

The Art Of Novel Milan Kundera

A man and a woman meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned twenty years earlier when they chose to become exiles. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence 'their memories no longer match'. We always believe that our memories coincide with those of the person we loved, that we experienced the same thing. But this is just an illusion. Then again, what can we expect of our weak memory? It records only 'an insignificant, minuscule particle' of the past, 'and no-one knows why it's this bit and not any other bit'. We live our lives sunk in a vast forgetting, a fact we refuse to recognise. Only those who return after twenty years, like Odysseus returning to his native Ithaca, can be dazzled and astounded by observing the goddess of ignorance first-hand. Milan Kundera is the only author today who can take such dizzying concepts as absence, memory, forgetting, and ignorance, and transform them into material for a novel, masterfully orchestrating them into a polyphonic and moving work.

Structure of the finished "mega-novel" echoes the work's thematic rationale." "To help readers who are interested in a particular Rabbit novel. Boswell devotes a chapter to each individual section of the tetralogy. At the same time, he treats each novel as an integral part of the more comprehensive whole." --Book Jacket.

This breathtaking, reverberating survey of human nature finds Kundera still attempting to work out the meaning of life without losing his acute sense of humour. It is one of those great unclassifiable masterpieces that appear once every twenty years or so. 'It will make you cleverer, maybe even a better lover. Not many novels can do that.' Nicholas Lezard, GQ

Slowness was Milan Kundera's first novel written in French. Disconcerted and enchanted, the reader follows him through a midsummer's night in which two tales of seduction, separated in time by more than two hundred years, interweave and oscillate between the sublime and ridiculous. As Kundera's readers would expect, Slowness is at the same time a formidable display of existential analysis. Slowness (and rapidity), discretion (and exhibitionism) are the principal concepts, and those which are to the reader like vital keys for understanding life in our contemporary world.

Karen von Kunes traces Milan Kundera's creative ideas to a 1950 police report filed in Stalinist era Czechoslovakia. Demonstrating how this incident influenced Kundera's literary trajectory and ultimately contributed to his acclaim as a writer, von Kunes interprets his work in a new way.

This study will attempt to understand, through both a careful reading of Kundera's oeuvre as well as a consideration of the Continental philosophical tradition, the place that Kundera calls "the universe of the novel." I argue that Kundera transforms--not applies--philosophical reflection within the art form of the novel. As Kundera argued in *The Art of the Novel*: "The moment it becomes part of a novel, reflection changes its essence. Outside the novel, we're in the realm of affirmation: everyone is sure of his statements: the politician, the philosopher, the concierge. Within the universe of the novel, however, no one affirms: it is the realm of play and of hypotheses. In the novel, then, reflection is essentially inquiring, hypothetical." This work is not a philosophical consideration of Kundera's work, but rather a reflection on the relationship between philosophy and the universe of the novel as it opens up in Kundera's writing. It does not seek to give philosophy the last word, but rather to open a space between these two universes and then to speak from it. Consideration is paid not only to Kundera's work, but to his self-avowed tradition, which includes Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Witold Gombrowicz, and Hermann Broch. This book asks what it might mean to insist that philosophy does not have a monopoly on wisdom or to insist that the novel has its own modes of wisdom, modes that, in some respects, challenge those of philosophy.

The Joke, Milan Kundera's first novel, gained him a huge following in his own country, and launched his worldwide literary reputation.

