

- 1947 Born in Barcelona.
- 1972 Degree in Catalan Philology. First stories published in different magazines.
- 1974 *Faules de mal desiar* (Ill-stowed Fables), Víctor Català Prize (1973).
- 1978 *Galceran, l'heroi de la guerra negra* (Galceran, Hero of the Black War) Joaquim Ruyra Prize (1978).
- 1978 *Carn d'olla* (Beef Stew), Fastenrath Prize (1980).
- 1979 Moves to live in Terrassa and works as a teacher.
- 1980 *El mirall i l'ombra* (The Mirror and the Shadow).
- 1984 *La teranyina* (The Spider's Web), Sant Jordi Prize (1983). Translated into Spanish (1984) and French (1985).
Fra Junoy o l'agonia dels sons (Brother Junoy or the Agony of Sounds) Prudenci Bertrana Prize (1983), Serra d'Or Prize (1985) and Spanish Critics' Prize (1985). Translated into Spanish in 1988. Hungarian translation forthcoming (2008).
- 1985 *Llibre de preludis* (Book of Preludes). Translated into Spanish (1989).
- 1988 Leaves his university professorship to write full time.
Writes the television series *La granja* (The Farm), the first long-running, state-wide television series. This is awarded the National Prize for Literature of the Government of Catalonia.
- 1991 *Senyoria* (Lordship). Joan Crexells Prize (1991), *El Temps* Prize (1992), Serra d'Or Prize (1992), Spanish Critics' Prize (1992) and the Prudenci Bertrana Prize (1992). In 2004 it was awarded the Prix Méditerranée de Littérature for the best foreign work translated into French. The novel has been translated into Spanish (1993), Hungarian (2001), Romanian (2002), Galician (2002), French (2004), Italian (2006) and Portuguese (2007).
- 1994 He writes the series *Estació d'Enllaç* (Junction Station) for Catalan television TV3. It was shown for five seasons, until 1999.
- 1996 *El llibre de Feixes* (The Feixes Book), a single volume consisting of the novels *La teranyina*, *Fra Junoy o l'agonia dels sons* and *Luvovski o la desraó* (Luvovski or Unreason). *Çl'ombra de l'eunuc* (The Shadow of the Eunuch), Ciutat de Barcelona Prize (1997), Serra d'Or Prize (1997) and Lletra d'Or Prize (1997). Translated into Hungarian (2004), Romanian (2004), French (2006) and Slovenian (2007).
- 1999 *El sentit de la ficció* (The Sense of Fiction), an essay on the creative process of writing.
- 2000 Appointed as a member of the Philological Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (Institute of Catalan Studies).
Viatge d'hivern (Winter Journey), Serra d'Or Prize (2001).
- 2001 Premiere in the National Theatre of Catalonia of the play *Pluja seca* (Dry Rain).
- 2003 Awarded the Catalan Writers' Prize for his literary career.
- 2004 *Les veus del Pamano* (Voices from the River), Critics' Prize (2005) and El Setè Cel Prize (2006). Translated into Hungarian (2006), Spanish (2007), German (2007), Dutch (2007), Italian (2007). French, Romanian, Greek and Norwegian editions are forthcoming.
- 2005 *La matèria de l'esperit* (Material of the Spirit), an essay on literary reading.

Jaume Cabré: The Man Who Writes



Fotografia: LIC



Jaume Cabré

Jaume Cabré: The Man Who Writes

Simona Škrabec

Jaume Cabré (Barcelona, 1947) believes that apart from books, our times offer other possibilities of expression that the master of the pen can always use to his advantage. Cabré is a novelist but ventures into the domain of television scripts. The results have been the series *La granja* (The Farm), *Estació d'enllaç* (Junction Station) and *Crimis* (Crimes), along with several made-for-TV movies that have captured the attention of viewers for many years.

"Since I'm Landless Maurici, I had no obligation to History", says one of his characters. Rootless, with a scarred memory but too clear to become identified with one's own lineage, guilty of a multitude of disappointments – this is the space of the characters created by Jaume Cabré. His work constitutes a reflection on the place the individual occupies vis-à-vis History, with a capital H. Cabré is interested in the ideological divisions that endure from one generation to another and writes about the impossibility of preserving ideals in a corrupt and cynical world.

In Cabré's world, power struggles have been a constant since time immemorial and they always employ the same mechanisms. This is the focus of his novel *Senyoria* (Lordship, 1991). The title refers to the civilian regent of Barcelona, who was appointed to the post in the autumn of 1799, a few months before the turn of the century. Apart from offering a historical portrait of the period, the novel depicts, through a series of kaleidoscopic scenes, the spiritual condition of a fictitious character who does everything possible to spread his influence in the circles of power, and who has the authority to make others pay, even with their lives, for the errors he himself has committed. This focus on figures who abuse their authority who, in the past and through to this very day, shape the fortunes of many people has an unexpected twist. The abuser's passion for beautiful women will lead him to commit a crime. Thenceforth, he does not know what hell he has begun to enter.

In 1996, Cabré published *El llibre de Feixes* (The Feixes Book) a trilogy of the novels *La teranyina* (The Spider's Web, 1984), *Fra Junoy o l'agonia dels sons* (Brother Junoy and the Agony of Sounds, 1984), and the short novel *Luvovski o la desraó* (Luvovski or Unreason, 1985). Feixes, the city that appears in these novels, as well as in others, is a literary correlate of Terrassa, Cabré's adopted home.

Also in 1996, he produced another surprise, with an ambitious portrait of his generation in *L'ombra de l'eunuc* (The Shadow of the Eunuch), which consists of individual portrayals of characters who are unable to find their place in the world. Born not long after the Spanish Civil War, they bore the whole burden of the Franco dictatorship in their childhood and only woke up to adult life in May 1968, which was to have been the dawn of a better world. Some years later, however, the end of the regime did not bring the hoped-for changes. A farewell to revolutionary ideas and resigning to the fact that one must integrate into society closes this novel of broad sweep. The eunuch's shadow hover's throughout, personified in the main character, a man who is sensitive to beauty but unable to create it or to establish any kind of coherent relationship with a woman. The sense of failure, of a life that seems unable to bear fruit, brings with it pain that can only be assuaged with the abstract beauty of music and the other arts.

Apart from these works, which are the most translated of his books so far, one must also mention a collection of fourteen short stories titled *Viatge d'hivern* (Winter Journey, 2001). These stories of widely varying content and European settings, are pulled together by a web of themes, which might be summarised under one leitmotif: the struggle against oblivion and the summoning of the memory of Europe. The adventures and vicissitudes of the characters stimulate the reader to think about how to preserve both individual and collective memories.

The latest work in Jaume Cabré's prolific literary output is the novel *Les veus del Pamano* (Voices from the River), which offers a highly complex account of the Spanish Civil War. Like all wars that bring people who share the same space into confrontation, this one split them into two opposing sides, so that it seemed a society could only be represented by two colours. But Cabré shuns black-and-white portrayals and devotes all his attention to the shades of grey. He shows that personal motives, old wounds, character weakness and chance all draw the ideological frontier in a small Pyrenees village. The divide is so entrenched that it is not only used to justify armed conflict and persecution, but lasts for many years after the last shot is heard. Multiple narrative voices and a host of characters living in different periods enable Jaume Cabré to elaborate an impressive fresco of Catalan society after the Spanish Civil War.