

## The kugelmass episode characters

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This Study Guide consists of approximately 35 pages of chapter summaries, quotes, character analysis, themes, and more - everything you need to sharpen your knowledge of The Kugelmass Episode. This section contains 1,043 words (approx. 3 pages at 400 words per page) Emma Bovary's husband Charles is a doctor whom Kugelmass calls a
"lacklustre little paramedic" who is "ready to go to sleep by ten" while Emma wants to go out dancing. Emma refers to her husband sarcastically as "Mr. Personality." He falls asleep during dinner as she is talking about the ballet. Emma Bovary is the title character of Gustave Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary, into whose world
Kugelmass gets transported by The Great Persky. In Allen's story she speaks in the "same fine translation as the paperback" version of the novel before she suddenly acquires a twentieth-century New York way of speaking. She is much like she is in the Flaubert novel: beautiful and spoiled, interested in material possessions, irresponsible, bored with
her bourgeois existence, looking for love and excitement. She detests her marriage and life in the country and is enthralled by Kugelmass's stories of... (read more) This section contains 1,043 words (approx. 3 pages at 400 words per page) Copyrights The Kugelmass Episode from Gale. © 2005-2006 Thomson Gale, a part of the Thomson Corporation.
All rights reserved. You either are a Woody Allen fan or you aren't. Or rather, you either are a Woody Allen fan or you have little sense of humor, don't see the value of sarcasm and satire or are too full of yourself to grasp how cathartic self-deprecation can be. Woody Allen the Director has proffered a consistent outpouring of titles revolving around
similar if not quasi-similar themes which time and again satisfy his fan base. Woody Allen the Director, unfortunately eclipsed to a great extent by the public's preference for moving pictures over written texts, which is why I was much delighted to see his short story "The Kugelmass
Episode" in a recent textbook assigned to 11th graders. Naturally, my next reaction was to lament those students who would read and not understand the references to Emma Bovary in the slightest, because let's face it, how many school curricula list Flaubert as compulsory reading? But no more harping on this. Let's turn our sights on "The
Kugelmass Episode" itself. Mr. Allen's work incorporates the absurd into reality, bringing the whole endeavor to a catastrophic end, leaving the reader with nothing but snippets of charred truths to ponder. You can read the story here. For students and teachers who want a brief overview of the story, I hope the following helps. Woody Allen - The
Kugelmass Episode Life born 1935, American, Jewish films, stories, stand-up comedy, jazz musician Post-Modernist = reflection on art of writing/filming genre: magical realism (the support, psychoanalysis wants an affair with a mysterious, appealing
woman the Great Persky \Rightarrow Chinese cabinet, throw novel in, tap 3 times, you're projected into novel Madame Bovary \Rightarrow Kugelmass pursues romance with Emma he draws Emma to 20th century, spends weekend with her at the Plaza Hotel problem = can't send her back (cabinet malfunction) romance fades Persky fixes cabinet, sends Emma back
Kugelmass says he's learned his lesson, won't cheat ever again returns after 3 weeks: wants affair with The Monkey from Portnoy's Complaint by Philip Roth (1969 novel, explicit treatment of sex, main character talking to psychoanalyst, banned in Australia) problem with cabinet: Persky dies of a heart attack, cabinet + whole house goes up in flames
Kugelmass projected into a Remedial Spanish textbook, spider-like verb 'tener' (to have) chases him characters Prof. Sidney Kugelmass Jewish, unhappy, bored, divorced, remarried teaches humanities at City College, NY has 2 dull sons from 1st wife, Flo needs flirtation, romance, softness, love beauty (at start) wants sexually promiscuous woman by
the end going through mid-life crisis ("I'm not getting younger ...") Dr Mandel (analyst) The Great Persky short, thin man, waxy-looking starts at $20, increases price to $25 Emma Bovary wanted romance chases after fame, clothes, etc (becomes typical 20th century consumer) Daphne Kugelmass overweight has money also works at City College, NY
setting NY, late 70's (OJ Simpson not indicted, still respected NFL player, was in his peak in the 70's, MVP 1973) themes mid-life crisis attempt to fuse real life with idealized life need to feel young, important, alive marriage and human relations loss of love, enthusiasm marriage of convenience normality, routine makes spontaneity/excitement
disappear (wife's family) who is to blame? Kugelmass tried to create better life for himself. Couldn't he have done the same for his real life? parody of entertainment business / consumerism Emma reduced from a romantic heroine to a groupie (even her language suffers) What's important for people = Tony Awards, clothes, chic hotels, discos, caviar
and champagne \Rightarrow this is what romance adds up to immediate gratification = connected to consumerism Kugelmass prefers this rather than look within himself to find the real problem literature \Rightarrow what conventions are involved? intertextuality:
by reading this story we add meaning to Madame Bovary by Flaubert, just like Kugelmass = words chasing writer "tener" = "to have" symbolic
chase of what we have/possess in our lives we run after things in life to possess them (money, mistresses, adventure, experiences) = do things run after us in the end? role reversal relatedness between texts: Kugelmass = becomes a character in Flaubert's book Emma = 'real' person in his life + fictional character in Woody Allen's short story Persky's
magic where we choose which book to be projected into \Rightarrow book chooses us we chase words (when reading) \Rightarrow words chasing us romantic lovers \Rightarrow annoyed with each other (ie. Emma becomes another Daphne) Click the picture for explanations of literary terms Recommended Reading Thank you for your participation! Woody Allen's "The Kugelmass" terms are commended reading.
Episode", a short story written in 1977, is about a humanities professor at City College that is unhappily married for the second time and suffocated in alimony to his first wife. Like the Flaubert novel, Madame Bovary, Allen's short story examines the inefficacy of the hunt for personal happiness. Written as a farce with the addition of satire, Woody
Allen's story, similar to Madame Bovary, is formulated around the feeling of discontentment with life. As the story progresses, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reach, the more Professor Sidney Kugelmass (the protagonist) reaches for something enticing and beyond his reaches for something enticing enticing and beyond his reaches for something enticing enti
utilization of verbal irony, dramatic irony and situational irony. "The Kugelmass Episode" is a farce; it uses word play and unlikely situations to create humor. It can also be said that this story is a satire, a type of comedy or drama that censures one's flaws or social expectations. For example, the story satirizes Professor Sidney Kugelmass as an
ordinary Jewish man that is going through a midlife crisis. In order to overcome a satire of the midlife crisis, Kugelmass was gone. At the same moment, he appeared in the bedroom of Charles and Emma Bovary's house at Yonville." (Paragraph 50). Instead of trying to find
meaning and self-improving his life, Kugelmass goes on an endeavor to satisfy his urges. Verbal irony is an effective literary element that the author uses to exemplify messages or situations in this story. For example, the professor's analyst tells him, "After all, I'm an analyst, not a magician" (Paragraph 9). Kugelmass goes on an endeavor to satisfy his urges. Verbal irony is an effective literary element that the author uses to exemplify messages or situations in this story.
