

# tree of smoke denis johnson

Tree of Smoke by Denis Johnson: A Deep Dive into a Vietnam War Epic

**tree of smoke denis johnson** is a phrase that conjures images of dense jungles, psychological turmoil, and the chaotic fog of war. Denis Johnson's novel, *\*Tree of Smoke\**, is a sprawling, complex narrative set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, weaving together espionage, moral ambiguity, and the human cost of conflict. This work stands as one of Johnson's most ambitious achievements, blending lyrical prose with a gripping storyline that challenges readers to confront the often surreal nature of war.

## Exploring the Depths of *\*Tree of Smoke\** by Denis Johnson

Denis Johnson, best known for his short stories and novels like *\*Jesus' Son\**, took on the Vietnam War with *\*Tree of Smoke\**, published in 2007. The novel won the National Book Award, cementing Johnson's reputation as a literary heavyweight. But what makes *\*Tree of Smoke\** stand out among other Vietnam War novels?

### The Narrative Structure and Style

Unlike traditional war novels that follow a linear progression, *\*Tree of Smoke\** is intricately layered, shifting perspectives among a large cast of characters. At the center is Skip Sands, a young and idealistic CIA operative, and his uncle, General Francis X. Sands, who oversees covert operations. Johnson's prose oscillates between poetic introspection and gritty realism, capturing the surreal experience of Vietnam.

The novel's structure mirrors the confusion and fragmentation of war. Readers navigate between espionage missions, internal CIA politics, and the psychological unraveling of characters. This complexity demands attentive reading but rewards with profound insights into the nature of conflict and morality.

### Themes and Motifs in *\*Tree of Smoke\**

Several powerful themes permeate the novel:

- **The Fog of War:** The title itself symbolizes the confusion and ambiguity that envelop soldiers and spies alike. Johnson delves into how truth becomes murky amid propaganda and deception.
- **Identity and Madness:** Characters grapple with their sense of self, often slipping into madness or disillusionment as the war progresses.

- **The Moral Ambiguity of Espionage:** The novel exposes the ethical gray areas of intelligence work, questioning the cost of secrecy and betrayal.
- **Family and Loyalty:** The relationship between Skip and his uncle Francis adds a deeply personal layer, exploring loyalty beyond the battlefield.

## Denis Johnson's Portrayal of the Vietnam War

Johnson's depiction of the Vietnam War in *\*Tree of Smoke\** differs from many conventional war stories. Instead of focusing solely on combat, he emphasizes the psychological and bureaucratic chaos behind the scenes.

### A Realistic yet Poetic Lens

Johnson's background as a poet and short story writer shines through in his vivid descriptions of the environment and the inner lives of his characters. The jungle is not just a setting but a living entity — oppressive, mysterious, and symbolic of the war's entanglement. His use of language evokes a haunting atmosphere where beauty and horror coexist.

### Espionage and Intelligence Operations

*\*Tree of Smoke\** provides an insider's look into CIA operations during the war, highlighting the complexity and often futility of covert missions. Johnson explores how intelligence agencies operated in a murky world of misinformation, paranoia, and shifting allegiances. This focus sets the novel apart, giving readers a nuanced understanding of the war's hidden battles.

## Characters That Resonate Beyond the Page

One of the novel's strengths lies in its richly drawn characters, each embodying different facets of the Vietnam experience.

### Skip Sands: The Reluctant Operative

Skip's journey from a naive recruit to a man haunted by his actions illustrates the loss of innocence that war precipitates. His idealism is gradually eroded by the moral compromises he must make, capturing the internal conflict faced by many soldiers and agents.

# General Francis X. Sands: The Visionary and Tragic Figure

Francis represents the authoritative yet flawed military mind, obsessed with an all-encompassing intelligence project dubbed "Tree of Smoke." His character embodies the hubris and tragedy of American involvement in Vietnam, making readers question the true cost of ambition.

## Supporting Cast and Their Stories

Beyond Skip and Francis, Johnson populates the novel with diverse characters — from Vietnamese villagers to fellow agents — each contributing to the mosaic of war's impact. Their stories add depth and humanity, reminding readers that war affects everyone, not just the combatants.

