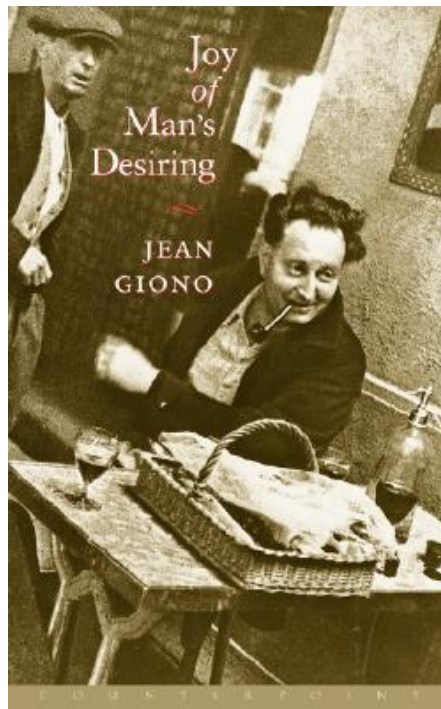




Joy of Man's Desiring

Jean Giono , Katherine A. Clarke (Translator)

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A true forebear of magical realism, Giono creates men and women rooted in the folklore of provincial France. With a poet's grace and imagination, he weaves a grand story of the earth and of passion, of animals and weather, of the miracles we now call the laws of nature.

Joy of Man's Desiring Details

Date : Published September 3rd 1999 by Counterpoint (first published 1935)

ISBN : 9781582430447

Author : Jean Giono , Katherine A. Clarke (Translator)

Format : Paperback 472 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, France, Classics, European Literature, French Literature, Magical Realism

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From Reader Review Joy of Man's Desiring for online ebook

Kathryn says

What was it about this book? What is it about Jean Giono? As I read this book, many years ago now, I was truly beguiled, bewitched by the beauty of the prose, and the remarkable whole-ness of his vision of life.

I must confess that I had a lot of trouble reading this book, easy as it was, just because of the intense beauty of the vision and the prose. That made me wonder if there was an issue with the writing, or if, as Hamlet tells us, the fault is in our stars.

It is hard, possibly almost indecent, to engage solely with the beauty of the world. Where is the suffering of the world? So much beauty is hard to behold. Perhaps it is just the shortcomings in my own vision that makes me resist this vision of total beauty (and possibly my perception of the book then, or my memory of it now, is faulty), but it is a question I ask myself. -- I have tried along life's way to love and behold all of life as holding potent beauty, meaning and power. I have tried to love the world as it is, and to imagine it as it might be, redeemed. But as I age, I have less patience, or perhaps less need?, to engage with the broken and unattractive aspect of the world. I see enough of that in myself! So perhaps now I am old enough to read Jean Giono and simply appreciate the beauty of his vision.

Maybe I'll try him again and let you know what develops.

Niklas Spitz says

Beautiful, hauntingly evocative prose, elemental rural landscapes, rich in poetic thought. Compelling and accomplished - the song of the earth comes lyrically through this writer.

Kc says

This reissue of this 1935 French novel has Mother Nature and the human condition as its main characters. The characters are there to be acted upon by nature and to find the core of what humans need and want in the process. I can't say I loved it, but it had a point of view which certainly makes you think.

Jessica says

A pastoral poem of a novel. And one of the most beautiful books i have ever read.

Tamra Karl says

Giono is like the French version of Thomas Hardy in his scenic descriptions. Only someone who has spent a lifetime in nature for entire days and weeks on end will have the insights shared in this book and only a poet could bring them to life like Giono. I felt simultaneously a memory for having experienced the native intimacy he describes and a longing to immerse myself in the wild enough to have those experiences only imagined.

Emily says

This was perhaps one of the strangest texts I've ever encountered, but it is breathtaking. Not for the skeptic or over-analytical reader.

Bebop2 says

Just re-read this. One of my favorite all time books.

Maureen says

Loved it! A friend gave it to me in 1978 because a character in one of my short stories reminded her of a character in the book. It's lyrical, beautiful, mystical and gives a contemporary perspective on what we lose when we let big business take over our farms.

Kinich says

very rich. full of images of nature's sensuality. just beautiful!

Camille says

Alors que j'étais perdue dans la routine parisienne, Que ma joie demeure m'est tombé dans les mains comme Bobi au milieu de la Jourdan. Un bref sursis dans ce quotidien maussade, pour ouvrir les yeux sur un monde oublié.

Il m'a fallu du temps pour terminer ce roman dont l'intrigue n'est que peu perceptible. L'intérêt n'était pas là. J'y vois davantage la peinture - non pas d'une société - mais des hommes d'une manière générale, et de leur rapport à la vie. Cette façon qu'ils ont de l'oublier au profit des apparentes difficultés du quotidien. Il s'agit alors de s'arrêter un temps, d'ouvrir les yeux, et de changer un peu de rythme, de direction, de regard.