'Kundera is the saddest, funniest and most lovable of authors.' The Times

Klima, a celebrated jazz trumpeter, receives a phone call announcing that a young nurse with whom he spent a brief night at a fertility spa is pregnant. She has decided he is the father. And so begins a comedy which, during five madcap days, unfolds with ever-increasing speed. Klima's beautiful, jealous wife, the nurse's equally jealous boyfriend, a fanatical gynaecologist, a rich American, at once Don Juan and saint, and an elderly political prisoner who, just before his emigration, is holding a farewell party at the spa are all drawn into this black comedy, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As usual, Milan Kundera poses serious questions with a blasphemous lightness which makes us understand that the modern world has taken away our right to tragedy. What happens within us when we read a novel? And how does a novel create its unique effects, so distinct from those of a painting, a film, or a poem? In this inspired, thoughtful, deeply personal book, Turkey's Nobel Prize winner explores the art of writing, and takes us into the worlds of the reader and the writer, revealing their intimate connections. Pamuk draws on Friedrich Schiller's famous distinction between "naive" poets-who write spontaneously, serenely, unselfconsciously-and "sentimental" poets: those who are reflective, emotional, questioning, and alive to the artifice of the written word. Harking back to his reading of the beloved novels of his youth and ranging through the work of such writers as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust, Mann, and Naipaul, he explores the oscillation between the naive and the reflective, and the search for an equilibrium, that lie at the center the novelist's craft. Orhan Pamuk ponders the novel's visual and sensual power-its ability to conjure landscapes so vivid they can make the here-and-now fade away. In the course of this exploration, he delves into the secrets of reading and writing, and considers the elements of character, plot, time and setting that compose the "sweet illusion" of the fictional world. Like Umberto Eco's *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* and Milan Kundera's *The Art of the Novel*, this is a perceptive book by one of the modern masters of the art, a title anyone who has known the pleasure of becoming immersed in a novel will enjoy, and learn from. A family-friendly novel of Leonardo da Vinci's many productive years in Milan. Follow Leonardo as he works for the Duke of Milan, paints the Last Supper, studies architecture, and much more! This novel is written at a young adult level; it has been enjoyed by adults, but also makes a great read-aloud for younger students. This book is the second in the series of historically based novels on da Vinci's life - *The Life and Travels of Da Vinci*. Chronologically it follows Leonardo the Florentine and precedes *Masterpieces in Milan*, but the books can be read and enjoyed in any order.

Like a muse for the writer, Oakley Hall thoughtfully leads us past the sinkholes of cliches, flat prose, and self-conscious writing and guides us toward the magic of vivid and original storytelling. ...An essential resource for any writer -- beginning, published, or just plain stuck. -- Amy Tan Oakley Hall cites the works and methods of such great novelists as John Steinbeck, Joyce Carol Oates, Leo Tolstoy, Agatha Christie and Milan Kundera to show readers what works in the novel, and why. This book features advice on taking a novel through each of its stages, from the beginning of an idea to The End, and guides writers through the process of writing a novel.

Jacques and His Master is a deliciously witty and entertaining "variation" on Diderot's novel *Jacques le Fatalist*, written for Milan Kundera's "private pleasure" in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. When the "heavy Russian irrationality" fell on Czechoslovakia, Milan Kundera explains, he felt drawn to the spirit of the eighteenth century—"And it seemed to me that

nowhere was it to be found more densely concentrated than in that banquet of intelligence, humor, and fantasy, Jacques le Fataliste." The upshot was this "Homage to Diderot," which has now been performed throughout the United States and Europe. Here, Jacques and His Master, newly translated by Simon Callow, is a text that will delight Kundera's admirers throughout the English-speaking world.

This collection of transnational, globalized European literature studies envisions understanding the intersection of our contemporary world and various writers in exile in new cultural, historical, spatial, and epistemological frameworks. The collection features essays on such major writers as Joyce, Kafka, Nabokov, and many others.

The author initially intended to call this novel *The Lyrical Age*. The lyrical age, according to Kundera, is youth, and this novel, above all, is an epic of adolescence; an ironic epic that tenderly erodes sacrosanct values: childhood, motherhood, revolution, and even poetry. Jaromil is in fact a poet. His mother made him a poet and accompanies him (figuratively) to his love bed and (literally) to his deathbed. A ridiculous and touching character, horrifying and totally innocent ("innocence with its bloody smile!"), Jaromil is at the same time a true poet. He's no creep, he's Rimbaud. Rimbaud entrapped by the communist revolution, entrapped in a somber farce.

The Art of the Novel

"A magic curtain, woven of legends, hung before the world. Cervantes sent Don Quixote journeying and tore through the curtain. The world opened before the knight-errant in all the comical nakedness of its prose." In this thought-provoking, endlessly enlightening, and entertaining essay on the art of the novel, renowned author Milan Kundera suggests that "the curtain" represents a ready-made perception of the world that each of us has—a pre-interpreted world. The job of the novelist, he argues, is to rip through the curtain and reveal what it hides. Here an incomparable literary artist cleverly sketches out his personal view of the history and value of the novel in Western civilization. In doing so, he celebrates a prose form that possesses the unique ability to transcend national and language boundaries in order to reveal some previously unknown aspect of human existence.

In this 1989 book, Rorty examines human solidarity and liberalism through literature, philosophy, social theory and literary criticism.