... ...int of view. For example, as Kugelmass is enjoying his affair with Emma Bovary, the readers of Madame Bovary are finding it difficult to understand where a Jewish, middle-aged man came from. "I cannot get my mind on this...and now she's gone from the book." (Paragraph 95). The readers of Allen's short story understand what is happening
through the context of Kugelmass's relationship and desires however, the characters that are reading Madame Bovary do not. Both characters in the short story, Emma Bovary and Professor Sidney Kugelmass are similar in that they always expect more in life and are never content with what they already have. The discontentment that these two
characters portray only brings depression and unmanageable obstacles into their lives. The central message of Allen's farce is significant and clearly understood through his use of all types of irony. Loading PreviewSorry, preview is currently unavailable. You can download the paper by clicking the button above. Woody Allen1977"The Kugelmass
Episode," first published in the May 2, 1977, issue of The New Yorker, is Woody Allen's fantastic tale of a dissatisfied humanities professor Wugelmass, unhappily married to his second wife, wants to have an affair, so he has a magician-entertainer
named The Great Persky project him into Flaubert's novel, where he embarks on a passionate affair with the title character, the spoiled and beautiful Emma Bovary. Allen presents a hilarious look at what happens when living out one's fantasy becomes a reality and satirizes contemporary society in the process. The story's humor comes not only from
its bizarre situation but from its broadly drawn characters, parody of the entertainment industry, spoof of the male midlife crisis, ironic look at literature and its study, and satirical depiction of Jewish culture and manners. Although the story is a farce and immensely funny from beginning to end, "The Kugelmass Episode" does tackle the serious
question of the human condition in modern times. Kugelmass, like Allen's heroes in other stories and films, is a schlemiel, or hapless bungler who finds himself the victim of circumstances (often of his own making) in an absurd and confusing world. The story draws on Jewish humor and culture as well as classical and modern literature, using lowbrow
humor to spoof high art. "The Kugelmass Episode," which was published the same year Allen won his first Academy Award for the movie Annie Hall, won an O. Henry award for best short story in 1978. The story was included in Allen's collection Side Effects in 1978, and has been widely anthologized. It appears in the 2003 collection, Fierce Pajamas:
An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker. Author BiographyWoody Allen was born Allen decided when he was just a child that he wanted to write and make movies. At 15 he changed his name to Woody Allen, and at 16 was hired to write jokes for radio and television. In the early
1950s he first attended New York University, where he failed motion picture production and English, and then City College of New York, where he also flunked out. He wrote for television for five years, writing for Sid Caesar and winning an Emmy nomination, but found this career stifling and turned to standup comedy. In 1965 Allen wrote and
starred in his first film, What's New, Pussycat? The following year he made his directorial debut with What's Up, Tiger Lily? and wrote a Broadway play, Don't Drink the Water. Around this time he became a regular contributor of humorous fiction and essays to The New Yorker and other publications. He rose to fame with the 1969 release of Take the
Money and Run, a spoof of gangster movies that he wrote, starred in, and directed. His reputation as one of America's most gifted comic filmmakers solidified with Bananas (1971), Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask) (1972), Sleeper (1973), and Love and Death (1975). Two collections of his prose writings,
Getting Even (1971) and Without Feathers (1975) appeared during these years. In 1977, Allen won an Oscar for Annie Hall, which was hailed as one of the first truly intelligent and complex American comedies. That same year, "The Kugelmass Episode" appeared in the The New Yorker. The story won an O. Henry Award the following year and was
published in his third and final prose collection, Side Effects (1980). Allen's 1978 Interiors, his first attempt at serious drama, met with mixed success, but 1979's Manhattan, an autobiographical work shot in black-and-white, was admired by critics and audiences. Allen continued to produce hit movies throughout the 1980s. In 1992, he suffered a
much-publicized breakup with his third wife, the actress Mia Farrow, after he admitted to an affair with Farrow's adopted daughter, Soon-Yi Previn. Caught in a bitter custody battle, his ex-wife alleging he had molested another of their children, Allen's reputation suffered considerably, but he continued to make movies, and he and Previn married in
1997. In addition to making films at a rate of about one per year, Allen plays jazz clarinet with the New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra. Over his career, he has received fourteen Academy Award nominations and three Oscars, eight British Academy of Film awards, and numerous prizes from the New York and Chicago Film Critics Circles, the
Writers Guild of America, the Cesar Awards in France, and the Bodils in Denmark. In 2002, Allen received the Palme des Palmes, the Cannes Film Festival's lifetime achievement award. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and two adopted children. Plot Summary "The Kugelmass Episode" opens with Kugelmass, a middle-aged, unhappily married
humanities professor seeking the advice of his analyst, Dr. Mandel. He is bored with his life, and he needs to have an affair. His analyst, not a magician." Kugelmass then seeks out a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, adding that he is "an analyst, not a magician." Kugelmass then seeks out a magician. "Kugelmass then seeks out a magician." Kugelmass then seeks out a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, adding that he is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, adding that he is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, adding that he is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, adding that he is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, and here is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, and here is "an analyst, not a magician to help him solve his problem. A few weeks later, here is no overnight cure for his troubles, and here is no overnight cure for his troubles, here is no ov
gets a call from The Great Persky, a two-bit magician/entertainer who shows him a "cheap-looking Chinese cabinet, badly lacquered" that can transport the professor into any book, short story, play, or poem to meet the woman character of his choice. When he has had enough, Kugelmass just has to give a yell and he is back in New York. At first
 Kugelmass thinks it is a scam, then that Persky is crazy, but for $20, he gives it a try. He wants a French lover, so he chooses Emma Bovary. Persky tosses a paperback copy of Flaubert's novel into the cabinet with Kugelmass, taps it three times, and Kugelmass finds himself at the Bovary estate in Yonville in the French countryside. Emma Bovary
welcomes Kugelmass, flirting with him as she admires his modern dress. "It's called a leisure suit," he replies romantically, then adds, "It was marked down." They drink wine, take a stroll through the countryside, and whisper to each other as they recline under a tree. As they kiss and embrace, Kugelmass remembers that he has a date to meet his
wife, Daphne. He tells Emma he will return as soon as possible, calls for Persky, and is transported back to New York. His heart is light, and he thinks he is in love. What he doesn't know is that students across the country are asking their teachers about the strange appearance of a "bald Jew" kissing Madame Bovary on page 100. The next day,
Kugelmass returns to Persky, who transports him to Flaubert's novel to be with Emma. Their affair continues for some months. Kugelmass tells Persky to always get him into the book before page 120, when the character Rodolphe appears. During their time together, Emma complains about her husband, Charles, and her dull rural existence.
