AMOS OZ

Amos Oz was born in Jerusalem in 1939. His family included scholars and teachers, some of whom were militant right-wing Zionists, who emigrated to Israel in the early 1930s from Russia and Poland. In 1954, aged 15, Amos Oz rebelled against his father's world and left Jerusalem to live and work in Kibbutz Hulda, where he also completed his secondary education. After completing his Army service in 1961, he returned to the kibbutz to work in the cotton fields. In his early twenties his first short stories were published in the leading literary quarterly Keshet, before the kibbutz assembly sent him back to Jerusalem to study philosophy and literature at the Hebrew University. With his BA degree, he returned to Kibbutz Hulda where, for twenty five years, he divided his time between writing, farming, and teaching in the Kibbutz High School.

As a reserve soldier in a tank unit, Amos Oz fought on the Sinai front during the 1967 Six Day War, and on the Golan Heights in the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.

In 1969-70 Amos Oz was a visiting Fellow at St. Cross College, Oxford. In 1975, and again in 1990, he was 'Author in Residence' at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and in 1984-5, together with his wife and son, he spent a year in residence at Colorado Springs College in America. In 1986 they took the difficult decision to leave the Kibbutz and make their home in Arad, where the dry desert climate was beneficial to his son's asthma. In 1997 he was visiting professor at Princeton University, NJ and in 1998 at Oxford University, England.

Amos Oz continues to devote his time to writing and teaching (he is a full Professor at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva) and actively campaigning for the Israeli Peace movement.

Since the 1967 war Amos Oz has published numerous articles and essays about the Israeli/Arab conflict, campaigning for an Israeli/Palestinian compromise to be based on mutual recognition and co-existence between Israel and a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. As one of the leading figures in the Israeli Peace movement since 1967, his articles, essays and political activities have made him a foremost figure in Israel. His speeches and articles appear in translation throughout the world.

- In 1998 he received the Prix Femina – France’s top literary prize for the best foreign novel of the year.
- In 1991 he was elected a full member of the Academy of the Hebrew Language.
- In 1992 he was awarded the German Friedenspreis, one of the most important international peace prizes, which was presented to him by the German President, Richard von Weizsacker.
- In 1997 he was awarded the French cross of the Knight of the Légion d’Honneur by President Jacques Chirac.
- Amos was awarded his country’s most prestigious prize: the Israel Prize for Literature in 1998, the fiftieth anniversary year of Israel’s independence.
- In 2002 he was awarded the prestigious Norwegian Authors’ Union’s Freedom of Expression Prize – an annual prize awarded to an author who has made outstanding efforts to promote freedom of expression and tolerance.
- In September 2004, Amos Oz and the Palestinian academic Sari Nusseibeh were jointly awarded the Premi Internacional Catalunya by the Catalan Government for their “decisive contribution to the development of cultural, scientific and human values around the world.”
- He also was awarded the Ovidius Prize granted annually by the Romanian Union of Writers for the quality of literary work and its contribution to the deepening understanding among different ethnic groups and cultures.
- And in November 2004 he was awarded the Die Welt Literary Prize given to authors whose books besides possessing high literary quality have had impacts across national boundaries and instigated international debates.
• In 2005 he won the most prestigious Goethe Prize honouring his literary work and impressive moral responsibility.
• In September 2007, he was awarded the Premio Grinzane Cavour Award. The aim of the Prize is “to celebrate writers who have a dialogue through their books, works and energy with people and cultures facing the Mediterranean”.
• In September 2007, he was awarded the Prince of Asturias Award for Letters, recognising his contribution to the world of literature. This is the leading international award in the Spanish speaking world.
• In April 2008, he was awarded the Stefan Heim Prize in Germany for the body of his work. This is a new prize which will be awarded every 3 years and he is the first recipient.
• In May 2008, he was awarded the Dan David Prize -honouring him “in the field of creative rendering of the past for portraying historical events while emphasizing the individual, and for exploring the tragic conflict between two nations from a very human point of view.”
• In June 2008, he received the Primo Levi Prize for the body of his work.

He received the Heinrich Heine Prize in December 2008, awarded to personalities who through their work in the spirit of Heine’s emphasis on the basic rights of man, advance social and political progress, mutual understanding of the peoples, or spread the idea that all people belong to the same group: mankind. Amos Oz is the first person to be awarded both the Goethe Prize and the Heinrich Heine Prize.

