

# Dragan Todorovic

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## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOKS

- *Little Red Radio from Trieste*  
[Stories. Nine Arches Press, UK, October 2012]
- *The Songs I Don't Dance to*  
[Essays. Uliks, Croatia, 2009]
- *Diary of Interrupted Days*  
[Novel. Random House Canada, 2009]  
  
In translation:
  - *Félbeszakadt napok krónikája*  
[Hungarian language. Europa Könyvkiadó. Hungary 2011]
- *The Book of Revenge*  
[Non-fiction. Random House Canada, 2006]  
  
In translation:
  - *Knjiga osvete*  
[Serbian language. Dobar naslov. Serbia, 2008]
- *To Arrive Where You Are*  
[Non-fiction. Banff Centre Press, Canada, 2000]

- *A Shadow & a Dream*  
[Poetry. Conceptual book—a single copy. Serbia, 1993]
- *A View Through the Window of a Subway Car*  
[Non-fiction. Tas Print, Serbia, 1991]
- *Hurricane Called Bruce*  
[Non-fiction. IIC, Serbia, 1989]

#### TRANSLATION

- Charles Bukowski: *Post Office*, a novel [serialised in NON Magazine, Belgrade, 1985]
- *Jockey Full of Bourbon* [Anthology of Tom Waits' poetry; translation and preface; ISBN 86-7129-002-6. Gradina, Serbia, 1990]

#### ESSAYS [SELECTED]

- *The Songs I Don't Dance to* [a series of essays, various publications, 1993-2004, collected in a book in 2009]
- *Ticket to Fiction: Art and War [To Arrive Where You Are*, Banff Centre Press, 2000]
- *A State Institution in a Broken State: The Communist Concept of Fun* [DOB 1994, Serbia]
- *Times. Man. Nightmares: The Poetry of Tom Waits* [article in Gradina III 1990, Serbia]
- *Diary of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1989: On Vasily Rozanov* [Savremenik IX-X 1989. Serbia]
- *A Peking Duck Dies in the Charge of the Light Cavalry, or Thieves are Part of Culture* [Savremenik I-II 1989. Serbia]

#### ARTICLES

I have published a few hundred articles in all leading newspapers and magazines of ex-Yugoslavia (Borba, NIN, Politika, Start, NON, Mladina), as well as in some of the leading Canadian publications, such as The Globe and Mail, This, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen, Saturday Night, NOW and others. The topics ranged from alternative culture, to interviews with artists, to politics. Some of my articles have were shortlisted for major awards in Yugoslavia an Canada.  
Some of the recent articles representative of my style:

- *Trapped underground? Sand in the stylists!* [The Globe and Mail, October 2010]
- *Night falls on Bill Clinton Street* [The Globe and Mail, April 2008]

**CURRENT / WORK IN PROGRESS**

My new book of short stories, titled *Little Red Transistor Radio from Trieste* was published in October 2012 in the UK. One of stories, titled *Small Red Radio From Trieste* has been published in Under the Radar literary magazine [2011].

I am currently working on two novels.

One, set in Germany and Serbia, is dealing with betrayal and loss. Another, set in Patagonia, is about the imaginary worlds.

Parallel to my work on fiction, I am gathering material for a major study on the space between the languages and how does it affect creative and cognitive practices of exiles. I envision this as a potential source of income for the University, both through grants and cooperation with interested institutions.

**WORKS FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA & OTHER PROJECTS [SELECTED]****RADIO**

- 1991-1993 Editor and host of *Mcluhan's Café*, a weekly radio magazine on culture (Radio Politika, Belgrade).
- 1992-1993 Wrote and directed 24 radio-plays for Radio Politika, Belgrade.
- 2003 Wrote, produced and edited *Checkpoint Berlin*, a radio documentary for CBC Radio one.

**TELEVISION**

- 1989-1994 Hosted over 150 live TV interviews on Belgrade TV channels (Channel 3, Art).
- 1992-1994 Wrote and directed two TV documentaries for Channel 3, Belgrade [*Darkness on The Edge of Town, Sad Heart of a Happy City*]
- 2000 Collaborated with director Ken Finkleman on the script of his TV series *Foreign Objects*, and played one of the leading roles in the episode *Evil*.

**SOUND ART**

- 2005-2011 Wrote, composed and edited *In My Language I am Smart*, a sound-art piece commissioned by CBC Radio One. It was performed at Deep Wireless festival in Toronto, and published on a CD in 2011 [*Deep Wireless 7, New Adventures in Sound Art*].

**CONCEPTUAL ART**

- 1993 After witnessing misappropriation of some of my articles during the war in Bosnia, I decided to symbolically withdraw my words from public life in Serbia. For this purpose I wrote and hand-printed a single copy of *A Shadow & a Dream*, a poetry book, which I circulated from hand to hand, thus putting my words under strict control.