Kugelmass tells her about life back in New York, with its nightlife, fast cars, and movie and TV stars. Emma wants to go to New York and become an actress. Kugelmass arranges it with Persky that the next liaison with Emma is in New York. He tells Daphne that he will be attending a symposium in Boston, and the next afternoon, Emma comes to New
York. They spend a wonderfully romantic weekend together, and Emma has never been as happy. Meanwhile, a Stanford professor, reading Flaubert's book, cannot "get his mind around" the changes that have taken place to the novel: First a strange character named Kugelmass appears, and then the title character disappears. When Persky tries to
return Emma to the novel, his cabinet malfunctions, and she is forced to stay in New York. Kugelmass finds himself running between Daphne and the stress begins to wear him out. He learns too that a colleague who is jealous of him,
Fivish Kopkind, has spotted Kugelmass in the book and has threatened to reveal his secret to Daphne. He wants to commit suicide or run away. But the machine is fixed at last, and Kugelmass rushes Emma to Persky's and eventually back to the novel. Kugelmass rushes Emma to Persky's and eventually back to the novel.
door again three weeks later. He is bored and wants another affair. Persky warns him that the machine has not been in use since the earlier "unpleasantness," but Kugelmass says he wants to do it, and asks to enter Portnoy's Complaint. But the cabinet explodes, Persky is thrown back and has a fatal heart attack, and his house goes up in flames.
Kugelmass is unaware of the catastrophe, but soon finds that the machine has not thrust him into Portnoy's Complaint at all but into a remedial Spanish textbook. The story ends with Kugelmass running for his life "over a barren, rocky terrain" as the "large and hairy" irregular verb tener ("to have") races after him on its spindly
legs. Characters Charles Bovary Emma Bovary's husband Charles is a doctor whom Kugelmass calls a "lacklustre little paramedic" who is "ready to go to sleep by ten" while Emma wants to go out dancing. Emma refers to her husband sarcastically as "Mr. Personality." He falls asleep during dinner as she is talking about the ballet. Emma Bovary Emma
Bovary is the title character of Gustave Flaubert's novel Madame Bovary, into whose world Kugelmass gets transported by The Great Persky. In Allen's story she speaks in the "same fine translation as the paperback" version of the novel before she suddenly acquires a twentieth-century New York way of speaking. She is much like she is in the
Flaubert novel: beautiful and spoiled, interested in material possessions, irresponsible, bored with her bourgeois existence, looking for love and excitement. She detests her marriage and life in the country and is enthralled by Kugelmass's stories of Broadway nightlife, fast cars, Hollywood, and TV. She and Kugelmass begin a torrid affair when he
visits her in the pages of the novel, but she soon wants to visit New York and begin an acting career. In New York, she goes out on the town with Kugelmass and buys new clothes to take home, another sign of her shallowness and interest in material possessions. When she finds herself unable to get back to the novel, she complains to Kugelmass that
watching TV all day is boring; she wants to take a class or get a job. She then locks herself in the bathroom and refuses to come out. Selfish and vapid, Emma Bovary is a parody of the demanding mistress as well as of the air-headed aspiring actress searching for fame and fortune. The Great Persky is the magician who transports
Kugelmass into Emma Bovary's world using a badly lacquered, cheap-looking Chinese cabinet. Persky, an unsuccessful entertainer, is described as short, thin, and waxy-looking, and lives in a broken-down apartment house. The fact that he is a magician reinforces the theme of reality versus illusion in the story, and he also is a parody of a two-bit
entertainer that used to be a staple on Vaudeville. Persky is also a satire of the quintessential New York Jew; he uses colorful colloquial expressions and has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook on life. When his cabinet has a pessimistic but relaxed outlook outl
malfunctions and Kugelmass is distressed, Persky is not overly worried and tells Kugelmass to relax and to get help for his personal anxiety. He can't help in that area, Persky says, because "I'm a magician, not an analyst." Professor Fivish KopkindThe professor is Kugelmass's colleague, a professor of comparative literature at the City College of New
York. Kugelmass says Kopkind, who has always been jealous of him, has identified him as the sporadically appearing character in Madame Bovary and has threatened to tell everything to Kugelmass's wife. Media Adaptations from an Anthology of Humor Writing from the New Yorker, a recording of the
collection edited by David Remnick and Henry Finder, includes a reading of "The Kugelmass Episode." The Kugelmass Episode. "The Kugelmass Episode interviews with the author and links to other useful
information. Allen's film The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985) uses a device similar to that found in "The Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the theater, and into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the theater, and into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the theater, and into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the theater, and into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode": a character from a movie steps off the screen, into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the moviegoer Cecilia. Kugelmass Episode (Into the life of the life 
transported to the pages of Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary, where he has an affair with the title character. Kugelmass is described as aging and "bald and hairy as a bear," and he thinks, mistakenly, that he has "soul." He is distrustful, pessimistic city man who races around town trying to get what he wants; he is forever in pursuit of something
better. He is drawn in the Jewish tradition of the schlemiel—a hapless bungler who gets caught up in an awful and absurd situation beyond his control, a powerless man at odds with his environment. But he is also an irresponsible, selfish, shallow man who wants a lot for very little—he wants to escape his humdrum life and unhappy marriage, but not
at the expense of his career or marriage. After The Great Persky transports Kugelmass to Yonville, and he begins an affair with Emma Bovary, he can't believe his luck and is happy for a while; he has never been particularly successful (he failed Freshman English). He thinks that he deserves happiness after all his "suffering," and when he begins an
affair with Emma thinks he "has the situation knocked." But when things start to go wrong and Persky cannot get Emma back to Yonville, Kugelmass starts to panic. He takes to drink and wants to escape again, this time either by suicide or moving to Europe. After Persky finally returns Emma to the Flaubert novel after her New York interlude,
Kugelmass repents and says he has learned his lesson. But three weeks later he is asking Persky again to transport him into another fictional realm. Kugelmass is like many Allen heroes—a nervous, inept New York Jew who hopes for the best but also worries constantly, thinks he has a situation "knocked," then finds himself in trouble that he cannot
handle. But he doesn't learn from his mistakes, because the call of flesh is more powerful than that of his head. Kugelmass's current, and
second, wife. Kugelmass considers her an "oaf" and a "troglodyte" who had promise (and money) but has now grown fat. She is demanding and spends her time doing mundane tasks—looking for bathroom accessories, for example. She suspects that her husband has a "chippie" on the side, senses his tension, but never catches on to his affair.Dr.
