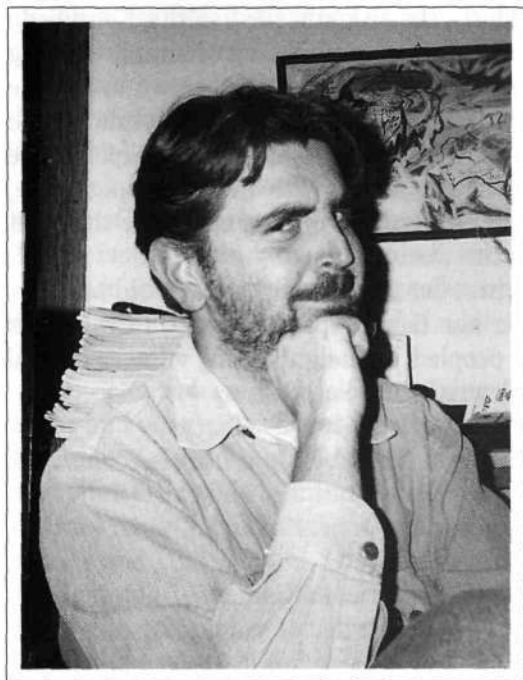


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**Aleksandar Bečanović** je rođen 1971. godine. Piše poeziju, prozu, književnu i filmsku kritiku. Član je redakcija crnogorskog nezavisnog nedjeljnika *Monitor* i časopisa za kulturu *Ars* i *PLIMApus*. Objavio je tri knjige pjesama: *Ulisova daljina*, 1994, *Jeste*, 1996 i *Ostava*, 1998.

ALEKSANDAR BEČANOVIĆ

# *Why I started to write memoirs*

*For F. W. Murnau, Mario Bava,  
Lucio Fulci, Jesus Franco &  
Carol J. Clover*

Perhaps time has run me over: years have an effect even on those who are deprived of death. The thousands of places I've been to and addresses I've changed can't save me from this feeling, from this lethargy which is threatening to incarcerate me. I'm old: this is something I can't explain. However, every awakening brings the same situation: and besides, the thirst for somebody else's life is still in me. And so, time and time again, I get up and set off to satisfy the need which no indifference can deny, no appeasement stop. I no longer know whether I have to curse it all or be grateful to be given the gift of eternal resurrection. Questions have caught up with me: in the times past I didn't have to think about them; the summon of the night came as a beneficial blessing, as a merciful fulfilment of my desires. Once upon a time: I used to believe that this expression had no power over me; that the past was something that couldn't be distinguished from the present, in which there existed only the night and what interrupted it for a short while, only to make my pleasure greater, a hundred times stronger. This split between the once and the now, this abyss which has disturbed my existence, is the opening of time which, as a matter of fact, can't harm me, but makes me concerned. Because everything that happens nevertheless leaves a trace, even in the hard, insensitive soil which gives me sanctuary.

I've been existing for 450 years. Although my body doesn't suffer, I sense for the first time that body and spirit are not one and the same. Their unity's been lost, but this fact doesn't take away the body's strength. On the contrary, it is now perhaps even more ready for attack. And when this moment comes, I must listen to the commanding voice, the roaring coming from the depth of my being which allows for no objection. These notes are a kind of counterweight, a mild introspection which – out of self-respect – I indulge in, and which I'm sure will bring about a change. These notes – people might call them memoirs – are a sign of a new era, a kind of obvious, yet no less powerful apology. Any grudge I can possibly think of will be ridiculed: the body denies any suspicion.

So I started writing my memoirs into this black book to give form to what couldn't be taken away from me, only disregarded. All memories – when I sat in a comfortable armchair and concentrated on the bright paper – were fresh, perhaps incomplete, but definitely fresh: I remembered the last day, the sun, which unusually slowly rolled towards the sea, the sudden bite, which was to shut my eyes if only for a short while, and then the opening of eyes and seeing, although darkness was all around me; I remembered the moment which was to define me for ever – the agent of a different transcendence: the instant when I realised that my being was no longer in God's domain, that my body was beyond nature; I remembered the blissful smell of the food, which I would soon learn to follow no matter how far I had to go and no matter how hidden it was; I remembered the towns and landscapes where I went for longer or shorter periods, always feeling nostalgic for the family castle, my homeland; and – naturally – I remembered the people, many miserable people I'd left behind, I'd surrendered to the dark. Having read part of the substantial amount of my notes, a friend of mine said to me: »What a miraculous life you've had.« He stressed the word »life«, and we both burst out laughing sincerely.

And so, with a strange turn, perhaps, my power is again becoming complete, renewed: what I write makes me less hesitant; I'm ready to assault any victim. When I'm done with the writing, when I put the book with my modest thoughts into a specially assigned drawer, I feel wild strength. I can't thank myself enough for this witty remark: writing is half health. I feel it most strongly at this exact moment, when the screams of a terrified girl are coming from the adjacent room: the wretched girl simply knows what will happen to her, as I started feasting on her blood last night. It was sweet as only human blood can be: tasty, thick, touchingly red, wonderful as it is sucked from the neck, even sweeter when it fills up my mouth, while the victim's eyes roll in intolerable pain.

I met her last night in a small, godforsaken street. The evening was specially pleasant: a cold breeze was gently stirring the leaves, the fog was coming closer from the nearby plain, and the moon only now and then peeked through the clouds. And then she appeared: a lost lamb sensing nothing as she hurried home. More than that I couldn't wish for: the pleasure was absolutely

lyrical, the kind only the presence of death can create. A gorgeous girl, romantic setting and a noble count, admittedly a bit aged, but still in excellent form. No profanity of this world could soil our encounter or debase the magnificent scene, I was thinking as my breath was approaching her innocent lips. I couldn't wait very long: countless drops of blood moved at once, everything became agitated, the contours lost their sharp outlines, shadows intermingled – like husband and wife, like expectation and fulfilment, like knife and wound – her face was caught in the trap of fear. Oh, how she squealed, how she squealed, even then! When later, just before sunrise, I carried her like a groom into the cold, stone chamber – my little temple, the place where heavy curtains drape over the high windows, where omnipotent desire deprives pity of any meaning – her eyes were closed in the deceptive peace of sleep. In any case, she'll serve me well for the next five or six days: her blood will last that long. And then – as all (and who am I to defy fate?) beautiful things come to a sudden and cruel end – our little romance will be over.

If I think better, what actually attracted me on this girl was her splendid, delicately white skin, its immaculate vastness: the parchment on which every bite was doubly visible, on which the tiniest detail was to leave a deep, irrevocable trace: nothing could remain unrecorded. When – gently, in order not to miss anything – I caressed the girl's skin with my hand, the true configuration of pain showed under my touch – proof of my skill, my newly awoken pride. Everything was opening up to me, without objection, without shame, without doubt – the sliding look was taking in what was left, the ultimate view: terror and its rapid spreading. The letter which is written and read with delight: the testament for a human being. Whoever wishes to find out, to write down what's happening, must soil his hands with blood, must be willing to open new and new wounds.

The long halls of the castle reinforce, multiply the sounds: the girl's screams and her crying are accelerating my writing. It's the music unmasking the soul.

Not long ago I explained my new method to a friend of mine, and he said approvingly: »You old pervert! These are strange times.« Strange, indeed: even vampires have become decadent. We, too, need additional stimuli.

*Translated by Lili Potpara*