
- **Samuel Shimon**, Iraq: *An Iraqi in Paris: an Autobiographical Novel*, Banipal Books, London, 2005
- **Ece Temelkuran**, Turkey: *We are Making a Revolution Here*, Signorita, Everest Yay. Istanbul, 2006
- **Manjushree Thapa**, Nepal: *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*, Penguin Viking India, New Delhi, 2005
- **Yaroslav Trofimov**, Ukraine: *Faith at War. A Journey on the Frontlines of Islam, from Baghdad to Timbuktu*, Henry Holt, New York, 2005
- **Sun Shuyun**, China: *The Long March*, HarperPress, London, 2006
- **Peter Vail**, Russia: *Genius loci*, Colibri Publishers, Moscow, 2006
- **Diana Washington Valdez**, Mexico: *Cosecha de mujeres. Safari en el desierto mediano* [*Harvest of Women. Safari in the Mexican Desert*], Oceano, Mexico/Barcelona, 2005
- **Zhou Qing**, China, 'What Kind of God'. *A Survey of the Current Safety of China's Food*, Reportage Literature, Beijing, 09/2004

The Jury

Independent, Experienced, Polyglot

2006 Jury (members and their native languages)

- **Gamal al-Ghitany** (Egypt): *Arabic*
- **Andrei Bitov** (Russia): *Russian*
- **Urvashi Butalia** (India): *Hindi*
- **Nedim Gürsel** (Turkey): *Turkish*
- **Isabel Hilton** (Great Britain) : *English*
- **Anne Nivat** (France): *French*
- **Sergio Ramírez** (Nicaragua): *Spanish*
- **Pedro Rosa Mendes** (Portugal): *Portuguese*
- **Ilija Trojanow** (Bulgaria / Germany): *Bulgarian/German*
- **Yang Lian** (China): *Chinese*

The Jurors

Biographical and Bibliographical Summaries

Gamal al-Ghitany, Egypt

“I reject unequivocal labels, like those who speak of an absolute Occident, or a fixed Orient. There is not just a single Occident, nor a single Orient; on the contrary, we learn to see that the sinking of the sun on the horizon is a process that continues throughout the year, which cannot be the possession of one region to the exclusion of the others.”

Novelist, essayist, writer. Gamal al-Ghitany was born in 1945 in the village of Guhayna, in Upper Egypt, and moved with his family to Cairo as a child.

Al-Ghitany spent three years training as an oriental carpet designer upon leaving school. He began to write short stories and novels in the 1960s and he wrote for Egyptian and Lebanese newspapers from 1963. In 1966/67 he was held in a prison camp for six months due to his criticism of President Nasser’s regime.

In 1969, he started to work for *Akhbar al-Youm* daily newspaper and was a correspondent from the Yom Kippur war fronts in 1973. He also travelled to war zones in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. In 1980 he published a biography of Nagib Mahfouz and was awarded *Egypt’s State Prize for Novels, a Merit of Science and Arts – First Degree*.

In 1985, he became head of the cultural section of the *Al-Akhbar* daily newspaper and also supervised the *Akhbar al-Youm* newspaper’s monthly book section. In 1987, he was named *Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* in France. Since 1993 he has been chief editor of the Egyptian literary weekly *Akhbar al-Adab* (Literature News Newspaper).

His collected works were issued in six volumes in Cairo (1990-1996). The *American University in Cairo Press* published his book *The Cairo of Naguib Mahfouz* in 2000 and *Zayni Barakat* in 2005. Al-Ghitany is currently working on a cycle of novels of which three volumes have already been published, based on the theme of “revival of memory.” In 2005 his novel *Le Livre des Illuminations* (1990) (*Kitab al-Tajalliyat*) was awarded the *Laure Bataillon Prize* for the best work of fiction translated into French that year. In 2006, he received the Italian *Premio Grinzane Cavour* for his collection of stories entitled *Schegge di fuoco*. His books have been published in many languages, including English, French, German, Italian and Hebrew.

Al-Ghitany has lectured at numerous universities throughout the world, and has participated in many international conferences. In 2004, he was the guest of honour at the *International Frankfurt Book Fair*.

He speaks Arabic, English and French, and lives in Cairo.

Andrei Bitov, Russia

“If I had lived in the 19th Century I would have been an explorer. That is my character. And even in the 20th Century I would have liked to have travelled the world. But that wasn’t allowed. And the country was so vast. So against my will I became an imperiologist – a science that I invented myself. Externally I was a traveller through the empire, but internally I was someone who was trying to get closer to the meaning of life. I can only do that when I write. I understand nothing until I have written it down.”

Novelist, writer, geologist. Andrei Bitov was born in Leningrad in 1937. He studied mining and geology from 1955 to 1962 before deciding to pursue writing fulltime in 1963. He moved to Moscow and in 1965 became a member of the Soviet writers union.

In 1967 he travelled to Armenia for the first time, and was fascinated by the country, its history and its people. He eventually published his travel memoir *Lessons of Armenia* in 1969. The book was cut and censored by the Soviet authorities. Another reportage *Choosing a Location: Georgian Album*, was first published in Russia in 1985. The two works are published together in English as *A Captive of the Caucasus*.

