



Nonino Prize, the winners are Kadare, the philosopher Agamben and the bartenders of P(our)

The Nonino Prizes 2018 are bound to tradition. The jury, which has often “guessed” the future Nobel Laureates and followed cultural lines and trends long before they became “mainstream”, this year seems to have played safe, awarding, by the way, two mythical figures of contemporary culture. And maybe if the Nobel should not come (a questionable prize as much as you want but of incomparable media appeal), the Nonino isn’t certainly less important.

The two prizewinners, in fact, are the Albanian poet and novelist Ismail Kadare and the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, who has obtained the prestigious title of “Master of our time”, above all for being the creator of the concept of “Homo Sacer”, the human being whose life is sacred. The Nonino Prize, promoted for the 43rd year by the distilleries of Percoto (Udine) and destined to great personalities of the world’s culture is awarded by a very authoritative jury presided by the Nobel Laureate V.S. Naipaul.

However there is also the innovation. And it is represented by the apparently most “conservative” prize: the “Risit d’Aur” (Gold vine shoot). Which this year is awarded to P(our), the international charity project established in 2016 by Alex Kratena, Ryan Chetiyawardana, Jim Meehan, Simone Caporale, Monica Berg, Joerg Meyer and Xavier Padovani, which has aim of creating a global community of bartenders, barmen, sommeliers, brewers, distillers and wine makers that can stimulate and reinvent the beverage world through new ideas, knowledge, inspirations, experiences and values.

The awarding ceremony will take place at the Nonino Distilleries in Ronchi di Percoto (Udine) on January 27th next.

Few more words on the two individual prizes. Poet, essayist, novelist and script writer born in Gjirokastër, Albania, Kadare is really the “bard in love and critical of his people”, as the jury portrays him in the motivation. His works, between historical realities and legends, recall grandeur and tragedies of the Balkan-Ottoman past, and create great narrations. An upright intellectual, he has been in exile in Paris since the time of the dictatorship “not to offer his services to tyranny”, but he has always refused silence, which is the “evil’s half”, often immersing his narration in imaginary worlds, becoming the witness of the horrors committed by totalitarianism and its inquisitors. He has made religious tolerance one of the foundations of his work”. The prize will be delivered to him by Claudio Magris, a member of the jury and an author akin to Kadare.

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Giorgio Agamben's investigations, on the contrary, range from the language to metaphysics and from aesthetics to ethics. "Agamben – we read in the jury's motivations - defines himself a follower, given his intense experiences with the flowering of free thinking; he builds on the example of Michel Foucault and of his ideas —he intuits a biopolitic and creates the concept of *Homo Sacer*, a human being whose life is sacred, meaning that it can be killed but not sacrificed; he traces an evolution, from an ancient man that "could" to a modern man that "wants", and asserts himself above both human and divine laws, opening the way to an age of holocausts. To become visible, societies must struggle between two opposing principles: that of legal rights and that of anomie. Agamben often translates his philosophy into a pure poetry immersed in nature; listen to his own admirable description from his latest book, "Self-portrait in the studio": "The grass is God. In the grass—in God—I can find all those whom I have loved. For the grass and in the grass and like the grass I have lived and will continue living".

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