- 1994            Exhibition *Trivia: Art & War*, at the Gallery of Belgrade Cultural Centre (Catalogue intro: Prof. Milena Dragičević Šešić). After collecting for several years the artefacts which the street vendors in Serbia sold during the war years, I exhibited them in one place, hoping that such concentration would clearly show what I suspected: that this bric-a-brac was actually a hidden call to arms. It worked: on the day of opening a paramilitary threatened to activate a hand grenade in the gallery and he destroyed several items. The exhibition still went on.

## AWARDS [SELECTED]

- *Diary of Interrupted Days* was shortlisted for Commonwealth Writers' Prize, was a finalist for Amazon First Novel Prize, and shortlisted for Toronto Book Awards [2009-2010]. It was also placed among the first five on three different lists of best books of 2009.
- *The Book of Revenge* won the Writers' Trust Non-fiction Prize for 2007, and was nominated for British Columbia Award for Canadian Non-Fiction [2007-2008].
- Golden Web Award for web site *Theatre and Exile* [2002].
- Canada Council for the Arts Grant. Grant value: \$18,000 [2002].
- Toronto Arts Council Grant. Grant value: \$4,500 [2000].
- Fellow at the prestigious Creative Non-Fiction program at Banff Centre for the Arts [1998].
- 1<sup>st</sup> prize on the International Astound Competition for a poetic cycle titled *Five Walks on Isabella Street*, which I wrote, coded and published as an interactive web site [1998].
- Article *Border Crossing* [THIS Magazine, October 1997], shortlisted for National Magazine Awards (Canada) [1997].
- The Best Journalist in Serbia [1981].

## EDUCATION

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|-----------|---|
| 1977-1981 | Faculty of Law, University of Kragujevac, Serbia.                         |
| 1977-78   | Journalism (audited), Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade University. |
| 1994      | Advanced Computing Systems, Kvin Informatika, Kragujevac, Serbia.         |
| 1996      | Digital Multimedia Academy, Hoffmann + Associates, Toronto, Ontario.      |

## WORK HISTORY

2011-current    Tutor, Warwick Writing Programme, Warwick University, UK

I am currently running Fiction Workshop 1 at MA in Writing.

2004-current Professional writer

I frequently collaborate with both Canadian and Serbian publications, mainly as a political and cultural commentator. Among them the most prominent are The Globe and Mail in Canada, and Blic and Danas in Serbia.

2001-2004 Creative Director, *dragan design*, Toronto, Ontario

I opened *dragan design* in 2000, since I saw an opportunity for a small creative studio, which would thread paths more artistic than those followed by big advertising agencies. I worked for some of the largest clients in business today, such as: Microsoft, Ford, Nike, Pepsi, AT&T, Saab, Lexus, Human Resources Development Canada, Air Canada, US Airways, CIBC, Scotia Bank, Royal Bank, Sun Life, Liberty Health...

My (total) design for Theatre and Exile academic conference at the Drama Centre, University of Toronto, had won a Golden Web Award in 2002.

2000-2001 Art Director, BBDO Canada, Toronto, Ontario.

I was the leader of a team of 7 people at BBDO Response, the department specialising in direct marketing across the media. I worked in a role combining writing and graphic design.

In The New York Festivals my project *Hoffa* [Client: Excite Canada] was awarded in 2000. The same year, at John Caples International Awards my project *Fishing* [Client: Ontario Tourism] also won an award.

1998-2000 Art Director, Grey Interactive, Toronto, Ontario.

Team leader (5 people), responsible for client liaison and total design. A role combining writing and graphic design. Emphasis in my work during this period was on digital/experimental content.

1996-1998 Freelance writing, Toronto, Ontario.

Assorted publications: This, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen, Saturday Night, NOW...

1995-1997 Programme Director, CHRY 105.5 FM, York University, Ontario.

I was responsible for the content created by 250 journalists, presenters and DJs from all over the world. Part of my responsibilities was to develop and supervise training of the staff. I also successfully organised and directed CHRY's yearly fundraising drives, which consisted of a week of special programmes, live shows and general community outreach.

- 1991-1995      Instructor of Writing, Studio Studia, Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
- I taught students creative non-fiction in the form of a workshop, and did additional classes on investigative journalism and the interview techniques.
- 1991-1994      Presenter and Editor, Art Channel, Belgrade
- I wrote and presented 3 series: *It doesn't Matter*, *Waiting for Dawn*, and *So Long Willer!* — in total over 40 episodes.
- 1989-1991      Presenter and Editor, RTS Channel 3, Belgrade.
- The National Television of Serbia (RTS) founded its Channel 3 in summer of 1989. During the 3 years I spent with them, I have authored 4 series: *Top Secret*, *You've Got Friday!*, *Shadows*, and *The World of Secrets* — in total over 90 episodes.
- 1988-1989      Editor-in-chief, ROCK! Magazine, Belgrade.
- This music magazine had circulation of about 17,000 when I took it over. I rebranded it as a magazine for alternative culture, redesigned it, and 6 months later it stood at 45,000 sold copies per issue. (I was removed from this position for political reasons, after publishing a satire against Slobodan Milosevic. The whole team of editors and writers resigned in protest and its publisher closed the magazine permanently.)
- 1983-1987      Arts Editor, NON Magazine, Belgrade.
- After two-years break for serving the Army, I moved to Belgrade to work with this publication, which, in the post-Tito years of dying communism, was known for its frequent clashes with the system and was a refuge of dissidents. I commissioned articles from a wide spectrum of artists and writers, started a publishing company and a record company within the magazine, took part in redesigning it, and formed a tight intellectual circle around it. I also initiated and produced cultural exchange between Serbian and Croatian artists (rock concerts, exhibitions, public readings).
- 1977-1981      Arts Editor, Omladina Magazine, Kragujevac, Yugoslavia.
- My first poem was published in 1974 and my first article in 1975. After becoming a regular contributor for this magazine, I was signed as their youngest editor in charge of the Arts. I worked as an editor during my studies.