Casting light on the most serious of problems and at the same time saying not one serious sentence; being fascinated by the reality of the contemporary world and at the same time completely avoiding realism—that's *The Festival of Insignificance*. Readers who know Kundera's earlier books know that the wish to incorporate an element of the "unserious" in a novel is not at all unexpected of him. In *Immortality*, Goethe and Hemingway stroll through several chapters together talking and laughing. And in *Slowness*, Vera, the author's wife, says to her husband: "you've often told me you meant to write a book one day that would have not a single serious word in it... I warn you: watch out. Your enemies are lying in wait." Now, far from watching out, Kundera is finally and fully realizing his old aesthetic dream in this novel that we could easily view as a summation of his whole work. A strange sort of summation. Strange sort of epilogue. Strange sort of laughter, inspired by our time, which is comical because it has lost all sense of humor. What more can we say? Nothing. Just read.

In seven independent, but closely related chapters, the author presents his personal conception of the European novel, which he describes as 'an art born of the laughter of God'.

This first volume of *ASNEL Papers* gathers together a broad range of reflections on, and presentations of, the social and expressive underpinnings of post-colonial literary cultures, concentrating on aspects of orality, social structure and hybridity, the role of women in cultural production, performative and media representations (theatre, film, advertising) and their institutional forms, and the linguistic basis of literature (including questions of multilingualism, pidgins and creoles, and translation). Some of the present studies adopt a diachronic approach, as in essays devoted to European colonial influences on African literatures, the populist colonial roots of Australian drama, and the intersection of exogenous and autochthonous languages in the cultural development and identity formation of Cameroon, Tanzania and the Swahili-speaking regions of Africa. Broadly synchronic perspectives (which nevertheless take cognizance of developmental determinants) range over dominant genres — poetry, short fiction and the novel, children's literature, theatre, film - and cover indigene literatures (Australian Aboriginal, Maori, First Nations) and regional creativity in West, East and South Africa, the Caribbean, India and the South-East Asian diaspora, and the settler colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Authors treated within broader frameworks include Chinua Achebe, 'Biyi Bandele-Thomas, Bole Butake, Shashi Deshpande, Louis Esson, Lorna Goodison, Patricia Grace, Bland Holt, Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera, Kazuo Ishiguro, Rita Kleinhart, Hanif Kureishi, Werewere Liking, Timothy Mo, V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Ruby Slipperjack. There are self-testimonies from the writers Geoff Goodfellow, Darrelyn Gunzburg and Don Mattera, poems by David Dabydeen, Geoff Goodfellow and Olive Senior. Of particular value to this collection are the perspectives offered by African, Caribbean and Eastern European contributors.

Milan Kundera is a master of graceful illusion and illuminating surprise. In one of these stories a young man and his girlfriend pretend that she is a stranger he picked up on the road--only to become strangers to each other in reality as their game proceeds. In another a teacher fakes piety in order to seduce a devout girl, then jilts her and yearns for God. In yet another girls wait in bars, on beaches, and on station platforms for the same lover, a middle-aged Don Juan who has gone home to his wife. Games, fantasies, and schemes abound in all the stories while different characters react in varying ways to the sudden release of erotic impulses.

A young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing; one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover—these are the two couples whose story is told in this masterful novel. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence, we feel "the unbearable lightness of being" not only as the consequence of our pristine actions but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine.

Rich in its stories, characters, and imaginative range, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is the novel that brought Milan Kundera his first big international success in the late 1970s. Like all his work, it is valuable for far more than its historical implications. In seven wonderfully integrated parts, different aspects of human existence are magnified and reduced, reordered and emphasized, newly examined, analyzed, and experienced.

With the same dazzling mix of emotion and idea that characterizes his novels he illuminates the art and artists who remain important to him and whose work helps us better understand the world. An astute and brilliant reader of fiction, Kundera applies these same gifts to the reading of Francis Bacon's paintings, Leos Janáček's music, the films of Federico Fellini, as well as to the novels of Philip Roth, Dostoyevsky, and García Márquez, among others. He also takes up the challenge of restoring to their rightful place the work of major writers like Anatole France and Curzio Malaparte who have fallen into obscurity. Milan Kundera's signature themes of memory and forgetting, the experience of exile, and his spirited championing of modernist art mark these essays. Art, he argues, is what we have to cleave to in the face of evil, against the expression of the darker side of human nature. Elegant, startlingly original and provocative, *Encounter* follows Kundera's essay collections, *The Art of the Novel*, *Testaments Betrayed* and *The Curtain*.