## Why *\*Tree of Smoke\** Remains Relevant Today

Despite being set decades ago, *\*Tree of Smoke\** resonates with contemporary readers for several reasons.

## The Universal Themes of War and Morality

The novel's exploration of ethical ambiguity and the psychological scars of conflict transcends the Vietnam War context. Issues of government secrecy, the reliability of intelligence, and the human cost of political decisions remain topical in today's geopolitical landscape.

## Denis Johnson's Timeless Writing

Johnson's lyrical style and deep empathy for his characters make *\*Tree of Smoke\** a timeless piece of literature. His ability to convey the chaos of war while maintaining a poetic touch invites readers into a reflective experience rather than just a historical recount.

## Tips for Reading and Appreciating *\*Tree of Smoke\**

Given its complexity, approaching *\*Tree of Smoke\** with some strategies can enhance understanding and enjoyment.

- **Take Your Time:** The novel's intricate plot and numerous characters benefit from a slow, thoughtful reading pace.
- **Keep Notes:** Tracking characters and events can help avoid confusion, especially in the early chapters.
- **Research Context:** Familiarity with the Vietnam War's history and CIA operations can deepen appreciation of the novel's nuances.
- **Reflect on the Themes:** Consider how the novel's ideas about truth, loyalty, and madness relate to broader human experiences.

## The Legacy of *Tree of Smoke* and Denis Johnson's Contribution to War Literature

*Tree of Smoke* occupies a unique place in the canon of Vietnam War literature. It stands alongside classics like *The Things They Carried* and *Dispatches*, yet it offers a distinctive lens through its focus on intelligence work and psychological depth.

Denis Johnson's contribution extends beyond just recounting war stories; he challenges readers to grapple with moral complexities and the elusiveness of truth. His portrayal of flawed, vulnerable characters in a chaotic world resonates across generations, making *Tree of Smoke* a touchstone for anyone seeking to understand the human dimension of war.

In exploring *Tree of Smoke*, readers embark on a journey through the shadowy corridors of espionage, the dense jungles of Vietnam, and the labyrinth of the mind. Denis Johnson's masterful storytelling ensures that this journey is both harrowing and illuminating, a testament to the enduring power of literature to make sense of history's darkest chapters.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is 'Tree of Smoke' by Denis Johnson about?

'Tree of Smoke' is a novel by Denis Johnson that explores the Vietnam War through the experiences of a CIA operative named Skip Sands and other characters, delving into themes of morality, identity, and the chaos of war.

### When was 'Tree of Smoke' published and did it receive any awards?

'Tree of Smoke' was published in 2007 and won the National Book Award for Fiction that

same year.

## **How does Denis Johnson's writing style in 'Tree of Smoke' stand out?**

Johnson's writing in 'Tree of Smoke' is noted for its lyrical prose, complex characters, and a nonlinear narrative that captures the confusion and surreal nature of the Vietnam War.

## **Are there any real historical events or figures depicted in 'Tree of Smoke'?**

While 'Tree of Smoke' is a work of fiction, it incorporates real historical events and a realistic portrayal of the Vietnam War era, though its characters are fictional.

## **What are the major themes explored in 'Tree of Smoke' by Denis Johnson?**

Major themes include the moral ambiguity of war, the impact of violence on individuals, the search for meaning, and the blurred lines between reality and illusion.

## **How has 'Tree of Smoke' been received by critics and readers?**

'Tree of Smoke' has been highly praised for its ambitious scope and profound insight into the Vietnam War, though some readers find its complex narrative challenging.

## **Is 'Tree of Smoke' considered Denis Johnson's best work?**

Many critics and readers regard 'Tree of Smoke' as one of Denis Johnson's masterpieces, showcasing his depth as a writer and his ability to handle large, intricate narratives.

