Dževad Karahasan
The Shadows of Cities - Essays

Originally written in Bosnian language

Dževad Karahasan, born in Duvno/Yugoslavia in 1953, is an author, playwright and essayist. The Siege of Sarajevo is the subject of the Diary of an Exodus (1993), translated into ten languages, of the essay collection entitled The Book of Gardens (2004) and of his novels The Rink of Shahrijar (1997) and Sara and Serafina (2000). His works also include the novel The Nocturnal Council (2006), Reports from a Dark World (2007), a collection of stories, as well as The Shadows of Cities (2010), a collection of essays. Karahasan has received numerous awards, including most recently the Goethe Prize 2020. He lives in Sarajevo, the spiritual capital of the Muslim world. The city, as Andric has shown, is a microcosm of the world, a microcosm of different cultures and religions, of the different traditions that exist in the modern world.

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About

Karahasan’s poetry of the «storied city» tells about a literature now more at home in the multilingual, asynchronous and multi-dimensional city than ever before in the modern era.

The great Bosnian writer and essayist Dževad Karahasan, rooted in the literary traditions of antiquity and of the Islamic and Christian world, has an understanding of the craft of writing that is out of step with the times. The architecture of his novel, its multifaceted time structure, its linguistic polyphony owes itself to an aesthetic experience of the city. The contrast of public and private spaces, the encounter, even confrontation with the unusual creates tensions that are developed throughout the narrative. Sarajevo stands as a testament to this finding in poetics, a city, which, as Karahasan demonstrates in Ivo Andric’s work, compels refined, perspective-rich writing to reconcile the different cultural traditions and religious practices that exist...
side-by-side in one place. »One could almost get the idea that Sarajevo is a city that was born to offer the narrative a native land.«

Graz and Sarajevo.

Awards (selection):
2020: Goethe Prize of the City of Frankfurt am Main
2019: Jeanette Schocken Prize (Bremerhaven)
2017: Franz Nabl Prize (Graz, Austria)
2014: Honorary doctorate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Basel
2012: Goethe Medal of the Goethe-Institut (Weimar)
2012: Ehrengabe of the Heinrich Heine Society (Düsseldorf)
2010: Vilenica International Literary Prize of the Slovene Writers’ Association (Vilenica, Slovenia)
2004: Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding
1999: Herder Prize (Vienna, Austria)
1995: Bruno Kreisky Prize for Political Books for *Diary of an Exodus*
1994: Prix européen de l’essai
Charles Veillon Lausanne
1991: Literary Prize of the Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena
1990: Yugoslavian Novel Prize (Sisak)
1981: Veselin Masleša Prize (Sarajevo)