



PRESS RELEASE

Agnes Heller to receive the 2006 Sonning Prize

The Hungarian philosopher and author, Agnes Heller, is to be awarded the 2006 Sonning Prize.

The Sonning Prize, which is Denmark's largest cultural award in the order of DKK 1 million, is given every other year by the University of Copenhagen for "commendable work that benefits European culture".

The award will be presented on Wednesday, 19 April 2006 in the Ceremonial Hall at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

Agnes Heller, the author of 40 books, has described European culture for 50 years with creative talent, political wisdom, moral energy and intellectual integrity. She has been greatly committed to topics such as justice, morality, emotions, society, politics, history, art and science. She has been in dialogue with Europe's masterpieces – by Kant and Nietzsche, Aristotle and Heidegger, Shakespeare and Kierkegaard – on the terms of human existence.

Agnes Heller was born in Budapest in 1929 and lost most of her family in concentration camps during World War II. She has had her academic positions in Hungary taken from her several times, and in 1977 she emigrated to Australia.

The recommendation for Agnes Heller says, among other things:

"She has witnessed the worst sides of European politics and the best of the continent's culture. Her reaction to difficult times has been unyielding political criticism combined with optimistic philosophical hope. Even in very difficult times, when fear began to take over and cripple the conscience, she was capable of reflecting on the fact that there are people who prefer to suffer unjustly rather than cause others to suffer. Heller's thoughts are primarily a philosophy on this miraculous state of mind."

Today, she is *Hannah Arendt Professor of Philosophy* at the New School of Social Research in New York. She lives half of the year in Hungary, where she is a member of the Academy of Sciences.

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Agnes Heller will be in Copenhagen on 18-20 April and can be contacted through Mette Damgaard Sørensen, University of Copenhagen publicity coordinator at +45 35 32 42 64.

For more information on Agnes Heller and the Sonning Prize, visit www.ku.dk/english/sonning_prize

The Sonning Prize

The Sonning Prize is the largest cultural award in Denmark. It was founded by editor C.J. Sonning and supports the promotion of European culture.

The Prize amount is DKK 1 million, and is awarded to a man or woman "for commendable work that benefits European culture."

European universities may propose nominees for the Sonning Prize.

The recipient of the Sonning Prize is selected by a committee at the University of Copenhagen. The Committee is appointed by the Board of the University of Copenhagen.