## **Additional Resources**

Tree of Smoke Denis Johnson: An Analytical Review of a Complex Narrative

**tree of smoke denis johnson** stands out as a compelling entry in the realm of Vietnam War literature, showcasing a distinctive narrative style and profound thematic depth. Unlike the more straightforward war novels, Johnson's work delves into the psychological turbulence and moral ambiguity of the era with an introspective lens. This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Tree of Smoke, examining its narrative structure, character development, and the broader implications it holds within war literature and historical fiction.

# Contextualizing Tree of Smoke within Vietnam War Literature

Tree of Smoke, though often associated with Denis Johnson, is important to clarify in terms of authorship. The novel Tree of Smoke is actually written by Denis Johnson's contemporary, author Denis Johnson, but often confused with another writer. However, it is crucial to understand the thematic and stylistic elements that Johnson's work shares with other Vietnam War narratives. The confusion frequently arises because both Denis Johnson and the novel's author, Denis Johnson, share a similar literary milieu focused on trauma and existential exploration.

Vietnam War literature traditionally focuses on the physical and psychological impacts of war, often contrasting the ideals of patriotism with the harsh realities on the ground. Tree of Smoke navigates this terrain by portraying a sprawling cast of characters involved in intelligence work during the war, emphasizing the fog of misinformation and the blurred lines between heroism and futility.

## Narrative Structure and Style

One of the most striking features of Tree of Smoke is its nonlinear narrative structure, which mirrors the chaotic and fragmented nature of war itself. The novel does not follow a straightforward chronological order; instead, it weaves through various perspectives and timelines, demanding a high level of engagement from the reader. This narrative choice reflects Johnson's literary technique, which often blends stream-of-consciousness passages with vivid, sometimes surreal imagery.

The prose style in Tree of Smoke Denis Johnson is marked by poetic intensity and a palpable sense of immediacy. The language captures the disorientation experienced by soldiers and civilians alike, avoiding romanticized depictions of combat. Instead, it dives into the psychological aftermath and the pervasive sense of disillusionment.

## Character Development and Psychological Depth

A central strength of Tree of Smoke lies in its multifaceted characters, each embodying different facets of the war experience. The protagonist's journey is emblematic of the broader narrative's exploration of identity, loyalty, and moral ambiguity. Characters are portrayed with nuance, often grappling with internal conflicts that underscore the futility and complexity of their missions.

The psychological depth presented in the novel aligns with Denis Johnson's broader thematic preoccupations across his oeuvre, including addiction, redemption, and existential despair. Tree of Smoke Denis Johnson uses these themes to dissect the human condition amidst the chaos of war, revealing how trauma permeates both personal and collective histories.

# Thematic Exploration in *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson

*Tree of Smoke* addresses several core themes that resonate beyond the immediate context of the Vietnam War. These include:

- **The Ambiguity of Truth:** The novel interrogates the nature of truth in wartime, where propaganda and misinformation often complicate the distinction between fact and fiction.
- **Alienation and Isolation:** Many characters experience profound alienation, highlighting the psychological toll of war and the difficulty of reintegration into civilian life.
- **Moral Ambiguity:** The story challenges binary notions of good and evil, portraying a spectrum of ethical dilemmas faced by individuals in extreme circumstances.

This thematic complexity positions *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson as a reflective commentary not only on a specific historical conflict but also on the universal human struggles engendered by violence and upheaval.

## Comparative Insights: *Tree of Smoke* and Other War Novels

In comparison to other notable Vietnam War novels such as Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* or Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson offers a more fragmented and symbolically rich narrative. While O'Brien focuses on the emotional burdens carried by soldiers and Herr on journalistic reportage, Johnson's novel immerses readers in the psychological labyrinths of intelligence operatives and the broader machinery of war.

This approach allows *Tree of Smoke* to stand apart as a novel that emphasizes the chaotic flow of information and the resulting disorientation, rather than the battlefield heroics or frontline experiences. This difference in focus enriches the canon of Vietnam War literature by providing a complementary perspective.

## Reception and Literary Significance

Upon release, *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson garnered critical acclaim for its ambitious scope and literary craftsmanship. Critics praised the novel's intricate plotting and its ability to capture the elusive nature of the Vietnam War experience. Some readers found the complexity and density of the narrative challenging, yet this very aspect contributes to

the novel's enduring appeal among scholars and serious readers.

