



"It is a privilege indeed to congratulate Nobel Prize laureates for literature, even more so to those who in turbulent times managed to resist one-sidedness and laying the blame on a single nation. The Swedish Academy has made an extremely bold decision by giving this literature award to Handke who, by his own account, summoned up the courage to write about the civil war in Yugoslavia from a different perspective.

I would like to recall that some of former Nobel Prize recipients included Sir Winston Churchill who was recognized "for his mastery of historical and biographical descriptions as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values" and to Günter Grass who admitted that as a young man in the last several months of the Second World War he became a member of Nazi elite Waffen-SS units.

I hope that in the future as well the Swedish Academy and the Nobel Foundation will be bold enough to award the Nobel Prize to all those who bravely stand up in the face of one-mindedness and demonstrate courage in exploring and acknowledging human and historical stories but also brave enough to recognize story-tellers showing originality and bringing diversity in their work, thus promoting freedom so much needed by mankind."