An engagement with the continued importance of modernism is vital for building a nuanced account of the development of the novel after 1945. Bringing together internationally distinguished scholars of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature, these essays reveal how the most innovative writers working today draw on the legacies of modernist literature. Dynamics of influence and adaptation are traced in dialogues between authors from across the twentieth century: Lawrence and A. S. Byatt, Woolf and J. M. Coetzee, Forster and Zadie Smith. The book sets out new critical and disciplinary foundations for rethinking the very terms we use to map the novel's progression and renewal, enhancing our understanding not only of what modernism was but also what it might still become. With its global reach, *The Legacies of Modernism* will appeal to scholars working not only in the new modernist studies, but also in postcolonial studies and comparative literature.

'A cult figure.' *Guardian* 'A dark and brilliant achievement.' Ian McEwan 'Shamelessly clever ... Exhilaratingly subversive and funny.' *Independent* 'A modern classic ... As relevant now as when it was first published.' John Banville A young woman is in love with a successful surgeon - a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanising. His mistress, a free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals - while her other lover stands to lose everything because of his noble qualities. In a world where lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and fortuitous events, and everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance and weight - and we feel 'the unbearable lightness of being'. A masterpiece by one of the world's truly great writers, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* encompasses passion and philosophy, infidelity and ideas, the Prague Spring and modern America, political acts and private desires, comedy and tragedy - and illuminates all aspects of human existence. What readers are saying: 'Some books change your mind, some change your heart, the very best change your whole world ... A mighty piece of work, that will shape your life forever.' 'One of the best books I've ever read ... A book about love and life, full of surprises. Beautiful.' 'This book is going to change your life ... It definitely leaves you with a hangover after you're done reading.' 'A must read - loved it, such beautiful observations on life, love and sexuality.' 'Kundera writes about love as if in a trance so the beauty of it is enchanting and dreamy ... Will stay with you forever.' 'A beautiful novel that helps you understand life better ... Loved it.' 'One of those rare novels full of depth and insight into the human condition ... Got me reading Camus and Sartre.' 'One of the best books I have ever read ... An intellectual love story if ever there was one.'

A model of clarity, grace, and intelligence, François Ricard's book joins the great French tradition of the literary essay as a meditation on the writing of Milan Kundera. Agnès's *Final Afternoon* imitates the protagonist of Kundera's novel *Immortality* on the last afternoon of her life. Like all readers of fiction, Agnès steps out of her car -- out of the world of planned routes, responsibilities, and social self -- and gives herself up to the discovery of a new landscape, an experience that will transform her. François Ricard's essay enters into the writings of Milan Kundera in much the same way. The landscape he explores includes a chain of ten novels, composed between 1959 and 1999, and two books containing one of the most lucid reflections on the novel. From *The Joke* to *Ignorance*, Ricard uncovers the richness of theme and character in the novels, their structural composition, polyphony of voices, and innovations of form and subject matter that stretch the boundaries of the novel to a breaking point. Readers need not be familiar with all of Milan Kundera's oeuvre to appreciate this unusual and original book. *Agnès's Final Afternoon* will inspire a sense of wonder and lead you to appreciate the beauty and profundity of Kundera's art.

Examines the art of fiction, focusing on the literature's history, its structure, and the creative process

Essay from the year 2002 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Comparative Literature, grade: A, University of Kent, course: Philosophy in Literature, 7 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Milan Kundera's novel "The Joke" abounds in existentialist vocabulary and themes. His main character's narrative is loaded with such expressions as choiceandexistence, self-deceptionorfreeself, which are sometimes even set in Italics. These are not just words, that Ludvik uses in his narrative, they are also made themes in themselves as well as reoccurring motifs - for example that of the 'destruction of façades'. These themes are important, from the very beginning as we have the basic condition of someone 'crossing the border', which is not altogether dissimilar to Roquentin's predicament in Sartre's *La Nausée*. All situations, that Kundera's characters find themselves in are existential, too, in such a way, that they require choices and a wholly new perspective on the past after the destruction of old value systems. It is therefore obvious that existentialist ideas must have influenced and inspired Kundera, and as Existentialism is in itself a philosophy that focuses greatly on perception and the possibility of self-knowledge, one could even propose to say, that its ideas are always also central to modern novel writing especially when we look at psychological novels and first-person narratives. However, (I would argue that) *The Joke* is by no means an existentialist novel, as its approach to ideas is by no means direct, but playful as well as critical. This is why it is impossible, to say, that for example, the novel reflects on the nature of self-deception, and its main character is in 'bad faith'. Such an approach, does not do the novel justice, and at this point it may well be worth remembering, that its author, too, resists such an attempt: "My disgust for those who reduce a work to its ideas: my revulsion at being dragged into what they call 'discussions of ideas.' My despair at this era befogged with ideas and indifferent to works."

