

## 14 Jean Echenoz

*"A tiny miracle of a biographical novel" inspired by the life of the brilliant French composer (Booklist). Shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award This beguiling and original evocation of the last ten years in the life of a musical genius opens in 1927 as Maurice Ravel—dandy, eccentric, curmudgeon—crosses the Atlantic aboard the luxury liner the SS France to begin his triumphant grand tour of the United States. With flashes of sly, quirky humor, this novel captures the folly of the era as well as its genius, and the personal and professional life of the sartorially and socially splendid ravel over the course of a decade. From a winner of the prestigious Prix Goncourt, Ravel is a touching literary portrait of a dignified and lonely man going reluctantly into the night. "A beautifully musical little novel." —The New York Times Book Review "The most distinctive voice of his generation." —The Washington Post*

*Jean-Claude Kastner is assigned to find Gloire Stella, a popular singer who disappeared four years earlier*

*If the academic field of death studies is a prosperous one, there still seems to be a level of mistrust concerning the capacity of literature to provide socially relevant information about death and to help improve the anthropological understanding of how culture is shaped by the human condition of mortality. Furthermore, the relationship between literature and death tends to be trivialized, in the sense that death representations are interpreted in an over-aestheticized manner. As such, this approach has a propensity to consider death in literature to be significant only for literary studies, and gives rise to certain persistent clichés, such as the power of literature to annihilate death. This volume overcomes such stereotypes, and reveals the great potential of literary studies to provide fresh and accurate ways of interrogating death as a steady and unavoidable human reality and as an ever-continuing socio-cultural construction. The volume brings together researchers from various countries - the USA, the UK, France, Poland, New Zealand, Canada, India, Germany, Greece, and Romania - with different academic backgrounds in fields as diverse as literature, art history, social studies, criminology, musicology, and cultural studies, and provides answers to questions such as: What are the features of death representations in certain literary genres? Is it possible to speak of an homogeneous vision of death in the case of some literary movements? How do writers perceive, imagine, and describe their death through their personal diaries, or how do they metabolize the death of the "significant others" through their writings? To what extent does the literary representation of death refer to the extra-fictional, socio-historically constructed "Death"? Is it moral to represent death in children's literature? What are the differences and similarities between representing death in literature and death representations in other connected fields? Are metaphors and literary representations of death forms of death denial, or, on the contrary, a more insightful way of capturing the meaning of death?*

*A fresh and comprehensive account of the literature of France, from medieval romances to twenty-first-century experimental poetry and novels.*

*French Twentieth Bibliography*

*The Aesthetics of Crisis*

14

Roman

*Genre and Cultural Politics in Contemporary French Fiction*

*Lightning*

**Jean Echenoz, considered by many to be the most distinguished and versatile living French novelist, turns his attention to the deathtrap of World War I in 1914. In it, five Frenchmen go off to war, two of them leaving behind a young woman who longs for their return. But the main character in this brilliant novel is the Great War itself. Echenoz, whose work has been compared to that of writers as diverse as Joseph Conrad and Laurence Sterne, leads us gently from a balmy summer day deep into the relentless—and, one hundred years later, still unthinkable—carnage of trench warfare. With the delicacy of a miniaturist and with an irony that is both witty and clear-eyed, Echenoz offers us an intimate epic: in the panorama of a clear blue sky, a bi-plane spirals suddenly into the ground; a piece of shrapnel shears the top off a man's head as if it were a soft-boiled egg; we dawdle dreamily in a spring-scented clearing with a lonely shell-shocked soldier strolling innocently toward a firing squad ready to shoot him for desertion. Ultimately, the grace notes of humanity in 1914 rise above the terrors of war in this beautifully crafted tale that Echenoz tells with discretion, precision, and love.**

**Winner of France's prestigious Prix Goncourt and a runaway bestseller, Jean Echenoz's *I'm Gone* is the ideal introduction to the sly wit, unique voice, and colorful imagination of "the master magician of the contemporary French novel" (The Washington Post). Nothing less than a heist caper, an Arctic adventure story, a biting satire of the art world, and a meditation on love and lust and middle age all rolled into one fast-paced, unpredictable, and deliriously entertaining novel, *I'm Gone* tells the story of an urbane art and antiques dealer who abandons his wife and career to pursue a memorably pathetic international crime spree. "Crisp and erudite" (The Wall Street Journal), "seductive and delicately ironic" (The Economist), and with an unexpected sting in its**