In 1965, he published a collection of short stories entitled WHERE THE JACKALS HOWL which won him his first literary award, a keen readership and a strong literary opposition. The volume has remained continuously in print ever since, in Hebrew and English, French and Polish. It will be published soon in China.

His next novel, ELSEWHERE PERHAPS, was published in Israel in 1966 and subsequently in America, England, France, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Spain and Argentina and China. As a stage adaptation, it was a major theatrical event in Tel-Aviv in 1982.

MY MICHAEL, one of Amos Oz’s best loved novels, appeared in Israel in 1968 and immediately caused a literary and political storm, provoking hostile criticism as well as enthusiastic admiration. Over 105,000 copies of the Hebrew edition have been sold, making it one of the biggest selling books ever in a country where the most popular national evening newspaper sells barely half a million copies. MY MICHAEL has also been published (often more than once) in America, England, France, Spain, Catalonia, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Poland, Japan, Egypt, Romania, Bulgaria, Brazil, Hungary, Lithuania, Serbia, Czech Republic, Croatia, Russia, Ukraine, China, Korea, Greece and Denmark. Many of Amos Oz’s publishers published special editions in 1988 to mark the novel’s 20th anniversary. MY MICHAEL was made into a wonderful film by Dan Wollman in 1975 and continues to be shown in cinemas from time to time around the world. Soon to be published in Vietnam and in the Catalan language.

Next came UNTO DEATH in 1971. A volume of two novellas - 'Crusade' and 'Late Love' - it is considered by many to be some of Oz’s most powerful writing. UNTO DEATH has appeared in America, England, France, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Holland, Russia, Ukraine, Czech Republic and Poland. Both novellas have been staged in Israeli theatres and have been broadcast on the radio in several countries. Soon to be published in Spain.

TOUCH THE WATER, TOUCH THE WIND, in 1973, caused another literary controversy in Israel. It has also been published in America, England, France, Spain, Russia, Korea and Poland.

THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL (a cycle of three novellas) appeared in 1976 and brought Amos Oz the prestigious Brenner Prize for Literature. It has been published in the USA, UK, France,
SOUMCHI, published in 1978, was Amos Oz’s first children’s book - a story of love and adventure. It has been translated into English (both in the US and England), Arabic, Estonian, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, Japanese, Chinese and Dutch. Soon to be published in Poland.

In 1979 UNDER THIS BLAZING LIGHT was published, a collection of articles and essays on literary, ideological and political issues. The English edition was published by Cambridge University Press in 1995. Some of the pieces have been translated into other languages, and have appeared in magazines and newspapers around the world.

A PERFECT PEACE, Amos Oz’s first full scale work since TOUCH THE WATER, TOUCH THE WIND nine years earlier, was published in 1982. Very warmly received in Israel, it was subsequently published in America, England, France, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Spain and Finland, and China. Soon to be published in Poland, Romania, Brazil and Russia.

IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, which caused a sensation in 1983, comprises a series of essays in which Amos Oz describes a journey he made through his own troubled country during Israel’s Lebanon War. The essays, which originally appeared in the leading newspaper Davar, combine serious documentary interviews with very personal observations in a storyteller’s setting, attempting to be fair and faithful to a variety of political and ideological groups within Israel. After a storm of protest and admiration, the essays were published together in book form in May 1983 to be followed by a whirlwind of rights sales around the world. The book has appeared in America, England, France, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Spain, Hungary and Poland.

BLACK BOX, first published in January 1987, immediately went to No.1 on the bestseller lists in Israel and remained there for longer than any previous book. At its peak it was selling 500 copies a day and sales in just four months approached 70,000 copies, extraordinary for a country with a population at that time of only 4,000,000 people. BLACK BOX has been translated into English, French, Dutch, German, Swedish, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Danish, Portuguese, Norwegian, Finnish, Italian, Czech, Polish, Greek, Hungarian, Russian, Latvian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Slovenian. It is still to be published in the Malayalam language in India.

In 1987 Amos Oz published THE SLOPES OF LEBANON, a collection of essays on Israeli and world politics, the Middle East Conflict, and the Holocaust. This collection also appeared in English (in the UK and USA), German and Japanese.

In 1989 Amos Oz published a novel regarded by many to be a new departure for him, TO KNOW A WOMAN, which evoked a passionate controversy in Israel. It has sold over 80,000 copies in Hebrew and it has been translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Greek, Danish, Portuguese, Italian, Finnish, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, Polish, Slovak, Serbian, Albanian, Korean, Malayalam- (India) Bulgarian and Slovenian.