Mandel Dr. Mandel is Kugelmass confides to Dr. Mandel that he needs is to express his feelings. He says he has no overnight cure for Kugelmass because "I'm an analyst, not a magician." Rodolphe Rodolphe is Emma Bovary's lover in
the novel Madame Bovary. Kugelmass wants to get into the novel before Emma meets Rodolphe is from the landed gentry, he says, and has nothing better to do than flirt and ride horses. Themes Literature and Literary StudyOne of the principal targets of Allen's satire in
"The Kugelmass Episode" is literature and its study. Kugelmass is a humanities professor at the City College of New York in Brooklyn, but, it turns out, he "failed Freshman English." (Allen himself attended CCNY and failed English at New York University.) He doesn't speak like an educated man at all, but uses colloquialisms and a very New York
Jewish speech pattern; the only time he deviates from this is to call his wife a "troglodyte" (a cave dweller) and to whisper sweet nothings into Emma Bovary's ear. Kugelmass is dissatisfied with his life, and he yearns not for love but for a cheap idealization or glamorization of it that is the stuff of romance novels. He decides he wants to have an affair
with Emma Bovary because she is French—"that sounds to me perfect," he says. But what he doesn't even consider is that Flaubert's novel is not about perfect love at all but the ridiculous idealization of it by the title character—which leads to her utter ruin. In fact Kugelmass is very much like Flaubert's Emma: dissatisfied and disillusioned by
story to classics of literature that reinforce the absurdity of Kugelmass's quest and resound with his general predicament. The Great Persky asks Kugelmass what his pleasure is in terms of female heroines to have an affair with. He suggests the social-climbing title character of Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie and the mad Ophelia in Shakespeare's
Hamlet, for example. At the end of the novel, Kugelmass asks to be projected into Philip Roth's Portnoy's Complaint, a book about a Jewish man who talks to his analyst about his sexual troubles. Throughout the story, Allen uses lowbrow humor to poke fun at serious, high art by combining it with absurd and farcical situations. The fact that a person
can be projected at all into a work of fiction is ridiculously comic, and that it is Flaubert's serious naturalistic novel is even more incongruous. Literary study is also satirized in the story as students and professors all over the country begin to wonder about what is happening as a "bald Jew" enters Flaubert's novel. Rather than thinking that something
Kugelmass Episode" is modern humans' pursuit of satisfaction. Kugelmass is dissatisfied and undergoing a midlife crisis, but rather than seek meaning, he looks for romance and glamour to relieve the boredom in his life. When things go wrong and Emma can't get back to the Flaubert novel, he tells Persky that all he is prepared for at this point in his life.
life is "a cautious affair." He is prepared to lie and cheat on his wife but he doesn't want to work too hard or to give up the other things in his life—his job, his comfortable existence—to get what he wants. The irony at the end of the story is that Kugelmass, who has been in the pursuit of things that he thinks he must have, is himself pursued by
reality. Fantasy in the story is seen on two levels. On the one hand, there are straightforward fantasies, for example Kugelmass's wish have a beautiful woman by his side and Emma Bovary's desire for an acting career and fame. But Allen plays on that idea and Kugelmass's fantasy becomes, literally, a fantastic journey into another dimension. Topics
for Further StudyResearch the terms satire, farce, parody, irony, spoof, and send-up. What are the differences between them? Where are these different elements found and how are they used in "The Kugelmass Episode?" Write a short story that satirizes a situation of your choosing. Choose two or three characters that will be familiar to your readers
exaggerate their character traits, and put them into an absurd situation that emphasizes those traits. One of the most famous discussions of the nature of reality is Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in his philosophical treatise. The Republic. Plato says that humans live in a state of ignorance and mistake the "false" images they see around them for the true
reality of the world. Read the "Allegory" and write a short essay on how the "false images" and the images seen in art. Do you see any parallels between these "false images" and the images projected on a movie screen? Explain those differences. Do a research project on the history of American Jewish humor and
humorists, from Vaudeville through radio, television, stage, and screen. How have Jewish comics and comedians contributed to the understanding of the human condition? In the story, Kugelmass is bored and seeks a
release from his dull, humdrum existence. He wants to escape from the reality of his oaf-like wife Daphne and have an affair. He doesn't want an ordinary dalliance, a "chippie" on the side as his wife says, but excitement, softness, glamour; he wants to "exchange coy glances over red wine and candlelight." He turns to Persky to help him, and even
though it should be apparent that things will probably not work out (the unsuccessful magician lives in a run-down apartment building and uses a cheap-looking Chinese cabinet as his transporter), he willingly suspends his disbelief and hopes for the best. As a sign of his desperation to escape his reality, Kugelmass the distrusting city man accepts
that Persky knows what he is doing. His fantasy comes to life when he is thrust into the world of Flaubert's novel and begins his affair with Emma Bovary, but Kugelmass soon finds that living with one's fantasy poses many hazards. Once again, Kugelmass wants to escape—this time his fantasy-turned-reality—either by committing suicide or running
away to Europe. He is relieved when Emma is finally transported back to Yonville. Art in the story is an escape from real life, with its fat and dull people and mundane situations. But even though it is a tempting escape, it is still an illusion, and illusion are not all they seem to be. New York Jewish Culture "The Kugelmass Episode" is very
much a story about a New York Jew, and Allen presents a number of details to emphasize the Jewishness of his principal characters. Kugelmass teaches at City College of New York The word "Kugel" in the title characters in the story are Jewish—Kugelmass
Daphne, Dr. Mandel, Persky, and even Kugelmass's jealous colleague, Fivish Kopkind. Allen's characters have stereotypical Jewish humor, with the main character cast as a schlemiel, or bungler, the use of exaggeration for comic effect
(Kugelmass notes, for example, that Emma's hotel tab reads "like the defense budget") and its concerns with the anxieties of urban life. But while Allen satirizes Jewish culture, speech, and manners, he never does so harshly, and his characters are crazy but ultimately likeable, and the colloquial speech they use in the face of such serious situations is
perhaps the most humorous element in the story. The Entertainment Industry "The Kugelmass Episode" pokes fun at the entertainment industry, especially in its satirical portraits of Persky the Great and Emma Bovary. Persky is an unsuccessful entertainment industry, especially in its satirical portraits of Persky the Great and Emma Bovary. Persky is an unsuccessful entertainment industry, especially in its satirical portraits of Persky the Great and Emma Bovary. Persky is an unsuccessful entertainment industry, especially in its satirical portraits of Persky is an unsuccessful entertainment industry.