*tail, I'm Gone*—translated by Mark Polizzotti—is a dazzling, postmodern subversion of narrative conventions and an amused look at the absurdities of modern life. With a wink and a nod and a keen eye for the droll detail, Echenoz invites the reader “to enjoy *I'm Gone* in the same devil-may-care spirit in which it is offered” (The Boston Sunday Globe).

This edited volume gathers together studies examining various aspects of physical culture in literature written in French from Europe and around the Francophone world. We define “physical culture” as the systematic care for and development of the physique, and interpret it to include not only sport in the modern sense, but also all the athletic activities that preceded it or relate to it, such as bodily forms of exercise, leisure, and artistic creation. Our essays pursue diverse interpretive approaches and focus on texts from a wide variety of periods (medieval to the present) and genres (short stories, novels, essays, poetry) in order to consider the fundamental - yet highly neglected - place of physical activities in literature and culture from the French-speaking world. Some of the questions the essays explore include: Does the genre “sports literature” exist in French, and if so, what are its characteristics? How do governments or other political entities mobilize sports literature? What role do narratives about sports - especially the creation of teams - play in the construction of national, regional and/or local identities? How is physical culture used in literary works for pedagogical or ideological purposes? To what extent do sports performances provide a metaphorical and figurative discourse for discussing literature and culture?

Unlock the more straightforward side of *The Officers' Ward* with this concise and insightful summary and analysis! This engaging summary presents an analysis of *The Officers' Ward* by Marc Dugain, a novel which tells the story of one soldier's brief experience of the First World War and the scars it leaves him with. After his face is horribly disfigured at the beginning of the war, Adrien Fournier is transferred to a military hospital, where he remains for the rest of the conflict. He must resign himself to his new appearance and find the courage to face his friends, family and society as a whole. *The Officers' Ward* was published in 1998 and was shortlisted for Le Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française. The phenomenal success of the novel convinced Dugain to become a full-time writer, and he has since written several novels and a play. Find out everything you need to know about *The Officers' Ward* in a fraction of the time! This in-depth and informative reading guide brings you: • A complete plot summary • Character studies • Key themes and symbols • Questions for further reflection Why choose BrightSummaries.com? Available in print and digital format, our publications are designed to accompany you on your reading journey. The clear and concise style makes for easy understanding, providing the perfect opportunity to improve your literary knowledge in no time. See the very best of literature in a whole new light with BrightSummaries.com!

**Chopin's Move**

**Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory**

**Reading the Times**

**Running**

**Plan of Occupancy**

**A Novel**

*Nadja*, originally published in France in 1928, is the first and perhaps best Surrealist romance ever written, a book which defined that movement's attitude toward everyday life. The principal narrative is an account of the author's relationship with a girl in the city of Paris, the story of an obsessional presence haunting his life. The first-person narrative is supplemented by forty-four photographs which form an integral part of the work -- pictures of various surreal people, places, and objects which the author visits or is haunted by in *nadja's* presence and which inspire him to mediate on their reality or lack of it. The *Nadja* of the book is a girl, but, like Bertrand Russell's definition of electricity as not so much a thing as a way things happen, *Nadja* is not so much a person as the way she makes people behave. She has been described as a state of mind, a feeling about reality, a kind of vision, and the reader sometimes wonders whether she exists at all. yet it is *Nadja* who gives form and structure to the novel.

A New York Review Books Original Whether you call her a coldhearted grifter or the soul of modern capitalism, there's no question that Aimée is a killer and a more than professional one. Now she's set her eyes on a backwater burg—where, while posing as an innocent (albeit drop-dead gorgeous) newcomer to town, she means to sniff out old grudges and engineer new opportunities, deftly playing different people and different interests against each other the better, as always, to make a killing. But then something snaps: the master manipulator falls prey to a pure and wayward passion. Aimée has become the avenging angel of her own nihilism, exacting the destruction of a whole society of destroyers. An unholy original, Jean-Patrick Manchette transformed the modern detective novel into a weapon of gleeful satire and anarchic fun. In *Fatale* he mixes equal measures of farce, mayhem, and madness to prepare a rare literary cocktail that packs a devastating punch.

