

## **Abstract**

Thesis “Milan Kundera's ‘The Joke’ supervised. Critical reception of the novel in the context of its release and today” deals with critical reflection of the novel ‘The Joke’ in the period from the end of the 1960's up to current reviews. The author dedicates first chapters to the cultural and political background of the release. The core of the thesis focuses mostly on critical reception of the novel, which is divided into three historical periods.

In the first part of the critical historical analysis and qualitative analysis, the author examines critical acceptance of the novel in the aftermath of its release (1967-1969), in the Czechoslovakian and exiled journals and literary magazines in particular. The second part considers critical reaction to the novel throughout 1970's and 80's, and stresses outcomes of the reception in the sixties, official normalized critical reviews and the acceptance in the exile and samizdat literature as well. Finally, the last part of the thesis offers contemporary critical response to ‘The Joke’, analyzed on the basis of Czech journals, literary magazines and newly emergent Kundera's monographs and on the basis of French critical reception of the Milan Kundera's collected work in the prestigious La Pléiade Gallimard edition.

Summarizing critical reception in each period, historical context is of primary importance to a profound understanding of the topic. The aim of the thesis is to find out to what extent the critical response to the Kundera's much-respected novel has changed and whether current literary critics read the novel from the different point of view than those in the end of the sixties, when the novel was first published.