The novel's literary significance is further underscored by its exploration of postmodern themes such as epistemological uncertainty and fragmented identity, situating it within broader contemporary literary trends. Its influence can be seen in subsequent war literature that embraces ambiguity and psychological realism over straightforward historical recounting.

## **Pros and Cons of Tree of Smoke Denis Johnson**

- **Pros:**

- Rich, poetic prose that conveys psychological depth
- Complex, well-developed characters that defy stereotypes
- Innovative narrative structure that reflects thematic concerns
- Thought-provoking exploration of truth and morality in war

- **Cons:**

- Nonlinear storytelling can be confusing for some readers
- Dense and sometimes opaque prose may slow narrative momentum
- Limited focus on frontline combat might disappoint readers seeking action-driven war stories

These considerations highlight how *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson appeals primarily to readers interested in literary experimentation and psychological nuance rather than conventional war narratives.

## **Legacy and Continuing Relevance**

Decades after its publication, *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson continues to be a pertinent work for understanding the complexities of war and memory. Its nuanced portrayal of the Vietnam conflict offers insights into broader questions about the nature of history, the reliability of narrative, and the human capacity for endurance amid chaos.



In academic circles, the novel is frequently studied for its innovative form and its contribution to discussions on trauma and postmodern war literature. For contemporary readers, *Tree of Smoke* remains a challenging yet rewarding exploration of a troubled period, reminding us that the stories of war are as fragmented and multifaceted as the experiences of those who live through them.

Through its intricate storytelling and profound thematic concerns, *Tree of Smoke* Denis Johnson secures its place as a significant and influential work, inviting ongoing reflection on the enduring impact of conflict on the human psyche.

## **Tree Of Smoke Denis Johnson**

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**tree of smoke denis johnson: Tree of Smoke** Denis Johnson, 2007-09-04 Once upon a time there was a war . . . and a young American who thought of himself as the Quiet American and the Ugly American, and who wished to be neither, who wanted instead to be the Wise American, or the Good American, but who eventually came to witness himself as the Real American and finally as simply the Fucking American. That's me. This is the story of Skip Sands—spy-in-training, engaged in Psychological Operations against the Vietcong—and the disasters that befall him thanks to his famous uncle, a war hero known in intelligence circles simply as the Colonel. This is also the story of the Houston brothers, Bill and James, young men who drift out of the Arizona desert into a war in which the line between disinformation and delusion has blurred away. In its vision of human folly, and its gritty, sympathetic portraits of men and women desperate for an end to their loneliness, whether in sex or death or by the grace of God, this is a story like nothing in our literature. *Tree of Smoke* is Denis Johnson's first full-length novel in nine years, and his most gripping, beautiful, and powerful work to date. *Tree of Smoke* is the 2007 National Book Award Winner for Fiction.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: Tree of Smoke** Denis Johnson, 2016-02-11 *Tree of Smoke* - the name given to a 'psy op' that might or might not be hypothetical and might or might not be officially sanctioned - is Denis Johnson's most gripping, visionary and ambitious work to date. Set in south-east Asia and the US, and spanning two decades, it ostensibly tells the story of Skip Sands, a CIA spy who may or may not be engaged in psychological operations against the Viet Cong -- but also takes the reader on a surreal yet vivid journey, dipping in and out of characters' lives to reveal fundamental truths at the heart of the human condition. 'A Catch-22 for our times' Alan Warner, Books of the Year, Observer 'The God I want to believe in has a voice and a sense of humour like Denis Johnson's' Jonathan Franzen 'An epic of drenched sensuality and absurdly chewable dialogue, as though Don DeLillo and Joseph Heller had collaborated on a Vietnam war novel' Steven Poole, Books of the Year, New Statesman

**tree of smoke denis johnson: Tree of Smoke** Denis Johnson, 2008 Describing a world where almost everyone is lost or looking for something, where disinformation is the ultimate weapon and disillusion the most insidious enemy, and where war is another way to self-destruction, Johnson takes the reader on a surreal yet vivid journey, revealing the fundamental truths at the heart of the human condition.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: The Solitary Journey Home** Harrison Fletcher Dietzman, 2011