## CRITICISM AND REVIEWS

### BOOK-LENGTH STUDIES OF MY WORKS:

- Vesna Lopičić: *Aspects of Autobiography — The Book of Revenge* [Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Serbia, 2008; ISBN 978-86-7379-158-6]

### REVIEWS

#### Reviews for *The Book of Revenge*

While building the stories of odd and endearing characters, Todorovic slyly slips in information about the history of Yugoslavia, and the country's march toward war. Few non-fiction writers can handle their material with lightness as well as depth. Todorovic can. I hope the non-fiction prizes don't overlook this fantastic memoir.

—Marianne Apostolides, Women's Post

*The Book of Revenge* will not be the last book to be written about the darkness that descended over the Balkans after Tito's death. But it is easily one of the best.

—The Sun Times

One of Todorovic's big heroes was Jimmy Hendrix, and it is hard not to think of Hendrix's own brand of blazing blues running through the book. [...] Clearly, Todorovic is an exceptional creative writer, but he is also an excellent reporter. In my mind, a record of a culture is preserved mainly through the arts, and Yugoslavia couldn't have asked for a more faithful recorder.

—Diana Adams, The Edmonton Journal

It's a wonderfully told tale. In addition to being a skilled journalist, Todorovic is also a musician and poet, and his memoir delivers keen-eyed reportage with impeccable pacing and the occasional flight of dark fantasy.

—Alexander Varty, Georgia Straight

He's a poet, a bold journalist, a beatnik [...] Great detail and marvellous language [...] The book brings out with astonishing clarity the avant-garde art scene in Belgrade.

—Peter Moreira, National Post [featured book]

His strengths [are] above all a kind of sardonic resignation, mixed with an appealing refusal to take either himself or anyone else too seriously, and a fine eye for the ridiculous. Todorovic is something of a specialist in the deadpan put-down.[...] *The Book of Revenge* presents an intensely polemical account of the break-up of Yugoslavia along with the engaging memoir.

—David Rieff, The Globe and Mail [featured book]

#### Reviews for *Diary of Interrupted Days*

Todorovic is after something more intriguing than the typical dramatic arc of war, dislocation, and memory. Like a postmodern visual artist, he uses a collage technique to deconstruct – without resorting to the distancing effects of deconstructivism – the linear narratives that we use to define and understand political and military conflicts, narratives that

too often leave out the idiosyncrasies and personal associations of the combatants and civilians on the ground. *Diary of Interrupted Days* bristles with the energy of those too-human personality tics, subjective reactions, and interpretations. [...] There are passages of unexpected beauty.

—**James Grainger**, Quill & Quire, starred review

The best fiction makes you feel there are no strangers. It affirms that inside you, in the purest, deepest, maybe scariest part, is a shared reservoir. This novel taps that core. If you recall Yugoslavia as a place made only more obscure by its media-spun death throes, *Diary of Interrupted Days* will unforgettably open you to its human face.

—**Jim Bartley**, The Globe and Mail

At its best, *Diary of Interrupted Days* is not only a poignant, intelligent look at people whose lives have been punctured by war and exile but a persuasive argument for the necessity of art during difficult times.

—**Kevin Chong**, National Post

Dragan Todorovic's debut novel is a compelling chronicle of rebellion, wreckage, and refuge, set amid the disintegration of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. [...] "There is no narrative of exile," Boris reflects at one point. "It is a chopped-up existence." The great success of *Diary of Interrupted Days* is to prove otherwise, rendering fragmented lives and complex conflict into an absorbing tale.

—**Jeremy Keehn**, The Walrus

## MEDIA APPEARANCES

### INTERVIEWS [RECENT & AVAILABLE ONLINE]:

- Dejana Milović: *Hulahop*, Radio B92, [http://www.b92.fm/channel/Hulahop/16280.html]
- Marina Vulićević: *Blues for ex-Yugoslavia*, Politika, [http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/intervjui-kultura/Bluz-za-bivshu-Jugoslaviju.sr.html]
- Dejan Kožul: *We Live in Times of Whores*, eNovine [http://www.e-novine.com/index.php?news=15320]
- Craig Rintoul: Bookbits, [Syndicated show] [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=656WY\_YdMak]

## REFERENCE

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