A brilliantly original thriller and “a startling, smart, vivid book” (Tana French, New York Times bestselling author) from the acclaimed author of *Three Graves Full*—inspired by the real-life unsolved theft of a seventeenth-century painting. Twenty-eight seconds. In less than half a minute, a home-security camera captures the hidden resolve in fourteen-year-old Carly Liddell as she fends off a vicious attack

*just inside her own front door. The video of her heroic escape appears online and goes viral. As the view count climbs, the lives of four desperate people will be forever changed by what's just barely visible in the corner of the shot. Carly's stepfather is spurred to protect his darkest secret: how a stolen painting—four hundred years old, by a master of the Dutch Golden Age—has come to hang in his suburban foyer. The art dealer, left for dead when the painting vanished, sees a chance to buy back her life. And the double-crossed enforcer renews the hunt to deliver the treasure to his billionaire patrons—even if he has to kill to succeed. But it's Carly herself, hailed as a social-media hero, whose new perspective gives her the courage to uncover the truth as the secrets and lies tear her family apart.*

*With his trademark comically wry phrasing and a sure eye for quirky detail, Echenoz has produced his oddest and most enjoyable novel to date. Chopin's Move interweaves the fates of Chopin, entomologist and recalcitrant secret agent; Oswald, a young foreign-affairs employee who vanishes en route to his new home; Suzy, who gets enmeshed in a tangle of deceit and counterdeceit; the mysterious Colonel Seck, whose motivations are never quite what they seem; and a typically Echenozian supporting cast of neurotic bodyguards, disquieting functionaries, and crafty double agents. As the plot thickens, the characters become embroiled in layer upon layer of deception and double-dealing, leading them further into a world in which nothing can be taken at face value and in which "reality" hinges on apparently harmless coincidence.*

*One Year*

*Cherokee*

*1914*

*Temporality and History in Twentieth-Century Fiction*

*Defective Inspectors: Crime-fiction Pastiche in Late Twentieth-century French Literature*

*Stories*

Frankreich, 1914: Ein idyllischer Sommertag, Anthime radelt durch die sonnenbeschienene Vendée. Er hört die Sturmglocken läuten, das Signal für die allgemeine Mobilmachung. Mit der alle gerechnet haben, nur nicht an einem Samstag, dem 1. August. Echenoz erzählt vier Kriegsjahre im Zeitraffer: Fünf Männer ziehen in den Krieg, eine schwangere Frau wartet auf die Rückkehr von zweien von ihnen. Bleibt zu erfahren, ob sie wiederkommen. Und wann. Und in welchem Zustand. Der Erste Weltkrieg ist heute nicht mehr mit traditionellen Mitteln darstellbar – Echenoz als Meister der Romansubversion zeigt, wie es anders gelingt.

Drawn from the life of Nikola Tesla, one of the greatest inventors of his time, *Lightning* is a captivating tale of one man's curious fascination with the marvels of science. Hailed by the *Washington Post* as "the most distinctive voice of his generation," Echenoz traces the notable career of Gregor, a precocious young engineer from Eastern Europe, who travels across the Atlantic at the age of twenty-eight to work alongside Thomas Edison, with whom he later holds a long-lasting rivalry. After his discovery of alternating current, Gregor quickly begins to astound the world with his other brilliant inventions, including everything from radio, radar, and wireless communication to cellular technology, remote control, and the electron microscope. Echenoz gradually reveals the eccentric inner world of a solitary man who holds a rare gift for imagining devices well before they come into existence. Gregor is a recluse—an odd and enigmatic intellect who avoids women and instead prefers spending hours a day courting pigeons in Central Park. Winner of the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, Echenoz once again demonstrates his astonishing abilities as a prose stylist as he vividly captures the life of an isolated genius. A beautifully crafted portrait of a man who prefers the company of lightning in the Colorado desert to that of other human beings, *Lightning* is a dazzling new work from one of the world's leading contemporary authors.

