

Title: The barbequed rewriter: Milan Kundera's plays, and the act and theme of rewriting
Author: Michelle Woods, SUNY New Paltz
Email: woodsm@newpaltz.edu

"Pane," Jakub says in Kundera's third play, *Jakub a jeho p-n*, "přepisujĚ se jinĚ věci než my dva" (1992, 90). Kundera described his play as an "homage" to Denis Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maÔtre* (1796), while insisting such an homage lay in direct opposition to "the demon of rewriting" (1986, 85-6, his italics). His paratext to Simon Callow's 1986 English translation, "Homage to Translator," sets out his ideas about translation and rewriting, subjects also discussed within the play by Jacques and his Master.

This paper explores the act and theme of rewriting with respect to all of Kundera's plays: *MajitelĚ KlĚčů* (1962), *Pt-kovina / DvĚ ušĚ, dvĚ svatby* (1968), and *Jakub a jeho p-n* (1981), and analyzes how this thematic and actual rewriting speaks to Kundera's later work as a novelist (using AndrĚ Lefevre's theories on rewriting, manipulation and translation and my own work on Kundera and translation theory). Kundera has prevented the performance, publication and translation of the first two plays, effectively removing them from his oeuvre, describing the plays as "školnĚ prace" and a "črta" rather than a finished work (1996, 320), neither relevant to the trajectory of his writing career or legacy. This paper argues, however, that all three plays are intricately linked to his later work and are suggestive of Kundera's later thematic and formal preoccupations.

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