Bitov first became well known internationally through his novel *Pushkin House*. The book was originally published in Russian in 1978 by a US publishing house and appeared for the first time in English in 1987. In 1989 the book was awarded the *Andrei Belyi Prize* (Leningrad), and the *French Prize for the Best Foreign Book* and in 1990 it received the *Pushkin Prize*, awarded by the *Alfred Töpfer Foundation* in Germany.

Initially Bitov was officially tolerated as a writer until he became co-publisher of the underground magazine *Metropol* in 1979, which brought him into conflict with the authorities and which caused his works to be banned or censored. It is only since *perestroika* and *glasnost* that his books have been available in their complete uncensored form. His works include the collections of short stories *Life in Windy Weather* (1991) and *Ten Short Stories* (1995), and the novels *The Light of the Dead* (1990), *Monkey Link. A Pilgrimage Novel* (1994), *People in Landscape* (1994) and *Pushkin's Hare* (1999). His latest works are *The Empire in Four Dimensions* (2002), a collection of his impressions and observations from 1960 to 1993, *Pushkin in Russia* (2003) and the novel *Taste* (2004).

Andrei Bitov has been the recipient of numerous awards and has been named a *Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* by the French government. In 1992/1993 he was a guest of the *Institute for Advanced Study* in Berlin. He was one of the co-founders of the *Russian PEN Club* and has been its president since 1991. In 2003 he became the vice-president of the *International PEN Club*. His essays and articles have appeared in many publications, including *Glas*, *DU*, *Lettre International* and *Wespennest* and his works have been translated into many languages including English, German, Swedish, French and Italian.

Bitov speaks Russian, and English, and lives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Urvashi Butalia, India

"It's clear that conflicts today are very modern conflicts, fought not only with an arsenal of sophisticated weaponry, but also with words and pictures, using the media, with arguments and discussions. They're battles over territory, sovereignty, homeland, power and above all, control, not only of resources, but also of that age-old thing, the mind."

Writer, feminist, historian, publisher. Urvashi Butalia was born in Ambala, India in 1952. She earned a Bachelor in Literature from *Delhi University* in 1971, a Masters in Literature from the same university in 1973 and a Masters in South Asian Studies from the *University of London* in 1977.

In 1984 Butalia was one of the co-founders of *Kali for Women*, India's first feminist publishing house. Butalia is now the director of *Zubaan Books*, which she founded in 2003, and which is an imprint of *Kali*.

Butalia's writing focuses on the modern history of India, and on partition and oral histories in particular. She has also written on gender, communalism, fundamentalism and media. She co-edited *In Other Words: New Writing by Indian Women* (1994) and her books include *Making a Difference: Feminist Publishing in the South* (1995), *Women and Right Wing Movements: Indian Experiences* (1995), and *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* (2002). In 1998 she wrote *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, which won the *Oral History Book Association Award* in 2001.

Butalia has been active in the Indian and global women's movements and in international citizen's exchange conferences. She has worked with *Samta*, an organization responsible for bringing about change in India's laws on violence against women, dowry and rape and she is a consultant for several national and international organizations. She received the *Nikkei Asia Award for Culture* for these activities.

Her writing has appeared in several publications including *The Guardian*, *The Statesman*, the *Times of India*, *Granta*, *Outlook*, the *New Internationalist*, *India Today* and *Lettre International*, Berlin. She is currently working on two new books: *Mona: A Sort of Life/A Life of Sorts* on the life of a eunuch, and *The India Reader*, an edited volume of essays on India.

Urvashi Butalia speaks several Indian languages (Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali) as well as English, French and Italian. She lives in New Delhi.

Nedim Gürsel, Turkey

"Writing is perhaps nothing but an illusion. But it is also a way of jumping into the void, of defying death, above all if the words have become an integral part of one's self, an indispensable substance of one's life, of one's unavoidable universe in fact. Nevertheless, one cannot vanquish death neither by giving life to a child nor by tracing your words upon a blank page."

Writer, novelist, literary critic, essayist. Nedim Gürsel was born in Gaziantep, Turkey, in 1951. He published his first novellas and essays in Turkish literary magazines in the late 1960s. After the military coup d'état in 1971, he left for Paris to study Comparative Literature at the *Sorbonne*. Gürsel returned to Turkey, but the military putsch of 1980 sent him back into exile in France. He then wrote articles and travel reports which were published in *Le Monde*, as well as in the Turkish newspapers *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet*.

Gürsel has published over thirty books, including novels, essays, short stories, works of literary criticism and travel writing. In 1976 he published *Long summer in Istanbul*, which received Turkey's most prestigious award for literature, the *Prize of the Turkish Language Academy*. In 1983 his novel *The First Woman* was charged with having offended public morality and it was censored by the Turkish military regime for many years. In 1986 the book was awarded the *Ipekçi Prize* for promoting Turkish-Greek cultural understanding. In the same year he received the *Prix de la Liberté* from the *French PEN Club*.

