**The Kunderas have donated their library and archive to the Moravian Library in Brno. The Minister of Culture talks about an extraordinary cultural event**

Milan Kundera, who is one of the world's most prominent writers and whose work has been published in four thousand editions, together with his wife Věra, has decided to dedicate his library and archive to the Moravian Library (MZK) in Brno in the Czech Republic. In the autumn of this year, Kundera's library, including an extensive archive, should be transferred from the Kunderas' apartment in Paris to the Moravian Library, where it will be used by readers and the professional public for study and scientific purposes.

The library, which has been built up over many years, includes books by Milan Kundera published in Czech and in more than forty world languages, and will be further expanded on the basis of an agreement with the administrators of copyright licenses for other Czech and foreign editions. The dedicated library also includes an exclusive archive containing articles written by Milan Kundera, articles about him, reviews of Kundera's books collected over the years by his publishers in the Czech Republic and abroad, a number of newspaper clippings, authorized photographs and even drawings by Milan Kundera. This archival material will be accessible to Moravian Library readers primarily in digital form.

The decision by Milan Kundera was also welcomed by the Minister of Culture, Lubomír Zaorálek, who described the gift as an extraordinary cultural event and added: *“Milan Kundera has always claimed that the author and no one else is the absolute master of his work. And so the fact that he decided to dedicate his entire thousand-volume library to a Czech institution is a huge event. I see great symbolism in that. After all, it will be us who will be closest to this work, and at the same time this gift perhaps shows that Milan Kundera also has been and is closest to this country.“*

Milan Kundera states in connection with this gift: *"I think that books belong to a library, so it is logical that I put them in the Moravian Library."* The Moravian Library has been cooperating with the Kunderas for a long time. Last year, for example, it prepared a representative exhibition of Milan Kundera “not lost in translation” with an exclusive catalogue, and published a Czech-French publication “The Work of Milan Kundera in Translations”, which also contains a bibliography of Kundera's translation work. A few years ago, the idea of ​​taking over the library and making it accessible for research was born. *"The gift of Milan Kundera's library is not only a message to Czech readers, but also a commentary on his relationship to Brno, i.e. his birthplace. And the Moravian Library is an institution that deserves to manage this gift,”* comments the director of the Moravian Library, Tomáš Kubíček, on the event.

After a complete inventory and cataloguing of the library, the Moravian Library plans to reserve a place for the collection in a separate study room next year, which will bear the designation "Milan Kundera’s Library". It will become the basis of a cultural brand, under which not only will the library itself be available, but also author readings, debates with writers, professional discussions on Czech and world literature and culture will be held there – that exactly matches the spirit of Kundera's world importance.

On the occasion of the dedication of the library, Věra Kunderová reminded us that this is not an isolated event, not only in connection with what the Moravian Library prepared last year. In autumn Czech readers and viewers can look forward to the translation of Kundera's latest novel, *The Festival of Insignificance,* in the Brno Atlantis publishing house. She also revealed that Milan Kundera is currently preparing the novel *Ignorance* for its Czech edition with the translator Anna Kareninová. And on 23 October this year, the renewed premiere of Kundera's absurd drama *The Owners of the Keys* from 1962 is to take place at the Brno National Theatre.

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