



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Time Shelter by Georgi Gospodinov

1. The novel can be read as an increasingly outlandish satire about modern society's idealisation of the past and the dangers of such an outlook when on a mass scale. It's a timely read, one which the Guardian said addresses the 'weaponization of nostalgia'. Would you agree that we live in an age where nostalgia has been weaponised?
2. The panel of International Booker Prize judges called the book 'morbidly humorous'. How does the author's use of humour and irony contribute to the book as a whole?
3. At one point during the story, Gaustine retreats to the year 1939, which is referenced at the beginning of the book as 'the end of human time'. The ending of the book also leans into this moment. Why does Gospodinov keep circling back to this date?
4. Gaustine's clinic offers the opportunity to not only experience one's own past, but an alternative past that an individual might have wished for; a past denied to them. To what extent does Gospodinov play with the idea that we can be nostalgic for something that we didn't experience, or that never existed?
5. When interviewed for the Booker Prizes website, Georgi Gospodinov said his career had been inspired by '[my] grandmother's stories that I listened to as a child. Stories that blended fiction and reality, with no clear end to one and beginning to another. Stories that had voices and whispers, and miracles at the end.' Can you see these influences in Time Shelter?
6. Initially, Gaustine seems to be a visionary, providing a radical and successful form of therapy. Later in the book, the narrator calls him a 'monster'. Did you find Gaustine a likeable character or a dangerous and malevolent figure, or both?

The above questions were taken from
<https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/features/reading-guide-time-shelter-by-georgi-gospodinov-translated-by-angela#questions-and-discussion-points>
to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Georgi Gospodinov is a Bulgarian poet, writer, and playwright. His debut novel, *Natural Novel*, was published in 23 languages, and his second novel, *The Physics of Sorrow*, won several awards. Gospodinov writes narratives based on the recent past of Eastern Europe, experimenting with different genres. In 2023, *Time Shelter*, translated in English by Angela Rodel, won the International Booker Prize.

<http://georgigospodinov.com/en/bio>

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