His most recent books include the literary travel reportage *Mirages du Sud* (2001) on the Islamic roots of Spain, a work of literary criticism *Le Chant des Hommes* (2002), the novel *Balcon sur la Méditerranée* (2003) and his literary memoir *Au pays des poissons captifs: Une enfance turque* (2004).

Gürsel was awarded the *Radio France Internationale Prize* for the best novel of 1990 and in 2003 he won the *France-Turkey Prize* for his life-time achievements. In 2004 he received the *Fernand Rouillon Literary Prize* from the Franco-Turkish Committee at the *Turkish Tourism Office* in Paris. In the same year he was named a *Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* by the *French Ministry of Culture*. Gürsel lectures on contemporary Turkish literature at the *Sorbonne* in Paris and is Director of Research at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*.

Nedim Gürsel's work has been translated into many languages including French, German, Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Greek and Bulgarian. He speaks Turkish, French and English and lives in Paris and Turkey.

Isabel Hilton, Great Britain

“There is no objective text. However, there are degrees of attention given to personal response and personal feeling, and I think reportage should err on the side of the more objective. So it’s not memoir, it’s not autobiography, it’s not internal journey.”

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* in Shanghai.

In 1977 she joined the *Sunday Times* and her foreign assignments took her to the United States, France, Spain, the Middle East, Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Africa. In 1986 she joined *The Independent* newspaper, pre-launch, as its Latin America Editor and from 1989 she was the European Affairs Editor. She left *The Independent* in 1995 to write a book about China and Tibet.

Hilton presented *BBC Radio 4’s The World Tonight* from 1995 to 1998 and in 1999 she joined *Radio 3’s Night Waves* as a presenter. Her radio documentaries for the *BBC* include: *Petra and the General*, an investigation of the life and death of Petra Kelly (1994); *Kingdom of the Lost Boy*, an account of the search for the 11th Panchen Lama (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 wrote *The Search for the Panchen Lama* in 1999 and co-authored *The Falklands War* (1982), *The Fourth Reich: Klaus Barbie and the Neo-Fascist Connection* (1984), and contributed to *Betrayed, Abuses of the Rights of the Child* (1986). Her work has been included in *The Best of Granta Travel* (1990) and *The Best American Travel Writing* (1999). She contributes regularly to various publications, including the *Grant*, *The New Yorker*, *New Statesman*, *Time*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Literary Review*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* and *Lettre International*.

Hilton is the editor of the *openDemocracy.net* website, an independent news source that is based on exchange and participation, with readers and contributors from around the world. She 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 was awarded an honorary doctorate from the *University of Bradford* in 2003. She is currently working on a book of collected reportage, including writing from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tibet, India, and the Middle East.

Isabel Hilton speaks Chinese, Spanish, French and German. She lives with her family in London.

Anne Nivat, France

“I’ve felt fear which has displaced every other feeling, but also solidarity with dozens of strangers with whom I’ve shared unique moments – moments of joy, because I could feel safe for a minute, or because I was warmed by a cup of hot tea. I tried to talk to as many people as possible: with men, women and children whose lives have been destroyed by this war, with rebels who have nothing left to lose, with Russian soldiers or officers who are caught up in this so-called ‘anti-terror operation’ as in a trap.”

Journalist and writer. Anne Nivat was born in France in 1969 and grew up on the Swiss border. She studied at the *Institut d’études politiques de Paris* and completed a doctorate, specializing on Russia.

In 1998, Anne Nivat became a correspondent for the French daily newspaper *Libération* in Moscow, and since then she has also written for other international newspapers and media from Russia as a freelance reporter, including *Le Soir*, *Ouest France*, *Le Nouvel Observateur* and the *Washington Post*.

Her book *Chienne de guerre. Une femme reporter en Tchétchénie* (2000) describes her experiences of daily life during the war in Chechnya through her encounters with rebels, soldiers and civilians. The book was translated into several languages and won the *Prix Albert-Londres* in July 2000. Nivat also received the *Prix ELeónore Pimentel Fonseca* (Naples, 2000) for her reporting from Chechnya, as well as the *Aventis Award for Excellence in Journalism* (Washington, 2000).

Her book, *La maison haute. Des russes d'aujourd'hui* (2002), is a monograph about a multi-storey building in Moscow which was constructed by political prisoners under Stalin, and which provides a picture of Russian society today. In 2005, a TV documentary based on the book, and produced by the award-winning director, Pavel Lungin, was broadcast on *arte*, the French-German channel.

Since September 11th 2001 Nivat has travelled extensively through some of the most dangerous places in the world, including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Her books include *La guerre qui n'aura pas eu lieu* (2004), a collection of further reports from Chechnya, and *Lendemain de guerre en Afghanistan et en Irak* (2004), which won the *Prix Erwan Bergot*, awarded by the French Ministry of Defence.

In 2006, Nivat published two books in French: *Islamistes, comment ils nous voient* which attempts to offer an insight into what is happening on the ground in the three countries most affected by the US 'war on terror' (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq) and *Par les monts et les plaines d'Asie centrale*, which deals with her travels through the ex-Soviet Republics of Central Asia.