Wartime British writers took to the airwaves to reshape the nation and the Empire

Quatorze1914A NovelNew Press, The

Fin de millénaire French Fiction

Nadja

Detailed Summary, Analysis and Reading Guide

Yann Andrea Steiner

Pour Le Sport

Beyond Return

**Ravel is a beguiling and original evocation of the last ten years in the life of the musical genius Ravel, written by novelist Jean Echenoz. The book opens in 1928 as Maurice Ravel—dandy, eccentric, curmudgeon—crosses the Atlantic aboard the luxury liner the SS France to begin his triumphant grand tour of the United States. A “master magician of the French novel” (The Washington Post), Echenoz captures the folly of the era as well as its genius, including Ravel's personal life—sartorially and socially splendid—as well as his most successful compositions from 1927 to 1937. Illuminated by flashes of Echenoz's characteristically sly humor, Ravel is a delightfully quirky portrait of a famous musician coping with the ups and downs of his illustrious career. It is also a beautifully written novel that's a deeply touching farewell to a dignified and lonely man going reluctantly into the night.**

**'I'm off', says Felix Ferrer to his wife. 'I'm leaving you'. And closing the door on their suburban home, Ferrer, a creature of appetite, impulse and habit, a man of our times, embarks on a journey to the extremes. Not weighing up every girl he sees. Not ignoring his doctor's warnings to avoid the very hot and the very cold.**

Following his brilliant portrait of Maurice Ravel, Jean Echenoz turns to the life of one of the greatest runners of the twentieth century, and once again demonstrates his astonishing abilities as a prose stylist. Set against the backdrop of the Soviet liberation and post-World War II communist rule of Czechoslovakia, *Running*—a bestseller in France—follows the famed career of Czech runner Emil Zátopek: a factory worker who, despite an initial contempt for athletics as a young man, is forced to participate in a footrace and soon develops a curious passion for the physical limits he discovers as a long-distance runner. Zátopek, who tenaciously invents his own brutal training regimen, goes on to become a national hero, winning an unparalleled three gold medals at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and breaking countless world records along the way. But just as his fame brings him upon the world stage, he must face the realities of an increasingly controlling regime. Written in Echenoz's signature style—elegant yet playful—*Running* is both a beautifully imagined and executed portrait of a man and his art, and a powerful depiction of a country's propagandizing grasp on his fate.

In *Beyond Return*, Lucas Hollister examines the political orientations of fictions which 'return' to forms that have often been considered sub-literary, regressive, outdated or decadent, and suggests new ways of reading contemporary adventure novels, radical noir novels, postmodernist mysteries, war novels and dystopian fictions.

Ravel

Physical Culture in French and Francophone Literature

Big Blondes, Piano, and Running

I'm Gone

French Fiction into the Twenty-First Century

The Eastern Shore

Dedicated to Duras' companion with whom she spent her last decade of life, Yann Andréa Steiner is a haunting dance between two parallel stories of love and solitude: the love between Duras and the young Yann Andréa and a seaside romance observed - or imagined - by the narrator between a camp counselor and an orphaned camper, a Holocaust survivor who witnessed his sister's murder at the hands of a German soldier. Memory blurs into desire as the summer of 1980 flows into 1944. An enigmatic elegy of history, creation, and raw emotion.

With several terms from the First World War still present in modern speech, *Languages and the First World War* presents over 30 essays by international academics investigating the linguistic aspects of the 1914-18 conflict. The first of the two volumes covers language change and documentation during the period of the war, while the second examines the representation and the memory of the war. *Communicating in a Transnational War* examines languages at the front, including the subject of interpretation, translation and parallels between languages; communication with the home front; propaganda and language manipulation; and recording language during the war. *Representation and Memory* examines historiographical issues; the nature of representing the war in letters and diaries; the documentation of language change; the language of representing the war in reportage and literature; and the language of remembering the war. Covered in the process are slang, censorship, soldiers' phrasebooks, code-switching, borrowing terms, the problems facing multilingual armies, and gendered language.