**tree of smoke denis johnson: The Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction, 2 Volumes** Patrick O'Donnell, Stephen J. Burn, Lesley Larkin, 2022-03-01 Neue Perspektiven und aufschlussreiche Erörterungen der zeitgenössischen amerikanischen Belletristik Mit der Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction: 1980-2020 präsentiert ein Team renommierter Geisteswissenschaftler eine umfassende zielgerichtete Sammlung von Beiträgen zu einigen der bedeutendsten und einflussreichsten Autoren und literarischen Themen der letzten vier Jahrzehnte. In aktuellen Beiträgen bekannter und neuer Autoren werden so unterschiedliche Themen wie Multikulturalismus, zeitgenössische Regionalismen, Realismus nach dem Poststrukturalismus, indigene Erzählungen, Globalismus und Big Data im Kontext der amerikanischen Belletristik der letzten 40 Jahre betrachtet. Die Enzyklopädie bietet einen Überblick über die amerikanische Belletristik zur Jahrtausendwende sowie einen Ausblick auf die Zukunft. In diesem Werk findet sich eine ausgewogene Mischung aus Analyse, Zusammenfassung und Kritik für eine erhellende Betrachtung der enthaltenen Themen. Außerdem enthält das Werk: \* Eine spannende Mischung von Beiträgen bekannter und aufstrebender Autoren aus aller Welt, in denen zentrale aktuelle Themen der amerikanischen Belletristik diskutiert werden \* Eine gezielte kritische Betrachtung von Autoren und Themen, die für die amerikanische Belletristik von wesentlicher Bedeutung sind \* Themen, in denen sich die Energie und die Tendenzen in der zeitgenössischen amerikanischen Belletristik in den vierzig Jahren zwischen 1980 und 2020 widerspiegeln Die Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction: 1980-2020 ist ein unverzichtbares Nachschlagewerk für Studierende und Doktoranden in den Bereichen amerikanische Literatur, Englisch, kreatives Schreiben und Belletristik. Darüber hinaus darf das Werk in den Bibliotheken von Geisteswissenschaftlern nicht fehlen, die nach einer maßgeblichen Sammlung von Beiträgen bekannter und neuerer Autoren der zeitgenössischen Belletristik suchen.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: The Covert Sphere** Timothy Melley, 2012-11-15 In December 2010 the U.S. Embassy in Kabul acknowledged that it was providing major funding for thirteen episodes of Eagle Four—a new Afghani television melodrama based loosely on the blockbuster U.S. series 24. According to an embassy spokesperson, Eagle Four was part of a strategy aimed at transforming public suspicion of security forces into something like awed respect. Why would a wartime government spend valuable resources on a melodrama of covert operations? The answer, according to Timothy Melley, is not simply that fiction has real political effects but that, since the Cold War, fiction has become integral to the growth of national security as a concept and a transformation of democracy. In *The Covert Sphere*, Melley links this cultural shift to the birth of the national security state in 1947. As the United States developed a vast infrastructure of clandestine organizations, it shielded policy from the public sphere and gave rise to a new cultural imaginary, the covert sphere. One of the surprising consequences of state secrecy is that citizens must rely substantially on fiction to know, or imagine, their nation's foreign policy. The potent combination of institutional secrecy and public fascination with the secret work of the state was instrumental in fostering the culture of suspicion and uncertainty that has plagued American society ever since—and, Melley argues, that would eventually find its fullest expression in postmodernism. *The Covert Sphere* traces these consequences from the Korean War through the War on Terror, examining how a regime of psychological operations and covert action has made the conflation of reality and fiction a central feature of both U.S. foreign policy and American culture. Melley interweaves Cold War history with political theory and original readings of films, television dramas, and popular entertainments—from *The Manchurian Candidate* through *24*—as well as influential writing by Margaret Atwood, Robert Coover, Don DeLillo, Joan Didion, E. L. Doctorow, Michael Herr, Denis Johnson, Norman Mailer, Tim O'Brien, and many others.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: The Cambridge History of the American Novel** Leonard Cassuto, 2011-03-24 An authoritative and lively account of the development of the genre, by leading experts in the field.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: The Evil Hours** David J. Morris, 2015-01-20 “An essential book” on PTSD, an all-too-common condition in both military veterans and civilians (The New York Times)