Anne Nivat speaks French, Russian and English and lives between Moscow and Paris.

Sergio Ramírez, Nicaragua

"It has been said that the trade of writing is the best in the world, though more ancient ones exist. Or perhaps not. The need to tell, and to be told, begins that magic moment in which someone is not content with the direct perception of the reality that surrounds him, and with his mind wanders beyond the real limits of his world, where what is visible ends and darkness filled with anxiety for the unknown begins."

Journalist, writer, professor. Sergio Ramírez was born in Masatepe, Nicaragua, in 1942, the second of five children. In 1960, while studying law at the *University of León*, he founded the literary magazine *Ventana* along with Fernando Gordillo, and became one of the leading figures of the literary movement bearing the same name.

For more than thirty years, Ramírez was active as both a politician and a novelist. He lived in Berlin between 1973 and 1975 as the recipient of a *DAAD* scholarship and was elected *Secretary General of the Confederation of the Central American Universities (CSUCA)* in 1968 and 1976. In 1977, he was one of the founders of "*The Twelve*", a group of Nicaraguan artists and intellectuals struggling against the Somoza dynasty's dictatorship. After the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in 1979, he served as the country's Vice President from 1984. He has now withdrawn from active political life.

Ramírez' first book *Cuentos* was published in 1963, and his first novel *Tiempo de fulgor* was issued in 1970. He received the *Premio Imagen* for his book of fables *De Tropeles y Tropelías* in 1973. In 1998, *Un baile de máscaras* (1995) won the French *Laure Bataillon Prize* for the best foreign novel. His work *Margarita, está linda la mar* (1988) was awarded the renowned Spanish *Alfaguara Prize* in 1998 and the *Premio Latinoamericano de Novela "José María Arguedas"* in

2000. His most recent works are *Mil y una muertes* (2004), a novel, *El Reino Animal* (2006), a collection of short stories, and *Señor de los Tristes* (2006), a collection of literary essays. His writings have been translated into many languages.

He is a member of the *Academia Nicaragüense de la Lengua* and associated member of *Real Academia Española*. He has been the chairman of the jury at film festivals in Cartagena, Colombia (1993), and in Huelva, Spain (2002). He was awarded the *Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Prize* in 1988, and was named *Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* in 1993. He was recently awarded the *Medalla Presidencial* (2004) by the Chilean government to mark the hundredth birthday of Pablo Neruda. He is also a leading member of the *Foundation for New Journalism, FNPI (Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano)*, which was established by Gabriel García Márquez. Ramírez was a guest professor at the *University of Maryland* in 1999 and 2000. In 2001, he was *Samuel Fischer Professor* for comparative literature at Berlin's *Free University* and in 2005 he was visiting professor for contemporary Latin American literature at the *University of California* in Los Angeles.

Ramírez writes for Spanish language newspapers throughout the world, including *El País*, Madrid, *La Jornada*, México, *El Tiempo*, Bogotá, *El Nacional*, *El Periódico*, Guatemala, and *La Prensa*, Managua, among others. He lives with his family in Nicaragua.

Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal

"With each millimetre 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 only move around 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."

Journalist, writer, novelist. Pedro Rosa Mendes was born in 1968 in Cernache do Bonjardim, Portugal. After studying jurisprudence at the *University of Coimbra*, he began to work as a journalist for the leading daily *Público*. He has reported from many countries, including Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe, Angola, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. He was twice awarded the *Feature of the Year Prize* in Portugal for reportage, and in 2000 he was honoured with the Lisbon Press Club's *Bordalo*.

In 1999 Rosa Mendes completed his first novel *Baía dos Tigres*, which describes a three and a half month journey from Angola to Mozambique. The book was subsequently translated into thirteen languages. In 2001, *Baía dos Tigres* was among the five finalists for the prestigious *Prix Astrolabe Étonnant Voyageurs* in Saint Malo.

Rosa Mendes has collaborated with several artists on a range of projects. He contributed five short stories to *O Melhor Café*, a photography book by the distinguished Portuguese photographer Alfredo Cunha (1996). In November 2002, he co-authored a book together with French illustrator Alain Corbel on civil society organizations in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe, and Cape Verde, entitled *Ilhas de Fogo*. The following year, in 2003, Rosa Mendes published the novel *Atlântico*, with pictures by the prominent photographer João Francisco Vilhena. He recently published a collection of his writings about East Timor entitled *Madre Cacau*, which, like *Ilhas de Fogo*, is illustrated by Alain Corbel.

Pedro Rosa Mendes now works as a freelance journalist, while also writing fiction – his latest novel *Lenin Oil*, was published in 2006 and he is co-authoring a play for the *Teatro Nacional Maria Matos* in Lisbon. Over the course of the last four years, he travelled extensively throughout the Western African countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Ivory Coast in preparation for his new book, *Schwarz.Licht*, with German photo-reporter Wolf Böwig. The book is the first part of *Waystation*, a project he and Böwig are continuing to work on together, which documents the major changes in West and Central Africa.