booking for the Knights of Pythias that "fell through," he tells Kugelmass, and he aims to make money from Kugelmass from his contraption. Emma, when she comes a parody of an actress with aspirations to fame. She wants to dine at Elaine's, a landmark restaurant in New York that serves Italian-Jewish comfort food and which
is the haunt of many celebrities (she wants to see and be seen). She thinks anyone can act and wants to be coached by the great Strasberg so she can win an Oscar. Both these characters show the most shallow side of the entertainment industry, that focuses not on art but on money and fame. StyleFarce/Satire "The Kugelmass Episode" uses humor
and comic situations to poke fun at people and situations and to show the absurdity of human desires and pursuits. The humor in the story can be classified as satire, which is the ridicule of ideas, institutions, particular individuals, or humanity in general to lower the reader's esteem of them and make them laughable. The story may also be viewed as
a farce, which is a comedy characterized by broad satire and improbable situations. Satire and farce are used by writers to different effects, sometimes reducing ideas or people to absurdity to proffer a moral criticism against injustice or social wrongs. Allen does not seem to offer heavy moral lessons in his story, but his humor does expose human
foibles and critiques modern humanity's particularly crass pursuit of bodily satisfaction, material wealth, and fame. The story is a parody of a number of types of people and situations. The characters are broadly drawn and have stereotypical traits. Kugelmass is an ironical portrayal of a middle-aged Jewish man undergoing a sexual crisis; his wife
Daphne is a satire of an over-the-hill, unrefined and materialistic Jewish wife; Emma is a spoof of shallow, celebrity-seeking, and untalented would-be actor; and Persky sends up Jewish speech and manners as well as cheap entertainers. Using these characters, Allen also satirizes literature and high art, material pursuits, Jewish culture, and the
and "badly lacquered." When it malfunctions, Persky crawls under it and bangs it with a large wrench; the problem, he reveals, was with its transmission. Allen undercuts serious romantic moments often by using colloquial expressions and incongruities. Emma is dazzled by Kugelmass's modern dress, which he tells her he got on sale. She is
enthralled by stories of New York, and he talks about O. J. Simpson's "rushing records." Throughout the story, situations and people are mocked, practically everything they say and do reduced to complete silliness. Colloquial Language Much of the humor of "The Kugelmass Episode" comes from his characters' manner of speech, as they use slang and
expressions that undercut the seriousness of the situations they are in. The tone of the language emphasizes the New York setting and Jewish accent. When Kugelmass is skeptical of his transporting cabinet, he tells Kugelmass "It's the emess,"
then asks for a "double sawbuck" to transport him to Madame Bovary. Kugelmass, a literature professor, uses colloquial language most of the time, and when he an Emma become close begins to call her "sugar" and "cupcake." At first Emma speaks in the "same fine English translation as the paperback," but by the end of the story she is telling
Kugelmass that "watching TV all day is the pits." Over and over, weighty and important matters are made absurd by the way the characters talk about them, bringing them into the jewish American ExperienceThe first Jews to settle in North America arrived in New
York City, then the Dutch port of New Amsterdam, in 1654. By the end of the century they had established synagogues, and by 1740 Jews were entitled to full citizenship. Jewish families settled all over New York and the community set up hospitals, businesses, and cultural organizations. Immigration to New York by European Jews continued in the community set up hospitals, businesses, and cultural organizations.
nineteenth century, intensifying in the 1880s. Between 1880 and 1920, the Jewish population in New York evolved from an immigrant community divided by language, politics, and culture into an English-speaking, upwardly mobile
American citizenry. Jews began to play an increasingly significant role in the general cultural life of New York. Many of New York seding entertainers, writers, artists and art patrons were of Jewish origin, and American intellectualism began to
assimilate, their humor began to integrate into mainstream American entertainment. Many Jews became successful Vaudeville acts, and future stars such as The Marx Brothers, Jack Benny, George Burns, Milton Berle, and The Three Stooges began their careers in Vaudeville. By the mid-1920s, a literary form of humor created by Jewish comics came
out of Vaudeville: stand-up comedy. When Vaudeville theaters were replaced by nightclubs in the 1930s and 40s, comedy became less physical and began to reflect its intellectual tradition of exhaustive reasoning and questioning. Before the
second world war, much Jewish humor relied on self-caricature, but after 1945 Jews ran into less discrimination and new possibilities opened up to them, and in the early 1950s the Jewish comic Sid Caesar created Your Show of Shows, which used a
combination of physical comedy, one-liners, and intellectual wit to offer social commentary and satirize highbrow culture. Among Caesar's writers were the Jewish issues, and in fact fearing the anti-Semitic sentiments of its audience pointedly
avoided presenting any sense that it was created by Jews. However, it did make numerous Jewish references and used inside jokes, and the Jewish background of the writers helped to produce humor laced heavily with irony and caustic wit. By the end of the years have been been described by Jews. However, it did make numerous Jewish references and used inside jokes, and the Jewish background of the writers helped to produce humor laced heavily with irony and caustic wit. By the end of the years have been been been described by Jews.