The turn of the millennium in France coincided with a number of tangible crises and apocalyptic discourses, and with the growth of the mass media and global market, further generating and manipulating crisis. In this original, wide-ranging but closely analytical study, Cruickshank contextualizes and reads the work of four influential writers of prose fiction — Angot, Echenoz, Houellebecq, and Redonnet — teasing out each one's response to this convergence. She suggests that the recurrent fictional and cultural trope of the turning point has both aesthetic and critical potential. Bringing together analyses spanning literature, thought, and culture, she identifies and critiques the ways in which, on the eve of the twenty-first century, different theoretical and fictional approaches confront the manipulation of crisis discourses. Drawing on a 'long twentieth century' of crisis thinking, Cruickshank counters the perception that a postmodern model of perpetual crisis is culturally dominant, and establ

A humorous and savvy Diva-like novel that mixes new-wave cinema, traditional roman noir, vintage Buster Keaton and the rhythms of Charlie Parker to tell its story of an innocent young man's dreamy pursuit of a mysterious woman.

Forms and Theories

Quatorze

Jean Echenoz

Three By Echenoz

Catorce

The Officers' Ward by Marc Dugain (Book Analysis)

Seven short stories by the Prix Goncourt winner—"the most distinctive voice of his generation . . . master magician of the contemporary French novel" (The Washington Post). France's preeminent fiction writer, Jean Echenoz is celebrated for his ability to craft stories with such precision that readers are caught off guard by the intense emotion and imagination just beneath the

placid surface of his writing. As Gary Indiana put it in his essay "Conjuror of St. Germain", "Echenoz risks everything in his fiction, gambling on the prodigious blandishments of his voice to lure his readers into a maze of improbabilities and preposterous happenings." The Queen's Caprice—seven stories available in English for the first time—reveals Echenoz at the height of his talents, taking readers on a journey across radically different landscapes. The title story explores a tiny corner of the French countryside; "Nelson" offers a brilliant miniaturist portrait of the hero of the Battle of Trafalgar; "In Babylon" sketches the ancient city of Mesopotamia, based on trace descriptions from Herodotus; and other stories visit the forests of England, the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, Tampa Bay, and the interior of a submarine. Amid the thrill and allure of this voyage of words, "again and again we pause to savor the richness of Echenoz's startling, crystalline observations" (Lydia Davis). "[A] terrific sense of humor tinged with existential mischief." —L'Express

A single volume that gathers together three of the most remarkable novels from Jean Echenoz, the "most distinctive French voice of his generation" (The Washington Post), Three by Echenoz demonstrates the award-winning author's extraordinary versatility and elegant yet playful style at its finest. "A parodic thriller sparkling with wit" (L'Humanité), Big Blondes probes our universal obsession with fame as a television documentary producer tries to track down a renowned singer who has mysteriously disappeared. A darkly comedic, noir-style tour de force, it finally answers the age-old question: do blondes have more fun? "Fluid, never forced...like a garment that fits beautifully even inside-out" (Elle), Piano brings Dante's Inferno to contemporary Paris, following Max Delmarc, a concert pianist suffering from paralyzing stage fright and alcoholism, as he meets his untimely death and descends through purgatory—part luxury hotel, part minimum-security prison—into a modern vision of hell. Running is "a small wonder of writing and humanity" (L'Express)—a portrait of the legendary Czech athlete Emil Zátopek, who became a national hero, winning three gold medals at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics even as he was compelled to face the unyielding realities of life under an authoritarian regime.

¿Cómo escribir sobre la Gran Guerra, la primera guerra «tecnológica» del siglo XX, y la puerta, también, a medio siglo de barbarie sin precedentes? Echenoz se enfrenta a un nuevo reto literario que supera con maestría. La certera pluma del escritor avanza A novel about journalism and one man's moral choices, "evoking the rhythms of Ernest Hemingway's early fiction . . . A quietly affecting, mournful achievement" (Richmond Times-Dispatch). Ned Ayres has never wanted anything but a newspaper career. His defining moment comes early, when Ned is city editor of his hometown paper. One of his beat reporters fields a tip: William Grant, the town haberdasher, married to the bank president's daughter and the father of two children, once served six years in Joliet. The story runs—Ned offers no resistance to his publisher's argument that the public has a right to know. The consequences, swift and shocking, haunt him throughout a long career—until eventually, as the editor of a major newspaper in post-Kennedy Washington, DC, Ned has reason to return to the question of privacy and its many violations.