Rosa Mendes contributes articles and essays to a variety of publications including *El País Semanal* (Madrid), *Terra Negra*, (Brussels), *Grand Street* (New York), *Lettre International*, (Berlin). His work has been translated into English, German, Spanish and French. He speaks Portuguese, French, English and Spanish.

Pedro Rosa Mendes has two daughters and lives in Lisbon.

Ilija Trojanow, Germany

"For me, travelling is the instrument, inspiration and theme of writing, because it touches the right manner of living, because, like literature, it is cathartic. Indian ascetics, known as Sadhus, move through the country as they did in former times. The orthodox among them don't even spend two nights in the same encampment. To me, the most important thing seems to be not to travel from your home abroad and to travel back again, but to turn what is foreign into home, sensually, linguistically."

Writer, translator, publisher. Ilija Trojanow was born in Bulgaria in 1965. In 1971, just as he was to be enrolled in school, his parents fled with him through Yugoslavia and Italy to Germany, where they gained political asylum in Munich. A year later, the family moved to Kenya where his father worked as an engineer. Trojanow lived in Nairobi from 1972 to 1984 – apart from a three year period in Germany (1977-1981).

After an extended period in Paris, between 1984 and 1989 he studied law and ethnology in Munich. In 1989, he founded the *Marino Publishing House*, which specialised in African literature. In the early 1990s, Trojanow travelled through Africa and wrote *In Afrika. Mythos und Alltag Ostafrikas* (1993), which he shows how his initial alienation turned to interest and affection for his new home, Kenya. His other books include *Naturwunder Ostafrikas* (1994), *Guardians of the Soil. Meeting Zimbabwe Elders* (1996), which he wrote together with Chenjerai Hove and the novel *Die Welt ist groß und Rettung lauert überall* (1996).

In 1998, Trojanow moved to Bombay and he wrote reportages and essays from India for a number of newspapers including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

In 2003 Trojanow wrote *An den Inneren Ufern Indiens (Along the Ganges: To the Inner Shores of India)* and in 2004 he published *Zu den heiligen Quellen des Islams. Als Pilger nach Mekka und Medina*. His latest novel *Der Weltensammler* (2006) is based on the life of the English adventurer Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) and won the 2006 *Leipzig Book Fair Prize* for fiction.

Trojanow has received many other literary awards, including the *Bertelsmann-Literaturpreis* at the *Ingeborg-Bachmann-Wettbewerb* 1995, the *Marburger Literaturpreis* in 1996 and the *Adalbert von Chamisso Prize* in 2000. His books have been translated into Spanish, Russian, Czech, Bulgarian, Dutch and English, and some parts have also been translated into French, Polish and Arabic.

Ilija Trojanow speaks German, English, Bulgarian, French and Russian. He lives in Cape Town.

Yang Lian, China

"I'm well aware that in this confused and frenzied day and age my writing will not well suit most reading habits. However, I do not mind – the conflict between individual writing and its environment can be summed up in the line 'do not yield to history'. If one stunts oneself purely in order to match the poverty of the times, then I say there are far more interesting ways to waste one's life."

Poet, essayist, literary critic. Yang Lian was born in 1955 in Bern, Switzerland, where his diplomat parents were stationed. He grew up in Beijing and during the Cultural Revolution he underwent 're-education through labour' by being sent to work in the countryside. His mother's death in 1976 initiated his life as a poet and on his return to Beijing he became one of the first members of a group of young 'underground' poets, who published the literary magazine *Jintian* (Today).

Yang Lian's works were introduced to overseas readers in the 1980s just as the political climate in China was becoming more open and he was invited to present his poems in many countries, including Hong Kong, West Germany, France, Spain, and England. Yang Lian was invited to visit Australia and New Zealand in 1988 for a year-long writer's programme and so he was in Auckland when the massacre in Tiananmen Square occurred on 4th June 1989. He organised protests against the suppression in China and from then on became a poet in exile. Since that time, various scholarships have taken him to different countries throughout the world, including a *DAAD* scholarship to Berlin in 1991 and a *University of Sydney* residency in 1993.

Yang Lian has published eight selections of poems, two selections of prose and many essays in Chinese. His three volumes of collected works, *Yang Lian Zuo Pin* (1982-1997, 2 vols) and *Yang Lian Xin Zuo* (1998-2002) have eventually been published in China. His work has also been translated into more than twenty languages, including English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and Eastern European languages. His most recent translations into English have been *Yi*, a book-length poem, and *Notes of a Blissful Ghost*, a selection of poems. His latest book of poetry *Concentric Circles* was published by *Bloodaxe Books* in 2005. He has also published two collections of essays, *Ghost Talk* (1995) and *Seven and a Half Nights of Lunar Eclipses* (2001), and has contributed to several newspapers and magazines, including *Granta*, *New Left Review*, *The Guardian*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and *OpenDemocracy.net*.

He was awarded the *Flaiano International Poetry Prize* (Italy, 1999) and his book *Where the Sea Stands Still: New Poems* won the title *Poetry Books Society Recommended Translation* (UK, 1999).

Yang Lian is now a New Zealand citizen and currently lives in London with his wife, the novelist Liu Yo Yo.