the forefront of radical social change. The brash humor of Lenny Bruce in that decade heralded an age of intelligent, sophisticated comedy that tackled important social issues and Run presented a Jewish protagonist who was no longer the
Jewish vaudevillian clown of old but a neurotic, analytic, intellectual New York Jew, thoroughly urban and anxiety-ridden. This persona, taken from his standup routine, appropriated some of the techniques and types from the Jewish humorist tradition, for example casting the hero as a schlemiel, a bungler and lovable failure who is to be pitied. But it
was also much more clever and self-consciously reflective even while being self-deprecating and zany. In the 1970s, as the social climate in the country changed, Jewish comedy writers began more and more to emphasize their Jewishness, and Allen's string of hit movies is a testament to the increasing tolerance of Jewish culture and ideas in the
mainstream. Like his story "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen's films poked fun at the Jewish America and paying tribute to the particularly Jewish ability to find humor in the most unlikely situations. In 1975, the television comedy variety
show Saturday Night Live, whose writers were almost all Jewish, was launched in New York and televised nationwide. The program often parodied Jewish manners, people, and culture and encouraged performers to be open about their Jewish identities. Since then, the American comedy scene has embraced Jewish comics and Jewish humor. The
synthesis of Jewish and mainstream comedy is seen in the work of Billy Crystal, Jerry Seinfeld, and Larry David, for example, whose verbal jabs and neurotic self-observations have popularized the sensibility of Jewish humor. But the work of these contemporary Jewish comics has also in some ways sublimated Jewish comedy's very Jewishness by
making it "all-American." Thus, while New York Jewish humor defined comedy in twentieth-century America, in the twenty-first century, Jewish American humor and its particular fusion of intellectual and lowbrow satire has become assimilated to the degree that it is regarded as one of the defining elements of American humor. Compare &
Contrast1970s: There are approximately 5.5 million Jews living in the United States, of which just under 1 million live in New York City. Jews make up approximately 6 million Jews living in the United States, of which just under 1 million live in New York City. Jews make up
12 percent of the population of New York City.1970s: While Jews account for less than 2 percent of the United States' population, while 70 percent of the Country's comedians are of
Jewish descent. Most of them are from New York City.1970s: Lorne Michaels's television comedy program Saturday Night Live premieres. Nearly all the writers on the show is Jewish.Critical Overview"The Kugelmass Episode" is
generally acknowledged to be a classic short story and one of the finest pieces in Allen's relatively small output of prose fiction. It was well received critically when it first appeared in The New Yorker in 1977, evidenced by it being short-listed for and then winning the first prize in the following year's O. Henry awards, the annual prizes given to short
stories of exceptional merit. However, partly because of Allen's enormous popularity and success as a filmmaker, "The Kugelmass Episode" and his other prose works have received almost no sustained critical or scholarly attention. The short story is routinely cited by critics from all disciplines as a "classic" and a brilliantly funny example of a fantasy
in which art and life intersect and frequently appears on college reading lists for modern and supernatural fiction and, ironically, Freshman English. Two short critical pieces on the explicator discussing the work's Jewish references and relationship to reader-response theory and criticism. But otherwise,
most critical commentary on Allen's work tends to focus on his films and, to a lesser extent, his plays. Nonetheless, "The Kugelmass Episode" continues to be read, being frequently anthology of stories from The
New Yorker. Side Effects, Allen's third prose collection in which the story was published in 1980, also continues to be in print, ensuring that the piece enjoys wide readership. Criticism Uma Kukathas is a freelance editor and writer. In this essay, Kukathas discusses how Allen explores the theme of art as an escape from reality in "The
Kugelmass Episode" and in his film The Purple Rose of Cairo. In his 1985 film The Purple Rose of Cairo. Allen tells the story of her existence by going to the movies. During one of Cecelia, a lonely woman trapped in a bad marriage and dead-end job who escapes the misery of her existence by going to the movies. During one of Cecelia, a lonely woman trapped in a bad marriage and dead-end job who escapes the misery of her existence by going to the movies.
screen idol Gil Shepherd, the character Tom Baxter, played by Shepherd, turns to Cecelia and begins a conversation with her. He confesses he's been watching Cecelia while she has been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching Cecelia while she has been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching Cecelia while she has been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching Cecelia while she has been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching Cecelia while she has been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him, and is falling in love with her. He confesses he's been watching him her her had been watching him her had been watching him her her had been watching him her her had been watching him her had been watching him
with her. He flees to the real world, where all he wants to do, he says, is lead a "normal" life, to "be real." Cecelia later enters Baxter's movie world with him, where she experiences for a time glamour, adventure, love, and hope. But both Baxter and Cecelia soon find that the fantasy worlds they have entered have their pitfalls. More importantly,
reality begins to set in, and in the end both are forced to return to their old lives, the only places where, they reality. Indeed, the 1977
story can be viewed as a prototype for the film that appeared eight years later. Both of these works use similar methods to examine the line between fantasy and reality and to show how seductive fantasy can be. The treatment of the theme of art versus reality in "The Kugelmass Episode" is not as developed as it is in Allen's film, and the moral lessons
lessons, veiled in the story in screwball satire, become a little more clear.In both "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and its power to offer solace and hope. In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and its power to offer solace and hope. In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and its power to offer solace and hope. In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and its power to offer solace and hope. In "The Kugelmass Episode," and The Purple Rose of Cairo, Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is a capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art and also in art is a capacity to provide relief from the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art are all the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art are all the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art are all the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the allure of art are all the Europe In "The Kugelmass Episode," Allen presents the Europe In "Th
dreariness of existence. Kugelmass seeks an escape from reality in art for the basest of reasons: he is having a mid-life crisis, feels that he is running out of "options," and thinks he'd better have an affair while he still can. He doesn't really turn to art for solace; rather, art happens to present itself as a means for him to satisfy his lust. Kugelmass is a
literature professor, but art so far has done little to offer meaning to his weary soul. Only when The Great Persky suggests that he use his transporting cabinet to "meet any of the women created by the world's best writers" does he decide that this is the type of fantasy world he will escape to. He decides to go to the France of Madame Bovary, where
he begins an affair with the title character. Once there, he is happy because he is "doing it with Madame Bovary" and thinks he has the "situation knocked." Being in the French countryside is a nice touch, but the most important thing for Kugelmass is that he has fulfilled his very particular fantasy—of having an affair with a beautiful, sexy woman.
