



SRPKO LEŠTARIĆ

The Wonderful World of Zakaria Tamer

Just like the all-seeing lord of the underworld, Zakaria Tamer is able to see the secrets which make an ordinary person's onerous life even more arduous, and the misfortune and misery which make a marginalised waif's even more tragic. For him, whether directly or circuitously, all these secrets can be traced back to the structures of state-backed, ideological violence. From war to rape, or from slander to a parent simply threatening a child, behind every act of aggression, there stand intentions justified by beliefs. The majority of these beliefs are based upon all manner and degree of prejudices and social institutions. These are suited to a brain that does not think. It is for this reason there is no institution which Tamer would not topple, nor any authority, whether secular or religious, to which he would not deliver a smack with one of his mighty fists. Each of his stories is an assassination.

And so it is no wonder that Tamer's books are nowhere to be found in bookshops in many Arab countries. His satire's sharp blade slashes our harsh reality in two, revealing the morbid nature of the despotic institutions which exist along the entire length of our social hierarchy. This writer has been attacked from all angles, but the main accusation made against him has been that he holds nothing as sacred. Not only does Tamer choose not defend himself against such criticism, but instead he welcomes it with the utmost joy and gratitude.

Tamer takes his motifs to the level of the archetypal so that every-