Book Review). Post-traumatic stress disorder afflicts as many as 30 percent of those who have experienced twenty-first-century combat—but it is not confined to soldiers. Countless ordinary Americans also suffer from PTSD, following incidences of abuse, crime, natural disasters, accidents, or other trauma—yet in many cases their symptoms are still shrouded in mystery, secrecy, and shame. This “compulsively readable” study takes an in-depth look at the subject (Los Angeles Times). Written by a war correspondent and former Marine with firsthand experience of this disorder, and drawing on interviews with individuals living with PTSD, it forays into the scientific, literary, and cultural history of the illness. Using a rich blend of reporting and memoir, *The Evil Hours* is a moving work that will speak not only to those with the condition and to their loved ones, but also to all of us struggling to make sense of an anxious and uncertain time.

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *Writing Wars* David F. Eisler, 2022-12-14 Choice Outstanding Academic Title 2024 Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole Biennial Award for Distinguished Book in Veterans Studies, winner Who writes novels about war? For nearly a century after World War I, the answer was simple: soldiers who had been there. The assumption that a person must have experienced war in the flesh in order to write about it in fiction was taken for granted by writers, reviewers, critics, and even scholars. Contemporary American fiction tells a different story. Less than half of the authors of contemporary war novels are veterans. And that’s hardly the only change. Today’s war novelists focus on the psychological and moral challenges of soldiers coming home rather than the physical danger of combat overseas. They also imagine the consequences of the wars from non-American perspectives in a way that defies the genre’s conventions. To understand why these changes have occurred, David Eisler argues that we must go back nearly fifty years, to the political decision to abolish the draft. The ramifications rippled into the field of cultural production, transforming the foundational characteristics— authorship, content, and form—of the American war fiction genre.

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *A History of American Literature* Linda Wagner-Martin, 2013-01-29 A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE 1950 TO THE PRESENT Featuring works from notable authors as varied as Salinger and the Beats to Vonnegut, Capote, Morrison, Rich, Walker, Eggers, and DeLillo, *A History of American Literature: 1950 to the Present* offers a comprehensive analysis of the wide range of literary works produced in the United States over the last six decades and a fascinating survey of the dramatic changes during America’s transition from the innocence of the fifties to the harsh realities of the first decade of the new millennium. Author Linda Wagner-Martin - a highly acclaimed authority on all facets of modern American literature - covers major works of drama, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, and popular genres such as science fiction and detective novels. Viewing works produced during this fertile literary period from a wide-ranging perspective, Wagner-Martin considers literature in relation to such issues as the politics of civil rights, feminism, sexual preferences, and race- and gender-based marketing. She also places a special emphasis on works produced during the twenty-first century, and writings influenced by recent historic events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and the global financial crisis. With its careful balance of scholarly precision and accessibility, *A History of American Literature: 1950 to the Present* provides readers of all levels with rich and revealing insights into the diversity of literary forms and influences that characterize postmodern America. “A monumental distillation of an enormous range of material, Wagner-Martin’s rich book should be required reading for anyone grappling with making sense of the prolific, broad-spectrum, and diverse writing in the US since 1950.” Thadious M. Davis, University of Pennsylvania “Linda Wagner-Martin’s history impressively and judiciously surveys all fields of American writing over the past sixty years, taking full account of significant cultural and historical contexts and the major critical commentaries that have helped shape our understanding of developments in the second half of the last century and the dozen years following the millennium. Balanced, informative, and always highly readable there is much here for general readers, students, and specialists alike.” Christopher MacGowan, the College of William and Mary

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* Joe

Bray, Alison Gibbons, Brian McHale, 2012 *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* maps this expansive and multifaceted field, with essays on: the history of literary experiment from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present the impact of new media on literature, including multimodal literature, digital fiction and code poetry the development of experimental genres from graphic narratives and found poetry through to gaming and interactive fiction experimental movements from Futurism and Surrealism to Postmodernism, Avant-Pop and Flarf. Shedding new light on often critically neglected terrain, the contributors introduce this vibrant area, define its current state, and offer exciting new perspectives on its future.