J'ai aimé le lire, petit à petit. Parcourir ses pages au fil des stations de métro dont j'oubliais les noms, pour me

focaliser sur le décor qui m'était offert par cette plume. Une plume dont je ne louerai pas l'habileté, quoique agréable au demeurant.

Que ma joie demeure, pour aller à l'essentiel, c'est l'histoire d'un village, non loin de la montagne, et de ses habitants, ni heureux, ni malheureux, vides, vides de tout espoir semble-t-il. Ils ont l'air d'attendre, sans vraiment distinguer l'objet de cette attente. Et "Bobi" - puisque c'est ainsi qu'il se fera appeler - arrive par une nuit un peu particulière, et entreprend de redonner vie au village, en entamant une sorte de "quête" de la joie. Tout le reste tournera plus ou moins autour de cette idée générale, alternant entre la réflexion philosophique et ses multiples interludes picturaux, les deux se mêlant parfois pour un résultat appréciable sans être surprenant.

Un bon livre, à lire par intermittences, pour le plaisir des sens, comme une échappatoire. Un avant goût des vacances.

Victor Morosoff says

Superbe. Giono réalise, dans ce livre, l'éloge poignant de l'espoir et de la joie. À l'aide d'un pouvoir lyrique extraordinaire, il met en scène une histoire entourée de magie et d'une poésie éternelle. Je garderai, à coup sûr, le souvenir des descriptions de la nature et notamment celles du ciel; un ciel comme moi, je pense, je n'en ai jamais vu de plus beau et expressif. Ça m'a fait rêver. Et ça habitera mon esprit pour longtemps. 4,5/5

« C'est difficile, dit-il, de jouer avec les étoiles.

- Non, dit Bobi, ce n'est pas ça le difficile, le difficile c'est de faire l'impossible. »

Karen says

Giono's most beautiful prose. I know it is a translation, but if it is, it is perfect! I often read it over again, picking up passages that reflect Nature so well. The feeling of being a part of the vast universe while standing in a field at night under the stars...

Chris Sherman says

This book is bizarre (duh, its postmodern) but there was some truth to it and I loved how distinctly French it is and the characters in it are. Its interesting too how early it was written, for lots of thematic elements are things contemporary writers are just now teasing out and sorting through.

Edwin Ransom says

the best book ever.

Maggie says

My neighbor loaned me this book. I had a like, bothered relationship with it. I kept reminding myself that it was originally a French book so some things are lost in translation. The story behind the random writings about deer and nature pulled me in. How it ended continued the confusion, yet I still wanted to read it.

Chrissie says

After reading:

I do not like Joy of Man's Desiring. I have decided to not finish it. Just as The Man Who Planted Trees has a central theme focused upon nature, this does too, but it is just too imaginary for my tastes. Animals speak with people and such. The dialogs are perfunctory. You can tell it is the same author, but is too fantastical for my tastes.

Don't pick up this book first. Start with The Horseman on the Roof and then Blue Boy or The Man Who Planted Trees. Jean Giono is a good writer, but never are all the books of any author equally good!

I gave this book a fair chance. I read 129 pages!

Before reading:

Although extremely popular in Europe, Jean Giono is less well-known in America. I really loved both The Horseman on the Roof and Blue Boy. The latter is a fictionalized autobiography of his youth, growing up in provincial France. The former takes place during the cholera epidemic in Europe. I have chosen to read Joy of Man's Desiring because the author's writing style before the war is said to be quite different, so I want to try this. Oh yes, he has also written The Man Who Planted Trees. Another five star book! Quite simply I do like this author. I certainly hope this one doesn't disappoint.

Lolo says

Sur un plateau provençal, quelques familles vivant de la terre souffrent sans s'en apercevoir de leur isolement et du manque d'harmonie avec l'univers qui les entoure. L'arrivée d'un homme énigmatique va peut-être bouleverser leurs habitudes et leur façon de penser ? Comme le titre le suggère, l'auteur, au travers de ce roman, parle de la joie, du genre de quête qui pourrait y conduire ou encore de la possibilité d'en trouver une durable. En parallèle, il est question (déjà il y a plus de 50 ans !) de la façon dont les travailleurs de la terre — à cause de l'argent ou de la mécanisation par exemple — ne savent eux-mêmes plus l'écouter, en prendre soin et vivre avec elle... Très beau livre, très touchant, poétique et philosophique.

Geoff Balme says

Recommended by Henry Miller in his Books In My Life - Giono also wrote a famous story about a lone shepherd who reforested miles of European hills with oaks that became a famous animation shown to

millions of french and quebequois kids.

This story is a curious one of rural people visited by an unusual stranger and mainly filled with a kind of tapestry of feeling and tastes. I deplore the unnecessary violence at the end, but it is otherwise a beautiful and almost experimental novel.

christopher leibow says

From the man who wrote, " The Man Who Planted Trees, Amazing, sublime.

Thomas says

Une lecture laborieuse et éprouvante mais un certain nombre de belles pages et de récompenses à la clé dans ce roman dont la petite musique est celle d'un Beckett émigré en terre de Provence.