A Bibliography for the Study of French Literature and Culture Since 1885

Critical and Biographical References for the Study of French Literature Since 1885

I'm Off

Imagining the City: The politics of urban space

Death Representations in Literature

*Cet ouvrage tente une approche interdisciplinaire de la littérature que Jean Echenoz a publiée dans les années 1980-1990, et jusqu'au début des années 2000 aux Editions de Minuit. Née sous le signe du jeu avec les genres littéraires figés, sous le signe d'une pratique littéraire à inscrire résolument dans le sillage du Nouveau Roman, la littérature de Jean Echenoz rejoint, ce qu'on pourrait appeler d'ores et déjà le tournant éthique de la culture française, manifesté en littérature autant qu'en théorie (le regain d'intérêt pour Lévinas, Blanchot, Barthes en témoigne).*

*Crime fiction is a popular target for literary pastiche in France. From the nouveau roman and the Oulipo group to the current avant-garde, writers have seized on the genre to exploit it for their own ends, toying with its traditional plots and characters, and exploring its preoccupations with perception, reason and truth. In the first full-length study of the phenomenon, Simon Kemp's investigation centres on four major writers of the twentieth century, Alain Robbe-Grillet (b. 1922), Michel Butor (b. 1926), Georges Perec (1936-82) and Jean Echenoz (b. 1947). Out of their varied encounters with the genre,*

*from deconstruction of the classic detective story to homage to the roman noir, Kemp elucidates the complex relationship between the pasticheur and his target, which demands an entirely new assessment of pastiche as a literary form.*

*Five Frenchmen go off to war, two of them leaving behind a certain young woman who longs for their return. But the main character in 1914 is the Great War itself. Jean Echenoz, the multi-award-winning French literary magician whose work has been compared to Joseph Conrad and Lawrence Sterne, has brought that deathtrap back to life, leading us gently from a balmy summer day deep into the insatiable—and still unthinkable—carnage of trench warfare. With the delicacy of a miniaturist and with irony both witty and clear-eyed, the author offers us an intimate epic with the atmosphere of a classic movie: in the panorama of a clear blue sky, a biplane spirals suddenly into the ground; a tardy piece of shrapnel shears the top off a man's head as if it were a soft-boiled egg; we dawdle dreamily in a spring-scented clearing with a lonely shell-shocked soldier strolling innocently to a firing squad ready to shoot him for desertion. But ultimately, the grace notes of humanity in 1914 rise above the terrors of war in this beautifully crafted tale that Echenoz tells with discretion, precision, and love.*

*This volume is based on papers given at the conference 'Imagining the City' held in Cambridge in 2004. Together they examine the city as imagined space and as a matrix for imagined worlds, using French, German, English, Italian, Russian and North American examples.*

*The Cambridge Companion to French Literature*

*French XX Bibliography 65*

*Fatale*

*The Hidden Things*

*The Return to the Story*

*géographies du vide*

This series of bibliographical references is one of the most important tools for research in modern and contemporary French literature. No other bibliography represents the scholarly activities and publications of these fields as completely.

This book examines contemporary French literature in the light of a widely-held critical notion that it exists 'in the wake' of a period in which avant-garde experimental literature and postmodern writing-about-writing held sway. It looks at five notable current writers, namely Annie Ernaux, Pascal Quignard, Marie Darrieussecq, Jean Echenoz and Patrick Modiano in the context of the broader literary scene, to discover how far they continue to pursue the ideas of the previous generation, and how far they have turned their back on them.

Etudie les liens structurels entre logos et topos dans l'oeuvre de J. Echenoz. Met ainsi en évidence l'originalité de ses partis pris esthétiques : invention d'un autre réalisme ; ses partis pris narratifs : principes de réécriture, utilisation de techniques cinématographiques ; le regard que J. Echenoz porte sur l'homme : question de l'identité replacée dans les inquiétudes du monde actuel.

*The Queen's Caprice*

*Big Blondes*

*Jean Echenoz et la distance intérieure*