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THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF KAVALIER AND CLAY

Novel
2000
Author: Michael Chabon

Extensive is perhaps the best word to use to describe The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay. Looking into such matters as anxiety, art, advertising, capitalism, Hollywood, loneliness, loss, war, physical disability, fatherhood, family, homosexuality, religion, escape, and exile, the novel covers social concerns that are almost as wide as the geographical experience of Joseph Kavalier, one of the two protagonists of the book, who in the course of the story finds himself in Prague, New York City, and Antarctica. The other protagonist, Sammy Clay, spends the bulk of the novel in New York, where most of the action takes place.

The novel tracks the relationship of these two comic book artists—Joe draws, Sam writes—focusing on their lives in the 1940s and 1950s, when, on a grand scale, America was dealing with World War II and its aftermath, and on a lesser one, comic books were experiencing a Golden Age. At the beginning of their friendship, Joe and Sammy create the comic book hero the Escapist, a figure modeled after Superman. It begins as a marketing tool for novelty items for their boss, Sheldon Anapol, but more importantly as a way to make a name for themselves, and it is this character that leads to the height of their success. Because of these narrative matters, the main social concerns of the novel deal directly with characters’ struggle to make their way and figure out their own identities in a world that is sometimes a Technicolor dream, but more often an everyday drama. Since Sammy and Joe are both Jewish (Joe also being an émigré and Sammy being homosexual), their opportunity for success is made slightly more difficult; in many ways, they do not fit into “normal” mainstream society, but what is most ironic and fitting is that they end up being responsible for one of the most popular superhero comics in the epitome of the stream medium.

Chabon places his novel solidly in historical context, using real place and names throughout. By doing this, he has used his novel as a story about America and American culture at this time. The characters’ interactions with each other and with the history in which they live are presented as a kind of sociological study of the times.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay

Author is at the end of the article
Each essay includes original source citation.
Citation has 2 Containers:

1. Reprinted article from a book or journal
2. Anthology

**Maya Angelou with Carol E. Neubauer**


In the following excerpt of an interview conducted by Neubauer in 1987, Angelou discusses the art of autobiography and the process of remembering.

[Neubauer]: I see autobiography in general as a way for a writer to go back to her past and try to present what is left in memory but also to recover what has been lost through imagination and invention.