The Lettre Ulysses Award 2003- 2005

The First Three Years

2005

- In 2005 the *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* was presented for the third time. The award ceremony took place on 15th October 2005 in Berlin.
- Alexandra Fuller won the first prize for her book *Scribbling the Cat. Travels With an African Soldier*.
- The second prize was awarded to the Moroccan writer and anthropologist Abdellah Hammoudi for *Une saison à la Mecque. Récit de pèlerinage*; anonymous weblogger “Riverbend” from Iraq received the third prize for *Baghdad Burning*.
- The Swedish writer Sven Lindqvist gave the ceremonial speech about “The Art of Truth”.

2004

- In 2004 the *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* was presented for the second time. The award ceremony took place on 2nd October 2004 in Berlin.
- The Chinese authors Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao won the first prize for the book *A Survey of Chinese Peasants*.
- The second prize was awarded to the US writer Tracy Kidder for *Mountains Beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*; Daniel Bergner – also from the US – received the third prize for *Soldiers of the Light*.
- The Tunisian poet Abdelwahab Meddeb gave the ceremonial speech about “Smuggling Paths”.

2003

- The *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* was established in 2003 and was awarded for the first time on 4th October 2003.
- The Russian author Anna Politkovskaya won the first prize for her book *Le déshonneur russe* about the war in Chechnya.
- The second prize was awarded to the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah for *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*; Jiang Hao, from China, received the third prize for *The Secret Life of Poachers*.
- The Polish reportage writer Ryszard Kapuscinski gave the ceremonial speech of the evening on “Herodotus – Reporter of the Ancient World”.

Media Coverage 2003- 2005

Press Reactions

2005

“Reading these reportages reminds you of the advantage that the word has over the assumed immediacy of the image: it can be simultaneously interior and exterior, can simultaneously reveal and reflect.”

Der Tagesspiegel, 15 October 2005, Berlin

“An honest, unnerving text, which makes the relationship between reporter and interview partner transparent: Fuller reports on complicity through knowledge and attempts to defend herself from the growing intimacy with a killer who is slowly beginning to understand what he has done.”

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 17 October 2005, Zurich

The *Lettre Ulysses Award* is named after that first great adventurous traveller and implies that the reporter is someone who reports from abroad. The three award-winning texts, however, are the very ones in which the first-person, the reporter’s “I”, does not tell of contemporary evils in foreign lands, or of past evils at home, but rather a real “I” explores the world, a world that is their own.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 17 October 2005, Frankfurt

“The world is more complex than superficial appearances would suggest, as is powerfully illustrated by Fuller’s reportage *Scribbling the Cat* ... For the reader it is a glimpse into the soul of a war that had no soul ... ‘Reality is a cold shower’ says Fuller. Yet the true reporter helps to ensure that the warmth of awareness and empathy does not get lost along the way.”

Neues Deutschland, 20 October 2005, Berlin

“Reportage writers are the trackers of untold tales, crossing borders between genres, between documentary reports and literary forms. They report from the scenes that exist in the shadow of publicity. With curiosity and empathy their books give a face to those who only appear on the news as the mere statistics of victims or perpetrators. It is the great merit of the *Ulysses Award*, that it manages to bring these forgotten stories to the public attention that they deserve.”

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 17 October 2005, Munich

“British-born Alexandra Fuller received the prestigious *Lettre Ulysses Award* in Berlin for her account of a nightmare journey with a Rhodesian war veteran and mercenary who decides to revisit the scenes of his wartime experiences in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique ... Her powerful account of her African travels published under the title “*Scribbling the Cat*” earned her praise from the ten-member strong international jury, which hailed the work as “a spellbinding literary accomplishment”.

Deutsche Welle, 17 October 2005, Bonn

“Non-fiction, topicality and the credibility of a recognisable first-person writer, these were the criteria which were the crucial factors in the presentation of the international *Ulysses Award for Literary Reportage* on Saturday at the Tipi Zelt.”

Berliner Zeitung, 17 October 2005, Berlin

2004

“At the second presentation of the *Lettre Ulysses Award*, the only world prize for reportage, Ryszard Kapuscinski described the essence of reportage as the struggle for justice and a better lot for those who are suffering.”

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 4 October 2004

“A *Survey of Chinese Peasants* ... was published, but met immediate official disapproval from the Communist authorities. Yet, this being a communist market society, the market also had its say, and bootleg copies were sold in their hundreds of thousands. Why? Because it was a revelation - first of all to the two journalists, who themselves had come from the peasantry they surveyed ... These realities were unwelcome - hence the muffling of the reportage. But it wasn't suppressed; the black market created by it was allowed to thrive; the writers are at liberty; and last month, they were allowed to travel to Berlin to collect the *Ulysses Prize* for narrative journalism, given by the journal *Lettre International* in Berlin. It seems there is both life, and thus hope, in the emerging giant that will be Chinese journalism.”

Financial Times Weekend Magazine, 20 November 2004

“Literary reportage has a whole host of friends, and all wanted to be present on Saturday evening when the cultural magazine *Lettre* presented the *Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage*, a prize for ‘literary non-fiction’ ... In fact, the environment wasn't opulent enough for all of the prize-worthy heroes of literary reportage, who still bring us news after the mainstream media's ‘embedded journalists’ have packed their things and left long ago.”