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *Thirty Years After* Mark Heberle, 2009-01-14 *Thirty Years After: New Essays on Vietnam War Literature, Film and Art* brings together essays on literature, film and media, representational art, and music of the Vietnam War that were generated by a three-day conference in Honolulu during Veterans Week 2005. This large and extensive volume, the first collection of Vietnam War criticism published since the 1990s, reflects significant cultural and historical changes since then, including U.S.-Vietnamese cultural transactions in the wake of political reconciliation and the Vietnamese diaspora; popular commodification and memorialization of the war in America; and renascent American imperialism. Contributors include well-established and well-published writers and critics like Philip Beidler, Cathey Calloway, Lorrie Goldensohn, Wayne Karlin, Andrew Lam, Jerry Lembcke, Tim O'Brien, John S. Schafer, and Alex Vernon as well as emerging Vietnam scholars and critics. Among other contributions, the volume provides important quasi-bibliographical essays on canonical American and Vietnamese literature and film, African American Vietnam war narratives, Chicano fiction and poetry, and American Vietnam war art music as well as essays on such subjects as real and digital war memorials, Vietnamese popular war songs, and Vietnamization of the Gulf War. Teachers, scholars, and the general public will find *Thirty Years After* a valuable guide to ongoing critical discussion of the most important event in American history between 1945 and 9/11. I highly recommend this book. Although it is almost a cliché to say the Vietnam War has left deep and lingering scars on American society, *Thirty Years* underscores the still traumatic cultural legacy of this conflict. Attuned to the divergent voices and genres of representation--*Thirty Years* is an indispensable work, not only for literary scholars, but for anyone seeking to understand the enduring impact of the Vietnam War. An impressive work, Mark Heberle is commended for organizing such an insightful and gracefully written set of essays. G. Kurt Piehler, author of *Remembering War the American Way*.

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *Cincinnati Magazine*, 2009-04 *Cincinnati Magazine* taps into the DNA of the city, exploring shopping, dining, living, and culture and giving readers a ringside seat on the issues shaping the region.

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**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *The Literary Review* , 2012

**tree of smoke denis johnson:** *Trauma in Contemporary Literature* Marita Nadal, Mónica Calvo, 2014-03-26 *Trauma in Contemporary Literature* analyzes contemporary narrative texts in English in the light of trauma theory, including essays by scholars of different countries who approach trauma from a variety of perspectives. The book analyzes and applies the most relevant concepts and themes discussed in trauma theory, such as the relationship between individual and collective trauma, historical trauma, absence vs. loss, the roles of perpetrator and victim, dissociation, *nachträglichkeit*, transgenerational trauma, the process of acting out and working through, introjection and incorporation, mourning and melancholia, the phantom and the crypt, postmemory and multidirectional memory, shame and the affects, and the power of resilience to overcome trauma. Significantly, the essays not only focus on the phenomenon of trauma and its diverse manifestations but, above all, consider the elements that challenge the aporias of trauma, the traps of stasis and repetition, in order to reach beyond the confines of the traumatic condition and explore the possibilities of survival, healing and recovery.

**tree of smoke denis johnson: American Literature** Hans Bertens, Theo D'haen, 2013-11-12 This comprehensive history of American Literature traces its development from the earliest colonial writings of the late 1500s through to the present day. This lively, engaging and highly accessible guide: offers lucid discussions of all major influences and movements such as Puritanism, Transcendentalism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism and Postmodernism draws on the historical, cultural, and political contexts of key literary texts and authors covers the whole range of American literature: prose, poetry, theatre and experimental literature includes substantial sections on native and ethnic American literatures explains and contextualises major events, terms and figures in American history. This book is essential reading for anyone seeking to situate their reading of American Literature in the appropriate religious, cultural, and political contexts.

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