

Senyoria (Lordship, 1991)

“This novel, which reads like a classic, deals with the relationship between the individual and power, crime and punishment, and the infinite banality of the reasons that make people seek power. With the pretext of fiction, of a historical-detective novel, Cabré, a connoisseur of the depths of the human soul and gifted with an explosive sense of humour, presents the life that is constructed over the lies of an individual who has climbed to a high position, his secrets, his grubby desires, his vanity, his meanness, his corruption and his unscrupulous ambition. [...] This is how a contemporary classic is written.”

Európa Könyvkiadó [Budapest], 2001

“Don’t forget the name of this Catalan novelist because you’ll be hearing more of him. *Senyoria* is his first novel translated – and excellently translated – into French. The literary quality is extraordinary: a novel with learned intrigue full of tensions, long Proustian sentences alternated with dialogue, loaded with memories and inner monologues, with a masterly command of temporal movements and flashbacks, a knowing distinction between responses, giving life to some one hundred people, as Balzac did, and resuscitating, like Dumas, the feeling of long-gone times: Barcelona, from 1795 to 1800.”

Jean-Charles Gateau, “Vertiginous Barcelona”
Le temps [Geneva], 25 April 2004

L’ombra de l’eunuc (The Shadow of the Eunuch, 1996)

“[...] for me, more than anything else, it is the structure that makes a masterpiece of *L’ombra de l’eunuc*. In fact, Alban Berg’s *Violin Concerto*, besides constituting the leitmotif of the book and part of the action in Chapter Four, also structures the novel: two parts, two settings, two chapters, with titles borrowed from musical terminology, the same mixing of genres as the *Violin Concerto*, and musical quotations. All of this without forcing things and without the slightest hint of artificiality. In the end, a rather chaotic world crystallises with Bach-like purity and aching sincerity into true tragedy. This is not a requiem but a cantata, with a chorale as its finale, to the memory of an angel. What, then, is *L’ombra de l’eunuc* about? Berg? Bach? The past? Us? Our failures, our wasted opportunities, now lost forever? Or simply death? There is no convincing answer to this question just as we shan’t have one either if we ask about the theme of Alban Berg’s *Violin Concerto*.”

Európa Könyvkiadó [Budapest], 2004

“Morning applause on the radio after Schubert’s *Nocturne* ends. The composition is strange, almost simple. In only ten minutes, the pianist’s fingers shape sounds and silences that rise and fade, just as happens in Jaume Cabré’s novel. Teresa Planella achieves the heights of fame with her violin and, when the love story ends, fades away as if in a gentle fall. Good literature, like good music, means an emotional shaking up. After Schubert’s *Nocturne*, people shouldn’t applaud, says one of Cabré’s characters. Nonetheless, they applaud immediately, and lengthily, because they are afraid of their emotions. Thanks to the music, they feel something that has no immediate response. Responses are found in faith, while literature expresses man’s anxieties. The moment of anxiety can be one of beauty and the experience of beauty can be an instant of happiness.

Drago Jancar, “The Morning Nocturne”
Delo [Ljubljana], February 2007

Viatge d’hivern (Winter Journey, 2000)

“*Viatge d’hivern* marks a progressive transition from transcendent aestheticism to a kind of protest literature with a moral content in which the theme of evil is no longer expressed through the disharmonies of the musical composition but in fictionalised testimonies about war, or feelings of guilt. Cabré takes on classical themes as a conceit for personal reflection on ambition, realism and poetry.

Julià Guillamón, “Jaume Cabré and the Thirst for the Absolute”,
La Vanguardia, 6 October 2000

“Jaume Cabré’s characters always opt for the most artistic solution as if they were all ignorant of the practical and precise side of more humdrum reality, and as if the only vital aim were to hurl themselves into the blind, devastating power of their particular Absolute. All of them resemble the main character of “Pols” (Dust), the scholar who is shut away with his books who, in literary terms, deserves nothing more than oblivion, desperately seeking the page or the phrase that will unlock part of the secret of the universe.”

Ponç Puigdevall, “Pure Ideals”,
El País, 12 October 2000

Les veus del Pamano (Voices from the River, 2004)

“Cabré capably traces the inner evolution of conscience and develops his story with a subtle blending of gazes that are fixed in the past or the future. His characters are never to be found in the present. They are constantly reliving their past, always finding new variations and explanations.”

Felix Müller, “Macondo Is in the Pyrenees”
Die Welt, 22 September 2007

“With this novel Jaume Cabré offers an epic gesture, but one that is always well rounded with a dramatic sense so that it is hard to put this book down. The language he uses is that of everyday life but steeped in fine-tuned irony, while a living tongue echoes and vibrates in every sentence. Cabré writes in Catalan and, thanks to its nasal tones and elegant pronunciation, the language sounds like a smooth-flowing, velvet river. [...] There is no doubt about it: *Les veus de Pamano* is one of the great novels to have been published in Germany this year.

Roman Rhode, “The Wounds of the Dictatorship”,
Der Tagesspiegel, 7 October 2007

“With power, irony, pain and passion, page after page, recklessly playing with time schemes and switching narrative perspectives, Cabré takes you by the hand and plunges you into the labyrinth of his characters’ destinies. [...] His is story-telling of an intense and at times frenetic rhythm, sustained by an impetuous flow of emotions. This is a book that must be read with a naked and ingenuous soul. Only then is it possible to submerge oneself in its colours and images, to fully capture the voices from this river that sing to History, and against History, to God, and against God, their frail and harrowing dirge.

Giancarlo De Cataldo, *l’Unità*, 20 November 2007

“What marks the difference is Cabré’s incisive and poetic writing, the precision and rawness with which he deals with his frankly melodramatic “raw material” and, in particular, the way he shapes his storytelling into unusual and complex forms, judiciously organising the comings and goings of his characters between past and present, and criss-crossing memories, voices, suspicions and secrets, making them fit into different stories. This is a novel that one reads avidly and then goes back to start all over again, as always happens with good books.

Francesca Lazzarato, *Il Manifesto*, 7 December 2007