Kugelmass is completely seduced by the world of art, but all that world is for him is a place where he can get what he wants without having to pay very much for it. "The Kugelmass Episode" satirizes the entire notion of the seductiveness of art as it shows Kugelmass's desire for escape in crass terms. The Purple Rose of Cairo develops the idea of art's
allure more fully and delicately, showing why humans choose to escape to it. For Cecelia, the world of the movies is a complete world, and she loves everything about it: the glamorous people, the adventure, the romance. She falls in love with Baxter because he is perfect; even after he has a fistfight with her husband, not a single hair is out of place
and there is no blood no his face. Art for Cecelia offers an escape because it depicts a perfect morality, where good always triumphs and evil fails. Her real world, in comparison, is disappointing,
deceitful, and the good guys never win. Cecelia turns to art to satisfy her desires, and the escape offered by art is magical and wonderful. The world of art is far superior to her real world, and it is no wonder that day after day Cecelia sits in front of the screen losing herself in its illusions of beauty and its perfect morality. Allen is not saying that all art
depicts a perfect world, but shows how audiences are seduced by it because of the alternative it offers to the complexity of the real world. Art may not portray life as being perfect, but it has a certain integrity and meaning that are missing from real life—or at least people think it has these qualities. The literary critics in "The Kugelmass Episode'
don't know what to make of it when the text of Madame Bovary changes; the novel has an expected progression, unlike life, and the Stanford professor "cannot get his mind around" the fact that suddenly it does not. A member of the movie audience in the film says she wants "what happened in the movie last week to happen this week. Otherwise
what's life all about anyway?" In both the story and the film, Allen shows how audiences' expectations of art are misquided in serious ways. They expect art to deliver certain truths when in fact it cannot. One of the things Allen does in both these works is use the genre of comedy, which is supposed to provide happy endings, and infuse it with the
unexpected, with sadness and absurd tragedy. Cecelia is betrayed by the movies and doomed to return to her horrible life, and Kugelmass, not learning his lesson about the dangers of living an illusion, is projected finally into an absurdist oblivion. Allen departs from the traditions of comedy to bring into focus the shifting boundaries of art and reality
and to show how people's expectations of art influence their thinking not only about art but their mistake is in believing that art can offer a permanent escape. For Kugelmass, things start to go horribly wrong when Persky's transporter malfunctions and Emman their mistake is in believing that art can offer a permanent escape.
Bovary is unable to return to her novel. Kugelmass finds very quickly that his fantasy-turned-reality is a liability, and he chooses to end it as soon as he can. But the allure of it is too strong, and three weeks later he is in Persky's apartment asking to be projected into Portnoy's Complaint. There he meets with his hilariously bizarre ending—thrust by
mistake into a remedial Spanish textbook and running for his life as he is chased by a large and hairy irregular verb. The ending to Cecelia's story is more tragic and more poignant. She believes at first that she can have a life with Baxter, leaving her husband for him. The movie studio then sends the actor Shepherd to convince his character to get
back into the film, and Shepherd asks Cecelia to choose him over his screen persona, promising them a life together. Baxter goes back to his film, but then Cecelia is back to her dreary existence, her only respite once again the magic of the
movies. What Do I Read Next? Madame Bovary (1857), by Gustave Flaubert, the novel in which Kugelmass gets projected, is the story of a young wife of a country doctor who yearns for excitement in her boring rural existence and engages in several illicit affairs. Philip Roth's comic novel Portnoy's Complaint (1969), also mentioned in the story, is a
continuous monologue as narrated by its eponymous speaker, Alexander Portnoy, to his psychoanalyst about his sexual frustrations and escapades. The novel is also a humorous exploration of Jewish and Jewish-inspired humor from
contributors such as Woody Allen, Max Apple, Gary Epstein, Lenny Bruce, Joseph Heller, David Levine, Sam Levenson, G. B. Trudeau, Judith Viorst, S. Gross, Jules Feiffer, and others. Allen's three collections of humorous prose are brought together in The Complete Prose of Woody Allen (1991). Jasper Fforde's The Eyre Affair: A Novel (2002) is a
humorous mystery novel about a criminal who steals characters from English literary works and holds them for ransom. "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (1939), American humorist James Thurber's best-known story, is about a middle-class man who escapes from the routine drudgery of his suburban life into fantasies of heroid
conquest. Even to the end, Kugelmass believes that art can offer something more than a passing diversion to his life, that it can transform it in some way that will have permanent rewards. This leads to his downfall. Cecelia finally recognizes that perfection isn't a substitute for reality, and she chooses reality instead. But reality is as harsh as it had
always been, with its imperfect morality, and she is once again alone and in a state of hopelessness and despair. The lesson that both characters learn, and which we can learn from their stories, is that painful though it is, humans must return to and live with reality, and reality has no happy ending. Art can offer some refuge from the harshness of
reality, but we cannot stay there permanently. We might find, as Cecelia does, that the world of reality is amoral and unwelcoming, but it is the only place we have the freedom and to accept responsibility for their own lives. They
both look for an easy solution, thinking their own lives meaningful. But to escape that responsibility, Allen shows, is to escape that responsibility, Allen shows, is to escape that responsibility of making their own lives meaningful. But to escape that responsibility, Allen shows, is to escape that responsibility, and that illusion, and that illusion illusion, and that illusion illusion, and that illusion illusion, and that illusion illusion illusion illusion illusion illusion illusion illusion.
Thomson Gale, 2005.Laurie ChampionIn the following essay, Champion explores how reader-response. In his short story "The Kugelmass Episode," reversing the phenomenon of reader-response critics.