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4 October 2004

“Maybe one day this award will be as prestigious as the *Pulitzer*, a *Pulitzer* of international reach. So far, it's started out on the right foot with an eager defense of reportage as art and artistry, and ambitious journalism that stands apart from the rush and immediacy of electronic media and the Internet.”

La Vanguardia, 7 October 2004

“The 2004 *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage* was given to the married couple Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao for their book *A Survey of Chinese Peasants* on how farmers endure widespread corruption, violence and illegal taxation by Communist officials.”

The New York Times, 5 October 2004

“The non-topical, the extreme, the preposterousness of this world to be reported on: these are revealed in a glance at the table of contents of *Lettre International's* latest edition. The magazine recently presented the *Lettre Ulysses Award 2004 for the Art of Reportage* for the second time, in the name of an international jury. A prize which aims for no less than to be a *Nobel Prize* for journalists! These works can be seen as a slow movement writing culture of resistance, perhaps as an antithesis to the journeys which hurl so many people around the world and let them return so awfully unaltered. To travel to a place, to stay, to write, as a form of respect.”

Die Zeit, 28 October 2004

“Inside the tent, world leading reporters and guests united to pay homage to a genre rife with difficulties in a media world which focuses on sensation, and novelties which are quickly produced and easily presented and thus as easily forgotten. While globalised, standardised media allow us

to believe we're informed about the conditions and occurrences in the entire world, literary reportage displaces this illusion and presents us with a reality which we otherwise try to ignore.”
Information (Copenhagen), 5 October 2004

“Award sponsors German magazine *Lettre International*, the *Aventis Foundation* and the *Goethe-Institut* called the book a monumental piece of literary reporting about the inequality and injustice forced upon the Chinese peasantry. The book was chosen by an international panel of 12 judges, with the award's purpose to draw attention to the outstanding achievements of journalistic literature and to provide financial, moral and symbolic support to its authors.”
South China Morning Post, 4 October 2004

“For three years they worked on the book that was a bestseller in China until it was banned by the authorities. Now the book is only available as a pirate version, and legal proceedings are underway against the authors.”
Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm), 5 October 2004

“Chen and Wu have also been targeted as a result of their book, which reports official abuses of rural communities – particularly in their home province Anhui – in unprecedented and devastating detail.”
Radio Free Asia (Washington D.C.), 11 October 2004

2003

“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 Politkovskaya, 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

“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”.
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 6 October 2003

“The reporter leaves the certitudes and supposed securities of the world which is reflected in the media. 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 January 2004

“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. It is here where the people, whose clamor is normally not loud enough to be heard, are given a voice.”
Danish Broadcasting, 11 October 2003

“The prize is part of an initiative by the magazine *Lettre Internationale*, 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

“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

“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

Comments on the Genre of Literary Reportage
Statements from the Jurors

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, 2005 & 2006/ Portugal)

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 ...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.

Ryszard Kapuscinski (Key note speaker, Gala 2003)

I think one of the first things for literary reportage should be to go into the field. For me, that’s the first thing, the field, someone who is not in the field is not reporting.

Anne Nivat (Jury member 2005 & 2006 / France)

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)

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 Alexievich (Juror 2003, 2004 & 2005 / Belarus)

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)

“Eye witnessing” is the linchpin of literary reportage.

Nedim Gürsel (Jury member 2003 & 2006 / Turkey)

In this particular world, fiction increasingly seems a very partial response to it and I think the form of literary reportage increasingly seems like the genre not only of the present but the future.

Pankaj Mishra (Juror 2004 & 2005 / India)

You cover these stories and you see massacres and you see all kinds of injustice and evil, and you want to strain after meaning in some way, and draw conclusions that will both satisfy you, because you have questions about your own interest and commitment to this and why you’re doing it.

Mark Danner (Juror 2005 / USA)

When a writer goes to a conflict, he is not part of the country, but he has a heart, he has humanity, vision, and then from Ram Allah to Jamaica, he can describe the suffering of people.

Gamal al-Ghitany (Juror 2005 & 2006 / Egypt)

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.

Svetlana Alexievich (Juror 2003, 2004 & 2005 / 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, 2005 & 2006/ Portugal)

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.

Jorge Edwards (Juror 2003 / Chile)

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.

Svetlana Alexievich (Juror 2003, 2004 & 2005 / Belarus)

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 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.

Pedro Rosa Mendes (Juror 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006/ Portugal)

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.

Isabel Hilton (Juror 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006/ Great Britain)

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.

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.

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

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.

Isabel Hilton (Juror 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006/ Great Britain)

The Trophy 2006

The Artist

Jakob Mattner

Born in Lübeck in 1946. Sculptures, Drawings, Installations, Theatre design.

Jakob Mattner's solo exhibitions include those at the *Kestner-Gesellschaft*, Hannover, the *Pervaja Gallery*, Moscow; the *Carpenter & Hochmann Gallery*, New York; the *Erick Franck Gallery*, Geneva and the *Moritzburg Gallery* in Halle. In 2000 he designed the stage for the German Pavilion at the EXPO Hanover.