FIMA (or THE THIRD CONDITION), appeared in Israel in 1991. Translated into German, French, Dutch, English, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Chinese, Romanian, Croatian, Malayalam- (India) and Turkish.

ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND PEACE - A collection of essays and speeches composed before and after the Israel-PLO peace initiatives in Oslo and Washington.

DON’T CALL IT NIGHT - Published in Israel in January 1994 and by May of the same year had sold more than 40,000 copies. British, German, French, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Estonian, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Polish and Chinese editions have
been published. It is still to be published in India—(Malayalam language),

**PANTHER IN THE BASEMENT** - A short novel about the last year of the British Administration in Jerusalem, published in Israel in 1995 and on the bestseller list for many months. Published in UK, US, Germany, France, Holland, Spain (Spanish and Catalan), Finland, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, Sweden, Denmark, Brazil, Norway, Japan, Portugal, Romania and Serbia. A film adaptation has just been completed, starring Alfred Molina. Soon to be published in Croatia and China.

**THE STORY BEGINS** - A collection of literary essays written with insight and affection about 10 well-known writers, including Chekhov and Garcia Marquez and how and why they begin certain stories the way they do. Sold in Israel, Germany, France, Holland, Spain, Brazil, Portugal, Poland, Greece, USA and UK.

**ALL OUR HOPES** – Published in Israel in 1998 to mark the 50th anniversary, this collection of speeches, lectures and essays by one of Israel’s foremost voices was an instant bestseller, and promises to remain a classic.

**THE SAME SEA** – Published in December 1998 in Israel to overwhelming critical and popular acclaim. Heralded a “masterpiece”, an outstanding, groundbreaking novel. Published in UK, USA, Germany, France, Sweden, Italy, Holland, Poland, Brazil, Greece, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Spain (Spanish and Catalan languages) and Lithuania. It is still to be published in India—(Malayalam language) and China. It is now being turned into an opera by a leading Italian composer.

**A TALE OF LOVE AND DARKNESS** – Published in Israel in March 2002, this is an extraordinary and moving autobiographical novel. This book has been Amos Oz’ fastest selling book in Israel to date and has achieved huge sales in its various European editions. In Germany and Italy, it has sold over 440,000 copies. It was awarded 10 different prizes around the world, including the 2005 Goethe Prize and the Prix France Culture 2004. It has so far been sold in over 25 countries. The film rights have been optioned. Soon to be published in Arabic.

**HOW TO CURE A FANATIC** – A collection of three essays on fanaticism delivered as lectures in Germany in 2002 which have so far been published in Italy, Germany, France, Spain, UK, USA, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brazil, Portugal, Greece, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Czech Republic. Soon to be published in Japan.

**SUDDENLY IN THE DEPTH OF THE FOREST: A Fairy Tale** – a young adult story (9 to 14) but this is read by all ages. The story is set in a village (no specific place) near a forest where children are not allowed to go. There is no wildlife near the village and a strange silence/mystery about where all the animals are. Two children solve the mystery. In the unravelling of the story, there is much to be read on all levels in the true fable tradition. Israeli edition published September 2005. German, Italian, French, Polish, Dutch, Hungarian, Korean, Brazilian, Norwegian and Spanish editions already published and rights have been sold in many other countries. There is serious film interest.

**THE SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO (HAR-GA’ASH)** – published in Israel in May 2006, this book contains Amos’ speech when receiving the Goethe Prize, his speech when receiving the Die Welt Prize and an essay entitled “Between Israel and Germany”

**RHYMING LIFE AND DEATH** – published in Israel in March 2007. A short novel that strikes a new chord in Amos’ work – a reflection on the status of writers, the debate between private and public, the question of autobiography and inspiration – all dealt with in great humour and subtlety. Published in UK, USA, Greece, Italy, Germany, Spain, Norway, Brazil, Spain, Sweden,
Holland, France, Poland and Israel. Soon to be published in Sweden, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, China, Denmark, Hungary and Korea

**SCENES FROM A VILLAGE LIFE** – published in Israel in February 2009 – 8 interwoven short stories set in an imaginary village in Israel. It has just been published in Germany and Holland. Soon to be published in Italy, Spain, Brazil, France, Sweden and Poland.

His fiction and non-fiction writing has been translated into a total of 39 different languages. There are now 500 different editions of his work in print.

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