"The Kugelmass Episode" portrays a distinct relationship between reader and text, a connection that represents a reversal of reader-response criticism: the protagonist literally enters the text Madame Bovary and metaphorically interprets it. When humanities professor Sidney Kugelmass tells the magician The Great Persky, "Make sure and always
get me into the book before page 120," he means it literally. Kugelmass Episode." We read Allen's "The Kugelmass Episode" metaphorically enter Flaubert's
novel.Kugelmass tells his analyst that he wants to have an affair. When Dr. Mandel, the analyst, cautions him, "You're so unrealistic," Kugelmass decides that he needs a magician rather than an analyst. Persky explains: "If I throw any novel into this cabinet
with you, shut the doors, and tap it three times, you will find yourself projected into that book.... You can meet any of the world's best writers. "Kugelmass wants a French lover, so he chooses Emma Bovary, who represents the antithesis of his wife. He thinks that Daphne is "an oaf." She is also overweight, and he implies that he
only married her for her money. But, he thinks, Emma is "beautiful.... What a contrast with the troglodyte who shared his bed." He says, "I've earned this.... I've suffered enough. I've paid enough analysts." Persky throws a "paperback copy of Flaubert's novel" into the cabinet with Kugelmass. When he meets Emma, Kugelmass says, "She spoke in the
same free English translation as the paperback." Kugelmass's illusions turn into reality as he has his affair with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! ... Me, who failed freshman English." His escapades with Emma Bovary! His escapades with Emma Bovary! His escapades with Emma English." His escapades with Emma English." His escapades with Emma English.
the shifting boundaries of art and reality and to show how people's expectations of art influence their thinking not only about art but their lives as well. "Professor Kugelmass's "mythical journey" is his trip to a fantasy land, a journey into the illusory force of art. One of the most interesting and marvelous techniques of "The Kugelmass Episode" is that
the protagonist literally enters the text. Critics who use reader-response criticism center their interpretations around examinations of the text on readers. This criticism center their interpretations around examinations of the text on readers. This criticism center their interpretations around examinations of the text on readers. This criticism center their interpretations around examinations of the text on readers.
Pam Gilbert summarizes the fundamental principles of reader-response theories, They focus, she observes, on the reader's contribution to the meaning of a text, and in that way they are seen to represent an assault of a sort on the traditional notion of literature as "expressive realism"—the notion that literature is a reflection of the "real" world, that
literary texts have single determinate meanings, and that the authority for their meanings lies with the authority for their meaning in the text is interpreted eathority. Allen's story also demonstrates reader-response techniques when "enter the text" is interpreted
as "read the text." Allen shows the effects that Kugelmass's literal entrance into Madame Bovary has on those who read Madame Bovary while Kugelmass and Emma are in the novel. The narrator says that students all over the country ask, "Who is this character on page 100? A bald Jew is kissing Madame Bovary?" One professor explains his
confusion: "I cannot get my mind around this.... First a strange character named Kugelmass, and now she's gone from the book. Well, I guess the mark of a classic is that you can reread it a thousand times and always find something new."Throughout his oeuvre, Woody Allen frequently depicts artists who are involved in the creative process, or
spectators who, like Kugelmass, are affected by their exposure to art. He often juxtaposes the notion of an ideal life that art portrays against his protagonists' flawed lives. In "The Kugelmass Episode," he broadens this theme: the protagonists' flawed lives and his subsequent illusory views compel him to seek art as a way of confirming his
illusions. Attempting to merge his idealized life with his real life, Kugelmass Episode," in Explicator, Vol. 51, No. 1, Fall 1992, pp. 61-63. John HartyIn the following essay, Harty discusses naming in "The Kugelmass Episode." Woody Allen created
two inside jokes when he wrote "The Kugelmass Episode," originally published in The New Yorker in 1977. The short story contains cryptic joshing in both the protagonist's name Kugelmass and in that of the magician—The Great Persky. These two names refer to items often made fun of by Allen—the Jewish culture and show business.
respectively. First, a plot review will help in the comprehension of the chosen names. Kugelmass to search for a woman to have an affair with, and in distress he decides to seek help from a Dr. Mandel, an analyst who warns Kugelmass that an affair won't solve his problems
and that "[he's] an analyst, not a magician." Curiously Kugelmass gets a phone call from a magician, The Great Persky, who will later tell him that "[he's] a magician, not an analyst," Persky has a magic cabinet in which Kugelmass gets transported to the novel. Madame Bovary, where Emma is found to be bored with her spouse and in search of
romance, stating to Kugelmass, "I've always dreamed that some mysterious stranger would appear and rescue me from the monotony of this crass rural existence." The two become lovers both within the novel (art) and back in New York (reality). Soon Emma gets bored with life in a New York hotel as the novelty wears off. Initially, Persky has
difficulties getting the magic cabinet to work, but finally he is able to send her back to her novel, Kugelmass reverts to his old life but eventually returns to Persky again, this time asking for Portnoy's Complaint. Instead, Persky's magic cabinet sends Kugelmass to a remedial Spanish book where he is chased by the verb tener while the magician dies
of a heart attack and his magic cabinet bursts into flames. Kugel is a Jewish holiday dish eaten to celebrate Shavuot, a time set aside for the remembrance of the first fruit at the Temple. During this season dairy dishes (Kugel) are often prepared because of several
traditions: (1) during biblical times the Jews did not have time to cook meat after leaving the Sinai; (2) the Torah is often thought of as milk and honey; and (3) during the period from May to early June, the Spring harvest, milk and cheese are plentiful. Kugel is traditionally served on Friday nights or on the Sabbath, and there are several variations of
the dish which include cheese, potato, and Lokshen (a sweet noodle pudding). "Kugel" in the name Kugelmass therefore emphasizes that the protagonist goes on a holiday, or what might be termed a lark, from his overweight spouse. The dessert of the story consists of the affair with Madame Boyary, whose name itself in English echoes the cow from
whom milk comes and then cheese and so forth to be eaten by Kugelmass. The protagonist, as might the errant husband in any culture on a Friday night or weekend away from his "mass of Kugel," and he wants her to be French and respectable. Emma fits this role, but after the initial attraction between the two, the
magic wears off and she means less and less to Kugelmass who is all but desperate to get Persky to send her back to her novel. Allen's selection of the magician pays tribute to Lester Persky, a film producer who started out in New York by forming an advertising agency. Persky, the real one, eventually created Persky-Bright
Productions, a film company that has been guite successful financing motion pictures that were originally stage productions, possibly an accidental connection with "Kugelmass." Persky's work includes Hair, Fortune and Men's Eye's, and Eguus. So Woody Allen had a few devices hidden under his narrative sleeve, known only to the select few while the
rest of us simply enjoyed his sad story of another schlemiel schlepping along. Kugelmass and "Kugelmass and "Kugelmass Episode," in Explicator, Vol. 46, No. 3, Spring 1988, pp. 50-51. Sources Champion, Laurie, "Allen's 'The Kugelmass Episode," in Explicator, Vol. 51, No. 1, Fall 1992, pp.
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