

A landmark in magical realism

# The Coming of Joachim Stiller

HUBERT LAMPO

Journalist Freek Groenevelt's life is thoroughly shaken up by a series of surprising events that seem to all revolve around an individual called Joachim Stiller. Along the way, Groenevelt discovers who Stiller is (a soldier he witnessed being killed in the war), but even then he can't make head nor tail of all the mysterious twists and turns. Stiller approaches as a kind of Messiah, but Groenevelt never gets any confirmation of his existence.

**Beautifully constructed prose, full of suspense and mystery from beginning to end**

NBD BIBLION

The novel is a textbook example of the magic realist style in which reality is interwoven with surreal elements: nothing is exactly as it seems. The classical theme of the quest follows logical steps towards a goal (to find and meet Stiller). Yet, in confrontation with inexplicable events, the story is elevated to another level, resulting in a rebirth of the main character. The hero's spiritual path parallels an awakening reader's experience.

Strongly influenced by experiences in World War II, humanism, democracy and social engagement are central notions in Lampo's writings. He combines these aspects with a remarkable sensitivity to the supernatural and a fascination for the uncanny, making him one of the fathers of Flemish 'magical realism'.

'The Coming of Joachim Stiller' has won numerous awards and was filmed by Harry Kümel in 1976.

**Our foremost representative of magical realism**

NRC HANDELSBLAD



## AUTHOR



**Hubert Lampo** (1920-2006) is one of the fathers of Flemish magical realism.

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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Anita Verweij - info@meulenhoff.nl

**TRANSLATION GRANTS** Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be, Yannick Geens - yannick@flandersliterature.be