Mattner has designed and realized countless stage designs for the *Berliner Schaubühne*, the *Berliner Festspiele* and the *Berlin international literature festival*, among others. His artworks have been shown in the *Akademie der Künste*, Berlin and in the *Hamburger Bahnhof*, Berlin. In 2005 his exhibition *A Look in the Sun*, which arose from his work with the astrophysicists of the *Einstein Tower* sun observatory in Potsdam, was shown at the *Berlinische Galerie*, the *Wiesbaden Museum* and the *New Museum Weserburg* in Bremen.

The artist lives in Berlin.

The Poster 2006

The Artist

David Reeb

Born in Rehovoth, Israel in 1952. Paintings, Photography, Documentaries.

David Reeb studied at *Bezalel Academy* in Jerusalem from 1975 to 1978. He has exhibited at various venues, including *Documenta X* in Kassel, *Haus am Lutzowplatz*, Berlin, *Israel Museum* and *Haifa Museum*. His work was included in the exhibition the 'The New Hebrews. A Century of Art in Israel' at the *Martin Gropius Bau*, Berlin in 2005. He has helped organize and participated in various cooperative exhibitions and other activities incorporating Israeli and Palestinian artists since the early 1980s.

His most recent work has involved making video documentaries about demonstrations in Israel and Palestine, particularly against the separation wall/fence, and focusing on the village of Bil'in in the occupied West Bank.

Reeb teaches at the *Bezalel Academy* in Jerusalem and lives and paints in Tel Aviv.

The Organizers

Initiators, Supporters and Project Partners

The prize was initiated by the journal *Lettre Internationale*, 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. The legal subject of the project is the *Foundation Lettre Internationale Award*, a non-profit society with limited liability, which was founded for this purpose.

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

***Lettre Internationale* – Europe's Cultural Magazine**



Lettre Internationale was established in Paris in 1984. The German edition was first published in 1988. The magazine now 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 with magazines and cultural institutions throughout the world. *Lettre Internationale*, Berlin, is known as one of the most important German language cultural newspapers. The founder of *Lettre Internationale*, Antonin Liehm, was awarded the *Leipziger Buchpreis zur europäischen Verständigung* in 1997.

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

Lettre Internationale...

- is an independent, modern cultural publication
- has an interdisciplinary and international focus
- exclusively publishes texts which appear 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

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The Aventis Foundation

Aventis foundation

The *Aventis Foundation* is a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals. The *Aventis Foundation* serves to promote music, theatre, art, and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research, and higher education. For more information visit the website at www.aventis-foundation.org

Contact: Aventis Foundation, Eugen Müller, Industriepark Höchst, Geb. F 821, D-65926 Frankfurt am Main.

The Goethe-Institut



The *Goethe-Institut* (founded in 1951) is the Federal Republic of Germany's worldwide cultural institute. It has a network of 3,049 employees in 144 cultural institutes in 80 countries. The *Goethe-Institut* promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and encourages international cultural co-operation. It also conveys a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information on its culture, society and politics.

Together with its partners, which include cultural bodies from both the public and private sectors, the German federal states, local authorities and businesses, the *Goethe-Institut* produces a programme of cultural events encompassing the arts, society, education, science, media and information.

Each year around 175,000 learners of German enrol for courses at the *Goethe-Institut* in Germany and abroad. In addition, approximately 1,500 foreign guests take part in information and networking trips as part of the visitors' programme organised on behalf of the German Foreign Office.

Information on Germany's language, culture and society is also offered in the form of books, magazines, feature films and documentaries produced by the *Goethe-Institut*.

The *Forum Goethe-Institut*, based in Munich and Berlin, also presents the German public with elements of the cultural programmes and main areas of work being carried out by the *Goethe-Institut* abroad, thus promoting international cultural debate.

The *Goethe-Institut* is funded by the German Foreign Office, by sponsors and through its own income.

President: Dr. Jutta Limbach
Secretary General: Dr. Hans-Georg Knopp

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Aventis Foundation

Reasons for Supporting the *Lettre Ulysses Award*

Why is the *Aventis Foundation* supporting 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 Indian 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.

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.

www.lettre-ulysses-award.org

The Website

The following materials can be found on the www.lettre-ulysses-award.org website:

- Information about the **Lettre Ulysses Award 2006, 2005, 2004 and 2003** (press reactions, book covers of the short listed texts, the initiators' and project partners' logos, an image of the trophy).
- **Biographies** and **photos** of the **winners** in **2005, 2004 and 2003**, and all the **finalists** and **jury members** from **2006, 2005, 2004 and 2003**.
- Photographs of the **award ceremonies**.
- **Background texts** on the **genre of reportage** and the jury procedures
- Past **press releases**.
- The **key-note speeches** by **Ryszard Kapuscinski** (2003) in English and German, by **Abdelwahab Meddeb** (2004) in French, English, and German and by **Sven Lindqvist** (2005) in English and German.
- **Timetable**.



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