

The Telegraph

Martin Amis attacks Royal family as 'philistines'

Martin Amis, one of Britain's most influential novelists has launched a scathing attack on the Royal Family, calling them "philistines".



Kate Middleton and Prince William will rehearse together a week before the wedding (GETTY)

By Peter Allen, Paris

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Amis, the 61-year-old author of bestsellers such as *The Rachel Papers* and *Money*, portrays [the Queen](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/queen-elizabeth-II/) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/queen-elizabeth-II/>) as a woman who never listens and describes the Prince of Wales as having a laugh "like a pig's snore".

He recounts a series of meetings with members of the Royal family and also attacks the forthcoming wedding in an edition of the influential French magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

"There's indeed something which doesn't work in this story," says Amis, referring to the big day on April 29th.

"One can't, in the era of media supremacy, make ones children go through everything which a wedding like this

entails: not only the loss of ones private life; but also the sacrifice of oneself pure and simple. "

"The [royal family](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/) is so spied upon, so scrutinised by the media that the life of these children becomes quite unbearable.

[William and Kate plan Middle-Eastern honeymoon](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/8455757/Prince-William-and-Kate-Middleton-plan-Middle-Eastern-honeymoon.html)

[Kate Middleton's wedding dress designer revealed?](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/8456677/Kate-Middletons-wedding-dress-latest-Sophie-Cranston-of-Libelula-chosen-as-designer.html)

[Prince Harry promoted to captain in Army](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/prince-harry/8455766/Prince-Harry-promoted-to-captain-in-Army.html)

[Clegg: rules of succession are 'old fashioned'](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/845600/Royal-Wedding-Nick-Clegg-says-the-current-rules-of-royal-succession-are-old-fashioned.html)

Amis suggests in the interview that [Prince William](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/prince-william/) and [Prince Harry](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/prince-harry/) could avoid attention if they remained single.

He says: "Harry and William rebelled some eight or nine years ago and they effectively let people know that they weren't going to sacrifice their lives anymore for the crown.

"They were probably told that it's the oldest institution in Europe and that they had to preserve it by all means possible. The Princes finally gave in. But how can we, today, ask for so much from a human being?"

Asked if other people will support the wedding with sincerity, Amis replies: "Without doubt. The atmosphere is going to be irrational, very British in a sense.

"Usually, when the crowd descends on the street its to find windows to break. Now, the crowd will be standing outside passively. Its difficult not to be moved by this enthusiasm. Its difficult not to think about it in a positive way.

"Without counting that, in the crowd, there will be Pakistani immigrants, Africans the most enthusiastic perhaps. Its certainly a good thing as far as the plan for social integration is concerned."

The latest edition of Le Nouvel Observateur is devoted to Britain, and the [Royal Wedding](#)

[\(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/) , with a colour picture of William and Kate on the front.

But Amis says: "I've met the Queen, indeed, along with other writers on I don't know which occasions anymore.

"The problem is that the Queen doesn't listen to what you say to her. Because she is not supposed to understand the remarks that one makes to her."

Referring to his late father, the Lucky Jim author Kingsley Amis, Amis says: "Still, I allowed myself to say impetuously when she greeted me: You knighted my father.

"Her only reaction was to look far away, vaguely staring at a painting on the wall. That's all. Another time, I had a lunch with the Duke of Edinburgh. He was surprised by my profession: 'Oh, you're a writer.'"

Amis is particularly critical of the Prince of Wales for his condemnation of 'The Satanic Verses', Salman Rushdie's book which led to a death threat being issued against him by Iran because it insulted Islam.

Referring to the Prince, Amis says: "We've had dinner together twice, a small gathering, four or five people. He was still married to Diana, but he never mentioned her name.

"[Charles is] charming, he has an extraordinary laugh, like a pigs snore."

Asked directly what he thinks of the Royals in general, Amis replies: They are philistines.

Confirming that he would turn down a knighthood, Amis says: "I said I wouldn't accept it. I don't want any link with the British Empire. Its quite ridiculous. No, there's no risk of that happening. In reality, I'd prefer not to be English.

Summing up views about the moral decay of the UK which will be contained in a new book subtitled The State of England, Amis says: "The young women dream of becoming models. Celebrity is the new religion. And you want it to come to you just like that, with no effort, without having any merit.

"So it's a book about the decline of my country, about anger, dissatisfaction, bitterness, even subconsciously, caused by this decline. Its perhaps subliminal. You can have the impression that life in London is rather pleasant. But everything is falling apart inside."

In a particularly direct attack on the upper classes, Amis says: "As for the British aristocracy, it's pathetic. All that snobbery is ridiculous today."